AFCAI 2026 press release

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Morocco Mauritius and Egypt lead inaugural Africa FTZ Country Attractiveness Index

Africa Urban Future Programme publishes a comparative assessment of national Free Trade Zone ecosystems across 54 African countries

The Africa Urban Future Programme (AUFP) has released the inaugural Africa FTZ Country Attractiveness Index (AFCAI 2026), examining the conditions shaping Free Trade Zone competitiveness across 54 African countries.

Published to mark Africa Industrialization Day, the report provides a common framework for comparing national zone ecosystems. It considers policy and regulation, infrastructure and logistics, incentives, administrative efficiency, performance and market validation, and regional and trade integration.

The 2026 publication uses 2025 as its reference year. Individual source periods are explained in the report's methodology.

Morocco leads the inaugural league table with a reported composite score of 92.67 points out of 100, followed by Mauritius at 91.57 and Egypt at 90.00. Rwanda and South Africa complete the top five.

The report also records substantial differences in operational readiness. AFCAI 2026 assesses 22 national frameworks as functional, 20 as limited and 12 as non-operational. These operational-status categories are separate from the report's rank-based classifications.

The assessment places the leading ecosystems in a broader comparative context. Mauritius and Rwanda each receive the maximum reported contribution for policy and regulatory framework, while Morocco and Egypt each record 19 out of 20 for infrastructure and logistics. These results illustrate different dimension-score patterns within the upper ranks; they do not establish that any single condition causes higher competitiveness.

AFCAI brings together a continental assessment, the national league table, country profiles and recommendations. Its six assessment dimensions comprise 33 indicators, with weights of 25% for policy and regulation, 20% for infrastructure and logistics, 15% each for incentives, administration and performance, and 10% for regional and trade integration.

The publication is intended to help governments and zone authorities examine comparative conditions, help investors and developers focus subsequent due diligence, and support research and development-finance assessment. Its unit of analysis is the national FTZ ecosystem; conditions within individual zones may differ.

AFCAI is a comparative benchmarking publication. It is not a regulatory certification, investment recommendation or legal assessment. Data availability varies across countries, and the methodology explains the use of expert-judgement weights and other limitations. Small differences in displayed scores should be interpreted cautiously.

The report is published by the Africa Urban Future Programme, a programme of the Council of Africa under the Global Africa Agenda — World Organisation for Human Advancement (WOHA). Research and technical production were undertaken by the SLIP Research Intelligence Unit, Subway Labs Infrastructure Partners.

Read the report and executive brief: https://www.subwaylabs.ng/research/afcai-2026/

Research and media enquiries

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Notes to editors

AFCAI 2026 is the inaugural edition of the Africa FTZ Country Attractiveness Index. It assesses 54 national ecosystems across six dimensions and 33 indicators, using 2025 as its reference year. Rank classifications comprise Most Attractive (1–10), Emerging (11–20), Nascent Zone Economies (21–44) and High-Risk (45–54). Operational status is reported separately.

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