

African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Summit 2025

A Renewed AERC for Africa's New Development Priorities

30th November – 2nd December 2025

Venue: Glee Hotel, Nairobi

1.0 Introduction

This year, the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) is holding its first Summit in the context of its new 10-year Strategic Plan (2025-2035). The three-day Summit themed '***A Renewed AERC for Africa's New Development Priorities***', is designed to hardwire the research-policy bridge. His Excellency, the President of Republic of Kenya is expected to grace the occasion.

Over the last three decades, AERC has built continental capacity in economic policy research and training through its biannual plenaries and thematic workshops. Recognizing that today's policy challenges demand faster, problem-driven translation of evidence, AERC is pivoting to a new convening model through an annual, Africa-wide conferencing, explicitly designed to bridge research-policy.

The Summit is being held at a time when Africa's development path is at a decisive inflection point. Growth has been too slow and weakly linked to poverty reduction. Macroeconomic recovery is underway but remains uneven and climate change is amplifying multidimensional vulnerability. Moreover, policies are often crafted in isolation making the policy framework highly fragmented. This notwithstanding, profound opportunities are emerging and use of data and evidence is becoming critical in guiding the policy process.

2.0 Objectives of the conference

The overall objective of this conferencing is to institutionalize a durable research-policy interface that accelerates the uptake of rigorous, Africa-centered evidence in shaping transformative, politically viable development policies.

To achieve this, the Summit will specifically:

- a) *Curate and translate frontier evidence* on poverty, inequality, macroeconomic management, finance, trade, and climate into concise, policy-ready syntheses.
- b) *Interrogate the political economy of policy reform* to co-design strategies that anticipate incentives, veto points, and coalition needs in improving livelihoods.
- c) *Explore data governance frameworks* balancing innovation, inclusivity, and sovereignty, and identifying regulatory pathways suited to African contexts.
- d) *Embed technical support models within ministries of finance and key government agencies*, outlining modalities for sustained in-house analytical capacity and iterative engagement with researchers.
- e) *Forge multi-stakeholder partnerships* (including private sector through the AERC Private Sector Platform (APSP), government, academia, civil society, development partners) in co-creating problem-driven research agendas and joint implementation roadmaps.
- f) *Prepare an actionable communiqué with a follow-up mechanism* to ensure continuity beyond the event.
- g) *Set measurable benchmarks for evidence use*, agreeing on indicators and timelines to track how conference outputs feed into policy formulation, adoption, and evaluation.

3.0 Structure and Design of the AERC Summit

The Summit is structured to have plenary sessions that bring together all the participants and parallel sessions that are focused on specific subject matter. In these sessions the following activities will be undertaken:

- a) **Presentations** of the ongoing and completed AERC research projects, distilling policy recommendations and exploring the possible next phase. The research projects include the Policy Analysis for Sustainable and Healthy Foods in African Retail Markets (PASHFARM) Project; Data Governance in Africa (Phase I & II) Project; and Political Economy of Reforms, Growth & Technical Support to Macroeconomic Policy Management (ESMF) project.
- b) **Fireside chats** focused on AERC research programmes that are part of the 10-year Strategic Plan including: Governance, Security and Economic Fragility; Industrial policy and growth strategies; and Unlocking digital potential of Africa. This providing an opportunity to co-create relevant research agenda.
- c) **Launching of new products** including: the AERC Strategic Plan 2025–2035; the AERC African Private Sector Platform (APSP); the International Finance and Banking Society; and two books “The Domestic Saving Shortfall in Sub-Saharan Africa” <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/domestic-savings-shortfall-sub-saharan-africa>; and “The Routledge Handbook of Infrastructure Finance” <https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Handbook-of-Infrastructure-Finance/Abor-Macomber-Arun-Murinde/p/book/9781032679297>.
- d) **High level panel discussions** which are policy reflection platforms that bring together policymakers including the African Governors Forum and the AERC Africa Private Sector Platform.
- e) **Thematic research workshops** that serve to build capacity for early career and middle career researchers on poverty, inequality, macro-fiscal policy, finance, trade, and climate change.
- f) **Keynote addresses** by distinguished global scholars and policymakers that helps to share status in policy debate of specific development issues and the policy initiatives being implemented.
- g) **Exhibition** of AERC activities showcasing the milestones, achievements, impact, and trajectory of future activities.

4.0 Target audience

The AERC recognizes that public policy space and generation of evidence involve various key stakeholders. By creating a platform that brings together these stakeholders, the Summit serves to enrich the policy dialogue. The stakeholders include:

- Development partners and funders - AfDB, World Bank, IMF, UNDP, USAID, NORAD, governments, and central banks.
- Private sector players from across sectors.
- Civil society organizations and think tanks
- Senior and middle level public policymakers including ministries and regulators
- Early and mid-career scholars and researchers

5.0 Expected outcomes

The key outcomes of the Summit include:

- A Conference communique
- A strategy for renewed engagement with Central Bank Governors
- The AERC African Private Sector Platform
- Co-creation of AERC research programmes
- Possible next phase of some research projects

- A new 10-year AERC Strategic Plan (2025-2035)
- A framework for development of a Data Hub
- A framework for technical support for ministries of finance, central banks, capital markets agencies and ministries and development.