Card Banking in Ethiopia

Infrastructure | Access | Growth

A snapshot of Ethiopia's card banking landscape, highlighting how card-based payments have evolved over recent years.

Cards

Card usage in Ethiopia has grown steadily, driven mainly by debit cards linked to bank accounts. While transaction volumes and values continue to rise, access remains concentrated in urban areas, with limited penetration in rural communities.

43.7 MILLLION
DEBIT CARDS (2025)

TYPE OF CARDS AVAILABLE

Debit	Credit	Prepaid	International
Linked directly to your bank account	*That let you borrow money up to a set limit*	*Loaded with a fixed amount of money in advance.*	*Debit, credit, or prepaid) enabled for cross-border use*
Widely available	Almost non-existent	Very small	Limited to travelers

ISSUED DEBIT CARDS (IN MILLIONS)

2020	16M
2021	21M
2022	31M
2023	38M
2024	45M
2025	44M

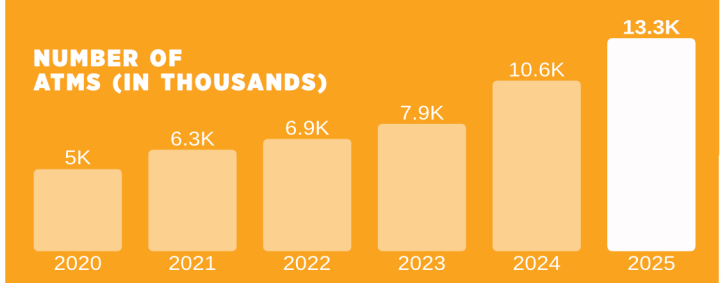
** Debit cards went down by 4 percent in 2025 due to the deactivation of ATM-only cards caused by expiration and long periods of inactivity.*

ATM's

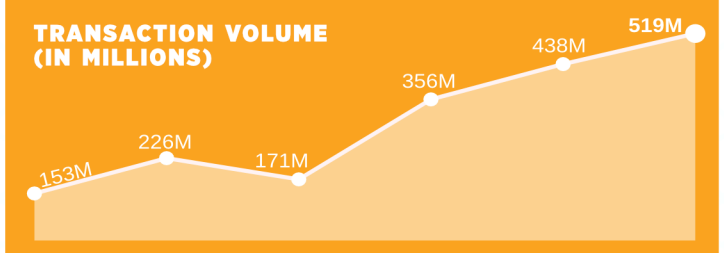
ATM infrastructure has expanded significantly over the years, supporting higher cash withdrawal volumes and transaction values.

13,313 ATMS (2025) | **519M** TRANSACTIONS | **730B** ETB VALUE

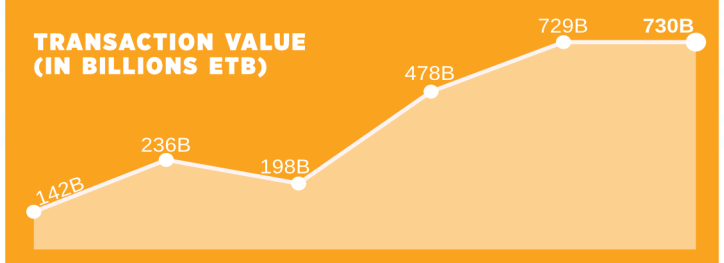
NUMBER OF ATMS (IN THOUSANDS)

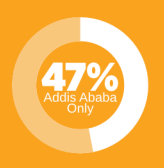


TRANSACTION VOLUME (IN MILLIONS)



TRANSACTION VALUE (IN BILLIONS ETB)





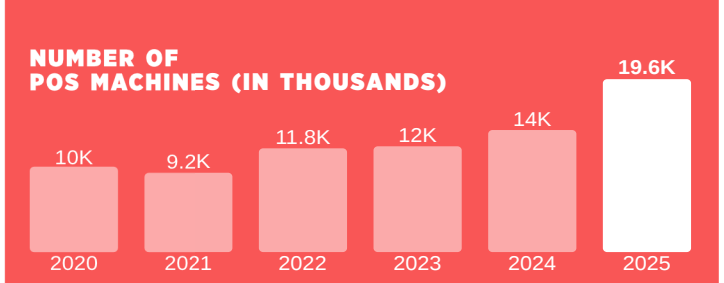
ATM distribution is nearly split between urban and rural areas, though access quality and usage frequency remain higher in cities.
- Addis Ababa Only - **47%**
- Outside Addis Ababa - **53%**

POS MACHINES

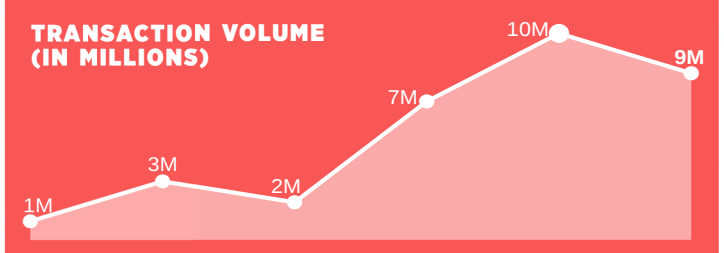
POS machines have seen rapid growth, reflecting increased adoption of card-based payments at merchant locations. Despite this progress, usage remains uneven, with stronger activity in urban commercial centres compared to rural markets.

19,638 POS (2025) | **9M** TRANSACTIONS | **26B** ETB VALUE

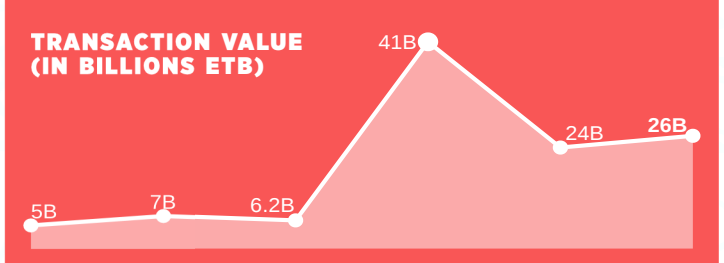
NUMBER OF POS MACHINES (IN THOUSANDS)



TRANSACTION VOLUME (IN MILLIONS)



TRANSACTION VALUE (IN BILLIONS ETB)





POS usage is heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa and major cities, with rural areas accounting for just 22% of machine locations.
- Addis Ababa Only - **78%**
- Outside of Addis Ababa - **22%**



KEY INSIGHT

Cards are predominantly used at ATMs, not POS devices.

Despite the steady growth in POS devices, transaction volumes and values at ATMs vastly outpace those at POS terminals, with ATM transactions volume being 58 times higher than that of POS transactions.

After Explosive Growth, ATM Transactions Flatten Out

ATM transaction value grew from 142B ETB in 2020 to 729B ETB in 2024, but remained flat in 2025. Despite more ATMs and cards, this signals user saturation, declining transaction sizes, or a shift toward digital payments.

Key Service Providers

Banks, switch operators, and payment system developers play a central role in issuing cards and operating card payment infrastructure. Their investments have driven ecosystem growth, though interoperability, efficiency, and broader outreach remain key challenges.

Commercial Banks
Card issuance & account management

ETHSWITCH
National switch, anchor of interoperability

POS and Payment Gateway Operators

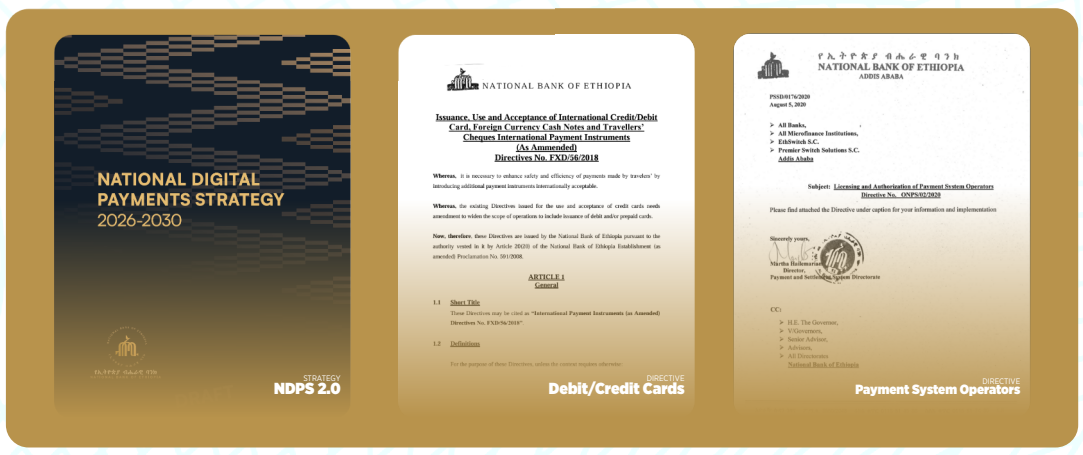
Premier Switch Solution
Private switch operator involved ininteroperating some financial institutions

Billing System Providers
Billing and payments integrations.

Hardware & Software Technology Providers
Provide hardware, software, monitoring and maintanance services.

Regulatory Body

The National Bank of Ethiopia oversees the card banking ecosystem by setting standards and policies, licensing service providers, and ensuring system stability. Its role is critical in promoting innovation while safeguarding consumer protection and financial system integrity.



Source - EthSwitch Annual Reports, NBE Financial Stability Reports & Akofada Report

PS. All data are as of the financial year ending June 30.

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