



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

EXECUTIVE BRIEFS

EXISTING AND NEW INITIATIVES
AT THE AFRICA CENTRE FOR
STATISTICS

OCTOBER 2025

1. ECA Statistical Online Platform

The ECA Statistical Online Platform (ECASTATS) is an online platform designed to collect, validate, produce, and disseminate comprehensive socio-economic data on African countries. An internal and external audit of the ECA Statistical Online Platform (ECASTATS) will provide a foundational strategy to improve its resourcefulness both within and beyond ECA. Tentative claims suggest that both ECA staff and external users of African statistics have had to rely on other sources of statistics in view of gaps with the ECASTATS. Responding to these gaps have become a priority agenda for the Africa Centre for Statistics (ACS) because of the emerging use cases of technology-led statistical products and the Commission's reputation which hinges on the use of quality statistics for economic transformation. The audit will offer an opportunity to establish baselines on the scope of statistical products based on production and use, and guide the shaping of setting targets in measuring the uptake of statistics on the African continent.

2. ECA Mobile Statistical Platform (MSP)

This is a mobile application developed on the backbone of the ECA Statistical Online Platform (ECASTATS) to provide instant access to statistics for the development of Africa. The motivation for developing the ECA Mobile Statistical Platform (MSP) for accessing statistics is premised on the demands of using web-based online platforms, which have better functionality using desktop and laptop computers. Consequently, the main target audience for the MSP is policymakers, legislators and chief executives with the responsibility of submitting numerical facts, verifying statistical claims and contributing to evidence-informed decision-making on the go. The young adults have also been targeted for enhanced uptake due to their affinity for the use of mobile phones. The MSP offers alternate functionalities, including interactive dashboards, country and thematic profiles, chatting tools, and offline options for enhanced use. This technology-based approach self-generates metrics for tracking use and guiding policies based on the domains of the search interests of the different users.

3. Harmonization and Quality Assurance of the Use of Statistics at ECA

This initiative aims at sustaining and building the reputation of ECA through the dissemination of accurate, consistent, comparable, and reliable statistics. These attributes of quality statistics have engendered the use of different numerical facts in describing a developmental phenomenon, risking the reputation of ECA. This initiative to institute processes for data and statistical harmonisation, quality assurance, and adherence to best practices in documenting metadata to guide the use of statistics will minimise the potential risk of using disparate statistics in ECA. Centralised online systems for queries across definitions, measurements, periodicity and sources will be built and made accessible to all ECA staff for verification. This system will be linked to other international statistical sources for the validation of statistics used in speeches and reports of the ECA.

4. ECA Interventions Footprint Atlas

The operational function of ECA necessitates sustained engagements with Member States across all Divisions and Sections on issues of capacity building and policy advice. With the concurrent undertaking of these engagements, tracking initiatives, promoting synergies and ensuring cost minimisations as well as burden to countries have been a challenge. This initiative, which is a collaboration with the Strategic Planning Oversight and Results Division (SPORD), leverages a Performance Management System to build a dynamic online dashboard that maps and visualises all ECA interventions across Africa in real time. It provides a single, searchable view of linking initiatives to outputs, partners, and evidence, enhancing coordination and institutional memory. Integrated with ECASTATS and SDG dashboards, the Atlas will support the work of other divisions responsible for monitoring outputs, outcomes and impacts of ECA's interventions.

5. Strengthening Data and Statistics Systems Through the Retooling of the Curricula of Tertiary Institutions in Africa

This initiative will address a double-sided challenge. On one hand, African countries are faced with increased and multifaceted challenges of development and unprecedented technological advancements, which have led to a dramatic change in the engagement with data and statistics for policy direction, monitoring, and evaluation. On the other hand, training in data- and statistics-related programs at the tertiary level in Africa often falls short of providing students with the requisite skills for application and adaptation, aptitude for policy engagement, upskilling to deploy contemporary resources, and critical reasoning that enables them to function effectively in the professional space. More concerning is the fact that in many institutions in Africa, the curricula do not incorporate newer technologies such as GIS, Earth observations, and AI, which offer powerful tools for visualising, analysing and applying data in real-time in context-specific ways. Addressing this two-sided problem will yield a system-wide development of the capacities of a critical mass of statistical professionals who are equipped with contemporary skills.

[Here](#) is the link to the working draft concept note.

6. Functional Alignment of ACS and PARIS21 Data and Statistics Activities

The ACS and PARIS21 have reached an unwavering consensus to explore mechanisms for functional activities that respond to the political power dynamics and tech-driven changes in the global data and statistics space. This deliberate alignment of the respective interventions of ACS and PARIS21 will uncover both the observable and unobservable development challenges through innovative data and statistical insights. Among the areas earmarked for alignment are development, implementation and evaluation of regional and national strategies for the development of statistics; harnessing technology, in particular artificial intelligence, for operational and cost efficiencies in the production and use of data and statistics; and the capacitating of state and non-state institutions, in particular parliamentarians, media and civil society organisations.

[Here](#) is the link to the working draft concept note.

7. ACS Functional and Impact-Oriented Engagement with Member States

The ACS holds a commendable track record of receiving requests from Member States for diverse statistical operations because of its resourcefulness in offering needed capacity-building interventions. However, this enviable record has been questioned from the perspectives of retention of capacity in the country, scalability to all the 54 Member States and translation of evidence on policy and economic transformation on the continent. This initiative builds on existing frameworks for engaging Member States to deliver a concurrent five-pronged approach to ensure functional and impact-oriented interactions. Two of the five-pronged interventions are (a) institutionalisation of the engagement of real sector line ministries on data and statistical products as a complement to ECA's regular convening with Ministers of Finance and National Statistical Offices, and (b) the certification and continuous professional development of professional experts in the region to support data, statistics and policy capacities.

[Here](#) is the link to the working draft concept note.

8. Policy Intriguing Statistical Bulletins

Among the different strategies for dispensing the think tank function of ECA is the intentional decision of ACS to initiate a monthly publication of statistical bulletins that are policy diagnosis-ready. The dissemination of country-specific policy diagnosis readiness will be characterised by the production of statistical frameworks that reflect interventions and their expected outcomes. Another reflection of this publication will focus on disaggregated statistics that portray trends and patterns contrary to the status quo. This exercise is expected to deepen the research and evidence services of ECA, leading to the dispensation of the Commission's policy advice mandate. The country-specific reports, which will be produced using AI tools, will be followed during country-level bilateral events for the assessment of use, outcomes, and impact.

[Here](#) is the link to the working draft concept note.

9. Africa's Weekly Statistical Highlights

Outreach to different target groups with regular and insightful statistical highlights remains central to the work of ACS. The African Centre for Statistics will launch a weekly statistical highlights, providing concise and reliable weekly statistical highlights that provide high-quality evidence on Africa's socio-economic developments. The series is intended for Heads of National Statistical Offices, senior policymakers in Member States, and development partners.

Each issue will present a single policy-relevant visual accompanied by a succinct analytic narrative, metadata, and clearly cited sources. The series is designed to demonstrate the value of official statistics and strengthen the evidence base for policy dialogue and action. Each edition will highlight recent trends and the associated policy implications. The product will be available in an accessible format suitable for offline and online use and, where feasible, will be available in both English and French. Dissemination will be by ECA web presence, email, WhatsApp broadcasts, and a one-line post on X. A light feedback mechanism with NSOs and policy counterparts will inform topic selection, improve clarity, and track usefulness for decision-making. The weekly highlight will be issued weekly and produced under a defined governance and clearance workflow.

10. Quarterly Methodological Sessions and Position Paper Series

The mode and scope of work of statisticians in recent times, is rapidly evolving. This is mainly because of the variety and volume of data now available, and the emerging skills and tools for analytics. In response, the ACS has resolved to institutionalize regular intellectual discourses on data and statistical methods to keep pace with the evolutions and thereby ensuring continuous adherence to scientific rigour both internally and by Member States. The ACS acknowledges the debates around self-reporting data, which is a major characterization of new data sources, use of synthetic data, statistical representativity of minority groups, engagement with unstructured data including text and images and predefined or data predicted models for analytics. In addition to creating a platform for knowledge sharing, a primary objective of this series is to improve documentation specifically guidelines and contextual approaches to reflect the peculiarity for Africa economies. The ACS will be active through the periodic release of position papers on emerging issues that affects the operations of the data and statistics profession.

A Working Draft on ACS' reflections on the defunding of the Demographic and Health Survey is an example of the intended releases of position statements. The processes, outputs and outcomes of the methodological sessions and position papers will be aligned with the initiative to strengthen data and statistical systems through the retooling of the curricula of tertiary institutions in Africa.

11. Artificial Intelligence Readiness of ACS

In line with the roadmap for the modernisation and transformation of official statistics in Africa, the ACS has employed, developed and deployed a variety of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the dispensation of its mandate. While the engagement with AI tools has become a necessity, the development of a roll-out framework premised on an assessment of the use environment, skills preparedness, guidelines for professional use and risk containment is required. The initiative to functionally align the activities of ACS and PARIS21 will be leveraged to assess the AI readiness of ACS and develop a roll-out framework. This initiative will be pivotal in supporting national statistical offices and contributing to the positioning of ECA in the use of AI.

12. Statistical Analytics Using Geographic Position System Coordinates

In line with the integration of statistical and geospatial information, the pseudonymisation of GPS coordinates comes in time to tackle spatial data pseudonymisation pitfalls and comes in handy for spatial analysis of several geospatial datasets collected during various projects and programmes undertaken in various sectors in Africa. The accurate, timely and effective collection, processing, management, analysis, archiving and dissemination of geospatial data are fundamental to national statistical offices and mapping agencies, offering critical insights for decision making considering aspects such as population dynamics, infrastructure planning, and environmental monitoring, etc. However, the increasing granularity of GPS coordinates use for various statistical and mapping endeavours raises significant privacy concerns for individuals and society, as precise location data collected during various operations can lead to individual re-identification and location when linked with auxiliary information. To address this challenge, geospatial and other GPS data pseudonymisation techniques have emerged as essential tools for balancing data utility and privacy protection. Most of these techniques have been incorporated into Geospatial Information software's for usage by practitioners and the application of these techniques is critical for statistical and geospatial development in Africa.

13. Climate Data Hub and Statistical Analysis

ACS is curating, developing, and analysing climate change data using geospatial methodologies, as outlined in the ACS developed Compendium of Data Sources for Monitoring Climate Change Impacts in Africa. The Compendium of Data Sources for Monitoring Climate Change Impacts in Africa: A Geospatial Perspective was developed by ECA. ACS aims to develop a geoportal that serves as a centralised platform for accessing, visualising, and sharing climate-related data, with features that enhance user experience such as search and filter options, data visualisation tools, and API integration for seamless access and updates. This initiative seeks to facilitate informed decision-making regarding climate resilience and promote sustainable development efforts across the continent, specifically addressing the analysis of climate vulnerability hot spots in Africa through a geospatial lens focused on the nexus between the environment, land use, agriculture, and food security.

14 Google Project: Advancing data integration, innovation, and capacity in Africa

Africa's statistical ecosystem remains fragmented and under-resourced. Interoperability gaps, limited infrastructure, and uneven capacity slow the translation of data into decisions. The African Centre for Statistics, in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division, will localise a proven Data Commons model pairing open, scalable infrastructure with a regionally owned governance framework that safeguards so countries can contribute to and use shared data with trust. The project will strengthen the continent's capacity to convert data into timely, policy-ready insights by building a high-value analytics and AI layer on the Data Commons. The project will establish thematic Analytic Hubs in priority domains such as food security and regional and international trade. The Data Commons will integrate priority national and regional datasets, expose reusable analytical workflows, and support multilingual, AI-assisted discovery.

The capacity building component of the project, through the regional hub for big data and data science, based in Kigali, Rwanda, will equip NSOs to publish new datasets to the Data Commons and to build their own analytics for national use. By project close, the project will have at least two operational Analytic Hubs; an AI brief generation prototype; an expanded library of integrated datasets and reproducible analytical assets; a trained cohort of NSO specialists capable of sustaining and extending the platform.

15. FAO Project: Integrated regional platform for the innovative use of Earth Observations technology and Farmer Registry for the production and validation of crop statistics (ESTELLA)

The FAO project is named the 'Integrated regional platform for the innovative use of Earth Observations technology and Farmer Registry for the production and validation of crop statistics' (ESTELLA). This three-year project aims to support African countries by increasing the availability of comprehensive and accurate agricultural data. This is achieved through establishing integrated regional platforms, such as the EOSTAT Regional Platform (ESTELLA), which will combine the use of earth observation (EO) data, in-situ data, physical-based crop growth models, and geospatial technology to produce validated crop statistics. By utilising earth observation and artificial intelligence (machine-learning, the ESTELLA platform will enable countries and regional institutions to produce crop field boundary delineation, seasonal crop type mapping, crop yield mapping, and extraction of crop acreage and yield statistics at any given aggregation level (from country to farm scale).

16. Country Data Harvester

The Country Data Harvester is an online platform that enables the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) to systematically capture, catalogue, and disseminate Member States' statistical publications and datasets as they are released. By sharing datasets in their original form ("as-is"), the platform complements rather than replaces traditional standardisation, harmonisation, and indicator-based compilation, thereby accelerating access to timely national data. Users can subscribe by topic and geography to receive immediate alerts when new content is added. ACS is currently developing an AI-driven layer to automate harvesting, documentation, and provide an intuitive natural-language search for policy and research use. The platform empowers ECA staff and researchers with comprehensive, reliable, Africa-sourced data, reducing reliance on external international sources and promoting greater use of Member States' data across the continent.

[Here is the link to the existing platform.](#)

17. Census/Survey Project Management

This is a digital toolkit developed by the African Centre for Statistics to manage census and survey operations from planning, instrument design, field operations, processing, dissemination, and post-survey/census assessment. The motivation for developing the Census/Survey Project Management tool stems from the limitations of fragmented, manual, siloed tools that hinder coordination and transparency. This centralised system streamlines workflows, facilitates coordination, and ensures transparency. The tool is for NSO executives, project managers, and logistics managers who must coordinate large, time-critical operations and verify progress, and who depend on timely, credible status updates. The tool offers functionalities including real-time dashboards, automated alerts and reports, Kanban boards, dynamic Gantt charts, and collaborative workspaces with document sharing. It is an open-source solution that contributes to digital transformation by modernising workflows, strengthening governance and accountability, and enabling more timely, high-quality data production across statistical operations.

18. Census of Centre of Excellence

In the last six decades, the conduct of Population and Housing Censuses (PHCs) across the 54 Member States in the African continent has garnered diverse and rich experiences. The occasioning of different external influences, including political considerations, funding challenges, technological evolutions, international and national conflicts and trust, has yielded mixed experiences capable of guiding African countries to reap the optimal benefits of PHCs while adhering to standard and emerging international best practices. The initiative to establish a Centre of Excellence offers an opportunity for synthesising the vast dimensions of experiences, mapping them with the Principles and Recommendations for the conduct of PHCs, developing learning modules and creating platforms for continuous knowledge sharing and incubating ideas for data collection, integration, analysis and policy uptake. The Centre of Excellence will design and maintain a regional data architecture which will be linked to other censuses, notably economic and agriculture censuses and establish the PHC and the national identification data sources as foundational for integrating all other forms of surveys, administrative data and other non-traditional datasets. Most importantly, the Centre will be a hub where national statistical offices can get specific technical assistance and advisory services under the South-to-South cooperation.

19. Census and Survey Field Monitoring Dashboard System

This is an open-source, web-based dashboard developed by the ECA to support member states in monitoring their census and large-scale survey field operations. It is motivated by the need to close operational blind spots and accelerate corrective action through timely performance and data-quality indicators while data collection is taking place. It helps NSO leadership, census and survey project managers, and field supervisors who require up-to-the-minute status to steer resources, enforce benchmarks, and uphold quality standards. It is widely used across multiple African NSOs.

ECA provides technical support, customisation, and capacity-building to help countries own, operate, and sustain the platform as part of their routine statistical operations. The use of this system brought faster issue detection and resolution, improved completion against targets, and higher data quality with fewer re-visits.

