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Creatives Connect Afrika (CCA) 2026: The AfCFTA Forum on Entertainment-led Tourism

Theme: Entertainment-Led Tourism: Transforming Pan-African creative wealth into global economic influence

CONCEPT NOTE

30 NOVEMBER – 3 DECEMBER 2026

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INTRODUCTION

1. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents an important step towards transforming Africa from a collection of largely fragmented national markets into a more integrated continental economy. By creating a single market for goods and services, the AfCFTA provides an opportunity to expand intra-African trade, stimulate investment, strengthen African enterprises and enable businesses to pursue opportunities beyond their domestic markets.

2. Services are central to this transformation. They move people and goods, facilitate payments and investment, connect businesses and consumers, and support economic activity across sectors. Recognising this, the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services provides the framework for the progressive liberalisation of African services markets, with the broader objective of creating a more integrated and competitive continental services economy.

3. Within this framework, Tourism and Travel-related Services is one of the five (5) priority services sectors, alongside Business, Communication, Financial and Transport Services. Tourism presents a particularly important opportunity given its extensive linkages with other sectors of the economy. Tourism activity generates demand across transport, accommodation, food and hospitality services, financial and digital services, retail, entertainment and a wide range of small and medium-sized enterprises. Greater integration of Africa's tourism services markets therefore has the potential to stimulate economic activity across interconnected sectors and strengthen tourism-related value chains across the continent.

4. At the same time, the factors influencing tourism demand are evolving, with cultural and creative experiences playing an increasingly significant role in destination appeal. Music, film, fashion, cuisine, wellness, festivals, sport, esports, gaming, live entertainment and digital content are increasingly influencing destination visibility, visitor interests and travel choices. For Africa, this convergence presents a compelling economic opportunity. The continent possesses extraordinary cultural and creative wealth. African music is reaching audiences across the world; African films and stories are travelling across borders; fashion, cuisine and contemporary culture are attracting growing attention; and festivals, sporting events and other entertainment experiences are creating new reasons to travel. The

challenge is how to ensure that this growing cultural influence translates into greater economic value for Africa - for its creatives, tourism businesses, entrepreneurs, destinations and communities.

5. It was within this broader context that Creatives Connect Afrika (CCA) began to take shape. The initiative can be traced to 2022, when a dedicated AfCFTA engagement on tourism, cultural and creative industries was introduced within the Africa Tourism Leadership Forum (ATLF), convened by Africa Tourism Partners (ATP), a Pan-African tourism development and strategic advisory organisation. Building on the collaboration between the AfCFTA Secretariat and ATP, the engagement progressively evolved over subsequent editions into a platform for dialogue on strengthening the linkages between tourism, Africa's cultural and creative industries, trade and economic development, ultimately laying the foundation for CCA as a standalone continental Forum and Festival.

6. In 2025, the AfCFTA Secretariat, in collaboration with ATP and the Black Star Experience (BSE) under the Office of the President of the Republic of Ghana, convened the inaugural, standalone AfCFTA Forum and Festival on Tourism, Cultural and Creative Industries, dubbed **Creatives Connect Afrika (CCA)**, in Accra, Ghana, from 25–28 November 2025, under the theme *"Lights, Camera, Trade: Unlocking Africa's Film, Fashion and Music Creative Industries under the AfCFTA."* The inaugural edition expanded the engagement beyond policy dialogue, bringing together policymakers and tourism institutions with filmmakers, musicians, fashion designers, creative entrepreneurs, businesses, investors and development partners. The programme combined policy and industry dialogue with masterclasses and capacity building, business-to-business engagements, exhibitions and creative showcases, providing a broader platform for collaboration and commercial engagement across Africa's tourism and creative economy.

7. Building on these achievements, the 2026 edition seeks to broaden the focus beyond individual creative sectors to explore the wider potential of entertainment as a catalyst for tourism development, destination competitiveness, trade and economic activity across Africa. Within the continent, entertainment can provide compelling reasons for Africans to travel across borders, contributing to stronger intra-African tourism markets and creating opportunities across tourism and related value chains. At the global level, the increasing reach and influence of African culture presents an opportunity to translate cultural visibility

into greater tourism demand, commercial opportunities and economic value for the continent.

8. It is against this background that the AfCFTA Secretariat, in collaboration with ATP and the Government of Ghana is convening Creatives Connect Afrika (CCA) 2026 under the theme, *"Entertainment-Led Tourism: Transforming Pan-African Creative Wealth into Global Economic Influence."*

9. Taking place in **Accra, Ghana**, from **30 November to 3 December 2026**, CCA 2026 will bring together policymakers, Tourism Boards and Authorities, creatives, tourism and entertainment businesses, investors and financial institutions, development partners, entrepreneurs and other relevant stakeholders to examine how Africa can more deliberately connect its creative wealth with tourism, trade, enterprise and investment, and translate its growing cultural influence into sustainable economic opportunity.

10. Building on the inaugural edition, CCA 2026 will combine masterclasses and capacity building, a closed-door Pan-African Tourism, Hospitality and Creatives Leadership Roundtable, the Sustainable Village, the Africa Creative Marketplace, business-to-business and investment engagements, and a Festival featuring a range of creative and entertainment experiences. Together, these components will strengthen CCA as a continental platform for capacity building, strategic partnerships, market access, investment and commercial opportunities, while fostering stronger linkages between Africa's tourism and creative economies and supporting the transformation of the continent's creative wealth into sustainable economic value.

JUSTIFICATION

11. Africa's cultural and creative industries represent an increasingly important source of economic activity and global cultural influence. Within this broader ecosystem, Africa's entertainment industries, including music, film, fashion, festivals, sport, gaming, cuisine and digital content are reaching wider audiences, shaping global trends and generating growing interest in African cultures and experiences. This growing reach presents an opportunity to leverage entertainment more deliberately as a driver of tourism, strengthening destination appeal while generating wider economic activity and commercial opportunities for businesses across the tourism value chain.

12. Of particular importance is the potential of entertainment-led tourism to stimulate intra-African travel and strengthen regional tourism markets**.** Festivals, concerts, sporting and cultural events and other entertainment experiences can create new reasons for Africans to travel across the continent, while supporting the development of cross-border experiences and regional tourism circuits. Strengthening these linkages can expand market opportunities for African tourism and creative-sector enterprises and enable a greater share of the economic value generated by Africa's creative wealth to be retained within the continent.

13. Despite this potential, the continent has yet to fully translate the reach and influence of its creative industries into commensurate economic value. African creatives and enterprises continue to face constraints relating to access to markets and finance, investment readiness, mobility and connectivity, cross-border payments, digital infrastructure, intellectual property protection and commercialisation, business capacity and fragmented regulatory environments. These challenges can limit the ability of businesses to scale across African markets and reduce the extent to which the economic value generated by African creativity is retained within the continent.

14. Addressing these constraints requires stronger connections between policy, enterprise, finance and markets. It also requires closer collaboration between tourism institutions and the cultural and creative industries to ensure that entertainment is more deliberately integrated into tourism development and that the resulting opportunities extend beyond visibility and showcasing to support sustainable businesses, investment and commercial partnerships.

15. The AfCFTA provides an important framework for advancing this agenda. Its implementation across trade in services, investment, digital trade, intellectual property rights and the movement of businesspersons can contribute to addressing barriers that affect tourism and creative-sector enterprises operating across borders. Greater market integration can provide African businesses and creatives with access to larger markets, while strengthened regulatory cooperation, investment and digital connectivity can support the development and commercialisation of African tourism and creative products and experiences.

16. Against this backdrop, *Entertainment-Led Tourism* provides a strategic lens through which CCA 2026 will examine how Africa's cultural and creative assets can be leveraged to stimulate tourism demand and generate sustainable economic opportunities. The theme, *"Entertainment-Led Tourism: Transforming Pan-African Creative Wealth into Global Economic Influence,"* reflects the need to move beyond the growing visibility and cultural influence of African creativity towards strengthening the enterprises, partnerships, markets and investment required to translate this influence into tangible economic value.

17. CCA 2026 therefore provides an important continental platform for bringing together policymakers, tourism institutions, creatives, businesses, investors and development partners to address shared challenges, strengthen collaboration and identify practical pathways for advancing Africa's tourism and creative economy under the AfCFTA. Through this engagement, the Forum and Festival will seek to facilitate market access, investment, enterprise development and strategic partnerships, while supporting Africa's efforts to derive greater and more sustainable economic value from its creative wealth.

OBJECTIVES

18. The overall objective of CCA 2026 is to strengthen the linkages between Africa's tourism and cultural and creative industries and harness entertainment-led tourism as a catalyst for trade, investment, enterprise development and sustainable economic growth under the AfCFTA.

19. Specifically, the Forum and Festival aims to:

i. **Promote Entertainment-Led Tourism and Strengthen Technical and Industry Dialogue:** Raise awareness of the potential of entertainment-led tourism and facilitate dialogue among policymakers, Tourism Boards and Authorities, creative and entertainment industry stakeholders, the private sector and other relevant actors on how music, film, sport, festivals, gaming, fashion, wellness, digital content and other creative experiences can stimulate tourism demand, strengthen destination appeal and generate wider economic opportunities;

ii. **Strengthen the Convergence between Africa's Tourism and Entertainment Ecosystems:** Foster stronger linkages between Tourism Boards and Authorities, destination management organisations, tourism businesses, event organisers, creative industry associations, entertainment businesses, media and other relevant stakeholders to develop collaborative approaches and initiatives that strengthen African tourism experiences, destination competitiveness and intra-African tourism;

iii. **Strengthen the Capacity and Market Readiness of African Creatives, Entrepreneurs and SMEs:** Equip creatives, entrepreneurs and SMEs with the practical knowledge, skills and tools required to strengthen their businesses, commercialise their products and services, access new markets and take advantage of opportunities within Africa's tourism and creative economies through targeted masterclasses, knowledge exchange and enterprise development support;

iv. **Facilitate B2B Engagement, Market Access and Strategic Partnerships:** Create opportunities for business matchmaking, cross-border partnerships, market linkages and commercial collaboration among tourism businesses, creatives and creative enterprises, buyers, investors and other relevant stakeholders;

v. **Promote Trade and Market Access through the Africa Creative Marketplace:** Provide a platform for African creatives and enterprises to showcase, market and sell their products, reach new customers and expand access to markets;

vi. **Facilitate Investment and Financing Opportunities across the Tourism and Creative Economies:** Promote engagement among investors, financial institutions, development partners, governments, creatives and entrepreneurs to identify investment opportunities, appropriate financing mechanisms and public-private partnerships that can support the growth and scaling of tourism, entertainment and creative enterprises and related value chains;

vii. **Promote Creative Enterprise, Innovation and Exchange through the Sustainable Village:** Provide an interactive platform for creatives, entrepreneurs, partners and industry stakeholders to showcase products, services, solutions and innovations, while fostering connections, exchange and enterprise development;

viii. **Showcase Africa's Creative Wealth through the CCA Festival:** Provide a platform for fashion, music and other creative experiences that celebrate Africa's cultural diversity and contemporary creativity, while demonstrating in practice the potential of entertainment to enrich tourism experiences, attract audiences and create economic opportunities for African creatives and enterprises; and

ix. **Develop Actionable Recommendations to Strengthen Tourism and the Creative Economy under the AfCFTA:** Generate practical policy and industry recommendations arising from the Forum and related engagements to support implementation of the AfCFTA, strengthen regulatory cooperation, improve market access and mobility, facilitate investment and address other constraints affecting the growth and cross-border participation of tourism and creative-sector enterprises.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

20. The Forum and Festival will run for four (4) days with the following expected activities:

DATE	ACTIVITY	DETAILS
30 November 2026	Masterclasses	Technical discussions, knowledge exchange and capacity-building sessions for creatives, entrepreneurs, tourism businesses, SMEs and other relevant stakeholders, aimed at strengthening knowledge, skills and capacity across the tourism and creative economies.
	Pan-African Tourism, Hospitality and Creatives Leadership Roundtable – Closed Door	A closed-door engagement bringing together Heads of African Tourism Boards and Authorities and leaders from the creative and entertainment industries to strengthen collaboration between the two ecosystems and identify practical opportunities to leverage entertainment to stimulate tourism, strengthen destination appeal and generate economic opportunities.
	B2B Networking Session	A structured networking session bringing together tourism and creative enterprises, entrepreneurs, investors, buyers, industry

		stakeholders and other potential partners to facilitate business connections, market linkages, strategic partnerships and opportunities for cross-border collaboration
	Sustainable Village	An interactive showcase and exchange space for creatives, entrepreneurs, partners and industry stakeholders, featuring film, music, fashion, esports, gaming, wellness, digital content and other creative industries, while fostering intra-African market access, connections and exchange.
	Africa Creative Marketplace	A dedicated marketplace for showcasing, buying and selling African creative products, providing creatives and enterprises with opportunities to reach new customers, access markets and generate commercial opportunities.
	Networking and Welcome Cocktail/Reception	An official welcome and networking reception bringing together CCA 2026 participants, partners and stakeholders ahead of the Forum and Festival.
1–3 December 2026	CCA Forum – Policy, Technical and Industry Dialogue and Panel Discussions	High-level, technical and industry discussions bringing together policymakers, tourism institutions, creatives, businesses, investors, financial institutions and development partners. Discussions will explore entertainment-led tourism and address key issues affecting the growth and cross-border participation of tourism and creative enterprises.
	Sustainable Village	Continues from Day One
	Africa Creative Marketplace	Continues from Day One
	B2B and Investment Engagements	Structured B2B, business matchmaking, networking and investment engagements connecting tourism and creative enterprises with buyers, investors, financial institutions and strategic partners.

	CCA Festival and Creative Experiences	A programme of immersive entertainment, cultural and lifestyle experiences, including Wellness and lifestyle experiences; Film, animation and creative content showcases; Fashion showcases; Live music and cultural performances; Sport and entertainment experiences; Digital content and creative storytelling; and Other cultural and creative showcases.
3 December 2026	Pan-African Musical Showcase & Celebration	A vibrant closing celebration of CCA 2026, featuring artists and sounds from across the continent and showcasing African music as a driver of entertainment-led tourism.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

21. The expected outcomes of the Forum and Festival are:

i Increased awareness of entertainment-led tourism opportunities under the AfCFTA;
ii New partnerships established between tourism and entertainment stakeholders;
iii Enhanced investment and financing opportunities across tourism and creative economies;
iv Practical recommendations developed for strengthening tourism and the creative economy under the AfCFTA;
v Increased visibility and market exposure of African destinations, creatives and creative enterprises;
vi Greater participation of youth, women, entrepreneurs and SMEs in tourism and creative economy opportunities;
vii Strengthened collaboration among tourism boards, creatives, investors, sports organizations, and policymakers.
viii Increased visibility and positioning of Africa as a competitive tourism destination, leveraging its cultural and creative wealth.

TARGET AUDIENCE

22. CCA 2026 will target a diverse range of stakeholders across Africa's tourism, creative and entertainment economies, including:
    - Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies responsible for tourism, trade, culture, creative industries and related areas;
    - Tourism Leadership and Captains of Industry;
    - African Tourism Boards and Authorities and other tourism institutions;
    - Creative, cultural and entertainment industry stakeholders, including artists, filmmakers, musicians, designers, producers, content creators, cultural practitioners, sports and esports stakeholders, promoters and industry associations;
    - Creatives, entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs across tourism and creative economies;
    - Tourism and hospitality industry stakeholders, including hotels, restaurants, tour operators, travel management companies, destination management organisations, tourism entrepreneurs, private-sector tourism associations, councils and federations;
    - Investors, financial institutions and development finance institutions supporting enterprises and investment across the tourism, cultural and creative industries; and
    - Event organisers, promoters, producers, media and digital platforms;
    - Sports organisations and stakeholders;
    - Content Creators and Influencers;
    - Development partners, regional and international organisations, technology and digital platforms, media, academia, research and knowledge institutions supporting the tourism, cultural and creative industries.
    - Entrepreneurs, start-ups, SMEs, established businesses and industry associations operating across the tourism, cultural and creative industries;
    - Academia, research institutions and industry experts;
    - Youth- and women-led enterprises and organisations.

VENUE AND DATE

- ***Venue:*** Alisa Hotel – North Ridge
- ***Date:*** 30 November – 3 December 2026
- ***Languages:*** English and French.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

23. The successful delivery of CCA 2026 will require collaboration with relevant public and private sector institutions, development partners and industry stakeholders. In addition to the convening partners, strategic partnerships will be pursued to support key components of the programme, including capacity building, the Sustainable Village, the Africa Creative Marketplace, creative and entertainment programming, participant support, mobility and logistics, communications and visibility, and other aspects of programme delivery.

24. Partnerships will be explored with Tourism Boards and Authorities, relevant government institutions, development partners, financial institutions and investors, private-sector organisations, tourism and creative industry associations, media and technology partners, and other organisations whose expertise and resources align with the objectives of CCA 2026.

CONCLUSION

25. CCA 2026 represents an opportunity to deepen the connection between Africa's tourism, creative and entertainment economies and translate the continent's growing cultural influence into tangible economic opportunities. By bringing together policymakers, tourism institutions, creatives, businesses, investors and other industry stakeholders, the Forum and Festival will provide a platform to move from dialogue to practical collaboration, stronger enterprises, expanded markets and investment.
26. Through its combination of high-level and technical dialogue, capacity building, business and investment engagement, enterprise showcases and immersive creative experiences, CCA 2026 will demonstrate how Africa's creative wealth can be more deliberately leveraged to stimulate travel, strengthen destinations and create opportunities across interconnected value chains.

27. Ultimately, CCA 2026 seeks to contribute to an Africa where its music, stories, fashion, film, sport, culture and creative experiences do more than capture global attention - they generate travel, trade, enterprise, investment and economic value for the continent. In doing so, CCA 2026 will advance the ambition at the heart of its theme: transforming Pan-African creative wealth into global economic influence.