



Investing in the Horticulture Sector in Kenya

Unlocking Growth,
Innovation, and Global
Market Potential



Industrial Confidence at Scale.

At a defining moment in Kenya's industrial journey, ARISE IIP Kenya is delivering a new standard for industrial development — built on coordination, partnership, reliability, and long-term performance.

Kenya's industrial advantage rests on five structural strengths: a renewable-powered energy base, integrated logistics corridors linking ports, rail, and airports, a stable and investor-confident macroeconomic environment, a leading digital and innovation ecosystem, and growth-enabling industrial policy frameworks, including strategic incentives.

The ARISE IIP Kenya platform is anchored by a secured portfolio of industrial zones across Kenya's key economic corridors — including Vipingo Special Economic Zone on the northern coast, the port-adjacent Coast Integrated Industrial Park (CIIP) SEZ in Mombasa, Great Rift Industrial Park (GRIP) SEZ in the geothermal-rich Rift Valley, and the fiber-to-fashion Rivatex SEZ in Eldoret, western Kenya. Each zone plays a distinct role within the national industrial platform, enabling manufacturing, processing, and export activity to be deployed where location, infrastructure, and energy advantages perform best.

By aligning a secured multi-zone industrial portfolio under common standards, sector logic, and investor pathways, ARISE IIP Kenya delivers a single, coordinated industrial platform enabling investors to enter with clarity, operate with certainty, and scale across locations without restarting the investment journey.

The ARISE IIP Kenya industrial platform is not a collection of zones.

It is Kenya's industrial advantage system — designed for delivery.

Coordinated. Reliable. Low-Carbon. Globally-Connected.

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From National Ambition to Industrial Performance.

Acknowledgements

In addition, we would like to acknowledge the valuable support and collaboration of the following institutions in the development of this report:

- Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA); Horticultural Crops Directorate (HCD)
- Warehouse Receipt System Council (WRSC)
- Kenya Flower Council (KFC)
- Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (FPEAK)
- Horticultural Association of Kenya (HAK)
- Fresh Produce Consortium of Kenya (FPCK)
- Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)
- National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
- Their insights and contributions were instrumental in shaping the content of this publication.



National Environment
Management Authority



Table of contents

Overview of the global horticulture sector	4
Kenya's competitive advantage in the horticulture sector	7
Kenya's horticulture export market and value chain	13
Investment opportunities within the value chain	17
Appendix	22

Global Horti-culture Market

Global floriculture market:
USD 45 – 57B (2023–24),
mid-single-digit CAGR to
2030.

Fresh fruit & vegetable trade
rising on year-round supply
needs.

Advantage for low-cost
climates with strong cold
chains & compliance.



Market Diversification

EU remains main market:
Netherlands, UK, Germany.
Middle East growth; China
opening for avocado &
vegetables.

Regional Africa demand
growing, logistics still key
constraint.



Key Risks & Compliance Landscape

EU phytosanitary tightening:
false codling moth protocols.

Airfreight cost volatility
affecting margins.

Higher MRL compliance
pressure → stronger IPM +
testing needed.



Kenya's Position Globally

Kenya supplies **~46%** of roses sold via Netherlands auction systems.

Horticulture exports valued **USD 1.06–1.21B** in 2023–24.

Avocado exports:

122,581 MT (2023);

~128,000 MT (2024 est.).



Kenya at a Glance: Prime Location for Horticulture

Geographic Advantage

Kenya spans 576,000 square kilometers with 16% classified as high and medium agricultural potential land. The country features 7 distinct ecological zones from Tropical Alpine to Coastal Lowlands, creating ideal microclimates for diverse crop production.

Strategic positioning on the equator provides year-round growing seasons and direct access to European markets within 8-10 hours.

Climate Diversity

Three distinct rainfall zones support varied production:

- **High rainfall zone:** Over 1,000mm annually, hosts 50% of population
- **Medium rainfall zone:** 750-1,000mm, covers 30-35% of land
- **Low rainfall zone:** 200-750mm, ideal for drought-resistant crops



Why Invest in Kenya's Horticulture?

USD 1.2 Billion

Annual foreign exchange contribution from horticulture, making it a top currency earner for Kenya's economy.

33% of Ag GDP

Horticulture accounts for one-third of agricultural GDP, demonstrating its pivotal role in national development.

6 Million

In direct employment for Kenyans, with an additional 3 million supported indirectly across the value chain.

Kenya's strategic location offers unparalleled access to regional East African markets and the lucrative European Union, with preferential trade agreements enhancing competitiveness.



Impressive Economic Impact & Export Growth

Ksh 156.7B
Export Value
2023 Up from Ksh 147.1 billion in 2022, representing a robust 7% year-over-year growth.

+76,931
Metric Tonnes Export volume increase in 2023, reflecting expanded production capacity and market penetration.

115.5%
Vegetable
Surge Explosive growth in vegetable export value during 2023, opening new investment frontiers.

Flowers, fruits, and vegetables dominate Kenya's horticultural exports, with consistent upward trajectories driven by quality improvements and market diversification strategies.



The Big Seven: Core Export Crops Driving Growth



Cut Flowers

Roses, carnations, and lilies command 40% EU market share. Kenya is the world's third-largest flower exporter, renowned for quality and consistency.



Avocados

Fast-growing export crop with surging global demand, particularly in European and Middle Eastern markets, valued for its healthy fats.



French Beans

Premium vegetable export generating substantial foreign exchange, meeting stringent EU food safety standards and prized for their crispness.



Mangoes

Sweet and juicy tropical fruit, a significant export to European and Middle Eastern markets, celebrated for its unique flavor and aroma.



Pineapples

Cultivated extensively in Kenya, these tropical delights are exported worldwide, known for their vibrant flavor and versatility.



Snow Peas

Highly sought after for their sweet taste and tender texture, these specialty legumes are a valuable export, primarily to European markets.



Herbs

A diverse category including basil, rosemary, and mint, these aromatic plants are increasingly exported for culinary and medicinal uses, known for their freshness.

These seven crop categories generate the majority of horticultural foreign exchange and provide employment to millions across production, processing, and logistics.

Strategic Investment Locations: Best Regions for Horticulture

Kenya offers diverse geographical advantages for horticultural investment, with specific regions excelling in particular crop categories due to unique climatic conditions, soil fertility, and market proximity. Identifying these strategic locations is key to maximizing returns and capitalizing on the sector's robust growth.

High-Value Vegetable Zones

- 1 Nakuru**
Fertile volcanic soils and a cool climate in areas like Njoro, Bahati, and Molo make it ideal for various high-value vegetables.
- 2 Nyandarua**
Cool, high-altitude conditions in Ol Kalou and Kipipiri are perfectly suited for growing cabbages and carrots.
- 3 Kiambu**
Regions such as Limuru and Kikuyu benefit from close proximity to the Nairobi market, ensuring fresh produce reaches consumers quickly.
- 4 Meru**
High altitudes in Timau, Buuri, and Katheri contribute to the production of premium quality vegetables.
- 5 Kirinyaga**
Benefiting from extensive irrigation schemes and fertile soils in Kutus and Mwea, ideal for intensive vegetable farming.
- 6 Laikipia**
Nanyuki and Rumuruti are emerging as centers for large-scale greenhouse operations, enabling controlled environment agriculture.

Key Fruit Farming Zones

- 1 Avocado**
Thriving in Murang'a, Kiambu, Meru, Nyeri, Kirinyaga, and Kisii, these areas produce highly sought-after avocados for export.
- 2 Mango**
Makueni, Machakos, Kitui, Tana River, and Taveta are renowned for their sweet and juicy mango varieties.
- 3 Passion Fruit**
Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia, Nyeri, Kericho, and Murang'a offer optimal conditions for robust passion fruit cultivation.
- 4 Watermelon**
Warm climates in Taita Taveta, Makueni, Kitui, Tharaka Nithi, and Garissa are perfect for watermelon farming.

Leading Floriculture Centers

Naivasha

The Lake Naivasha basin is the heart of Kenya's flower industry, known for its extensive rose farms.

Timau

Located on the Meru/Laikipia border, this region boasts high-altitude conditions favorable for diverse flower cultivation.

Eldoret/Kitale Highlands

These elevated areas are conducive to growing various flower species, contributing significantly to floricultural exports.

Thika & Kiambu

Proximity to Nairobi and suitable climates make these regions important for floriculture, catering to both local and international markets.

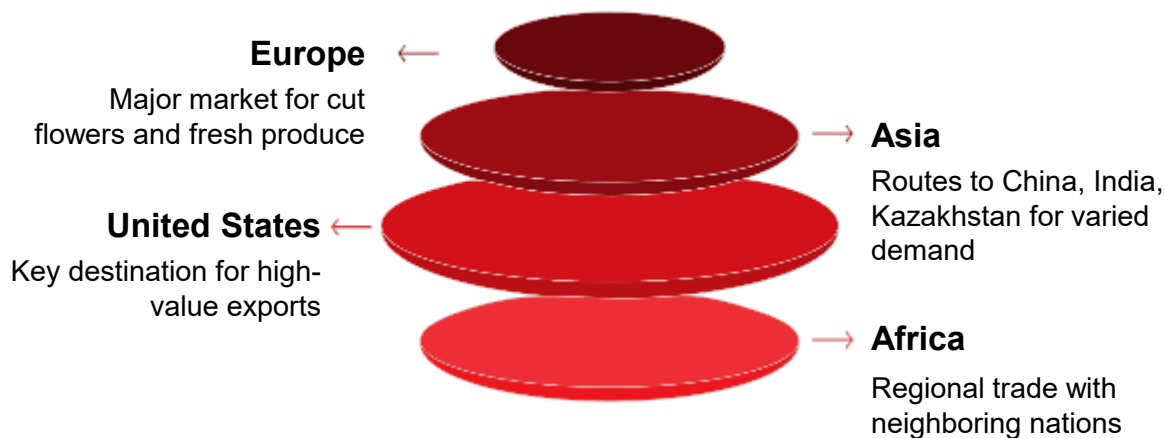
Emerging Opportunities

In addition to traditional farming, Greenhouse Farming Clusters and Irrigation-Based Horticulture zones across Kenya present modern investment opportunities, allowing for controlled cultivation and efficient resource utilization, ensuring consistent supply and high yields.



Key Export Markets for Kenyan Horticulture

Kenya's horticulture sector boasts an impressive global footprint, reaching diverse markets across continents thanks to strategic trade relationships, logistical efficiencies, and a reputation for high-quality produce. This extensive reach underscores the sector's resilience and growth potential.



Primary Markets: Established Strongholds

European Union

The EU, with the Netherlands and the United Kingdom as top destinations, remains Kenya's largest horticultural market. Preferential trade agreements facilitate duty-free access, enhancing competitiveness. Kenyan flowers, fruits, and vegetables are highly sought after for their quality and freshness, catering to a sophisticated consumer base. Growth opportunities lie in expanding organic and fair-trade certified produce to meet evolving consumer demands.

Asia

Emerging as a significant growth area, key markets include China, India, and Kazakhstan. Growing middle-class populations and increasing demand for diverse food products are driving this expansion. Kenya is strategically leveraging direct trade routes and bilateral agreements to access these vast consumer bases. Opportunities abound in introducing new varieties of fruits and vegetables, and capitalizing on the rising health-consciousness in these regions.

Secondary Markets: Expanding Horizons

United States

The United States represents a market with substantial untapped potential. Initiatives like the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) provide duty-free access for many Kenyan agricultural products, offering a significant competitive advantage. As logistics improve and consumer awareness grows, Kenya is well-positioned to increase its market share, particularly for specialty crops and off-season fresh produce.

African Nations

Regional trade with fellow African nations is a cornerstone of Kenya's market diversification strategy. Proximity and regional trade blocs foster easier market access and reduced logistical costs. East African and Southern African countries represent a natural extension for Kenyan horticultural products, supporting regional food security and economic integration. Future growth is anticipated through enhanced infrastructure and streamlined customs procedures.

Kenya's strategic market diversification, supported by robust trade relationships and market access advantages, positions its horticulture sector for sustained growth and global leadership.

Horticulture Export Value Chain in Kenya

Kenya's horticulture export value chain is a well-structured system designed to efficiently move high-quality produce from farm to global markets, driven by a robust support framework and diverse market access.



Three Key Stages of the Value Chain



Product Categories and Target Markets

Product Category	Primary Target Markets
Floriculture (Cut Flowers & Ornamentals)	EU, UK, USA, Australia, China, Russia, Middle East, UAE, Japan
Vegetables (French beans, Snow peas, Onions, Tomatoes)	EAC, EU, UK, USA, UAE, broader Middle East, South Africa, China, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong
Fruits (Avocado, Mango, Pineapple, Passion Fruit)	EU, UK, USA, Australia, China, Russia, Middle East, UAE, Japan
Herbs & Spices (Basil, Mint, Chilli, Coriander, Rosemary)	EU, UK, USA, Middle East

Key Observations



Kenya's Horticulture Export Performance: Weekly Volumes & Annual Values

Kenya's horticulture sector continues to demonstrate robust growth and significant export potential. The following data highlights key performance metrics across various sub-sectors, showcasing the industry's dynamism and contribution to the national economy.



Key Performance Insights

Floriculture Dominance: Floriculture contributes approximately 70% of the total horticulture export earnings, solidifying its position as the sector's primary driver.

Avocado Growth: Avocado is highlighted as the fastest-growing fruit export, with increasing demand in key markets such as the EU, China, and the Middle East.

Compliance for Vegetables: Fresh vegetables face stricter compliance requirements, necessitating adherence to rigorous international standards for market access and sustained growth.

Growth Opportunities

High-Value Produce: Significant potential lies in developing and expanding the production of high-value organic and specialty vegetables to cater to niche markets.

Value-Added Processing: Opportunities exist in value-added fruit processing, including purees, dried fruits, and juices, to enhance product shelf-life and market appeal.

Market Diversification: Strategic expansion into emerging markets, particularly in the Middle East and Asia, offers new avenues for export growth and reduced market concentration risk.

Kenya's Horticultural Product Portfolio: Current Production & Export Enhancement Opportunities



Kenya boasts a diverse horticultural sector with significant potential for growth and export enhancement. This overview details key product categories and strategic opportunities to scale production, targeting investors eager to capitalize on this vibrant market.



Specific Horticultural Products Kenya Produces or Can Enhance for Export

Product Category	Specific Products (Produced or High-Potential)	Export Readiness / Notes
Nuts	Macadamia, Cashew, Groundnuts	Macadamia is a strong export performer; Cashew sector requires rehabilitation and investment to boost production and quality; Groundnuts have untapped local and regional market potential.
Bananas & Plantains	Ripe Bananas, Green Bananas, Plantains	Staple food crops with established local markets; opportunities exist in value-added processing (e.g., flour, chips) for export and regional trade, especially for plantains.
Tropical Fruits	Mango, Pineapple, Papaya, Passion Fruit, Guava	Mango and Passion Fruit are strong export products; Pineapple and Papaya production is growing with potential for increased export through improved varieties and post-harvest management.
Citrus Fruits	Oranges, Lemons, Limes, Tangerines	Primarily for local consumption; significant potential for export with investment in modern orchard management, improved disease-resistant varieties, and post-harvest handling.
Berries & Temperate Fruits	Strawberries, Raspberries, Blackberries, Apples (highland varieties)	Emerging high-value niche market with strong demand in Europe; requires specialized farming techniques and cold chain logistics for export scalability.
Frozen Fruits & Nuts	Frozen Mango Chunks, Frozen Avocado Halves, Frozen Berries, Frozen Macadamia Kernels	High potential for value addition and extended shelf-life; meets growing international demand for convenient and healthy food options. Requires investment in freezing infrastructure.
Provisionally Preserved Fruits	Fruit Pulp (Mango, Passion Fruit), Fruit Purees	Offers market stability by utilizing surplus produce and providing ingredients for the beverage and food processing industries; growing demand in regional and international markets.
Dried Fruits & Nut Mixtures	Dried Mango, Dried Pineapple, Dried Jackfruit, Macadamia & Cashew Mixes	Taps into the healthy snack market; requires modern drying technology and quality packaging for premium export markets. Supports rural employment and reduces post-harvest losses.
Citrus & Melon Peel	Candied Citrus Peels, Citrus Zest, Pectin from Melon Peel	Utilizes by-products from fresh fruit processing, reducing waste and creating new revenue streams; niche market for confectionery and food ingredient industries.

Key Opportunities for Kenya to Scale Production

Value Addition	Investment in processing infrastructure for drying, freezing, and pulping fruits and vegetables can significantly increase export value, extend shelf life, and diversify market reach. This also reduces post-harvest losses and provides consistent supply.
Coastal Cashew & Citrus Orchard Rehabilitation	Revitalizing neglected cashew and citrus orchards along the coast through improved agronomic practices and modern varieties offers a dual benefit: increased farmer income and robust export volumes. Requires financing for new seedlings and farmer training.
Avocado, Macadamia & Mango Orchard Expansion	Expanding the acreage dedicated to these high-demand export crops, particularly in suitable regions, will meet growing international demand. This involves supporting farmers with access to quality seedlings, irrigation, and best farming practices.
Commercial Berry Farming in Highlands	Developing commercial-scale berry farms (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries) in Kenya's highlands can tap into premium export markets. Requires investment in specialized varieties, protected cultivation (greenhouses), and efficient cold chain logistics.

Opportunities for Diversification & Expansion



Beyond the Big Seven

Industry experts advocate expansion into high-value crops including potatoes, macadamia nuts, specialty herbs, and berries to reduce market concentration risk.



NExT Kenya Programme

EU-funded initiative strengthening value chains, improving compliance with international standards, and opening new market corridors across Asia and Middle East.



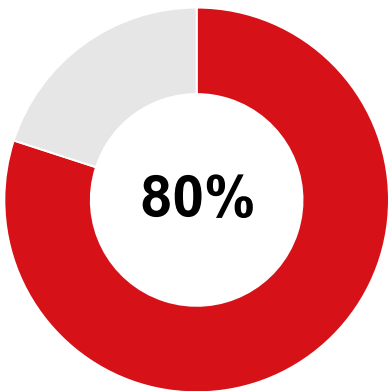
Strategic Investment

Market-oriented policies, infrastructure development, and public-private partnerships are unlocking untapped potential worth billions in new export revenue.

Diversification reduces vulnerability to market shocks while capitalizing on emerging consumer trends for exotic and organic produce globally.

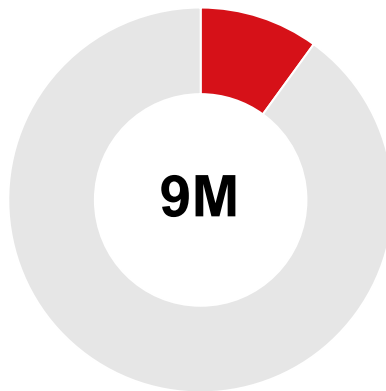


Smallholder Farmers: The Heart of Inclusive Growth



Smallholder Production

Over 80% of horticultural produce grown by farmers operating under 10 acres, ensuring inclusive economic participation.



Livelihoods Supported

Direct and indirect support for over 9 million Kenyans, making horticulture a critical poverty reduction tool.

Empowering Women & Youth

Women and youth are highly represented across the horticulture value chain, particularly in floriculture where they comprise over 65% of the workforce. This sector provides meaningful employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, driving social transformation.



Innovation, Technology & Climate Resilience

01 AI & Precision Farming

Advanced sensors, drone monitoring, and data analytics optimize resource use, increasing yields by up to 30% while reducing water and fertilizer consumption.

02 Climate- Smart Agriculture

Drought-resistant varieties, rainwater harvesting, and greenhouse technology mitigate climate risks and ensure year-round production stability.

03 Research & Training

Government and private sector partnerships fund agricultural research centers, farmer training programs, and technology transfer initiatives.

04 Standards Compliance

NEXt Kenya and similar programs enhance compliance with international phytosanitary and food safety standards, maintaining market access.



The Future of Kenya's Horticulture Investment



Growing Global Demand

Consumer appetite for fresh, organic, and exotic produce continues rising in EU, Asia, and Middle East markets, creating expanding export opportunities worth billions.



Innovation Leadership

Diversification strategies, technological adoption, and capacity building position Kenya as Africa's preeminent horticulture hub and global leader.



Investment Opportunity

Investing now means accessing a resilient, high-growth sector with strong social impact, competitive returns, and government backing.

Join Kenya's horticulture revolution – where tradition meets innovation for sustainable prosperity.

Robust Government Support & Regulatory Framework

Key Regulatory Bodies

Horticultural Crops Directorate (HCD)

- Enforces quality standards, coordinates sector development, and provides market intelligence to farmers and exporters.

Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS)

- Ensures phytosanitary compliance, pest control, and seed certification to meet international trade requirements.

Policy Support

- **Access to credit:** Government-backed financing schemes and microfinance programs
- **Quality inputs:** Subsidized fertilizers, certified seeds, and agricultural equipment
- **Market information:** Real-time pricing data and export opportunity alerts
- **PPPs:** Public-private partnerships foster innovation and infrastructure development



Appendix

Sector Performance - 2023–2024 Snapshot

Export receipts:
KES 153.7B in 2023 (KNBS).

Floriculture revenue:
USD 720M–835M depending
on dataset.

Smallholders:
>80% of output; **6–9M**
livelihoods supported.



Updated Opportunities Across the Value Chain

Cold-chain expansion +
modern packhouses.

Processing (pulping, freezing,
drying) to increase FOB
value.

Protected cultivation for
herbs, berries, high-value
vegetables.

Certification & traceability
investments for global
markets.



Kenya offers multiple public SEZs, EPZs and industrial parks

Example parks¹



1

Konza Technopolis
Machakos
5,000 acres

Borders 3 counties (Makueni, Machakos and Kajiado)
60 KM from Nairobi



2

Dongo Kundu SEZ
Mombasa
3,000 acres

Adjacent to the Mombasa Port in Likoni



3

Naivasha SEZ
Naivasha
1,000 acres

Located in Maai Mahiu along the Nairobi-Naivasha SGR line
Competitive power tariffs
Planned 5,000 acre expansion



4

Olkaria SEZ
Nakuru
8,292 acres

Leverages geothermal power and hosts KenGen's Green Energy Park



5

Riwa SEZ
Homa Bay
530 acres

13 KM from the CBD
8 industrial, sector-based zones planned

18,000 acres of public SEZ and industrial park land
47 CAIPs in development

1. At different stages of development (e.g., Konza Technopolis is operational, Dongo and Naivasha are under construction)

Source: SEZA, EPZA

Private SEZs and industrial parks are also available in Kenya

Example parks



1

Vipingo SEZ
Kilifi
2,000 acres



Plug-and-play industrial park in Kilifi County focused on green energy solutions



2

Two Rivers Financial Center
Nairobi
64 acres



Access to international markets for global, regional, and Kenyan service-oriented business enterprises



3

Tatu City
Kiambu
5,000 acres



Mixed-use special economic zone



4

Northlands SEZ
Kiambu
528 acres



Private SEZ located in Ruiru, Kiambu County



5

Infinity IP
Nairobi
200 acres



Private IP for SMEs located 10 km from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and 20 km from Nairobi's City Center



6

Mount Kipipiri Golf and Resort
Nyandarua
1,478 acres



Megaproject in Kipipiri, Nyandarua

Source: SEZA, EPZA


Get started today!


Meet our sector expert...

... and meet the rest of our management team

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A Kenya Investment Authority publication, 2026