

The Northern Corridor

Green and Digital Trade Corridors: Facilitating Trade and Infrastructure for Agri-logistics and cool chain development

OCTOBER 2025

Transport Connectivity

The Netherlands invests, together with the EU and in close collaboration with Kenya, in physical infrastructure and digital trade systems to strengthen the Northern Corridor as a strategic trade route. This Global Gateway initiative delivers this through combining investments in cool chain logistics with smart, digital trade facilitation, ensuring that these infrastructure investments realize their full potential. Together, they form the backbone of a **climate-smart, efficient, and inclusive export system** for perishable goods, enabling the important shift from costly, carbon-intensive air freight to more sustainable sea freight. This initiative strengthens regional markets, as well as export to Europe. It's a pathway to shared prosperity, green growth, and a more connected Africa.



Our work along the Northern Corridor is based on two mutually reinforcing pillars

Infrastructure

The development of cold storage facilities, consolidation centers, and cool ports across Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda provides the essential backbone for preserving produce quality, reducing post-harvest losses, and enabling the cost-effective shift from air to sea freight.

Digitally enabled trade facilitation

If cold chain infrastructure is to deliver its full worth, then goods must move across borders quickly and transparently. Through smart customs systems, trusted trader programmes, harmonized standards, and digital platforms, we reduce delays, ensure compliance, and give exporters access to markets. This makes East African produce more competitive, reliable, and ready for global trade.

Why are we working on the shift from air to sea freight

- **A sustainable future:** Transitioning to sea freight for transporting horticulture produce from East Africa reduces greenhouse emissions and keeps the region competitive in a changing global market.
- **Stronger economies:** Lower transport costs through sea freight unlock new export opportunities and fuel growth across the region.
- **Protecting livelihoods:** Meeting EU consumer demands for greener products safeguards millions of jobs that depend on the horticulture sector.
- **Stronger food systems:** Removing trade barriers and strengthening cold chain logistics reduces waste and improves food security.



Stakeholders

- Implementing consortium: Invest International, TradeMark Africa, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and involved embassies of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Private sector active in East Africa (horticulture industry, logistics companies, freight companies)
- (Semi-)Government authorities
- DG INTPA and EU Delegations in East Africa