

Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa

2017 - 2026



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African Union
Commission



African Development Bank



United Nations Economic
Commission for Africa



African Capacity
Building Foundation

Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa - SHaSA 2 2017 - 2026

Abridged Version



**African Union
Commission**



African Development Bank



**United Nations Economic
Commission for Africa**



**African Capacity
Building Foundation**

EX.CL/Dec.987(XXXII)
**DECISION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE STRATEGY FOR THE HARMONIZATION
OF STATISTICS IN AFRICA (SHASA)**

The Executive Council,

1. **COMMENDS** the progress made since the inception of the SHaSA in rallying along countries to give priority to statistical development, especially in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics and Economics Statistics, among others;
2. **WELCOMES** the efforts by the Commission and the African Development Bank (AfDB), in collaboration with the African Capacity Building Foundation, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States, to develop a draft of the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2)
3. **ADOPTS** the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2) as the Continental Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Africa for the next 10 years; and its action plan, financing plan and resource mobilization strategy;
4. **REQUESTS** AfDB with the support of the Commission, UNECA and ACBF to lead the preparation of a resource mobilization strategy in support of SHaSA 2; and mobilize sustainable financial resources for the effective implementation of SHaSA 2;
5. **REQUESTS:**
 - I. Member States to allocate 0.15% of their National budgets to finance statistics;
 - II. The Commission to coordinate with UNECA, AfDB and other relevant stakeholders on the implementation of the second Strategy for the Harmonization on Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2), and report regularly to the Assembly on the progress made.

FOREWORD

With the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity/African Union in 2013, the nations of Africa committed themselves to “Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want”. This document sets out the path that will lead to the emergence of a new Africa – one that is prosperous, integrated and peaceful – by 2063. The same core principles of Agenda 2063 are also espoused in the African Development Bank’s (AfDB)’s High Five Transformational Agenda for Africa for 2015-2025 and in the United Nations’ “Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.”

In order to implement these development programs there is a need for reliable and harmonized statistics. The “Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA 2)” aims to improve statistical coordination and collaboration among all actors in the statistical system on the continent. SHaSA 2 is the fruit of the collective efforts of the four pan-African organizations – African Union Commission (AUC), UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and AfDB.

The constraints impeding progress in this endeavor include: insufficient human and financial resources, weak administrative and organization systems, and a tendency to pursue sector-focused rather than system-wide statistical harmonization. The main objective of SHaSA 2 is therefore to enable the African Statistical System to generate timely, reliable, and harmonized statistical information on the following dimensions: (i) environmental, (ii) social, (iii) economic, and (iv) cultural and political.

The document provides general information on the scope of the integration process and on sustainable and inclusive development in Africa. Furthermore, it summarizes the various initiatives that have been undertaken under SHaSA 1 to promote the production of harmonized and quality statistical information. Building on lessons learned then sets out the vision and objectives of SHaSA 2 and implementation plans.

We express our gratitude to all the actors of the African Statistical System including Member States and partners at the national, regional, and international levels. We also call on all African countries to acknowledge the crucial role that quality statistics have in regard to the socio-economic development and growth of African nations and to commit the necessary resources to strengthen statistics across Africa.

Mahamat Moussa Faki Akinwumi A. Adesina Vera Songwe Emmanuel Nnadozie

<i>Chairperson</i> <i>African Union</i> <i>Commission</i>	<i>President</i> <i>African Development</i> <i>Bank Group</i>	<i>Executive</i> <i>Secretary</i> <i>United Nations</i> <i>Economic</i> <i>Commission for</i> <i>Africa</i>	<i>Executive Secretary</i> <i>African Capacity</i> <i>Building Foundation</i>
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The overarching goal of SHaSA 2 is to enable the African Statistical System to generate quality, timely and harmonized statistics to monitor regional integration policies and support national, regional and international development agendas.

African Integration and Development

Africa is facing numerous challenges in the field of development and, since the 1960s, has been responding to them with an integration process entrusted to the African Union as its main implementing body. The African Integration Agenda comprises three main components: political, economic, and social and cultural integration. For example, the Abuja Treaty of 1991 provided for the establishment of the African Economic Community endowed with a single currency. Mindful of the need to accelerate progress across the entire continent, the African Union's 50th Anniversary celebrations in May 2013 saw the launch of "Agenda 2063". This document sets out in clear and broad terms the aspirations for the future of the continent and its people in order to build a prosperous, integrated, and peaceful Africa (see Box 1).

The African Development Bank (AfDB) is also currently implementing its "Ten-Year Strategy 2013–2022", which articulates two main objectives (i) *inclusive* and (ii) *green and sustainable growth*. In order to implement this strategy, the Bank has been focusing its efforts since 2013 on five priority sectors, the "High Fives," namely to: (i) Light Up and Power Africa; (ii) Integrate Africa; (iii) Feed Africa, (iv) Industrialize Africa; and (v) Improve the Quality of Life of Africans. These five priority sectors are designed to act as beacons to guide development and to spur African countries to redouble their efforts toward the sustainable transformation of the continent.

Alongside these pan-African efforts, many countries and regional actors are pursuing their own development plans. At the global level, the international community has adopted the UN's "Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development." The 17 goals and 169 targets set out in this document accommodate three dimensions of sustainable development, namely: economic, social, and environmental. They will guide the actions to be taken during the next 15 years in the domains that are crucial to mankind and to the planet.

Box 1 - The seven aspirations of Agenda 2063

Aspiration 1: A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Aspiration 2: An integrated, politically united continent based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of the Renaissance of Africa.

Aspiration 3: An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.

Aspiration 4: An Africa of peace and security.

Aspiration 5: An Africa endowed with a strong cultural identity, a common heritage, values and shared ethics.

Aspiration 6: An Africa whose development is led by its citizens, depending on the potentials of the African populations, in particular, its women and its youth and conscious of the future of its children.

Aspiration 7: A strong, united and resilient Africa and an influential global player and partner.

The Role of Statistics

The need to closely monitor and evaluate the successful implementation of the agendas outlined above places great responsibility on all Member States. It requires them not only to produce in a timely manner quality disaggregated statistical data that are accessible to all, but also to respect the harmonization of data across the continent to allow for cross-country comparisons and to ensure that no country is left behind.



With a view of formulating an adequate response to the increased demand for detailed and timely data to monitor progress on the SDGs, the international community developed the Global Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics. As a next step, the African statistical community conducted in 2015 in Libreville, Gabon, an in-depth discussion of the Global Transformative Agenda in the context of the African Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

(Role of Statistics - Continuation...)

The “Action Plan for the African Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics,” as the outcome document of that meeting, specifies key actions built on the five thematic areas of the Global Agenda, namely:

- ➔ *Thematic area 1: Coordination at and between the global, continental, regional and national statistical systems;*
- ➔ *Thematic area 2: Communication and advocacy;*
- ➔ *Thematic area 3: Innovation and modernization through standard-based statistical business architecture;*
- ➔ *Thematic area 4: Integrated statistical systems; and*
- ➔ *Thematic area 5: Capacity building and training.*

In the past, there was a tendency to concentrate on statistics mainly for monitoring and evaluation (M&E). In recent years, a sea-change has been taking place, in which statistics are recognized as a public good and an integral part of a conducive and enabling environment for the achievement of development outcomes. The alignment of SHaSA 2's statistical dimensions with the three agendas outlined above has helped to identify the need for statistics on pressing new and emerging issues, such as climate change, social inclusion and Big Data.



Challenges confronting the African Statistical System

Despite the progress made to date, there remains a number of serious challenges facing the African continent, which impacts on the operating environment of the African Statistical System.

Various evaluations, including evaluations relating to the 1990 Addis Ababa Plan of Action for the Development of Statistics in Africa; the Regional Reference Statistics Framework for the development of Statistics in Africa of 2006; the template for the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS); and the coordination mechanism for the implementation of the African Charter on Statistics, have pinpointed weaknesses in the African Statistical System.

These include:

- ➔ Institutional weaknesses such as inadequate financing and use of statistics in policy making as well as poor management and institutional capacity within statistical bodies themselves;
- ➔ Organizational weaknesses such as poor quality and management of data, weakness in data analysis and poor dissemination and access to produced information.

In addition to these shortcomings, there are difficulties in providing data within the African Statistical System on current and emerging issues, such as governance, environment, climate change, gender and food and financial crises. The statistics are produced according to methodologies that do not always reflect African realities on the ground and are often not comparable or harmonized across countries.

This review and update of the “Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA)” aims to address all of these challenges in a drive to support the African integration program alongside national, regional, continental, and international development agendas. SHaSA 2 also comes at a time of considerable change for statistical systems globally and notes in particular the challenges and opportunities offered by the emergence of Big Data, methodologies to integrate geospatial and statistical information and calls for a data revolution which places a burden on countries to widen the group of actors involved in the statistical system.

The methodology used for the review and updating of SHaSA adopted a participatory approach involving all African Statistical System actors and users of statistics, including National Statistical Systems (NSS), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Central Banks, decision-makers, academia, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), etc.

Main actors of the African Statistical System

The African Statistical System comprises four levels: national, regional, continental, and international.

National level actors

At the national level, the National Statistical Councils, the Statistical Boards or the National Statistical Committees coordinate and supervise the NSS. In terms of production, the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are the main actors of the NSS. Sectoral data are produced and disseminated through the different ministries (for example, the Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture, Water Resources, etc.) and by institutions such as Central Banks and public companies, sometimes with limited participation of the NSOs.

Regional level actors

At the regional level, the major actors are Regional Economic Communities (RECs), sub-regional organizations of economic, monetary and customs nature, and organizations in charge of strengthening statistical capacity, mainly AFRISTAT and AFRITAC, which work alongside RECs.

Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

RECs derive their mandates to carry out statistical activities from treaties and constitutive acts, including: i) strengthening the statistical capacity of Member States; (ii) the harmonization of statistics (ex-post and ex-ante) in Member States; and (iii) the compilation and dissemination of quality statistics in order to inform decision-making at national and regional levels.

Sub-regional organizations

In addition to RECs, sub-regional organizations are contributing to the development of statistics.

- AFRISTAT promotes the harmonization of concepts, standards and methods.
- AFRITAC: The IMF supports African countries through five AFRITAC centers.
- Regional Centers for Statistics and Demographic Training of which there are 10 alongside universities, which offer courses in statistics.



Continental level actors

At the continental (pan-African) level, four institutions, namely AUC, AfDB, ECA, and ACBF, are playing important roles in statistical development.

African Union Commission (AUC)



Since its launch in 2002, the AU has been working towards the establishment of the African Economic Community (AEC). The AUC develops every four years a strategic plan structured around four strategic pillars; (i) Peace and Security; (ii) Integration, Development and Cooperation; (iii) Shared Values, and (iv) Institutional and Capacity Building.

The Statistics Division of the AUC has as its main mission to work towards strengthening the capacity of Member States for the production and dissemination of quality and harmonized statistics; to advocate for the development of statistics at all levels of the decision-making process; and to work toward the establishment of an appropriate framework for the harmonization of statistics.

African Development Bank (AfDB)



The AfDB is a multilateral development bank, which strives to “stimulate and mobilize public and private internal and external resources towards promoting investment and providing technical assistance

and practical advice to its Regional Member States.” Through its Department of Statistics, the AfDB contributes to effective development by strengthening the capacity of the statistical systems of African countries, through workshops, training missions, technical assistance, etc.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

The ECA is both a pan-African organization and a United Nations body. The main mission of the organization is “to promote the economic and social development of its Member States, encourage inter-regional integration and promote international cooperation for the development of Africa.” It draws its strength from its role as the sole UN agency mandated to carry out its operations in Africa at both the continental and regional levels, and to mobilize resources to support the development priorities of Africa, as defined by the AU. In recent years the ECA has reorganized itself to improve the statistical capacities of its Member States. It has established data centers and strengthened its sub-regional offices to provide technical and advisory support.

African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION | FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

ACBF's work focuses mainly on statistical capacity building and transcends national, regional, and continental levels. In particular, the organization has assisted countries to develop (i) statistics in the core areas (economic, financial, social, labor, gender, etc.) for the design, monitoring and evaluation of programs; and (ii) databases and macro-economic models for trade and investment. As part of its new Strategic Plan (2017–2021), the ACBF will contribute to development programs by collaborating with Pan African Organizations and other partners to introduce innovations in the production and use of statistical data in countries and to effectively coordinate and harmonize statistics in Africa.

Other important continental level actors include:

- Association of African Central Banks (AACB)
- African Union Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC); and
- Pan-African Centre for Statistical Training

After the adoption of the African Charter on Statistics in January 2009 and the SHaSA 1 in July 2010, Heads of State and Government took a decision to create two new institutions: (i) the African Union Institute for Statistics known as STATAFRIC, and (ii) the Pan-African Centre for Statistical Training.

International level actors

At the international level, the key actors are the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations as well as other bilateral and multilateral international organizations (for a full list, please see the unabridged SHaSA 2 document).

National and regional level

Two key strategic frameworks are employed at the national and regional levels to coordinate and harmonize the production of statistics on the continent:

- The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) provides a framework for mainstreaming statistics into national policy and planning processes, mainstreaming sectors into the NSS, and strengthening statistical capacity building and the effective coordination of the NSS.
- The Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS): At least five RECs are implementing RSDS as tools for the coordination and harmonization of statistical activities in support of the regional integration process. They focus in particular on the production of comparable statistics in economic domains to monitor macroeconomic convergence.

A number of RECs and certain regional organizations (such as AFRISTAT) are executing programs and projects aimed at improving the comparability of data in their regions (for elaboration of activities, see the unabridged SHaSA 2 document).

Continental level

Several platforms and initiatives for the strengthening of capacity and the harmonization of statistics at the pan-African level have been introduced. Some of these focus on the development of methods for the collection and compilation of statistical data (ex-ante harmonization), while others specialize in the production of comparable statistical indicators (ex-post harmonization) in different domains. Certain organizations are therefore working on the harmonization of statistics on national accounting while others focus on price statistics, external trade statistics, etc. Notable examples include the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF) and the African Charter on Statistics.

An analysis of the African Statistical System environment has highlighted its strengths and weaknesses (Table 1) as well as the opportunities and threats it faces (Table 2).

Table 1: Strengths and weaknesses of the African Statistical System

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Existence of statistical regulations in the country in order to control statistical activities - Infrastructure to carry out activities, collect data on a large scale, including censuses and studies on opinion pool - Existence of skills in the collection and management of data in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA) - Existence of training institutions both for professional and semi-professional personnel - Strengthened continental and regional organizations capable of providing technical and financial support to countries - Existence of different initiatives aimed at strengthening statistical capacity in Africa - Existence of fora for the sharing and exchange of knowledge, experiences and practices, including regular meetings with officials of NSOs at regional and continental levels, statistics news bulletins and African statistical directories, etc. - Strengthening the availability of the main stakeholders at all levels in the NSS to collaborate for the success of the synergy and cost effectiveness in the production of statistics - Emergence of new actors, producers of data (private sector, civil society, etc.): the need to forge a partnership with these actors - Coming into force of the African Charter on Statistics	- Vulnerable and fragile National Statistical Systems in most African countries - The NSDS do not cover all sectors of the NSS - Absence of updated statistics laws that are aligned to the Charter - Weak statistical capacity in MDAs, some RECS, and some pan-African statistics organizations - Absence of effective civil registration and vital statistics systems - Poor quality of data and poor use of statistical data by decision-makers - Insufficient availability of statistical information on certain essential development indicators such as environment/climate change, gender, governance, fight against HIV/AIDS - Absence of incentives and /or capacity to use data - No disaggregated data at the level of local governments - Insufficient administrative autonomy and insufficient professional independence in the African Statistical System - Lack of planned and sustainable financing for the harmonization of statistics in Africa - Absence of public statistics in the training programs of some universities and statistics training centers - Political interference in statistical work, particularly at the national level

Table 2: Opportunities and threats to National Statistical Systems (NSSs)

Opportunities to exploit	Threats to avoid
1. Results-based program leads to an increase in the demand for statistics and concomitantly to an international consensus that statistics are vital for monitoring and evaluating development outcomes and for policy-making at all levels 2. Agenda 2063, the 2013-2022 Strategy of the AfDB, United Nations Agenda 2030 and national and regional development plans 3. Increasing demand for quality statistics for the monitoring/evaluation of development agendas and plans 4. Recognition by the governments of Member States of the weakness of their statistical systems and of the need to strengthen them 5. Availability of big data 6. Commitment by regional, continental and international organizations and bodies to strengthen statistical capacity in Africa, both financially and with technical assistance 7. Existence of international frameworks, norms, directives and practices crowned with success in the domain of the harmonization of statistics 8. Strengthening of regional, continental and international partnerships for the development of statistics 9. Technological breakthroughs which have made computers cheaper, more powerful and more accessible 10. Increasing use of computer science, the internet and social networks for the dissemination and the promotion of data	1. Multiplicity of initiatives and lack of coordination among international partners 2. Reduction in the demand for data and statistical information 3. Priorities and investments in statistics reduced 4. Difficulties in attracting and retaining statistical staff 5. Absence of commitment in favor of coordination between stakeholders of NSS 6. The fact that a new law favorable to statistics has not been promulgated and applied 7. Multiplicity of actors, especially non-official, that have divergent interests

Status of Implementation of SHASA 1

Since its adoption in Kampala, Uganda, in July 2010 by the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, the implementation of SHaSA 1 has been carried out by the different actors of the African Statistical System. Several problems have hampered the implementation of SHaSA 1 at the national level, including: a lack of political will; political and security issues; difficulty in financing statistical operations; lack of human resources in terms of quality and quantity; lack of technical capacity; and a lack of control over the use of new information and communication technologies in the production of statistics. Progress against each objective in each strategic theme in SHaSA 1 is outlined below.

Implementation of the Strategic Framework

Strategic theme 1: Produce quality statistics for Africa

Strategic objective 1.1: Broaden the information base

African countries have carried out various major activities in order to produce quality statistics for Africa. This has broadened the statistical information base and informed several socioeconomic indicators.

Strategic theme 2: Coordinate the production of quality statistics for Africa

Strategic objective 2.1: Strengthen cooperation between the different institutions of the African Statistical System

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) have created statistics units within their institutions. East African Community (EAC), ECCAS, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) each have a RSDS that is currently being implemented in their respective regions. The challenges to be met by RECs concern the lack of capacity, the problem of financial and human resources, poor institutional infrastructure, etc.

Strategic objective 2.2: Put in place an effective coordination mechanism

The Committee of Directors-General of NSOs (CoDG) acts as the policy organ at the level of the African Union.

Strategic objective 2.3: Define the priority statistics for the implementation of the integration process

AUC, AfDB, and ECA have developed an approach that enables the measurement of the level of integration of RECs and of the continent. The instrument chosen to measure the level of integration is a Regional Integration Index, which comprises five dimensions: (i) trade integration; (ii) regional infrastructure; (iii) productive integration; (iv) free movement of people; and (v) financial and macro-economic integration.

Strategic theme 3: Strengthen the African Statistical System's sustainable institutional capacity

Strategic objective 3.1: Reform and strengthen National Statistical Systems

Most African countries have incorporated statistics into their national development plans as tools for the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies; as of February 2017, only six African countries were not planning to develop or update their NSDS.

Strategic objective 3.2: Develop sustainable statistics capacity

In 2013, the Pan-African Centre for Statistics Training was created. Several countries have adopted statistics laws and regulatory statistics frameworks. Most African countries have National Statistics Councils and NSOs are becoming increasingly autonomous and professionally independent. An African Group on Statistical Training and Human Resources (AGROST) was established in 2009 under the aegis of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa).

Strategic objective 3.3:

Put in place an effective technological environmental

The actors of the African Statistical System are increasingly improving their technological equipment and state-of-the-art software to facilitate the accurate and timely collection, processing, and dissemination of data, and data storage.

Strategic theme 4: Promote a culture of policy and quality decision-making

Strategic objective 4.1: Take decisions based on facts through the increased use of statistics

Countries are increasingly basing their policy decisions on statistical data. This poses a real challenge to the African Statistical System to provide quality and reliable data often within tight deadlines.

Strategic objective 4.2: Improve the communication of statistics information

Improvement of the communication of statistical information remains a challenge, especially for those countries that are not yet endowed with a communications strategy and a plan for the dissemination of data.

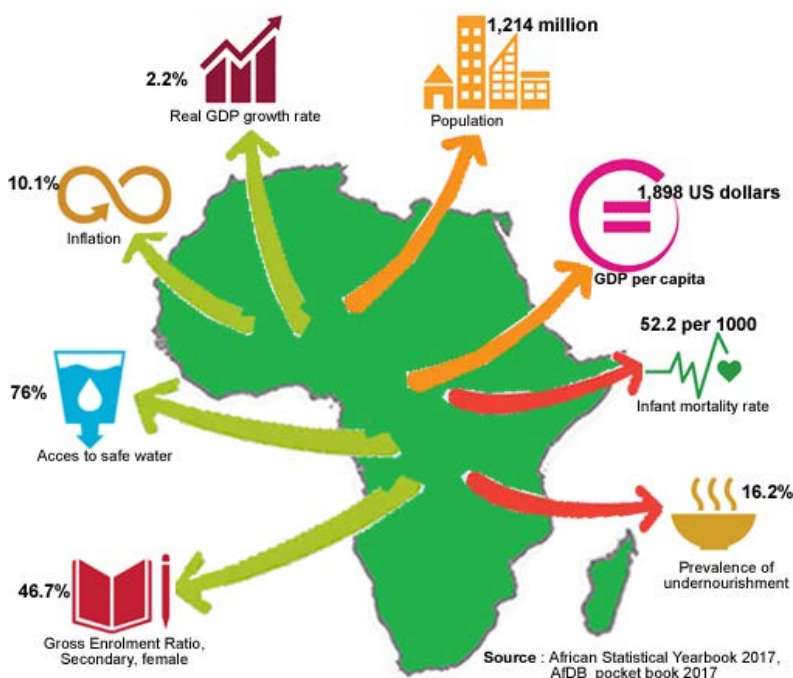
Specialized Technical Groups

Of the Specialized Technical Groups (STGs) put in place within the framework of SHaSA 1, 11 have met and had varying degrees of success in terms of securing their mandates, and range in focus from National Accounts, to Demography, to Gender Statistics, etc.

Lessons Learned

The unabridged SHaSA 2 document identifies a number of lessons learned from the implementation of SHaSA 1 and proposes actions to implement these lessons and overcome possible challenges.

SHASA 2: Vision, Themes and strategic objectives



The vision of the African Statistical System has been defined as: "An efficient statistical system that generates reliable, harmonized and timely statistical information covering all dimensions of political, economic, social, environmental and cultural development and integration of Africa."

The Vision is based on four strategic themes, which are to: (i) Produce quality statistics for Africa; (ii) Coordinate the production of quality statistics for Africa; (iii) Develop sustainable institutional capacity in the African Statistical System; and (iv) Promote a policy culture and quality decision-making.

Themes and Strategic Objectives

SHaSA 2 aims to achieve the vision outlined above over the period 2017-2026 by pursuing the strategic themes and objectives that are set out in Table 3 below. For a comprehensive matrix of themes, objectives, outcomes and indicators, please see chapter 5 of the unabridged SHaSA 2 document.

Table 3: Strategic themes and objectives of SHASA 2

Code	Strategic Theme	Objectives
1.	Strategic Theme 1	<i>To produce quality statistics for Africa</i>
1.1	Strategic Objective 1.1	To expand the statistical information base
1.2	Strategic Objective 1.2	To transform existing statistics for comparability
1.3	Strategic Objective 1.3	To harmonize the standards and methods of statistical production
2.	Strategic Theme 2:	<i>To coordinate the production of quality statistics for Africa</i>
2.1	Strategic Objective 2.1	To establish effective coordination and collaboration mechanisms
2.2	Strategic Objective 2.2	To define statistical priorities to implement the integration and development agendas
3.	Strategic Theme 3:	<i>To develop sustainable institutional capacity in the African Statistical System</i>
3.1	Strategic Objective 3.1	To reform and enhance National Statistical Systems
3.2	Strategic Objective 3.2	To reform and enhance regional and continental statistical systems
3.3	Strategic Objective 3.3	To develop sustainable statistical capacities
3.4	Strategic Objective 3.4	To establish an effective technological environment
4.	Strategic Theme 4:	<i>To promote a culture of quality policy and decision-making</i>
4.1	Strategic Objective 4.1	To drive evidence-based decisions through the increase use of statistics
4.2	Strategic Objective 4.2	To improve the communication of statistical information

i. Strategic theme 1: Produce quality statistics for Africa

The first strategic theme is a clear approach to ensure the availability of information in all domains of development and integration.

Strategic objective 1.1: Expand the information base: to cover all the domains of development and integration, as well as to adapt the production of statistics to align to the economic structures and activities of Member States. This will entail a number of varied approaches, namely: the regular conduct of surveys on population and households, agricultural censuses, economic surveys, the strengthening and exploitation of administrative sources, including civil status registration, the development of trade registers, geographic frames, big data, and local administrative sources.

Strategic objective 1.2: Transform the existing statistics for comparability: This requires the adoption of methodologies for reprocessing and adjustment, and the production and validation of comparable data, enabling quality decision-making in support of development programs and integration.

Strategic objective 1.3: Harmonize the standards and methods of statistical production: This objective seeks to adapt international norms and methods to African realities to increase availability of harmonized statistical data, in support of the integration and development programs.

ii. Strategic theme 2: Coordinate the production of quality statistics for Africa

Uncoordinated interventions of different actors not only lead to the duplication of activities, but also to the ineffective use of the scarce resources.

Strategic objective 2.1: Establish effective coordination and collaboration mechanisms. This implies (i) the implementation of a protocol defining the roles and responsibilities of each actor of the African Statistical System, (ii) the strengthening of the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) and (iii) cooperation between the different actors.

Strategic objective 2.2: Define the statistical priorities to implement the integration and development agendas. The identification of priority statistics and the selection and definition of statistical indicators will lead to a harmonized work program for the African Statistical System.

iii. Strategic theme 3: Develop the sustainable institutional capacity in the African Statistical System

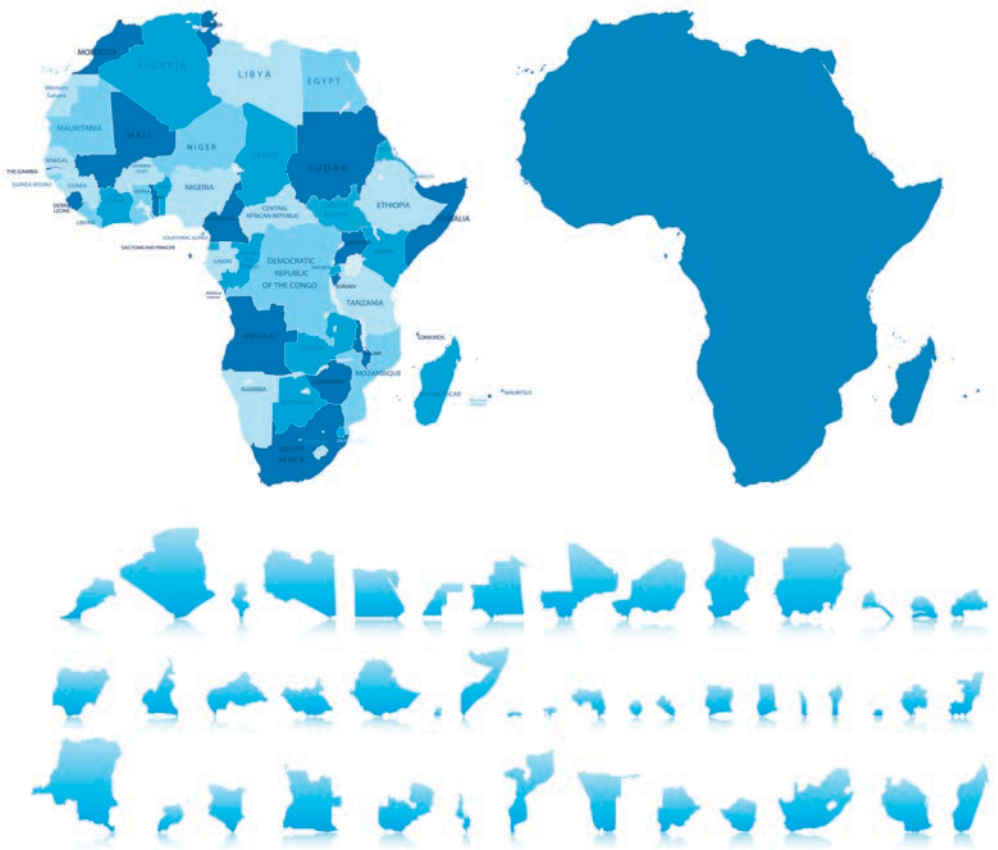
Building the capacity of the African Statistical System lies at the heart of this strategy because in its absence, the members of the African Statistical System will not be able to produce and disseminate quality and harmonized statistics that are necessary for development and the integration process.

Strategic objective 3.1: Reform and enhance National Statistical Systems. Activities at the national level include: the adoption of statistics laws and regulatory frameworks conforming to the African Charter on Statistics; the development of a professional Code of Ethics for African statisticians; the integration of statistics into national development processes; the development and implementation of NSDSs, leading to better planning, sustainable development, and improved coordination of statistical activities.

Strategic objective 3.2: Reform and enhance regional and continental statistical systems, including: the creation of units in charge of statistics in the Secretariats of RECs that do not yet have them (CEN-SAD, IGAD); the strengthening of the statistical functions of RECs; and the operationalization of the African Union Institute for Statistics of the (STATAFRIC). The key expected outcomes are: harmonized programs and better coordination of statistical development across the continent.

Strategic objective 3.3: Develop sustainable statistical capacity through the development of a harmonized training program; the establishment and strengthening of in-service training centers within NSOs; the strengthening of statistics and demographic training schools and centers; the operationalization of the Pan-African Training Centre for Statistics; etc.

Strategic objective 3.4: Establish an effective technological environment; for example, Management Information Systems (MIS) to ensure (i) the monitoring of the integration program; (ii) the creation of a statistical database; and (iii) the standardization of dissemination tools and platforms.



iv. Strategic theme 4: Promote a culture of quality policy and decision-making

The lack of appreciation of the importance of statistics can lead to underfunding by governments of crucial statistical initiatives, leading to the low level of up-to-date and reliable statistics across the continent.

Strategic objective 4.1: Drive evidence-based decisions through the increased use of statistics. This objective will be realized by approaching decision-makers and policy-makers to advocate for the use of statistics in their speeches and policy-making.

Strategic objective 4.2: Improve the communication of statistical information. This implies the development of a strategy for the dissemination of data and a communications plan, which will culminate in the increased use of statistics and an improvement in the quality of policies and decisions.



Expected outcomes and developmental effects of SHASA 2

It is expected that the implementation of SHaSA 2 will lead to the production of comparable statistics and hence to better implementation and outcomes of programs and policies at all levels: national, regional, continental, and international. Moreover, the harmonization of statistical methods and practices across the continent will bolster the regional integration program of Africa.

The main initiatives and outcomes that emanate from the strategic objectives include: (i) the adoption of common international norms adapted to African realities; (ii) a better coordination of development efforts and the sustainable production of a wide range of harmonized statistics in order to inform political decisions and measure progress made in the implementation of development agendas. Ultimately, SHaSA 2 should assist a number of the pan-African objectives underpinning the integration agenda.

Governance, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SHaSA 2

Governance

A framework of governance structures has been developed for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SHaSA 2, and regular reporting on its progress. This mechanism defines the roles of governance organizations, taking into account their existing capacities and their particular areas of expertise and strengths, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity (for organogram and description of activities, see unabridged SHaSA 2 document).

Implementation

Specialized Technical Groups

The Specialized Technical Groups (STGs) will be revitalized in order to continue their activities in each identified statistical area under the coordination of countries and the responsibility of the AU Statistical Institute. The STGs will prepare and implement sectoral action plans for statistical harmonization in the area concerned; they will develop and/or adopt international standards and methodological guidelines for statistical harmonization in their respective fields. The AU Institute for Statistics with the support of Pan-African Organizations will assist African countries in the implementation of these standards and methodologies.

Lead Countries or Champions: Lead countries or champions will be designated to lead on the STGs. Pan-African institutions will provide the secretariat for the various groups. STATAFRIC will establish the programs of activities of the STGs (see unabridged SHaSA 2 document for list of countries).

The African Union Institute for Statistics: The AU Institute for Statistics (STATAFRIC) will be the Secretariat for SHaSA 2's implementation and will coordinate the work of the STGs, carry out technical audits with RECs and Member States to verify statistical operations, collection methodologies and instruments used, collection processes etc., certification of data with a view to guarantee the quality of the statistics produced on Africa, and the uniqueness of the sources given on the continent. It will also have to carry out organizational audits (peer evaluation of the NSS, etc.).

The Pan-African Statistical Training Centre: The Pan-African Statistical Training Centre will be a complementary structure to existing schools and training centers and will fill the missing links in training programs.

Enhanced partnerships

This new statistical landscape calls for other types of partnerships, notably with the private sector, which can contribute to the financing of statistics, foundations, civil society, development partners, researchers, academics, media and journalists, and users, among others, both inside and outside the African continent.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring makes it possible to identify the current potentials as quickly as possible in order to make adjustments or take any necessary corrective measures. The reporting mechanism specifies the different reports that need to be prepared as well as their frequency. It also indicates the entities that are responsible for preparing the reports, as well as the audiences for which they are intended. It enables the sharing of information on implementation among the different stakeholders of the African Statistical System and its partners.

The evaluation will assess: (i) the progress of the activities and the achievement of expected outputs; (ii) the quality of the work undertaken and the products obtained, including timeliness; and (iii) the use of resources. During this exercise, lessons will be learned, and corrective actions will be taken to improve implementation. The M&E activities will be carried out at quarterly, half-yearly, annual, and biannual intervals according to their specificities.

Political will, leadership and behaviour change

To ensure that the African Statistical System works as effectively and efficiently as possible over the coming years and is able to meet the increased demand for data, political leaders will be required to prioritize quality, timely, reliable, and harmonized statistical production across the continent.

Fostering political will and commitment

A significant lesson learned from the implementation of SHaSA 1 has been that political will is vital to ensure that statistics are prioritized in national and regional programs. Consequently, in order to signal political will and commitment, the African Union Commission should:

- Continue to advocate for all countries that have not yet ratified the African Charter on Statistics to do so as soon as possible; and
- Invite Member States to adapt their national statistical laws to the requirements of the Charter.

In addition, Member States may wish to exchange their best practices and experiences such as the adoption by Tunisia of its own National Charter of Statistics based on the African Charter on Statistics.

Increasing and allocating resources

It is widely accepted that large-scale statistical activities such as censuses and surveys require considerable resources. However, there are countless other activities that are necessary to ensure the effective functioning of statistical systems, such as the promotion of the utilization of administrative data sources. The decision of the Heads of State and Government to allocate 0.15% of the national budget each year to statistical activities is therefore welcome. However, to make commitments such as this will not be sufficient to create sustainable statistical systems unless it is put into action and made tangible in budget decisions.

Utilizing and advocating for statistics

Political commitment to increased resource allocation would help to revolutionize the production of statistics. However, political leaders must also commit to improved advocacy for statistics and their effective use. Political actors have an important role to play in elevating the importance of statistics by promoting their use in key policy -and decision-making processes.



Leadership

At the national level, it is firstly incumbent on Directors-General of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to play the role of coordinators and ensure the harmonization of statistics across the entire NSS. This activity is one of the major priorities – if not the most important priority of SHaSA 2. At present, the low level of political commitment to statistics has resulted in the continent facing a chronic deficit in statistical financing, with only about 20% of the needs provided for by national resources. This high dependence on external resources does not allow for efficient strategic planning of statistical activities and makes it very difficult to implement NSDSs.

In the chain of continental harmonization and coordination, RECs have an important role to play through the implementation of their integration policies, which are often accompanied by regional convergence mechanisms. It must be recognized however that at present, some RECs have little statistical capacity of their own.

At the continental level, mindful of the fact that SHaSA constitutes the roadmap for STATAFRIC and the Pan-African Centre for Statistics Training, pan-African institutions should continue to work in a complementary manner. In this regard, the AUC, which has been mandated to assume political leadership of the African Statistical System and which has elevated the role of statistics to the highest level of Heads of State and Government of the continent, will continue to play this role for the implementation of SHaSA 2.

Behavior Change

The implementation of SHaSA 2 calls for profound behavior change across the African Statistical System, most notably among statisticians themselves, particularly at the national level. Approaching their work as unbiased scientists with a commitment to a clear explanation of working methods and utilizing methodologies in a transparent way, statisticians must begin to see their role as integral to the functioning of country economies and societies. In addition, they must ensure that statistical products are delivered to users in a timely manner and according to pre-agreed and communicated timetables in order to increase the relevance and credibility of these products.

While the new demands being placed on statisticians are considerable, statisticians should also view the elevated importance placed on statistics as an opportunity to improve statistical production. They should therefore be open to embracing innovations. As National Statistical Systems become more inclusive, it will be necessary for statisticians and managers of statistical systems to build and sustain partnerships with diverse actors drawn from academia, the media, development partners, civil society, and the private sector. The NSS leadership must capitalize on political will and ensure that statistics are prioritized at the highest levels and remain an issue of national sovereignty.

At the regional level, members of the statistical divisions at the RECs must prioritize the drafting and implementation of RSDSs in line with their regional integration programs, and interact more effectively with Member States throughout these processes. At the continental level, all actors involved in supporting institutions must continue to regard statistical development and harmonization as matters of the highest priority, with resulting actions such as the resourcing of the continental institutions.

Action Plan

While responding to the demand of policymakers and users to have harmonized quality statistics necessary for the implementation of the integration and development programs of the continent, SHaSA responds to the need for the African Statistical System to have a tool for the harmonization of statistical activities in Africa. The successful implementation of SHaSA depends on: (i) political will at the highest level of the continent; (ii) the commitment of the members of the African Statistics System including the heads of national, regional and continental statistical systems; (iii) the operationalization of the AU Institute for Statistics and the Pan-African Statistical Training Centre; (iv) the change of behavior of statistical actors on the continent; (v) the implementation of the roadmap for the data revolution; and (vi) the mobilization of adequate resources to finance the implementation of the action plan. Continuous and active advocacy at all levels, dissemination and monitoring and evaluation of SHaSA with regular reports of the governance bodies are also critical for its effective implementation.

Financing Plan

To calculate the cost of implementation of SHaSA 2, each AU Member State was requested to provide information on the cost of their planned statistical activities for 2017-2026. Calculations were performed to estimate costs for countries that did not provide estimates. All regional-level activities were assessed and costed by Regional Economic Communities on the basis of their own experience. Pan-African organizations (AUC, AfDB, UNECA and ACBF) and AFRISTAT compiled the costs of activities at the continental level and the costs of the Specialized Technical Groups' activities were also included. The total estimated cost of the SHaSA 2 Action Plan is USD 11.09 billion over the ten-year period, of which USD 10.34 billion is for national level activities (93%). Regional level activities account for USD 0.19 billion (2%), and USD 0.56 billion is for continental level activities (5%). The largest proportion of the cost is allocated to activities associated with "Strategic Objective 1.1: Expand the information base", which includes activities such as Population and Housing Census, Household Agricultural and Economic Surveys, improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems and other core statistical activities.

Resources Mobilization Strategies

The Action Plan for SHaSA 2 is a results-based logical framework containing activities at the national, regional and continental levels. These activities are derived from the operationalization of the four strategic themes and related objectives, as well as coordination, monitoring and evaluation; these are to be implemented over a ten-year period from 2017-2026. Within the Results-Based Logical Framework Matrix, each activity is accompanied by the reference situation (baseline), target, objectively verifiable indicators, source of verification, risks, assumptions and mitigation measures, and the institution responsible for its implementation. The AU Institute for Statistics is to be mainly responsible for coordinating the implementation of SHaSA 2.



Conclusion

While responding to the demand of policymakers and users to have harmonized quality statistics necessary for the implementation of the integration and development programs of the continent, SHaSA responds to the need for the African Statistical System to have a tool for the harmonization of statistical activities in Africa. The successful implementation of SHaSA depends on: (i) political will at the highest level of the continent; (ii) the commitment of the members of the African Statistics System including the heads of national, regional and continental statistical systems; (iii) the operationalization of the AU Institute for Statistics and the Pan-African Statistical Training Centre; (iv) the change of behavior of statistical actors on the continent; (v) the implementation of the roadmap for the data revolution; and (vi) the mobilization of adequate resources to finance the implementation of the action plan. Continuous and active advocacy at all levels, dissemination and monitoring and evaluation of SHaSA with regular reports of the governance bodies are also critical for its effective implementation.





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Abridged Version

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