

EAC Policies Influencing One Health and Sustainable Green Development: Scoping Review and Framework

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Abstract

This The East African Community (EAC) has adopted policies that influence the integration of the One Health Approach and Sustainable Green Development. This study aims to develop a framework that describes several policies through which the One Health approach influences sustainable green development within the EAC region. We carried out a scoping review to identify policies using the One Health and Sustainable Green Development (OHSGD) terms ($n = 14$) published and implemented prior to December 20, 2024, that discusses One Health and Sustainable Green Development aspects across all the 8 member states of EAC. We used the qualitative constant comparative technique to inductively code descriptions and examples of the One Health approach aspects within these policies, arrange the aspects into descriptive domains, and generate an overarching framework. The resulting One Health Approach influence on sustainable green development across EAC countries identifies four areas of the One Health Approach that can influence sustainable green development in EAC. These areas are grouped into four influence categories: (1) integrated health and environmental management, (2) climate change mitigation and adaption, (3) sustainable agriculture practices, and (4) strengthening multisectoral collaboration. We propose a framework that positions these categories according to their relevance to sustainable green development outcomes and highlights two critical focus areas for assessing the impact of the One Health Approach in EAC: (1) government and policy-driven interventions to health and environmental outcomes and (2) the extent to which these interventions address equity and sustainability concerns across diverse population groups.

Keywords: One Health, Sustainable Green Development, EAC, Africa

1. Introduction

For many years, government actors and the governance structures within a country or a regional economic bloc, such as the East African Community (EAC) that regulates them, have significantly shaped public health and environmental sustainability. The increasing economic, political, and legal influence of governments in regional economic communities necessitates a critical examination of their role in shaping health as one of the sustainable development determinants. Recent scholarship has explored these dynamics through the lens of the commercial determinants of health (CDH), defined as the systems, practices, and pathways through which commercial actors drive health and equity (Freudenberg, 2023; Walls et al., 2020). Building upon Bureau and Blank's (2006) foundation, the typologies of health systems to capture the institutional context of health policies to contribute to explaining health policies across the EAC provides a comprehensive framework to analyse government influence on population health and environmental sustainability.

In the East African Community (EAC), various policies have been implemented to integrate the One Health approach into sustainable green development strategies. This paper aims to develop a framework that delineates how these policies influence regional sustainable development. Through a systematic scoping review of policies related to One Health and Sustainable Green Development (OHSGD) published before December 20, 2024, we identified nine key policies addressing these aspects across the 8 member states of the East African Community (EAC). Employing a qualitative constant comparative technique, we coded descriptions and examples of One Health components within these policies, categorising them into distinct domains to construct an overarching analytical framework.

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The resulting framework identifies four key domains through which the One Health approach can influence sustainable green development in the EAC: (1) integrated health and environmental management, (2) climate change mitigation and adaptation, (3) sustainable agricultural practices, and (4) strengthening multisectoral collaboration. These domains align with the typologies of health systems, which categorise government influence into structured domains and evaluate their impact on various population groups, including consumers, workers, and local communities.

Through the application of the typologies of the health systems concept, this paper offers a nuanced understanding of how governments in EAC and policy-driven interventions shape health outcomes and environmental sustainability. Specifically, it contextualises government influence on sustainable development by examining regulatory frameworks and industry-specific practices. Our analysis highlights two critical focus areas for assessing the impact of One Health policies in the East African Community that is (1) government and policy-driven interventions to health and environmental outcomes and (2) the extent to which these interventions address equity and sustainability concerns across diverse population groups.

This paper contributes to the broader discourse on CDH by providing a structured framework to assess policy-driven health and environmental interventions. Future research should explore how government entities navigate regulatory landscapes in the EAC and the effectiveness of multisectoral collaborations in promoting sustainable green development. By leveraging the typologies of health systems, policymakers and stakeholders can better evaluate government engagement in public health and environmental governance, ensuring that sustainable development initiatives prioritise health equity and environmental resilience.

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1.1 Context

1.1.1 What is One Health?

One Health is an interdisciplinary approach that recognises the interconnection between human, animal, and environmental health. It advocates for cross-sectoral cooperation among stakeholders such as human and veterinarian health professionals, environmental scientists, policy makers, etc. to address complex health challenges. One Health aims to holistically achieve optimal health outcomes by addressing complex health issues (Danasekaran, 2024).

What is Sustainable Green Development?

Sustainable green development is a comprehensive strategy that intends to achieve economic development while preserving environment and ensuring social equity. It promotes progress that satisfies current needs without compromising the development of future generations by implementing practices that minimise ecological footprints and creating opportunities in green sectors and sustainable industries. Sustainable green development ensures that the advantages of progress are distributed equitably among all the levels of the society by addressing inequalities, promoting inclusion, and guaranteeing access to essential resources ("Green economy," 2018).

1.1.2 Quick Facts about EAC (n.d.)

- Members: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda
- Area (including water): 5.4 million square kilometers
- Population: USD 312.9 billion (2021)
- Date of foundations: 1967 (first established), 7 July 2000 (re-establish)

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2. Literature Review

The East African Community (EAC) has been working on integrating One Health and sustainable green development into its regional policies. These efforts recognise the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, aligning with global sustainability goals. However, challenges such as fragmented governance, financing limitations, and weak enforcement mechanisms continue to hinder effective policy implementation (EAC, 2021). This literature review explores cross-sectoral policy approaches, regional cooperation mechanisms, policy implementation challenges, and multisectoral collaboration models in sustainable development and One Health, incorporating insights from Rwanda, Uganda, and other EAC nations.

Cross-Sectoral Policy Approaches and Regional Cooperation.

One Health and environmental policies intersect in various ways across East Africa, where deforestation, pollution, and climate change exacerbate zoonotic disease risks (Tanzania National One Health Strategic Plan, 2022). The EAC Vision 2050 and the 6th EAC Development Strategy emphasise sustainable economic transformation and resilience (EAC, 2016; EAC, 2021). Similarly, frameworks like the African Union's Agenda 2063 align regional policy efforts with sustainability objectives (African Union, 2015). In comparison, ASEAN3 has established a Coordinating Centre for Animal Health and Zoonosis (ACCAHZ), which fosters regional collaboration on One Health strategies (ASEAN, 2023).

The One Health Strategic Plans of EAC countries play a crucial role in guiding national-level policies towards a unified regional approach. National One Health frameworks have been developed in Rwanda (2021), Uganda (2018), Kenya (2021), and Tanzania (2022), often with

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2.1 Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Support from development partners such as the FAO⁴, WHO⁵, and GIZ⁶, mainly focusing

on responding to the increasing burden of zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance, underscoring the need for collaboration at national and sub-national levels. Rwanda's One Health Strategic Plan (2021-2026) underscores the importance of multisectoral collaboration for disease surveillance, antimicrobial resistance, and environmental conservation (Rwanda One Health Strategic Plan, 2021). Similarly, Uganda has implemented the Uganda One Health Strategic Plan (2018-2022) to strengthen cross-sectoral engagement and early warning systems for emerging zoonotic threats (Uganda One Health Strategic Plan, 2018). Tanzania and Kenya also have structured One Health strategies, aiming to integrate human, animal, and environmental health considerations into national policies (Tanzania National One Health Strategic Plan, 2022; Kenya One Health Strategic Plan, 2021).

In addition to One Health strategies, National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) have been developed by all EAC member states to address climate change and its impact on socio-economic sectors. Rwanda's National Adaptation Plan (2021) focuses on ecosystem-based adaptation, agriculture resilience, and sustainable land management (Rwanda National Adaptation Plan, 2021). Uganda's adaptation plan emphasises disaster risk management and strengthening climate information systems (Uganda National Adaptation Programme, 2021). These national policies contribute to the broader regional goals of sustainability and policy harmonisation.

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Out of the East African Regional block, frameworks like the European Green Deal serve as a model for integrating environmental sustainability across governance structures, particularly through its Just Transition Mechanism, which ensures equitable implementation

of green policies (European Commission, 2022). The World Bank's Global Program on Sustainability (GPS) promotes the incorporation of natural capital valuation in policymaking, a model that could benefit EAC nations (World Bank, 2023). ECOWAS, another African regional bloc, has successfully implemented the One Health Zoonotic Disease Prioritization (OHZDP) framework, supporting policy harmonisation across West African states (ECOWAS, 2021).

2.2 Challenges in Policy Implementation

Despite the existence of strategic policies, implementation remains a significant challenge in East Africa. The main obstacles are fragmented governance structures and limited funding mechanisms for sustainability initiatives (EAC, 2021). Many countries rely on international climate finance sources, such as the Green Climate Fund and Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), but access to these resources remains cumbersome (World Resources Institute, 2024). MDBs provided a record-high \$125 billion in public climate finance in 2023, yet developing countries, including those in the EAC, received an insufficient share of adaptation funding (World Resources Institute, 2024).

Moreover, weak institutional coordination undermines policy enforcement. Unlike ASEAN's structured One Health Coordination Center, EAC member states lack a formalised multisectoral governance framework (ASEAN, 2023). Lessons from India's failed attempts to integrate One Health into national policies reveal the importance of sustained government commitment (Raj et al., 2022). Bureaucratic inefficiencies and political instability further hinder the region's ability to implement long-term sustainability projects (Kenya National Adaptation Programme, 2021).

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Rwanda and Uganda have experienced similar challenges, with Uganda's efforts in transboundary disease management often hindered by inconsistent inter-ministerial coordination (Uganda One Health Strategic Plan, 2018). Rwanda, on the other hand, has faced difficulties in securing long-term financing for its green economy initiatives despite a strong policy framework (Rwanda One Health Strategic Plan, 2021).

Stakeholder engagement is crucial in shaping effective policies. The integration of indigenous knowledge into environmental sustainability strategies remains underutilised in East Africa despite its potential for sustainable agriculture and ecosystem conservation (Burundi National Adaptation Programme, 2021). Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are gaining traction in green energy and eco-tourism but require stronger policy incentives to drive long-term investment (African Development Bank, 2021).

Evidence-based policymaking remains a priority, particularly in climate resilience and disease surveillance. The Africa CDC One Health Framework enhances regional coordination for zoonotic disease management (Africa CDC, 2023). Meanwhile, initiatives like the World.

Bank Group's Environment Strategy (2012-2022) stress the importance of integrating sustainability into national economic planning (World Bank, 2023). The UNFCCC's Climate Finance Mobilization Strategy for Least Developed Countries in Asia demonstrates how streamlined access to international climate finance can benefit vulnerable economies, offering a model for East African nations (UNFCCC, 2024). Another promising approach to improving collaboration is the One Health High-Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) Theory of Change (Mettenleiter et al., 2022), developed by FAO, UNEP⁷, WHO, and WOA⁸. The framework aims to prevent, predict, detect, and respond to health threats through three main pathways: policy, advocacy, and financing; organisational development and sectoral integration; and data, evidence, education, and knowledge exchange. The framework also emphasises the “4 Cs” approach—collaboration, communication, coordination, and capacity building—which can guide One Health's implementation efforts within the EAC.

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The successful integration of One Health and sustainable green development in the EAC depends on robust regional cooperation, improved financing mechanisms, and multisectoral governance. While significant policy frameworks exist, their implementation remains challenged by fragmented coordination, financial constraints, enforcement limitations, and disparities in policy adoption across member states.

Drawing from global best practices, including ASEAN's coordination models, ECOWAS's zoonotic disease prioritisation, and the European Green Deal, East Africa can strengthen its sustainability and health security initiatives. Moving forward, enhanced stakeholder engagement, stronger policy harmonisation, scientific evidence integration into policy-making, and targeted climate finance will be crucial in advancing regional resilience and long-term sustainability goals. By fostering cross-sector collaboration and adopting a holistic approach to health and environmental sustainability, East Africa can set a global precedent for One Health implementation.

8 World Organisation of Animal Health 7United Nations Environment Programme

3. Methodology

3.1 Scoping Review Approach

We employed a scoping review methodology to systematically identify and analyse EAC regional and national policies as well as research papers that integrate the One Health approach with Sustainable Green Development (OHSGD) within the East African Community (EAC). This approach allowed us to comprehensively map the existing literature and policy landscape, categorise key themes, and develop an overarching framework to understand how the One Health approach influences sustainable green development across EAC countries.

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3.2 Search Strategy

A structured search was conducted using relevant OHSGD-related terms across multiple databases and policy repositories to identify documents published and implemented before December 20, 2024. The search terms were designed to capture policies explicitly discussing both One Health and Sustainable Green Development aspects across all EAC member states. We followed an iterative search process to ensure that the widest possible range of relevant

policy documents was included.

3.3 Eligibility Criteria

Documents were considered eligible if they met the following criteria.

- Written in English or an official EAC language.
- Explicitly addressed aspects of both One Health and Sustainable Green Development.
- Published or implemented by governmental or recognised regional institutions within EAC.
- Available as full-text documents for review.
- Discussed policy measures within the East African Community with direct or indirect implications for environmental sustainability, public health, agriculture, or climate change mitigation within the One Health framework.

Exclusion criteria included documents that focused solely on health or environmental policies without an explicit connection to One Health, lacked sufficient detail to assess policy influence on Sustainable Green Development, and were opinion pieces or editorial reviews without empirical or policy-based backing.

3.4 Data Extraction

For each included document, we extracted key information such as:

- Policy name, year of implementation, and issuing authority.
- Thematic focus areas related to One Health and Sustainable Green Development.
- Geographic and sectoral scope within EAC.
- Stated objectives, strategies, and expected outcomes.

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- References to multisectoral collaboration, climate change adaptation, and sustainable agricultural and environmental practices.

Data Synthesis and Framework Development

We employed the qualitative constant comparative technique to inductively code policy descriptions and examples of One Health aspects within the identified documents. The data was analysed using NVivo software with the aim of identifying recurring themes and policy mechanisms related to One Health and Sustainable Green Development.

We then grouped the identified themes into overarching descriptive domains and developed a

conceptual framework that positions these domains in relation to sustainable green development outcomes within EAC.

Through this process, we identified four key areas in which the One Health approach influences Sustainable Green Development in EAC, including (1) Integrated Health and Environmental Management, (2) Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, (3) Sustainable Agricultural Practices, and (4) Strengthening Multisectoral Collaboration.

Through its emphasis on the interconnection of human, animal and environmental health, the One Health approach is intrinsically linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the following: SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) (FAO, 2023). One Health promotes an integrated approach to disease surveillance and prevention, especially for cross-species (zoonotic) diseases, that would allow a faster and more effective response to outbreaks. This integrated approach is also applied to the evaluation and prevention of anti-microbial resistance (AMR) across species. Moreover, the One Health approach recognises the importance of environmental factors such as pollution, habitat destruction, and climate change on human and animal health. Thus, the One Health approach inspires good practices to preserve the environment and ensure healthy ecosystems that would ensure sustainable agriculture and mitigate climate change. Finally, the One Health approach highlights the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration among public health officials, environment scientists, policymakers, infrastructure specialists, etc. All the above-mentioned One Health aspects constitute a lesson to ensure that sustainable green development is conceptualised in a holistic manner.

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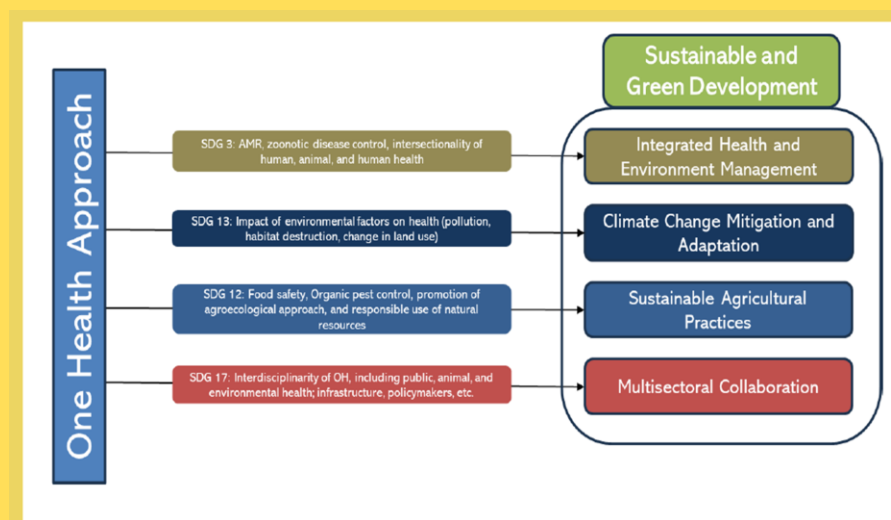


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: One Health Approach's Influence on Sustainable Green Development

The framework highlights the relationships between these categories and their impact on sustainable green development, emphasising two critical focus areas for assessing the effectiveness of One Health policies in the EAC region's sustainable green development: (1) government and policy-driven interventions to health and environmental outcomes and (2) the extent to which these interventions address equity and sustainability concerns across diverse population groups.

4. Results

4.1 Characteristics of Articles Included in the Review

Following the screening process, a total of eight articles and fourteen policy documents from EAC member states were included in the analysis. More than half of the selected materials were conceptual, while the remaining combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies. These articles detailed governmental activities incorporating the One Health approach into policy frameworks across East African Community (EAC) countries.

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Of the articles and policy documents included with a specific country focus, 72% of the documents originated from Rwanda's governmental initiatives incorporating One Health principles into national policy. Additionally, contributions from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania highlighted their respective efforts to align national policies with the One Health approach.

5. Discussions

5.1 Key Findings

5.1.1 Government Initiatives and Policy Implementation

Rwanda has taken a leading role in integrating One Health into national policies, with the

Rwanda One Health Strategic Plan (2021-2026) playing a crucial role in disease surveillance, antimicrobial resistance management, and environmental conservation. Additionally, the Rwanda National Adaptation Plan (2021) underscores ecosystem-based adaptation strategies, promoting climate resilience through sustainable agricultural practices and natural resource management. Despite strong policy frameworks, challenges remain, particularly in securing long-term financing for these initiatives.

Uganda's One Health Strategic Plan (2018-2022) focused on strengthening cross-sectoral engagement, early warning systems for zoonotic diseases, and disaster risk management. The Uganda National Adaptation Programme (2021) emphasised the need for improved climate information systems to support sustainable green development. However, Uganda has faced difficulties in policy enforcement due to inconsistent inter-ministerial coordination, which has hindered its effectiveness in transboundary disease management.

Kenya's One Health Strategic Plan (2021) aims to integrate human, animal, and environmental health considerations into its national development policies. The Kenya National Adaptation Programme (2021) further aligns these objectives by addressing climate change adaptation and resilience-building strategies. However, fragmented governance structures and bureaucratic inefficiencies have posed obstacles to seamless policy execution.

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Tanzania has developed its National One Health Strategic Plan (2022), focusing on the intersection of public health, environmental sustainability, and agricultural resilience. The plan aligns with the broader EAC Vision 2050 and the 6th EAC Development Strategy, which advocate for sustainable economic transformation. However, access to international climate finance, such as the Green Climate Fund, remains a significant barrier to full policy implementation.

Despite the absence of dedicated One Health Strategies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Somalia, South Sudan, and Burundi, their respective National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) provide a framework for green and sustainable development. These plans align with broader One Health objectives, particularly in disease prevention, environmental conservation, and agricultural resilience.

In the DRC, the NAP (2022-2026) prioritises the conservation of forest ecosystems and biodiversity, integrated agriculture, water and sanitation management, and strategic action plans for implementation. The plan acknowledges that urban resilience must also be addressed due to cities' vulnerability to climate change impacts. Notably, indigenous populations are considered in adaptation priorities, including social clauses in negotiations with mining and forest operators to mitigate environmental damage .

Somalia's NAPA (2013) was the first document outlining its urgent and immediate climate adaptation needs. It focuses on increasing community awareness, risk monitoring, and the adoption of government policy to improve resilience against climate risks. Additionally, Somalia's Recovery and Resilience Framework (2018) aims to enhance sustainable management of natural resources, access to renewable energy, and disaster risk reduction, which are critical for mitigating disease outbreaks and food insecurity caused by climate variability .

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South Sudan's NAPA (2016) highlights five priority thematic areas: environment, water resources, agriculture, disaster risk reduction, and policy/institutional frameworks. Specific adaptation measures include promoting climate-smart agriculture, wetland conservation, and establishing early warning systems for droughts and floods. The plan also underscores the need for institutional strengthening to integrate climate change into national policies .

Burundi's NAPA aligns closely with One Health principles by focusing on land degradation control, biodiversity conservation, and water resource management. The strategy includes promoting erosion control mechanisms, developing irrigation techniques, and encouraging sustainable agricultural practices to enhance food security and resilience against climate shocks.

5.1.2 Challenges and Opportunities in One Health and Green Development

While the East African Community (EAC) has established strong strategic policies to promote One Health and sustainable green development, several challenges hinder effective implementation. Fragmented governance, characterised by the absence of a formalised multi-sectoral framework, leads to inefficiencies in policy execution. Additionally, limited financing mechanisms remain a barrier. EAC nations rely heavily on international funding sources such as the Green Climate Fund and Multilateral Development Banks, yet face difficulties in accessing these funds, restricting the scalability of One Health initiatives. Weak institutional coordination further exacerbates these challenges, with case studies from Uganda and Rwanda highlighting how poor inter-ministerial collaboration hampers policy enforcement and resource allocation.

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Despite these challenges, significant opportunities exist to strengthen One Health policies through enhanced multisectoral collaboration. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have successfully advanced green energy projects and eco-tourism initiatives, showcasing the potential for increased private sector engagement. Furthermore, integrating indigenous knowledge into environmental sustainability strategies remains an underutilised yet promising approach for promoting sustainable agriculture and conservation. Regional coordination efforts, such as the EAC Vision 2050, offer a pathway to improving policy harmonisation across member states, fostering a more cohesive and effective approach to One Health and sustainable green development.

6. Conclusion

The integration of One Health and sustainable green development in the EAC is progressing, albeit with challenges. While Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania have established national frameworks aligning with the One Health approach, fragmented governance,

financial constraints, and weak enforcement mechanisms continue to hinder effective implementation. Strengthening regional coordination, improving access to climate finance, and fostering multisectoral collaboration will be critical in advancing One Health initiatives across the region. Drawing on global best practices, such as ASEAN's structured coordination models and ECOWAS's policy harmonisation efforts, the EAC can enhance the sustainability and resilience of its health and environmental policies.

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- 1.2. Kenya One Health Strategic Plan 2012-2017
- 1.3. Kenya One Health Strategic Plan For The Prevention And Control Of Zoonotic Diseases In Kenya 2021-2025
- 1.4. Rwanda One Health Strategic Plan 2021-2026
- 1.5. Tanzania National One Health Strategic Plan 2022-2027
- 1.6. Uganda One Health Strategic Plan 2018-2022

2. EAC Member states' National Adaptation Programmes for Climate Change: 2.1.

- Kenya National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change
- 2.2. Rwanda National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change
 - 2.3. Somalia National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change
 - 2.4. Burundi National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change
 - 2.5. Uganda National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change
 - 2.6. DRC National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change
 - 2.7. South Sudan National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change
 - 2.8. Tanzania National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change

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- Progress in the Implementation of a National Action Plan for Combatting Anti Microbial Resistance: A Case Study from Uganda
- 3.2. East African Community: "Diseases Are Invisible, but They Can Cross Borders"_(by Joshua Waswa)
 - 3.3. Implementing One Health as an Integrated Approach to Health In Rwanda (Thierry Nyatanyi et al.)
 - 3.4. One Health Theory of Change by One Health High-Level Expert Panel
 - 3.5. Report on Pilot of the Short Course on: Pandemic Preparedness with a One Health Approach (by Dr. Adijah M.A Olubandwa)
 - 3.6. Nyandungu Eco Park Factsheet
 - 3.7. Organising for One Health in a Developing Country (by Nachiket Mor)

3.8. Opportunities, Gaps, and Challenges in the Implementation of the One Health Approach in Kenya

3.9. Operationalising the One Health Approach in Uganda: Challenges and Opportunities

3.10. Implementation of One Health approach in Tanzania: Strengths and challenges

4. Other Documents: 4.1. 6th EAC Development Strategy

4.2. African Development Bank Climate Change and Green Growth Strategic Framework

4.3. EAC Vision 2050

4.4. Framework for One Health Practice in National Public Health Institutes - Africa CDC 2020

4.5. One Health Joint Plan of Action (2022-2026)