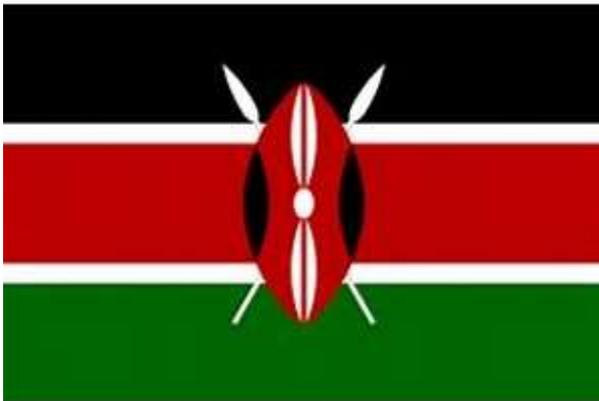


Version of the Business Travel Guide: 7 November 2022

Country: Kenya

Business Travel Guide



Compiled by:

Trade Section, Embassy of Switzerland

Nairobi, November 2022

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1. ENTRY TO KENYA: VISAS AND PERMITS

a. Visa Administration

Swiss nationals wishing to enter the Republic of Kenya must obtain an e-Visa via <https://www.ecitizen.go.ke>

The e-Visa is required prior to departure to Kenya. No visa will be issued on arrival

There are six types of visas (given below), more details are available here <https://evisa.go.ke/>

It is important to note that there are different paths for business and tourist purposes except in the case of a Transit and East African Tourist visa.

One must give enough time allowance when applying for a business visa.

- Single Entry Visa
- Transit Visa
- Courtesy Visa
- East African Tourist Visa
- Multiple Entry Visa
- 5 year Multiple Entry Visa

b. Foreign National Certificate / Alien Card

An entry permit will not allow the holder to remain in Kenya for more than three months. It is mandatory that a permit holder obtains an alien certificate, which is similar to the national identification card issued to Kenyan citizens. The card identifies the holder of a permit as an alien and bears the holder's physical address. However, an alien card does not entitle the holder to conduct business for which purpose a special pass or work permit is required.

More details are available here:

<https://immigration.go.ke/issuance-of-foreign-nationals-certificate-alien-card/>

c. Special Pass

As work permits take time (atleast three to four months), an investor can apply for a special pass to commence operations in Kenya. A special pass is issued to foreign nationals who wish to enter Kenya or remain in Kenya for:

- Applying for a permit or pass
- Temporarily conducting business, trade or profession in Kenya
- Possibility of reapplying for the special pass for a further three months.

More details may be found here:

<https://immigration.go.ke/work-permits-passes/kenya-special-pass/>

d. Work Permits and Passes

When applying for a work permit in Kenya, it is important to choose the correct pathway for your needs. There are several classifications of work permits in the country.

More details are available here:

<http://immigration.go.ke/work-permits-passes/>

e. Permanent Residence and Citizenship Services

The process of acquiring a Permanent Residence is by way of an online application. More details may be found here: <https://immigration.go.ke/permanent-residence>

Permanent Residence is provided for under Section 37, 38 and 39 of the Kenya Citizenship and Immigration Act, 2011. There are two categories of Citizenship by registration:

- **Those who are entitled for example:**
Regaining, Citizenship by marriage, Child of a Kenyan citizen by registration, and Child adopted by a Kenyan citizen.
- **Those who are eligible for example:**
Widows/Widowers, Lawful Resident, Stateless Persons, Migrants, Descendants of stateless Persons and Migrants

f. Swiss Tourists/Business Persons visiting Kenya

Kindly register your temporary stay in Kenya through this Travel Admin-App (see picture below). In the App you can introduce your travel details and travel advices countries. In case of a crisis at your place of stay, your registration helps the Embassy/DFAE to easily locate and contact you.



g. Registration at the Embassy for Swiss with permanent residence

Swiss nationals can register themselves online through the following online link:

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/usa/en/home/services/online-desk.html>

2. STAY IN KENYA

a. Security:

See travel advice (available in German, French and Italian):

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/representations-and-travel-advice/kenya/travel-advice-kenya.html>

b. Weather

Although Kenya is centered at the equator, it shares the seasons of the Southern Hemisphere so when it is winter in Europe (November to February), it is summer in Kenya. Because of the proximity to the equator, it is not necessary to heat even in the Kenyan winter in Nairobi (at around 1800 m.a.s.l.). The climate is more or less the same as the Swiss spring all year round.

More details are available here: <https://meteo.go.ke/>

c. Time Zones

Switzerland time Zone: UTC +02:00 or CEST

Kenya time Zone: UTC +03:00 or EAT

Same time zone is used all over the country

d. Electricity Supply



The voltage in Kenya is 240 V with a frequency of 50 Hz and the power plugs and sockets are of type G.

One can use your electric appliances in Kenya, if the standard voltage in your country is in between 220 - 240 V (as is in the UK, Europe, Australia and most of Asia and Africa). Manufacturers take these small deviations into account. If the standard voltage in your country is in the range of 100 V - 127 V (as is in the US, Canada and most South American countries), you need a voltage converter in Kenya. You can also consider a combined power plug adapter/voltage converter.

e. Dress code (Business attire) and manners

Business attire:

Smart and Smart/Casual.

The dress code is much less formal in the Startup scene.

Building trust and personal relationships:

Kenyan buyers appreciate quality and service and, if justified, are willing to pay a premium if they are convinced of a product's overall superiority.

Scheduling Meetings: The use of first names at an early stage of a business relationship is acceptable. The principles of customary business courtesy, especially replying promptly to requests for price quotations and orders, are a prerequisite for exporting success.

f. Accommodation

Licensed hotels and other licensed accommodation in any city can be found here:

<https://www.tourismauthority.go.ke/list-of-licensed-facilities/>

g. Office space

Information may be obtained from: <http://www.invest.go.ke/one-stop-center/>

h. Communication

Kenya's country code is: +254

A local SIM card can be bought at: Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) and official retail stores of one of the mobile internet providers which include, Safaricom, Airtel, Faiba and Telkom. Every prepaid sim card needs to be registered on your name so you need to bring your passport when buying a sim card in Kenya. The process is easy and fast and should not take more than 5 minutes.

The 4G network of Telkom and Faiba are modest, Safaricom have launched 5G network in in the cities of Nairobi, Kisumu, Kisii and Kakamega

i. Business hours

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays/National Holidays
Government offices	09:00-17:00	closed	closed
Banks	08:30-16:30	09:00-13:00 (depends on banking institution)	depends on banking institution
Shops	free to determine their times	open	open

j. Public holidays

Name	Date
New Year's Day	1 January
Good Friday	Not fixed
Easter Monday	Not fixed
Labor Day	1 May
Eid al Fitr	Not fixed
Madaraka Day	1 June
Eid ul Adha	Not fixed
Huduma Day	1 October
Mashujaa Day	20 October
Jamhuri Day	12 December
Christmas Day	25 December
Boxing Day	26 December

k. Public security

You must carry a form of ID with you at all times. A copy of your passport is normally acceptable, but recently some police officers have been insisting on the original documents.

Please check the link below for update information:

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa.html>

l. Health requirements

Mandatory and recommended vaccinations: Details are available on <https://www.health.go.ke/>

Mandatory medical insurance: Health insurance is **not mandatory** in Kenya but is highly encouraged.

Other mandatory health requirements: Travellers should be up to date with routine vaccination courses and boosters recommended in Switzerland. These vaccinations include for example measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and diphtheria-tetanus-polio vaccine.

COVID-19 Requirements

Please check the link below for update information:

<https://www.health.go.ke/>

m. Air travel to Kenya and local transportation

From Switzerland, Kenya can be reached by flight. There are no direct flights at the moment.

In Kenya, the most commonly used kind of transport are buses (also known as 'matatus'), 'boda-bodas' and taxis. 'Matatus' and 'boda-bodas' could be dangerous (in terms of road traffic accidents or security issues). The quality of licensed taxis is good. It is recommended to get a taxi from the various taxi companies with an office outside arrivals at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA). These services are also available for daily hire in most large towns and cities. Ride sharing services such as Uber are available in major cities.

Main taxi operators are (the list is not exhaustive)

Name	URL Link
UBER	https://www.uber.com/ke/en/
JIMCAB Services	https://jimcabservices.business.site/
ABSOLUTE TAXI	https://absolutecabs.co.ke/
Taxi BOLT	https://bolt-taxi.com/en/

n. National Trade Fair Calendar

Dates of the main trade fairs are available from the following sources:

Name	URL Link
Kenyatta International Convention Centre	https://kicc.co.ke
Sarit Expo Centre	https://saritexpo.com

o. Important Phone numbers

Authorities	Contact
Police Diplomatic Unit	https://kenyapolice.go.ke/ Police Hot Lines - 999 / 112 / 911
Ambulance: Avenue Rescue Service AAR Healthcare AMREF Flying Doctors	020 374 2407 / 020 374 1539 020 289 5000 / 020 271 5319 0733 639 088 / 0736 359 362 / 0722 314 239
Fire Brigade	0728 999 900 0728 999 920 (KK)
Hospitals	Aga Khan University Hospital https://hospitals.aku.edu/Nairobi Follow @akuhnairobi +254 20 3662000 Nairobi Hospital https://thenairobihosp.org/ Follow @theNairobihosp +254 703 082 000 Nairobi Hospital (Warwick Centre, UN Avenue) https://thenairobihosp.org/ Follow @theNairobihosp + 254 703 072 000 MP Shah Hospital https://mpshahhosp.org/ Follow @MPShahhospital + 254 4291 000
Supply companies: Kenya Power Nairobi Water	95551/ 0711 031 000 0724 253 582/ 0702 206 418

3. BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

a. Opportunities

- Geographic position, two ports, an international airport in Nairobi
- Kenya is considered as a regional economic powerhouse and a lower middle income country
- Massive investments in recent year in infrastructure opening up new opportunities for regional trade (construction of roads, expansion of the Mombasa-Nairobi railroad, construction of the port of Lumu)
- Large number of people in urban areas still live in informal housing. Investments by the government in social housing construction is expected.
- Kenya is an innovative country and is also referred to as 'Silicon Savannah'
- The population is very open to technology, also financial technology (Fintech), as evidenced by the revenue figures of mobile transactions (smart phone penetration), led by the mobile money platform M-Pesa
<https://www.s-ge.com/en/publication/fact-sheet/2022-e-fint-kenya-c6-factsheet-overview>
- English is widely spoken in business, schools and government. This has allowed for ease in communication with foreign firms and entrepreneurs
- Liberal ideas have characterized Kenya since its founding. The country is committed to economic openness and promoted regional integration, especially within the framework of the East African Community (EAC)
- A lot of foreign companies use Kenya as its business hub for East Africa or even a bigger region
- Kenya has a strong private sector which is the backbone of the economy
- The Government of Kenya is moving forward to establish Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to attract further investment in the industrial production sector
- Domestic population of approx. 47.6 m. Due to its demographic development, Kenya has many young and mostly well-trained workers.
- Well-skilled work force is available

b. Risks

Corruption is widespread in Kenya, however despite the ongoing problems there were also success stories in the fight against corruption. On Transparency International's index, Kenya dropped another rank to 128 in 2021. With a score of 30/100, the country is slightly below the Sub-Saharan Africa average.

- Limitations on infrastructure
- Big informal sector
- Counterfeiting
- Currency instability (due to trade imbalance)

c. Investment opportunities for Swiss companies, start-ups

- Renewable Energy and clean technology (incl. circular economy e.g. Waste Management) are particularly promising sectors as the country has extensive resources for solar, hydro, wind and geothermal

- Agrotech and Medtech sectors are emerging strongly; with rising food security due to climate change, as well as rising prices, innovation in the agriculture sector is central to increasing productivity
- Financial technology; the Sandbox Program, launched in March 2019 by the Capital Markets Authority, allows domestic and foreign Fintech companies to test their innovative product or service in the market for 12 months. This program facilitates market entry, however exemptions from taxes or licenses are not provided.

More details are available here:

<https://www.s-ge.com/en/publication/country-information/kenya-market-information>

4. REGISTER A COMPANY AND TAXATION

a. Starting a business

The Register of Companies which is a department of the Attorney General's office is responsible for business registrations in Kenya. He/she issues certificates of compliance for foreign companies, certificates of incorporation for local companies and certificates of registration for sole proprietorship and partnerships.

Further details are available: <http://www.invest.go.ke/starting-a-business-in-kenya/>

b. Company forms

Details are available: <https://eregulations.invest.go.ke/>

c. Corporate Tax

The corporate tax year is based on the calendar year. However, companies may under Section 27 of the Income Tax Act and with prior approval of the Commissioner, vary their accounting year.

Corporate tax rate: www.invest.go.ke/starting-a-business-in-kenya/corporate-tax/

Further details are available: <http://www.invest.go.ke/starting-a-business-in-kenya/>

d. Value Added Tax (VAT)

Any person, individual, company or partnership that has supplied or expect to supply taxable goods above a defined threshold must register for VAT. Registration is done online via; <https://itax.kra.go.ke/KRA-Portal/>

Once registered, you will be required to account for VAT charged on your taxable supplies through online monthly returns and pay any VAT due. There are 3 types of tax rates;

1. 0%
For zero rated supplies. Goods listed in the 2nd Schedule to the VAT Act e.g. Exportation of goods/services, goods supplied to EPZ, Privileged persons and Public bodies etc
2. 8%
Petroleum oils obtained from bituminous, Motor Spirits (Diesel Supero, Aviation spirit etc.)
3. 16%
General rate for other Goods and Services
4. 14%
VAT on e-service provided via digital marketplaces

Further details are available here:

<https://www.kra.go.ke/individual/filing-paying/types-of-taxes/value-added-tax>

e. Other import licenses for doing business in Kenya

- Kenya has a pre-shipment inspection requirement known as the Pre-Shipment Verification of Conformity or PVOC, further details of this are available here: <https://www.kebs.org/>

- All goods coming into Kenya require to have; Import Declaration Forms (IDF); a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) from the PVoC agent for regulated products and valid pro forma invoices from the exporting company

Further details are available here:

<https://eregulations.invest.go.ke/>

f. Online publications from Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA)

An important department known as the Customs & Border Control Department (C&BC) within Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) <https://www.kra.go.ke/>, has disseminated two online publications, which are valuable for foreign investors. Details of these are:

1. Customs handbook

<https://www.kra.go.ke/images/publications/KRA-Passenger-Handbook.pdf>

2. Customs and Border control

<https://kra.go.ke/images/publications/Customs%20and%20border%20control%20department%20brochure.pdf>

g. Import of samples and catalogues

Samples and exhibits/display for trade fairs may be imported into the country duty-free. It is a customs department requirement, however, that such items are re-exported or certified destroyed by a customs certification officer after use. An importing firm that fails to meet these requirements will be charged import duties and value-added taxes on the presumed value of the items.

More details are available here: <https://kra.go.ke/>

5. BANKING SYSTEM

a. Overview

In Kenya, the banking industry is governed by the Companies Act, the Banking Act, the Central Bank of Kenya Act and the prudential guidelines issued by the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK).

Over the last few years this sector has grown immensely and is well-functioning. The country's banking sector consists of more than **40 commercial banks**.

National currency in Kenya is the Shilling (KES)

b. Methods of Payment

- There are ATMs throughout Kenya. Credit cards (Visa, Master card and American Express) are accepted by most of the merchants and at the hotels
- When entering or leaving the country with USD 10,000 or more in cash or other monetary instruments, the money must be declared in writing to the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA)
- Non-residents may export local and foreign currency without restrictions. However, for amounts equivalent to USD 5,000.- and more residents and non-residents need to hold documents indicating the source and the purpose of this amount
- M-PESA is a banking feature that uses the USSD feature on a sim card. Once the sim of your mobile operator has been inserted into your mobile device you are ready to start using the service

More details on this mode of payment which is accepted everywhere in Kenya is available here;

<https://mpesaguide.com/>

Acceptance of methods of payment:

	everywhere	almost everywhere	limited	not accepted
Cash (national currency)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cash (USD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MasterCard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visa	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
American Express	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apple Pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Google/Samsung Pay	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M-PESA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Airtel Money	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Banks (Commercial and Foreign)

- The Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) is responsible for formulating and implementing monetary policy and fostering the liquidity, solvency and proper functioning of the financial system. Furthermore, it is regulator and licensing authority.
- According to CBK for the financial year ended 30 June 2020, Kenya had 41 commercial banks, 1 mortgage finance company, 14 microfinance banks, 9 representative offices of foreign banks, 69 foreign exchange bureaus, 19 money remittance providers and 3 credit reference bureaus. The biggest 5 Kenyan banks are:

1. Equity Group Holdings
<https://equitygroupholdings.com>
2. Standard Chartered Bank Kenya
<https://www.sc.com/ke>
3. Absa Bank Kenya PLC
<https://www.absabank.co.ke>
4. Kenya Commercial Bank-KCB Bank Kenya
<https://ke.kcbgroup.com>
5. Cooperative Bank of Kenya
<https://www.co-opbank.co.ke>

- Habib Bank AG Zurich is the only Swiss Bank which is present in Kenya. Their address is:

Habib House, Koinange Street
P.O. Box 30584-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
Url: www.habibbank.com

d. Opening a Bank account in Kenya

Foreign investors wishing to invest in Kenya can open bank accounts, which can be either in foreign or Kenyan currency. A foreign currency account is availed upon request by the applicant and helps cushion the customer from currency fluctuation (forex controls and expatriation of funds inter-alia).

6. TRADE AGREEMENTS

a. Overview

Kenya has built both strong bilateral and multilateral trade relationships / frameworks;

1. East African Community, EAC
<https://www.eac.int/>
2. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, COMESA
<https://www.comesa.int/>
3. Was the third country to ratify the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA
<https://au-afcfta.org>
4. ACP/Cotonou Partnership Agreement
<http://www.acp.int/>
5. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)
Under GSP, a wide range of Kenya's manufactured products are entitled to preferential duty treatment in the Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, other European countries, and the United States
6. UK-Kenya Economic Partnership Agreement (UK-Kenya EPA)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-kenya-economic-partnership-agreement>
7. Kenya and the WTO
Kenya has been a WTO member since 1 January 1995 and a member of GATT since 5 February 1964
https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/kenya_e.htm

b. Bilateral Legal Framework:

A bilateral investment protection agreement between Switzerland and Kenya has been in force since 2009: <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2009/525/de>

7. USEFUL LOCAL WEBSITES, ADDRESSES, EMAILS/ NUMBERS

Name	Url Link	Emails/Twitter Handles
Business news	https://nation.africa https://www.businessdailyafrica.com https://www.standardmedia.co.ke	bdnewsdesk@nation.co.ke Follow @NationMediaGrp corporate@standardmedia.co.ke Follow @Standard Media
Customs hotline (KRA)	https://www.kra.go.ke/	callcentre@kra.go.ke Follow @KRACare

Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS)	https://www.kebs.org/	info@kebs.org Follow @KEBS_ke
European Business Council (EBC)	https://www.ebckkenya.org/	info@ebckkenya.org Follow @EuropeanKenya
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)	https://mfa.go.ke	in terms of road traffic accidents or security issues Follow @ForeignOfficeKE
State Department of Trade	https://www.trade.go.ke/	ps.trade@trade.go.ke Follow @Trade_Kenya
Department of Industrialization and Enterprise Development	https://www.industrialization.go.ke/	ps@industrialization.go.ke cs@industrialization.go.ke Follow @MinistryofIT
Kenya Investment Authority (KenInvest)	http://www.invest.go.ke/ One Stop Centre http://www.invest.go.ke/one-stop-center/	inquire@invest.go.ke Follow @KenInvest
Kenya Export Promotion & Branding Agency (KEPROBA)	www.brandke	enquiries@brand.ke Follow @MakeltKenya
Konza Technology City	https://konza.go.ke/	konza@konza.go.ke Follow @KonzaTech
Kenya Ports Authority (KPA)	https://www.kpa.co.ke/	ca@kpa.co.ke Follow @Kenya_Ports
Central Bank of Kenya (CBK)	https://www.centralbank.go.ke/	comms@centralbank.go.ke Follow @CBKKenya
Directorate of Immigration services	https://immigration.go.ke	Follow @immigrationdept.
Law Society of Kenya	http://online.lsk.or.ke	Follow @lawsocietykenya

Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK)	https://www.icpak.com/	Follow @ICPAK
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Priority Divisions for Swiss companies

Name	Details
Renewable Energy	Kenya Renewable Energy Association (KEREAA) http://web.kerea.org
Financial Technology	Capital Markets Authority (CMA) https://www.cma.or.ke Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) www.centralbank.go.ke
Medical Technology (Med-tech)	Pharmacy and Poisons Board, Ministry of Health www.pharmacyboardkenya.org Medical Technology Industry Association of Kenya http://medak.or.ke/

8. ADDRESSES OF EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Switzerland

Rosslyn Green Estate, Rosslyn Green Drive, off
Redhill Road
P.O. Box 2600, 00621, Nairobi, Kenya
Phone: +254 730 694 000
Email: nairobi@eda.admin.ch
Url: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/nairobi>

Contact Persons:

Deputy Head of Mission and Economic / Trade Counsellor

Embassy of Switzerland, Nairobi
Email: nairobi@eda.admin.ch

Trade Officer

Mahvish Malik
Embassy of Switzerland, Nairobi
Phone: +254 730 694 000
Email: mahvishmajid.malik@eda.admin.ch

Swiss Business Hub Southern & Eastern Africa

c/o Embassy of Switzerland
P.O. Box 2508
Brooklyn Square 0075
South Africa
Email: pretoria@eda.admin.ch
<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/south-africa/en/home/representations/embassy/swiss-business-hub.html>

Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE)

Switzerland Global Enterprise
Stampfenbachstrasse 85 – CH-8006 Zürich
T +41 44 365 51 51 – www.s-ge.com

Swiss African Business Circle (SABC)

c/o rainbow unlimited

Neuengasse 21, CH-3011 Bern

Email:

info@sabc.ch

Url:

www.sabc.ch

**Swiss-African Chamber of Commerce
(SwissCham, Basel)**

Steinengraben 79

CH 4051 Basel

Email:

a.schweizer@swisscham-africa.ch

9. ADDRESSES NATIONAL AND LOCAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

- a) Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry; <https://www.kenyachamber.or.ke>
info@kenyachamber.or.ke
- b) European Business Council; <https://www.ebckkenya.org/>
- c) Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA); <https://kepsa.or.ke/>
- d) Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM); <https://kam.co.ke/>

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Date: November 7, 2022

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