



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY  
BUILDING FOUNDATION

FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT  
DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

# The Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027

Transformative Capacities for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in Africa



**The Strategic Plan 2023 - 2027**  
Transformative Capacities for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in Africa

# Contents

<b>4</b>	FOREWORD
<b>5</b>	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
<b>6</b>	ACRONYMS
<b>7</b>	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<b>12</b>	1. INTRODUCTION
<b>15</b>	2. OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT
<b>19</b>	3. OVERVIEW OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE YEARS
<b>23</b>	4. LESSONS FROM THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022
<b>24</b>	5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY FOR 2023-2027
<b>27</b>	6. CORE ELEMENTS OF OUR BUSINESS MODEL
<b>32</b>	7. OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2023-2027
<b>50</b>	8. THEORY OF CHANGE
<b>54</b>	9. STRATEGY DELIVERY MODALITIES
<b>60</b>	10. ORGANIZATIONAL ENABLERS
<b>63</b>	11. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING
<b>66</b>	12. RISK MANAGEMENT
<b>68</b>	13. CONCLUSION
<b>70</b>	ANNEXES
<b>72</b>	ANNEX I – RESULT CHAINS
<b>73</b>	ANNEX II. STRATEGY RESULTS MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

## FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Strategic Plan 2023-2027 of the African Capacity-Building Foundation (ACBF), which outlines how our institution will support our collective effort towards the economic and social transformation of our continent over the next five years.

We African countries are increasingly and consciously making capacity development a priority. ACBF defines capacity development as a process through which we create a social, economic, and political environment conducive to improving our abilities to actively play our respective roles over time. It, therefore, requires high-level political commitment, collective action and bold responses. Eliminating institutional defects and skills deficits constitutes an imperative for accelerating growth and transformation in Africa. Over the years, we have made progress in developing the capabilities of our people and institutions at country, regional, and continental levels thanks to our Institution, other like-minded organizations, and the support of our generous partners. However, we must recognize that a lot more needs to be done to accelerate the economic and social transformation of our continent to offer opportunities to our rapidly growing youth population and to women, not as targets for development, but as actors of their own empowerment.

We are facing challenging times, with the critical tasks of managing the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, tackling

youth unemployment, addressing the effects of high inflation on our citizens' purchasing power, high poverty levels, and the increasing threat of climate change despite our reduced footprint in global warming. We need to accelerate capacity development to improve our ability to address these urgent challenges.

Success in developing human capital and institutional strength in the critical impact areas of this Strategic Plan – climate change and energy for productive use; agribusiness and food sovereignty; trade as an engine of economic development; and economic and social governance – will significantly support our efforts to create opportunities for our youth and women in agriculture, climate change and off-grid energy generation, and trade. Capacity in these areas will also contribute to our effort to achieve results for the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

For this potential to materialize, the implementation of this Strategic Plan will require, for its resourcing, the enhanced commitment and ownership of African countries and institutions and the unwavering support of our development partners. I am confident that all ACBF current and future stakeholders will pull their weight for its successful implementation.

### **Hon. Ken Ofori Atta**

Minister of Finance of the Republic of Ghana  
Chair, ACBF Board of Governors

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Strategic Plan 2023-2027 offers the unique opportunity to revisit our priorities and ensure they are aligned with those of African countries. To ensure this alignment, the development of our Strategic Plan was informed by consultations with our key stakeholders, namely our member states, partners, Executive Board and staff.

The development of this Plan was conducted with the effective support of the members of a Strategic Advisory Panel (SAP) that I set up with membership drawn from among high-level development practitioners. The SAP supported the strategy development process with candid views, fresh and innovative perspectives, unbiased viewpoints, up-to-date expertise, a vast experience base and critical analytical skills.

Our Strategic Plan 2023-2027 chooses to be intentionally disruptive, as compared with the previous ones, in terms of its selectivity. First, we considered the Founders' vision of the public sector as a central target of the capacity development effort in Africa, given the unique role of governments in promoting and facilitating economic transformation. The interventions proposed by this Plan will cover the private sector, academia and training institutions, research institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs). We believe that a capable public sector will create the enabling environment that fosters the participation and contribution of all these players to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. Second, from consultations, background research and analysis, we identified, four specific areas where we would

like to make an impact. Third, in order to achieve more impact, we chose to focus our human capital development and institutional strengthening efforts on ecosystems rather than on individual institutions in silos. Fourth, under this Strategic Plan, we committed to going a step further than assessing capacity needs and formulating capacity development strategies to support policy implementation.

We will also rationalize our approach using a unique product with three arms: the Institutional Accelerator Model for organizational strengthening; the African Capacity Building Academy for human capital development; and the Knowledge Hub for knowledge generation and sharing services. These programmatic innovations will sharpen our capacity development offer and our response to our target institutions' challenges. Successfully delivering on this Plan will require strengthening the internal capacity of our institution and building effective partnerships.

I am confident that for the successful implementation of this Plan, I can count on the continued unwavering support of our member states and institutional members, our partners, our dedicated staff and our committed network of capacity development institutions across Africa.

I thank you all, once again, for your support in developing this Strategic Plan, and I look forward to implementing it with your continued guidance.

**Mamadou Biteye**  
Executive Secretary

## ACRONYMS

ACBF	African Capacity-Building Foundation
ACR	Africa Capacity Report
AERC	African Economic Research Consortium
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AFGO	African Financial Governance Outlook
AU	African Union
BIDPA	Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis
CADERDT	Centre Autonome d'Etudes et de Renforcement des Capacités pour le Développement au Togo
CAMERCAP	Centre d'Analyse et de Recherche sur les Politiques Economiques et Sociales du Cameroun
CEPOD	Centre d'Etudes des Politiques de Développement
COVID-19	Novel coronavirus disease 2019
EDRI	Ethiopian Development Research Institute
EPM	Economic Policy Management
GCF	Green Climate Fund
IPIECE	Impact, Partnership, Inclusiveness, Efficiency, Communication, and Effectiveness
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDEG	Institute for Democratic Governance
IEA	International Energy Agency
IPAR	Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (Rwanda)
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NILDS	National Institute for Legislative and Development Studies
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PFM	Public Financial management
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
R&D	Research & Development
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
STYIP	Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (of AU Agenda 2063)
UN	United Nations
WEF	World Economic Forum

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the **Strategic Plan of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) for the period 2023-2027**. The Plan was developed following consultations with our key stakeholders, including member states, partners, members of the Executive Board and ACBF staff. It also builds upon the conclusions of an independent background study commissioned to identify Africa's key development priorities over the next five years and the major capacity development challenges that need to be tackled for countries to successfully deliver on their national development plans. These strategic conversations and research findings revealed an extensive array of capacity development priorities to be addressed in order to support Africa's transformation process. In selecting the impact areas for this Plan, we were guided by the ethos behind the creation of our Institution, the priority areas identified during the consultations with our key stakeholders, the findings of the background research, the analyses carried out and trends uncovered during the strategy development process.

The outcomes of the consultations, study and analysis point to Africa-specific issues such as insecurity and terrorism in many areas of the continent, rapid population growth, insufficient job creation, growing climate and health threats. There is also persistent energy poverty, slow economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued effects of traditional beliefs and practices such as female genital mutilation. These issues were further compounded by the intensifying United States-China rivalry, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and the attendant economic

shocks, particularly high inflationary pressure, rising food and energy insecurity, and soaring cost of living across the continent.

Conversely, the findings also revealed Africa's unique comparative advantages, such as its youthful and dynamic youth, its rapid urbanization and expanding middle class, and its rich endowment in natural and strategic resources, including those that are vital for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and their potential for value creation and transformation. There was also the launch on 1 January 2021 of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is set to become the continent's new engine of growth and integration. In addition, there is continuing commitment to the United Nations Global Agenda 2030 and the vision underpinning the African Union Agenda 2063 of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena." (AU Agenda 2063)

It is against this backdrop that our Strategic Plan 2023-2027 proposes a purpose-driven approach to capacity development, with the aim of building the required human capital and institutional strength for transformative change in four priority impact areas, namely **Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use; Agribusiness and Food Sovereignty; Trade as an Engine of Economic Development and Economic and Social Governance**. This is an ambitious Strategic Plan but one that is commensurate with the scale and importance of capacity development in Africa.

Fully cognizant of the magnitude of capacity challenges in each of these key impact areas, we will exercise selectivity and prioritization in our interventions by focusing them on the following specific dimensions, working with a wide array of partners:



### **Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use**

- Improving the capacity of Member States to develop bankable climate adaptation projects to increase resources for the financing of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- Enhancing the capacity of the private sector, especially micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to leverage opportunities in climate change to grow



### **Agribusiness and Food Sovereignty**

- Improve the capacity of the state to promote private sector investment in the agricultural value chains
- Enhance the capacity of the private sector, especially MSMEs, for value addition to agricultural products to reduce the impact of their seasonality and post-harvest losses



### **Trade as an Engine of Economic Development**

- Improve the capacity of the state to domesticate (integration into national laws, regulations and playbooks) of trade agreements for better implementation
- Increase awareness of the private sector, especially MSMEs, of the provisions of these agreements and build MSMEs' capacity to leverage the opportunities they offer



### **Economic and Social Governance**

- Enhance the capacity of the state for evidence-based policy formulation
- Improve the capacity of state actors for domestic resource mobilization,
- Improve soft capacities (leadership, accountability) in public finance management

We will address capacity challenges in these specific dimensions in government and the public sector, in the private sector, civil society, academia and research institutions. Throughout the Plan's implementation, we will pay particular attention to four cross-cutting issues, namely, **increasing youth empowerment, enhancing gender equity, boosting digitalization and strengthening data talent.**

Our overall Strategic Direction over the period 2023-2027 is to enhance Africa's transformation ecosystem with fit-for-purpose capacity development solutions for inclusive growth and sustainable development. The Plan aims to achieve the following strategic goals:

### The Plan aims to achieve the following strategic goals:



#### Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use

To enhance capacity for climate adaptation and resilience building in member countries



#### Agribusiness and Food Sovereignty

To promote wealth and job creation through increased investment in food sovereignty and value addition



#### Trade as an Engine of Economic Development

To enable increased MSME access to intra-African cross border trade

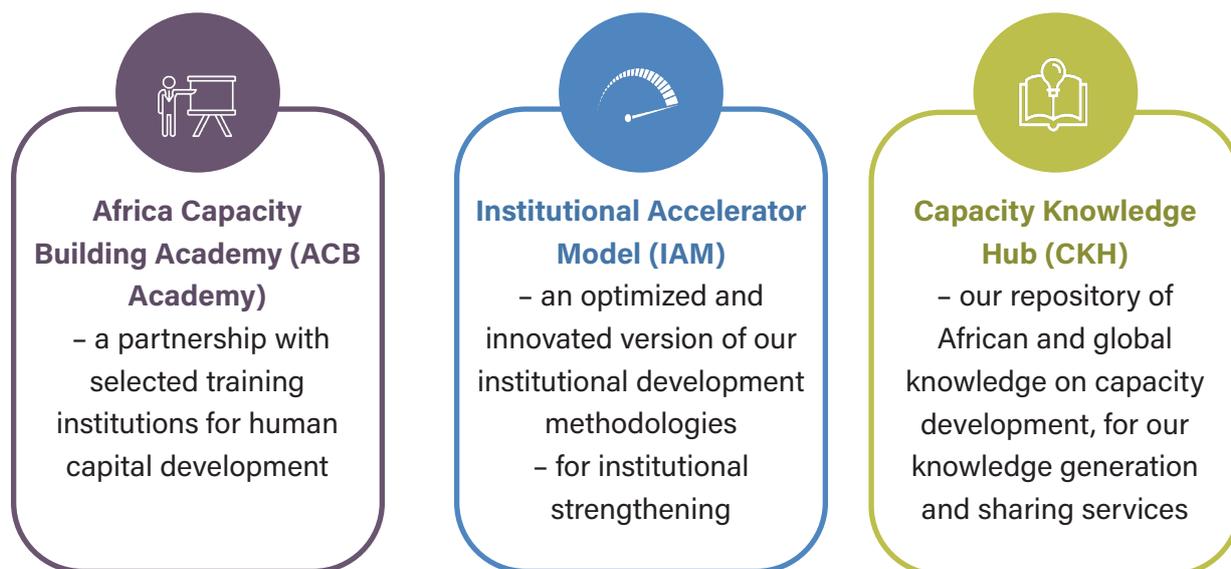


#### Economic and Social Governance

To improve purpose-driven economic and social governance

**Our Strategic Results Chain is presented in Table 1 at the end of this Executive Summary.**

**The implementation of this Strategic Plan will use three unique components:**



The **IAM** is articulated around several parameters including tools, target institutions, country and regional prioritization, partnerships, and building the capacity of capacity-building institutions. The **ACB Academy** will offer specialized training on topics relevant to Africa's development in partnership with existing country, regional and continental training institutions. The **Knowledge Hub** will collect, generate and share knowledge to inform our capacity development initiatives both independently and in support of the IAM and the ACB-Academy.

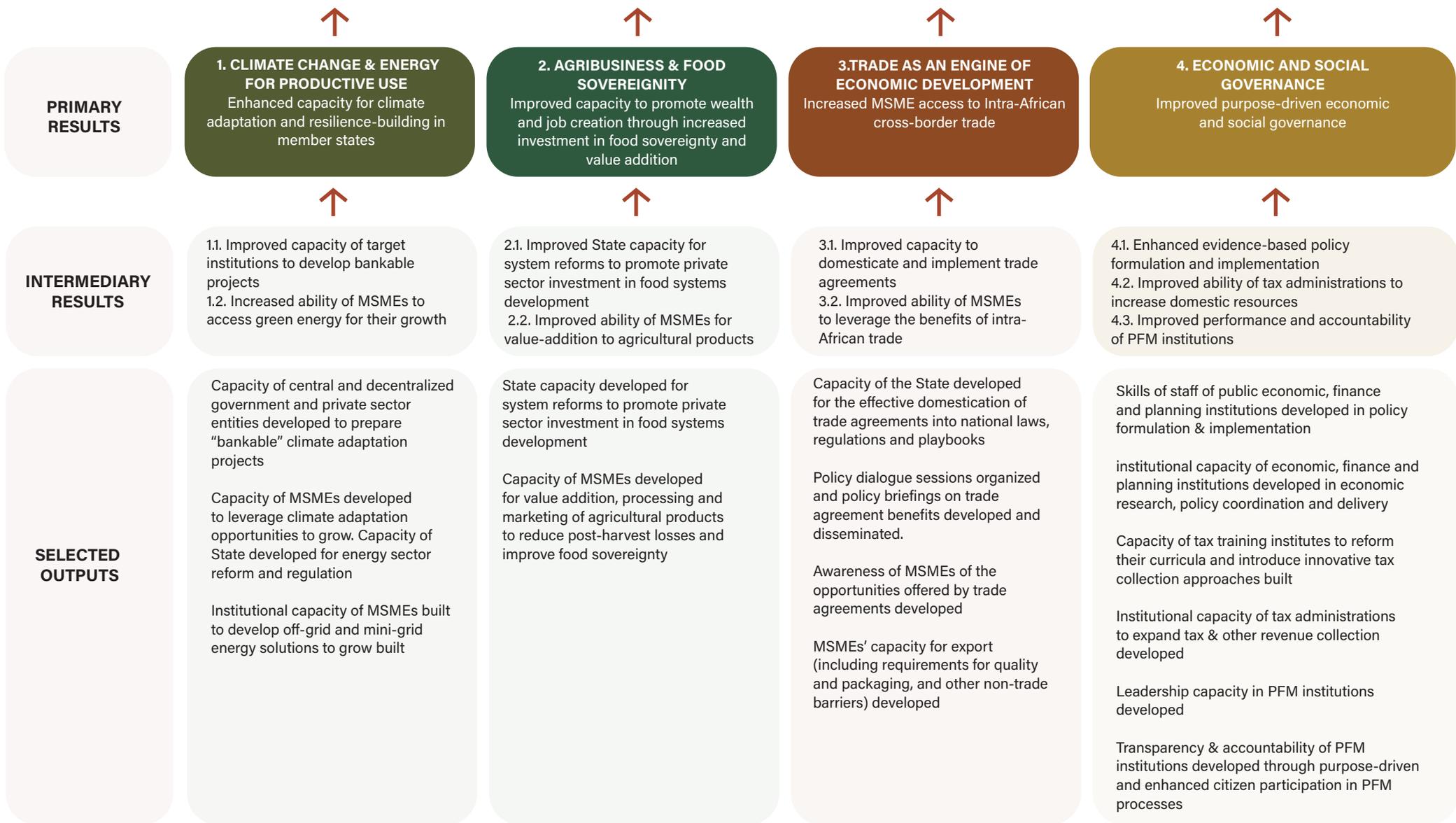
To optimize the impact of this Strategic Plan, we will work to further enhance several organizational enablers within ACBF. These include *Investment in People; Systems and Processes; Partnerships; Innovation, Communication and Impact Measurement.*

In implementing the Strategic Plan 2023-2027, we will conduct regular monitoring of activities and periodic assessments of the Strategy's performance. These will enable us to appropriately address implementation challenges and ensure effective delivery of results. A comprehensive Strategy Results Measurement Framework (SRMF) was developed as the critical instrument to support the results-based Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) component of the Strategic Plan.

We have identified potential risks to the successful implementation of this Strategic Plan and we have proposed mitigation measures. We will monitor these risks and other emerging ones to ensure success.

# STRATEGIC RESULTS CHAIN

A prosperous, resilient and inclusive Africa



STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Skills development

+

Institutional development / strengthening

+

Knowledge generation and sharing

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) plans its activities at three levels: a **long-term horizon** articulated in our Vision, which is informed by our Constitution; a **medium-term horizon** guided by our 5-year Strategic Plan; and an **annual horizon** expressed in our annual Business Plan.

This Strategic Plan 2023-2027 is prepared on the basis of the outcomes from consultations with the institution's governors, partners and members of the Executive Board and the findings of a background study which highlighted Africa's key development priorities over the next five years. Also factored in are the major capacity development challenges that could hamper the successful implementation of national development plans. This Strategic Plan builds on our institutional strengths, focusing on areas where we can add value, such as youth employment, gender, digitalization and data, as well as potential partnerships to be forged for its implementation. With a population doubling every 25 years, African countries are mindful of the urgency of accelerating the development of their human and institutional capabilities for attaining the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU Agenda 2063.

The Strategic Plan has been developed against the backdrop of a challenging and rapidly shifting global landscape, exacerbated by geopolitical tensions and global supply-chain disruptions, the concurrent health, climate and

energy crises, the slow post-COVID recovery of African economies, and high inflation. Despite this context, the Plan also builds on the continent's comparative advantages such as its youthful and dynamic population; its rapid urbanization and expanding middle class; its rich endowment in natural and strategic resources and their potential for value creation and transformation; and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) mechanism set to become the continent's new engine for growth and regional integration.

In line with our Vision and Mission, this Plan aims to contribute to the realization of the aspiration of a continent that seeks to achieve transformative, inclusive and sustainable development steered by its human capital, effective institutions and the maximization of its natural resources through the pursuit of an innovation-driven industrialization agenda. The Plan intends to do so by supporting efforts to achieve the SDGs and contributing to the execution of the Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan (STYIP) of Agenda 2063, while ensuring youth empowerment and gender equity in all the initiatives it will support.



## 1.1. Our Vision

A prosperous, resilient and Inclusive Africa



## 1.2. Our Mission

To develop the human capital and institutions required to enable Africa's inclusive and sustainable development.



## 1.3. Who We Are

### 1.3.1. Creation and Membership

ACBF is a pan-African institution established in 1991 by African countries with the support of their bilateral and multilateral partners. The creation of ACBF was in response to the severity of capacity challenges in Africa and the need to offer a common governance platform for partners' investment in the capacity development process on the continent. ACBF has established itself as a leading capacity development institution and has increased its membership from 12 countries at inception to 40 countries to date.

### 1.3.2. Our Value Proposition

We develop human capital and accelerate institutional development to enable Africa to address its current and future sustainable development challenges.

### 1.3.3. Our Credentials

**Relevance:** Africa has adopted Agenda 2063, an ambitious vision for the continent's transformation to fully meet the needs of a population that doubles every 25 years. Achieving this ambition requires massive and steady investment in developing human capital and institutions. We are the only pan-African organization entirely and exclusively devoted to human capital and institutional development with an Africa-wide scope.

**Experience:** We have demonstrated our ability to deliver capacity development programs for over three decades and achieved meaningful results, especially in improving policy making and implementation practices through our support to policy think tanks and policy institutes in Africa. We have also proven our capacity to work in diverse environments and in all circumstances across the continent.

**Credibility:** We have gained the trust and financial support of African governments and partners committed to developing human capital and building institutions in almost every African country. As a result, we have been conferred the status of Specialized Agency of the African Union for Capacity Development, giving us further legitimacy to act on behalf of Africa while remaining an autonomous entity.

**Access to Governments:** Our Governors, also our clients, are the Ministers of Finance and/or Economic Development of our member states.

**Networks:** We have built a rich community of local partner institutions across Africa and we maintain a network of readily deployable and reputable experts, who are selected globally.

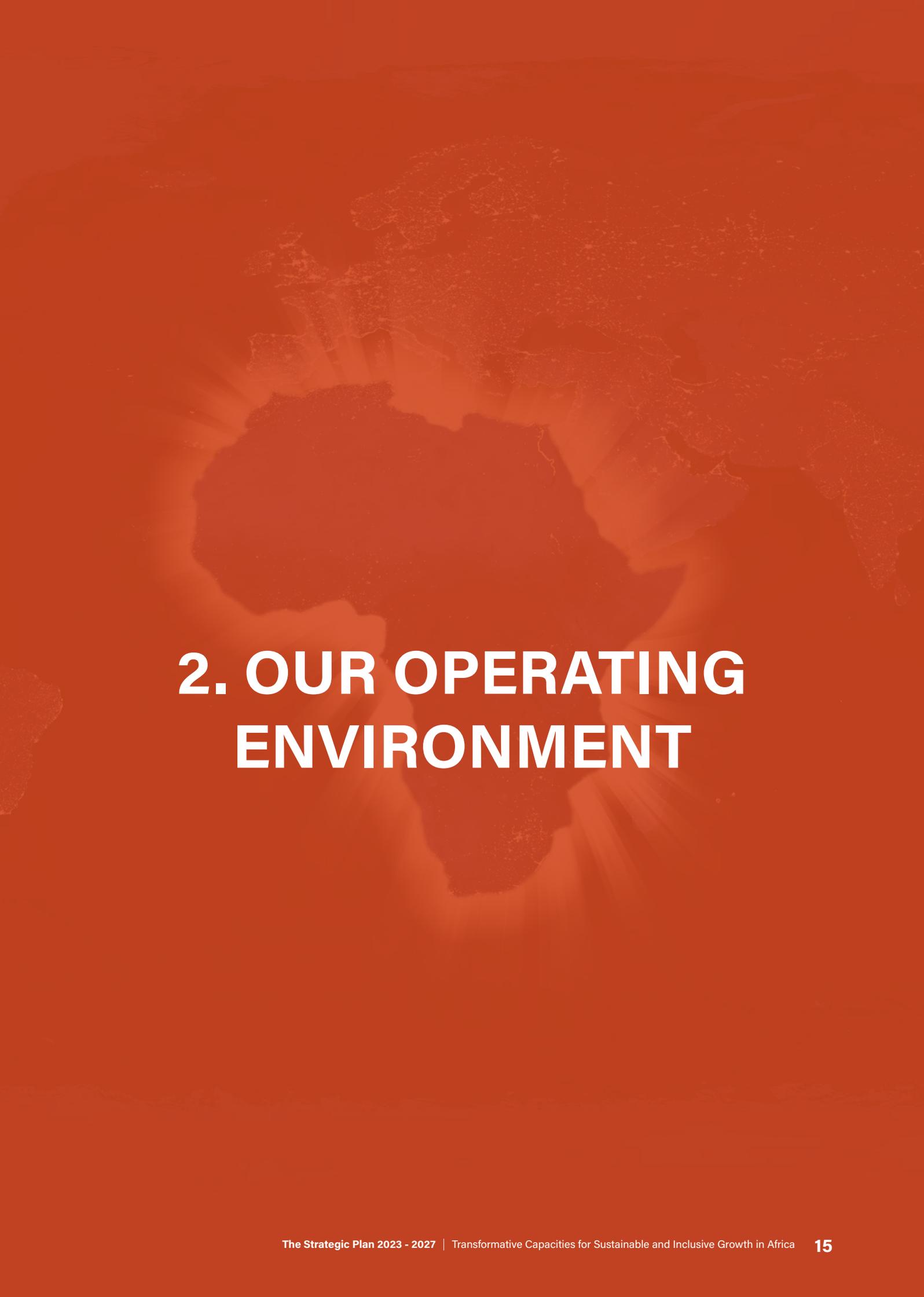
**Strength and integrity of financial and fiduciary systems:** We maintain world-class financial and fiduciary systems through which we have managed substantial amounts of financial resources in grants entrusted to us by various partners and subjected to regular internal audit assurance, annual external audits and audit reviews.



## 1.4. Our Values

**We operate according to the values of:**

- **Accountability:** We insist on honest and ethical behavior towards others and avoid wasteful use of resources entrusted to us.
- **Innovation:** We work relentlessly to improve our services.
- **Excellence:** We strive to be the best at what we do and maximize the value of our resources for all stakeholders.
- **Partnership:** We believe addressing Africa's capacity challenges requires collaboration.
- **Communication:** We say what we intend to do and share what we have done.



## **2. OUR OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

## 2.1. Africa's development landscape

Africa is at a major development crossroads, with a specific development context that includes the rapid growth of its population, set to rise from 1.3 billion today to 4 billion by 2100, and its rapid urbanization, with cities doubling in size every 25-30 years. This context offers undeniable development potential, provided that the right capabilities are developed across the continent to empower women and youth, promote social cohesion, mitigate and adapt to climate change. Related requirements include effective service delivery in conditions of security and rule of law; green energy; climate-smart food systems and effective social services. The continent's development

landscape is also impacted by global challenges such as high inflation rates, food insecurity, slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as intensifying geopolitical tensions, notably the Russia-Ukraine war, and the United States of America-China rivalry. These contextual factors and challenges require a massive investment in Africa's human and institutional capabilities to plan, design, and implement effective and resilient development programs. Such an investment is expected to be supported primarily by Africans and other stakeholders of the continent's development process.



To deliver on our mission, we remain mindful of our operating environment, continuously monitoring new developments and taking remedial action in our key impact areas as and when necessary. Developments in Africa's policies and institutional frameworks as well as in global, regional, and national arenas will be tracked to ensure that our initiatives remain tailored to Africa's priorities.

## 2.2. Africa's Capacity Development Landscape

### 2.2.1. Capacity Development Providers

**Africa's capacity development landscape features institutions working at country, regional and continental levels.**

- At country level, there are numerous organizations providing capacity development on various aspects of economic and social development. We work with many of them and they form a valuable part of the ACBF implementing partners' network. In recent years, embassies of developed countries have also been active in conducting capacity development interventions or supporting local institutions to implement projects on their behalf.
- At regional level, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) maintain robust capacity development activity for their own Commissions or Secretariats as well as for the benefit of their member states.
- At continental level, key African players besides ACBF include the African Development Bank through the African Development Institute, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC). International institutions with significant participation in

capacity development include United Nations (UN) agencies, especially the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the World Bank; International Monetary Fund (IMF); European Union Commission; Islamic Development Bank; United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Global Affairs Canada; United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID); and the Swedish International Development Agency.

- Better cooperation and coordination among these providers would certainly contribute to increasing the scale and effectiveness of capacity development efforts in Africa and lead to more lasting results.

### 2.2.2. Effectiveness of capacity development interventions in Africa

**Capacity remains a critical constraint to Africa's development and implementation capacity is consistently considered by partners as one of the major risks to some types of investment.**

Many factors could account for this challenge, including the following:

- Many capacity-building initiatives are limited to training. This approach does not consider the

fact that capacity problems may exist despite the availability of skilled individuals. The crucial factor here is the absence of an enabling environment in which technical skills could be effectively used and performance rewarded. Furthermore, effective implementation capacity requires appropriate project selection and sequencing of tasks; effective project management; coordination of key stakeholders, timely financing and continuous monitoring and progress evaluation.

-  An overwhelming proportion of the investments in capacity building is included in development projects (infrastructure, agriculture, health, etc.). However, when these projects are completed, there is no systematic attempt to assess if the planned capacities were built in the process.
-  The complexity of measuring capacity building is due to the absence of good metrics and instruments for capturing changes resulting from the capacity-

improvement interventions. An institution's capacity is developed through three steps: first the identification, through a capacity assessment, of the institution's ability to deliver, sustain its delivery performance over time, manage change and achieve resilience to shocks; second, through policy and programmatic responses that drive improvement in the areas where gaps are identified; and finally, the ability to evaluate changes resulting from the capacity improvement interventions. Only a few capacity development actors and initiatives duly follow this process. Additional important factors that impede effective implementation include cumbersome or problematic regulatory frameworks; inadequate financing; organizational inefficiencies around project and program implementation and inconsistent political commitment to change and reform.



# 3. OVERVIEW OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE YEARS

# 3.1. Programmatic Achievements

We have been widely acknowledged for our contributions to Africa's development process over the years through our work in human capital development, institution-building and knowledge sharing. Below is a brief overview of these achievements.

## 3.1.1. Human Capital Development

We consider human capital development in its global meaning, spanning a broad range of areas including **education, skills development, health, food systems, nutrition, gender and social protection**. We contribute to the overall human capital development ecosystem through the skills development dimension and the ripple effect it produces on the other aspects.



We have supported over 70 higher education institutions across Africa promoting curriculum reform, equipping libraries and training faculty in Departments of Economics. We have also provided numerous non-degree training programs that have increased by more than 50,000 the pool of middle- and senior-level economists and development managers in public policy, public sector management, and financial management. One of our most successful human capital development programs is the Economic Policy Management (EPM) program, offered by seven universities, namely Makerere in Uganda, University of Ghana, Yaoundé 2 in Cameroon, Cocody Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire, Lusaka (UNILUS) in Zambia, Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique and Kinshasa (UNIKIN) in the Democratic Republic of Congo. More than 90% of EPM graduates perform key leadership roles in the public sector, including in key ministries, departments and agencies.

Another ACBF program, the Public Sector Management Training Program (PSMTP) is offered on a regional basis in three tertiary institutions, namely the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), Ecole nationale d'administration (ENA) in Gabon and Africa University in Zimbabwe. The program has not only provided civil servants in West, Central and Southern Africa with opportunities to learn new concepts and tools to improve their work but has also created networks for peer-learning and continuous development.



During the implementation of the ACBF Strategic Plan 2017-2022, our human capital development efforts focused on demand-driven training programs including management, marketing and other business skills for women and youth in agriculture and entrepreneurship.

### 3.1.2. Institution Building



Our contribution to the institutional development of think tanks in Africa is particularly significant. ACBF has supported the creation and/or strengthening of some 35 think tanks and policy institutes across the continent. We have helped to establish them as sustainable institutions that are now active drivers of policy debates as well as reliable conduits and sources of technical and advisory support to stakeholders along the policy value chain. Notable examples include the Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) in Botswana; Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) in Kenya; Centre autonome d'Etudes et de Renforcement des Capacités pour le Développement au Togo (CADERDT) in Togo; National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) in Nigeria; Cameroon Policy Analysis and Research Center (CAMERCAP) in Cameroon; Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) in Rwanda; Centre d'Etudes de Politiques pour le Développement (CEPOD) in Senegal; and Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) in Ghana. We continue to support the performance improvement of these think tanks through the annual Africa Think Tank Summit we have organized since 2014 (see page 17).

We have also contributed to enhancing the institutional capacity of 16 civil society organizations working on tobacco control in Africa to improve their organizational effectiveness and efficiency in delivering on their core mandate. They aim to reduce tobacco-related death and disease in Africa by preventing the initiation of new smokers, decreasing overall tobacco use, and reducing exposure to secondhand smoke. Our support included upgrading governance practices, strategic planning, systems and processes, project management, and monitoring and evaluation in the target institutions. Among the independently assessed key achievements of the tobacco control program are the following: (i) Tobacco control policies are increasingly supported by facts and evidence in target countries; (ii) National Tobacco Control Programs (NTCPs) are increasingly funded in the national budget in nine countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Togo, Uganda, Nigeria and Gabon); (iii) 65% of tobacco control stakeholders have used research products generated by ACBF partners.



### 3.1.3. Knowledge and Learning Services



Our flagship publication, the Africa Capacity Report (ACR), was launched in 2011 to take stock of progress in the capacity development process. The ACR adds to our growing list of knowledge products and bears witness to our leadership in the capacity development space in Africa. It provides an authoritative review of the state and evolution of capacity development across the continent. It is also an invaluable tool for country benchmarking and the monitoring and evaluation of capacity development interventions. The most recent issues of the ACR, published during the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2017-2022, focused on *Building Capacity in Science, Technology and Innovation for Africa's Transformation*<sup>2</sup> in 2017 and *Fostering Transformative Leadership for Africa's Development* in 2019. The findings of the 2019 report were based on data collected in 45 African countries and through 8 country case studies. The ACR has gained wide recognition and is considered a valuable source of knowledge on capacity development.

Throughout the years, we have increased access to knowledge platforms for capacity development and generated more than 500 knowledge products in research studies, and publications covering close to 200 development topics. This includes the publication in 2018 of the African Financial Governance Outlook (AFGO) on Effective Public Financial Management for Sustainable Development.



A vital knowledge-sharing and networking platform is the annual Africa Think Tank Summit, which brings together experts from think tanks, academia, international development partners, government officials, media, and CSOs for experience and knowledge sharing. It also offers the opportunity to share experiences on the role of think tanks in implementing Agenda 2063 and programs for achieving the SDGs. The Summit discusses a range of issues including emerging development challenges and the sustainability of Africa's think tanks

Our Virtual Library on capacity development is a global conduit for disseminating knowledge products and expanding access to relevant information. Overall, users from more than 120 countries have accessed our knowledge products via the virtual library.



2. Africa Capacity Report 2017: Building Capacity in ... - Africa Portal. <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/africa-capacity-report-2017-building-capacity-in-science-technology-and-innovation-for-africas-transformation/>

# 4. LESSONS FROM THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022

The lessons learned from the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 have informed the development of this Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and will guide its implementation through innovative programming and delivery modalities, full engagement of our member states, and a flexible and need-based staffing structure. The lessons include the following:

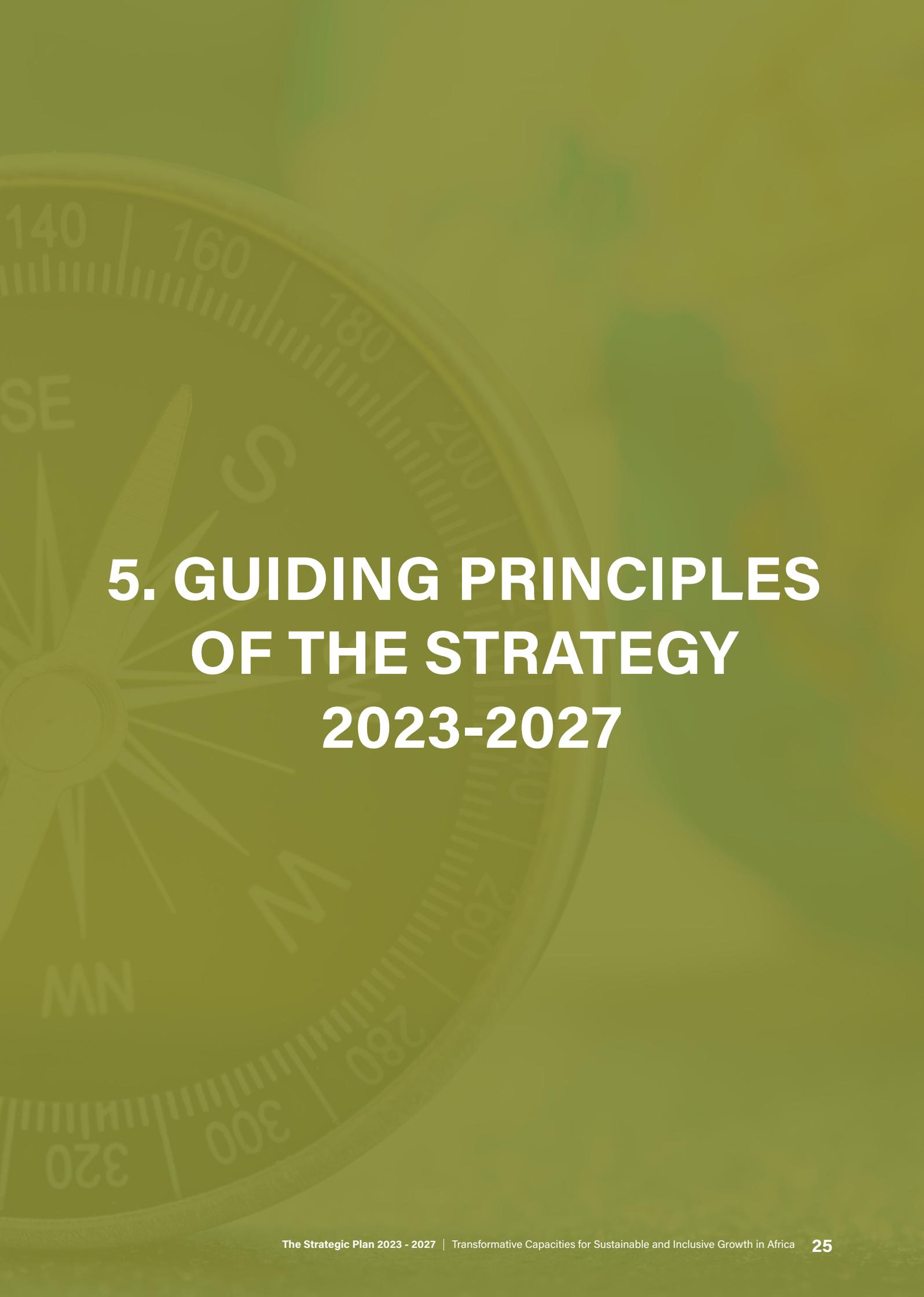
## 4.1. Lessons that pertain to enhancing capacity-building interventions

- **Partnerships anchored on making impact are more relevant:** To maximize impact, we have learned the importance of aligning our partnerships with the focus areas in which we work. Such partnerships, built on mutual interests, are more likely to lead to stronger and more impactful interventions.
- **A flexible staffing model is key to the sustainability of voluntarily-funded non-profit organizations:** Voluntarily-funded institutions such as ACBF may sometimes face severe financing constraints. Maintaining a lean core-staffing structure while responding to additional needs through project-based staffing is essential to ensure flexibility and institutional sustainability.
- **It is important to combine various tools and approaches to ensure effective and impactful delivery of capacity-development interventions:** Training remains an important capacity-development tool, but there is more to capacity development than just training. It needs to be complemented by other instruments such as coaching and mentoring as well as by institutional strengthening to ensure that trained individuals contribute their full potential.
- **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) should focus more on tangible impact than nominal delivery of outputs:** The impact achieved during the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 was not sufficiently documented by the time this Strategic Plan 2023-2027 was being drafted, partly

because an independent assessment had yet to be conducted. It is critical for our institution to tell the story of its impact based on factual data using an M&E system that can continuously track and assess the performance of our projects and programs in terms of impact, and not just outputs.

## 4.2. Lessons to increase ACBF capacity to deliver

- **Flexibility is critical to adapt to shocks:** We will endeavor to build operational flexibility into our activities to avert disruption when shocks arise owing to conflict, major economic crises, natural disasters or pandemics. By strengthening our ability to work remotely in a professional environment shaped by the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing health and economic crises, we were able to sustain our operations and those of our implementing partners across the continent.
- **The role of member states remains critical for ACBF's sustainability and relevance:** Member states' ownership, confidence and support are critical to attract investment from partners. During the implementation of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, member states reaffirmed the continued relevance of our institution and their ownership of it by continuing to fund its operating costs. However, their support only partially covered program costs. An appropriate level of funding by member states is crucial for ACBF to deliver on its mission and provide cutting-edge support to its member states, especially in times of minimal or non-existent partner support.



# **5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY 2023-2027**

With Africa's population set to double every 25 years, the continent's socio-economic development has been unable to keep pace with such rapid demographic change. It has failed to deliver meaningful opportunities and livelihoods for its people, and specifically for its youth. We intend to contribute to the acceleration of Africa's transformation process over the next five years by focusing on areas in which we are likely to make the greatest impact on capacity development. In more than three decades of operation, we have acquired extensive knowledge about what works in capacity development and how to scale impact. We will apply such knowledge and experience to consolidating and expanding capacity gains in areas that remain relevant to Africa's development priorities.

**Our work during the period 2023-2027 will be guided by four principles, namely:**



Recognizing the central role of the public sector in facilitating and coordinating Africa's socio-economic transformation.



Accelerating the implementation of recommendations from Capacity Needs Assessments.



Focusing on a limited number of specific impact areas.



Evolving from targeting individual institutions to enhancing ecosystems



### 5.1. The central role of the public sector in facilitating and coordinating Africa's socio-economic transformation

The public sector, the private sector and civil society are strongly interlinked in delivering on their respective roles in socio-economic development. For example, factors enabling the private sector to thrive, such as policy coherence, social and political stability, the rule

of law, transparency, a conducive regulatory framework, and low corruption are the remit of the public sector. Therefore, we view the role of the government as critical for setting up the enabling environment for the private sector and civil society to grow. Hence the need to have a public sector – defined as organizations owned and operated by the government at local, national, regional and continental levels – at the center of the capacity development effort in Africa. We will prioritize enhancing government ability to coordinate the development agenda in partnership with various players including the private sector, civil society, academia, and training and research institutions. A capable public sector is essential for Africa's transformative and

sustainable development. Far from envisioning an omnipotent public sector, our idea of a capable public sector is one that creates the necessary space for private sector-led inclusive growth by developing infrastructure, building a solid industrial foundation, promoting exports and import substitution and investing in the social sectors.



## 5.2. Accelerating implementation of recommendations from Capacity Needs Assessments

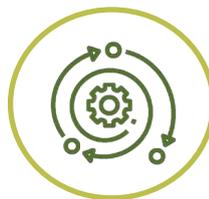
Over the years, ACBF has undertaken numerous capacity needs assessments across Africa and has been credited for accurately identifying key capacity constraints in country, regional and continental institutions. In implementing our Strategic Plan 2023-2027 in collaboration with our partners, we will strive to go beyond the assessment stage and focus on the implementation of policy recommendations. In doing so, we will ensure that implementation enablers such as leadership and communication, prioritization, problem-solving and feedback mechanisms are in place.



## 5.3. Evolving from supporting individual institutions to enhancing ecosystems

Having identified the facilitation role of the African public sector as one of the central

targets of our action, we will work with our partners to address the specific issues and challenges undermining its performance and capacity with the objective of creating enabling ecosystems that operate effectively. We define an ecosystem as a community of interacting stakeholders and institutions including the private sector, civil society, academia and training institutions, and research institutes. We aim to support a coherent group of institutions that collectively play a role in shaping a particular outcome. Such a holistic and ecosystem approach is essential for increased impact rather than isolated interventions supporting institutions operating in silos.



## 5.4. Improving selectivity by focusing on a limited number of specific impact areas

Africa has scores of development priorities with multi-faceted capacity challenges. Driven by our mandate and comparative advantages, we will focus on a limited number of selected impact areas where we can make substantive impact. In these areas, and in collaboration with our partners, we will address specific human capital development and institutional strengthening challenges over the next five years.



# 6. CORE ELEMENTS OF OUR BUSINESS MODEL

Our business model has five core elements: **who we support; our value proposal (see Section 1.3.2); our service offering; our revenue model; and our unique strategic position.**



## 6.1. Who we support

To improve their capacity to deliver sustainable development results, we support human capital development and institutional strengthening in governments, private sector associations, civil society organizations, think tanks, academia and research institutions at country and local levels, as well as in regional and continental institutions.



## 6.2. Our Service Offering

**Our unique service offering (see Section 10.1 below for more details) has three elements.**

- For institution building, we will optimize and innovate our institutional development methodologies into an Institutional Accelerator Model (IAM). The IAM is our unique package of interventions to support target institutions in their institutional development. Tailored IAM services will be provided to respond to the specific needs of
- For human capital development, we will launch the Africa Capacity Building Academy (ACB Academy) to focus on hard and soft skills development. Hard skills are technical skills relating to the execution of specific tasks including economic planning, budgeting, project management, negotiation, public-private partnership initiation and management, and debt management, Soft skills relate to

each target institution and will be applied over a period of 1-5 years depending on the depth of the support. There will be an initial scoping phase followed by a pilot phase and lastly, a roll-out phase that will consist in the deployment of various organizational development and change-management interventions aimed at improving performance. The IAM package of interventions will include a wide range of tools such as organizational restructuring advisory, embedded advisory, technical assistance, leadership development, management and team-building support. The roll-out of the IAM may require tailored human capital development and knowledge-sharing services for greater impact in institutional strengthening. Skills development tools may also be used as part of the roll-out of the IAM in the form of coaching and mentoring

greater interactive ability in areas such as leadership, communication, decision making and networking. The ACB Academy does not require physical premises owned by our institution. We will identify human capital development needs in African institutions and partner with existing training institutions such as the AU Leadership Academy (AULA), the African Development Bank's African Development Institute (ADI), and the Nelson Mandela Global Leadership Institute (GLI). The ACB Academy will address skills gaps not filled by existing training institutions and make the necessary arrangements to offer relevant courses working with global experts. It will primarily target officials from governments but will also be open to civil society and private sector personnel interested or working in

critical areas of specialization.

- For our knowledge generation and sharing services, there will be the Africa Capacity-Building Knowledge Hub. The Knowledge Hub will encourage individuals to innovate and promote the cultural changes required for their organizations to meet growing institutional needs. The services consist in generating or collecting good practices on a global scale and sharing them with people and institutions in Africa. Our knowledge services will ensure we connect people to people, institution to institution, and people and institutions to knowledge. The Knowledge Hub will also serve as a source of experience sharing and guidance on replication and scaling.

### Box 1 – The Service Offering Concept

Under this strategy, ACBF will adopt a new approach and package its support and tools into three client-facing services: one for human capital development, the second for institutional building/strengthening and the third for knowledge collection, generation and sharing. We define a service offering as a package of tools made available to an institution or an individual to support the fulfilment of their capability development goals. The service offering will be delivered in a way that maximizes impact. The list of ACBF tools is provided in Section 9. The combination of tools to be used to deliver the service will be determined based on our unique capacity needs assessment methodology.

For the human capital development component, we will primarily rely on skills development tools that could take various forms including training, coaching, mentoring or tutoring.

With respect to the institutional strengthening component, adopting the IAM will mean that the tools are used as a package to ensure attainment of the capability goals of the target institution. The choice of tools, the extent to which each tool will be used and their sequencing will depend on the context and will be highly responsive to the results of the capacity needs assessment of the target institution.

For knowledge services, we will rely on tools such as research, policy dialogue, and sharing of good practices through communities of practice. For all three elements, whether we use just one tool or a package, ACBF support to institutions and individuals will always carry our unique brand of highest quality standards.



### 6.3. Our Revenue Model

Our revenue model reflects the potential universe of funding accessible to our organization and the strategic decisions for preserving, increasing, and expanding our revenue streams. We will implement a “Mix of Revenue Sources Model” to finance this Strategic Plan. This means assessing all acceptable sources of revenue, including the following:

- **Membership Fee** – ACBF is a membership-based institution and, as such, should be primarily sustained by its shareholders. This Strategic Plan will explore the introduction of a mandatory membership fee to be approved by the Board of Governors
- **Additional Contributions by Member States** – Member states make contributions to implement the Strategic Plan in addition to the membership fee.
- **Grants from Partners** - Partners interested in cooperating with us make grants either in the form of flexible resources or resources tied to the implementation of specific programs/ projects.
- **Resources from Calls for Proposals** - We will proactively research and respond to calls for proposals aligned with our key impact areas.
- **Paid Training Courses** – We will offer courses for a fee through the ACB

Academy on topics relevant to Africa’s capacity development.

- **Fee for Service** – Through direct awards or competitive bidding, we implement programs and projects on behalf of institutions in areas compatible with our key impact areas. ACBF is also uniquely positioned to help deliver the institutional development components of larger projects financed by international financial institutions or donors.
- **Mission-Driven Endowment Investment**- We use our modest endowment to support innovation and strengthen private sector support for capacity development to ensure the sustainability of the sector.



### 6.4. Our Unique Strategic Position

We have been conferred the status of Specialized Agency of the African Union for Capacity Development by African heads of state and government, with the mandate to drive the continent’s capacity development agenda. This unique strategic role places us at the confluence of the demand for and supply of capacity development in Africa, and ensures our active engagement with governments and key institutions in Africa’s development architecture including the African Union, the AU’s organs and specialized agencies. Other key players are private sector associations, CSOs (notably women and youth organizations), think tanks, academia and research institutions.

A hand holding a pen over a calendar grid, symbolizing strategy and planning. The background is a solid reddish-orange color.

# **7. OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2023-2027**

# 7.1. Overall Strategic Direction, Goals and Objectives

The Strategic Plan 2023-2027 aims to enhance the delivery capabilities of Africa's transformation ecosystem for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Our strategic objectives goals and objectives are the following:



**Strategic Goal 1 - To enhance capacity for climate adaption and resilience building in member countries**

**Strategic Objective 1.1** - Increase resources for the implementation of country NDCs and business opportunities for climate MSMEs.

**Strategic Objective 1.2** - Enhance access to green energy for productive use, especially for MSMEs.



**Strategic Goal 2 - To promote wealth and job creation through increased investment in food sovereignty and value addition**

**Strategic Objective 2.1** - To increase private sector investment in agriculture

**Strategic Objective 2.2** - To enhance value addition to agricultural products to reduce post-harvest losses.



**Strategic Goal 3 - To enable increased MSME access to intra-African cross border trade**

**Strategic Objective 3.1** - To enhance domestication of trade agreements for effective implementation

**Strategic Objective 3.2** - To improve MSME awareness of trade agreements and their capacity to access the related business opportunities.



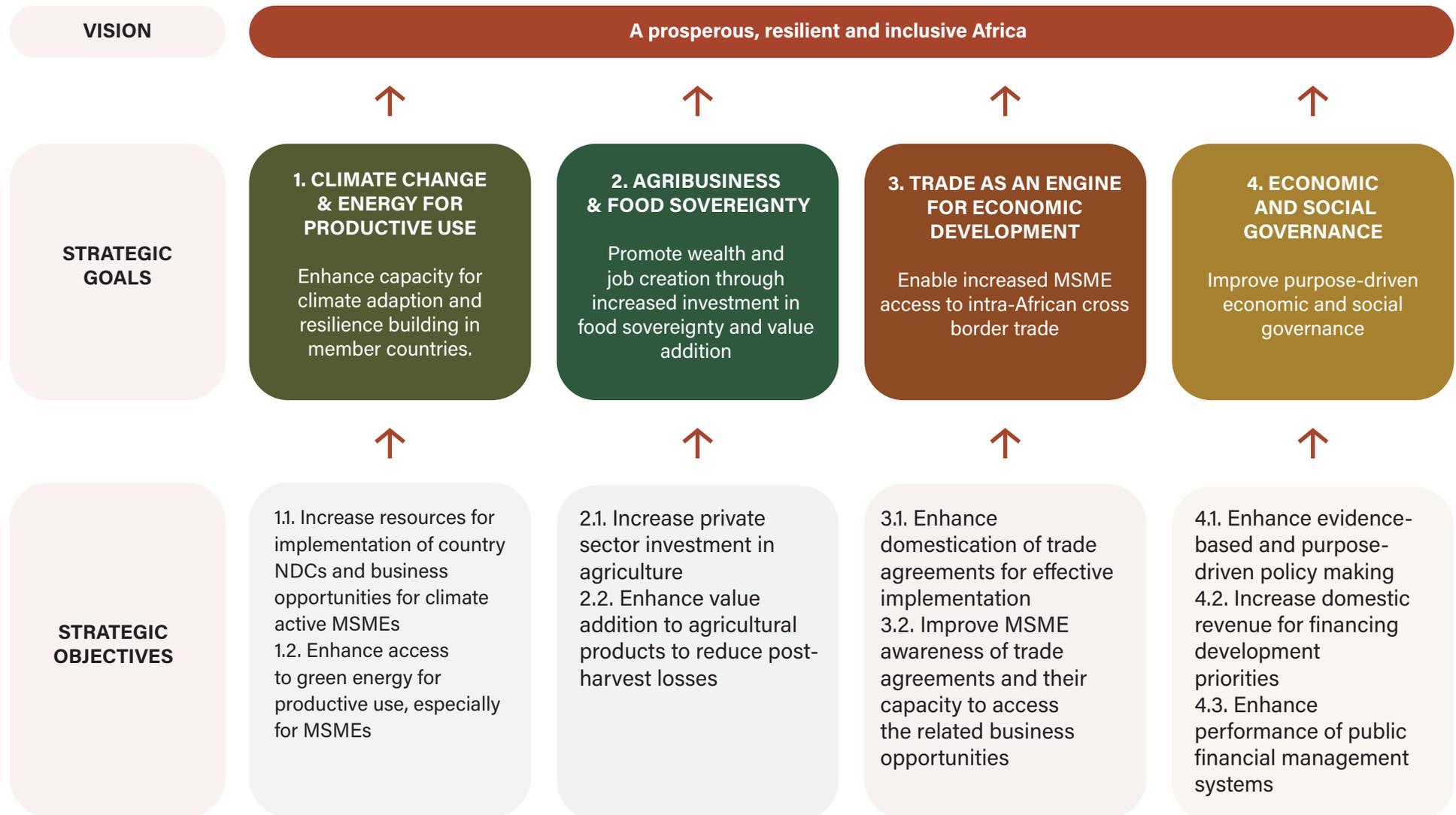
**Strategic Goal 4 - To improve purpose-driven economic and social governance**

**Strategic Objective 4.1** - To enhance evidence-based and purpose-driven policy making.

**Strategic Objective 4.2** - To increase domestic revenue for financing development priorities.

**Strategic Objective 4.3** - To enhance performance of public financial management systems.

**TABLE 2 - OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**



## 7.2. Key Impact Areas

We have a purpose-driven approach to capacity development. We aim to build the required human capital and institutional strength for transformative change in four priority impact areas:



Across these areas, we will ensure inclusion and equity, especially for women and youth, not as “targets for development” but as active players in impactful capacity-building initiatives.

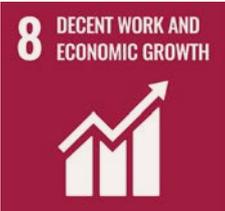
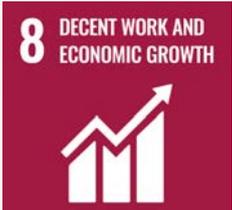
In selecting these four areas, we were guided by the ethos behind the creation of ACBF, the priority areas identified during the consultations with our stakeholders including governors and partners, the findings of the

background research we commissioned, our own analysis, and the trends uncovered during the strategy development process. We believe that successful capacity building in these four areas will help African countries make faster progress towards several critical goals of the SDGs. It will also contribute to the realization of the Agenda 2063 vision of **“an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”**.

## 7.2.1. Relevance of our key impact areas to the SDGs and Agenda 2063

There is clear alignment of the four ACBF key impact areas with the SDGs and Agenda 2063, as summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3. Alignment of ACBF Impact Areas with the SDGs and Agenda 2063**

ACBF Impact Area	SDGs	Agenda 2063
Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use	 	<p><b>Goal 1</b> - A High Standard of Living, Quality of Life, and Wellbeing for All Citizens</p> <p><b>Goal 7</b> - Environmentally Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Economies and Communities</p>
Agribusiness and Food Sovereignty	 <p>Achieve Food Sovereignty and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture</p>	<p><b>Goal 5</b> - Modern Agriculture for Increased Productivity and Production</p>
Trade as an Engine of Economic Development	  <p>(Target 17.10) - Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory, and equitable multilateral trading system</p>	<p><b>Goal 4</b> - Transformed Economies</p> <p><b>Goal 8</b> - United Africa (Federal or Confederate)</p> <p><b>Goal 19</b> - Africa as a significant partner in global affairs and peaceful coexistence</p>
Economic and Social Governance		<p><b>Goal 4</b> - Transformed Economies</p>

## 7.2.2. Summary of proposed ACBF interventions in each key impact area

Key Impact Area	Capacity Development Issues	Dimensions of ACBF Interventions
Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use	Limited ability of African countries to tap into existing adaptation resources to fund projects aimed at implementing their NDCs. Insufficient business opportunities for MSMEs	<b>Enhance climate adaptation and mitigation by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building the capacity of central and decentralized government and MSMEs to develop bankable climate adaptation projects</li> <li>Developing the capacity of private sector, especially MSMEs operating in the green economy to leverage opportunities in climate change</li> </ul>
	600 million Africans and MSMEs in rural areas do not have reliable access to electricity because national grids are unable to supply the required quantity and quality of affordable energy; this hampers the ability of MSMEs to be more productive and efficient	<b>Enhance access to green energy for productive use by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building the capacity of the State for energy sector reform and regulation</li> <li>Developing the institutional capacity of MSMEs offering off-grid and mini-grid energy solutions</li> </ul>
Agribusiness and Food Sovereignty	Low formal private sector investment in agriculture (leading to low productivity and insufficient innovation)	<b>Increase private sector investment in agriculture by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting State capacity building for system reforms to promote industrialization and private sector investment in food systems development</li> </ul>
	High post-harvest losses due to inefficiencies in the agricultural value chain and insufficient value addition	<b>Reduce post-harvest losses of agricultural products:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building capacity of MSMEs for value addition, processing and marketing of agricultural products</li> </ul>
Trade as an Engine of Economic Development	Countries sign trade agreements but do not incorporate them into national laws, regulations and playbooks to support their effective implementation	<b>Improve implementation of trade agreements by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building the capacity of the State for the domestication of trade agreements into national laws, regulations and playbooks.</li> </ul>
	The limited capacity of African businesses, especially youth- and women-owned MSMEs, to leverage regional trade agreements and the AfCFTA	<b>Improve access to business opportunities offered by trade agreements by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building awareness of the private sector, especially MSMEs, of opportunities offered by trade agreements</li> <li>Enhancing MSMEs capacity for export (quality, packaging and other non-trade barriers) and participation in regional value chains</li> </ul>
Economic and Social Governance	Insufficient evidence-based economic policies to inform public investments Regulatory bottlenecks that hinder investment promotion	<b>Improve Economic Policy formulation and implementation by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing skills of staff of public economic, finance and planning institutions in regulatory reforms, policy formulation and implementation</li> <li>Improving institutional capacity of public economic, finance and planning institutions for economic research</li> </ul>
	Heavy dependency of national agendas on external funding, limiting countries' capacity to invest in priority areas Low capacity of countries to recover fiscal resources	<b>Enhance Domestic Resource Mobilization by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building capacity of tax training institutes through reforming their curricula to introduce innovative tax approaches</li> <li>Enhancing institutional capacity of tax administrations to expand tax and other revenue collection</li> </ul>
	Significant loss of State resources due to ineffective finance management practices (inadequate allocation of resources, delayed or inappropriate decision-making), etc.	<b>Improve Public Finance Management by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing leadership capacity in PFM institutions</li> <li>Improving transparency and accountability of PFM institutions through purpose-driven and enhanced citizen participation in the PFM process</li> </ul>

### 7.2.3. Detailed overview of our interventions



## a) Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use

Climate change and inability to access a reliable, affordable and sustainable energy are among Africa's priority challenges over the next five years and beyond. We will focus our interventions in climate change on specific challenges relating to the insufficient capacity in African countries to mobilize resources to fund the implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the insufficient business opportunities for Africa's private sector, especially the MSMEs. In the area of energy, we will focus on supporting the capacity to boost the production of off-grid and mini-grid green energy. This is of particular importance given that more than 600 million Africans and millions of MSMEs, especially in rural areas, have no access to power through the inadequate national grids.

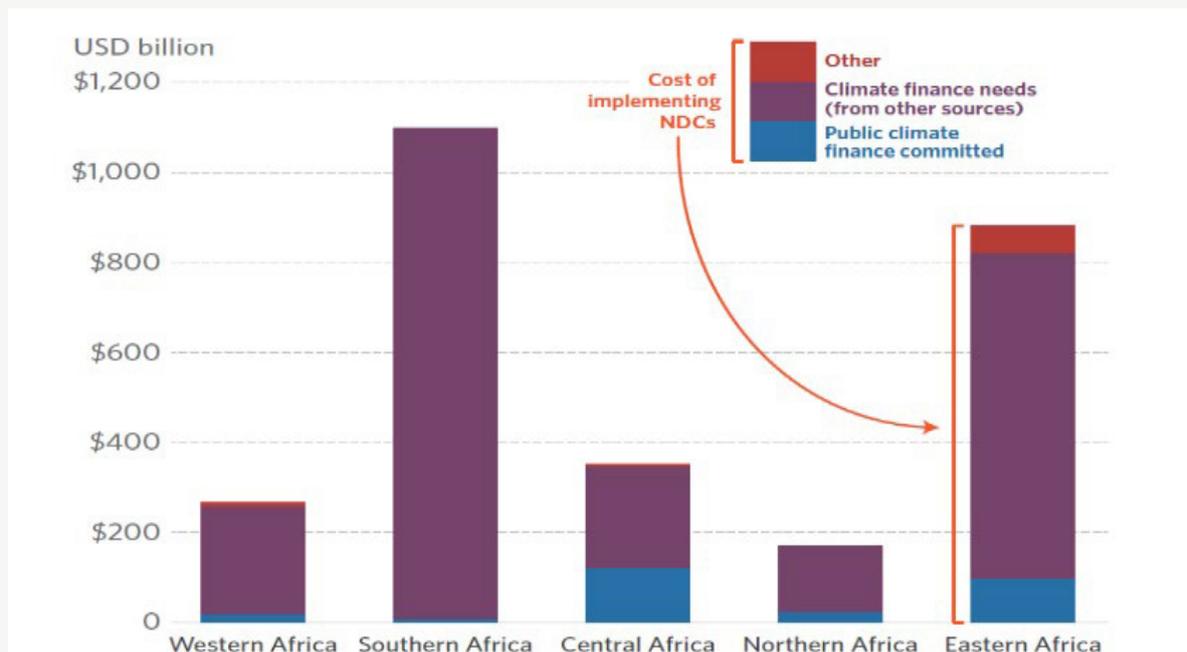
### • **Climate Change**

We will support capacity building in central and decentralized government and private sector entities to develop fundable climate adaptation projects to attract the necessary resources to fund the implementation of their NDCs. We will also help improve the capabilities of the private sector, especially MSMEs operating in the green economy, to develop business opportunities and grow. The rationale for our focus is the inability of many African countries to access international climate funding.

This is partly due to their inability to develop fundable projects. An analysis of proposals submitted to the Global Climate Fund (GCF) up to 2017 shows that African countries had the lowest proportion of approvals (39%) compared with all the other regions.<sup>2</sup> The continent currently receives less than 3% of climate

funding. According to the Climate Policy Initiative, 51 out of 53 African countries that submitted their NDCs under the Paris Agreement estimated the total cost of implementing their NDCs at around US\$2.8 trillion between 2020 and 2030 (Figure 1).

2. <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/gcf-b28-inf09.pdf>



Source: Climate Policy Initiative

## ■ Energy for Productive Use

We will support efforts to expand access to green energy for productive use by building state capacity for energy sector reform and regulation. We will also help to build the institutional capacity of MSMEs offering off-grid and mini-grid energy solutions to grow their businesses. In doing so, we will work with a variety of players including rural energy authorities and MSME associations. Our interventions will aim to support country efforts to strengthen the ability of national grids to provide reliable, adequate and affordable clean energy, especially for MSMEs, which are the main sources of

job creation, especially for women and the youth.

There are many successful examples of mini-grid projects in Africa that are making a difference. They include the M-Kopa Solar System, which has provided nearly \$600 million in credit, enabling over 1 million customers in Kenya alone to access branded solar lighting, energy-efficient televisions, fridges and smartphones, as well as obtain cash loans, and more.<sup>2</sup> The project has had a transformative effect on those who have benefited from it, providing access to clean energy and improved livelihoods.

3. or more information about M-KOPA, see <https://m-kopa.com/uganda/about/>



## **b) Agribusiness and Food Sovereignty**

ACBF will support government efforts in two areas: first, in creating a conducive environment for private sector investment in agriculture, and secondly, in implementing system reforms that promote value addition to agricultural products. We will work with ministries of agriculture, rural development agencies, investment promotion agencies and all other contributing institutions in the agricultural ecosystem in target countries. A crosscutting theme of our work is the promotion of gender equity – we encourage policies that support women-owned agribusinesses and promote youth employment and entrepreneurship in agriculture. We will also encourage the uptake of digital technologies to improve the generation and utilization of data to inform agricultural policies. This will improve productivity and agricultural product marketing while promoting access to and use of clean energy to power agricultural activities.

Our interventions will seek to address Africa's low agribusiness performance and its chronic food insecurity due in part to the low level of private sector investment in agriculture, especially in food crops, and the undeveloped agricultural value chains. ACBF insists on the urgent need to build resilience in Africa's agriculture sector and food systems, to prepare them to face external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic or the Russia-Ukraine war. Without decisive interventions, Africa's food import bill is projected to reach US\$110 billion by 2025 while the continent's agricultural potential remains largely untapped. We will therefore focus on two

initiatives: promoting formal private sector investment in agriculture and value addition to agricultural products.

- **Promoting formal private sector investment in agriculture**

We will support efforts to increase formal private sector investment in agriculture by building state capacity for system reforms that attract private sector investment in food systems development. Addressing the perennial challenges of Africa's food insecurity requires substantial investment in agriculture. Promoting such investment requires policy reforms to create the enabling environment and incentives for the formal private sector to operate and thrive along the agricultural value chain.

- **Value addition to agricultural products**

We will also support efforts to reduce post-harvest losses by building MSME capacity for value addition through greater processing, better packaging and more effective marketing of agricultural products. The main reasons behind Africa's precarious food systems include the insufficient investment of the formal private sector in agricultural infrastructure and value chains.



## c) Trade as an engine of economic development

Our interventions in trade will focus on two areas: the effective implementation of regional and continental trade agreements, and the heightened private sector awareness, especially MSMEs, of the business opportunities offered by trade agreements.

- **Ensuring effective implementation of trade agreements**

We will support efforts to improve implementation of trade agreements by building state capacity for actual domestication of trade agreements into national laws, regulations and playbooks. Our support will target trade and industry ministries, departments and agencies as well as the private sector, including MSME organizations and other key contributing institutions. We will work with institutions and help to train relevant officials to ensure that trade agreements

are fully integrated into national laws and regulations. Our rationale for this intervention is the observation that trade agreements are signed by governments and ratified by parliaments in African countries but often without subsequent implementation.

- **Increasing private sector (and especially MSME) awareness of the business opportunities offered by trade agreements**

To support growth of the private sector, especially MSMEs, through cross-border trade, we will help to increase their awareness of opportunities offered by trade agreements. We will also develop their export capabilities, including compliance with quality, packaging and non-tariff barrier requirements.



## d) Economic and Social Governance

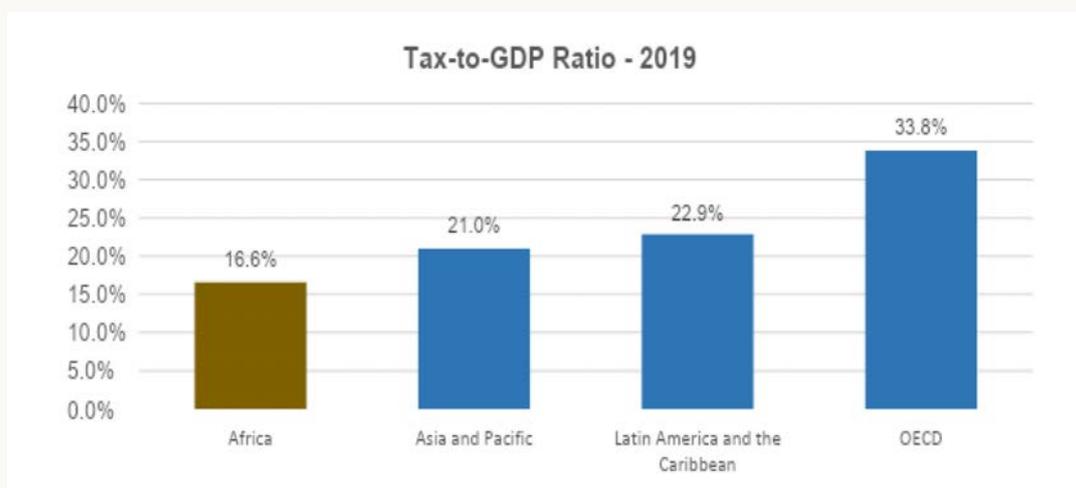
Our aim is to enhance the capabilities of member states' central and decentralized institutions to deliver in three main areas: domestic resource mobilization; public financial management; and formulation and implementation of purpose-driven economic policies and regulatory reforms. We selected these three interrelated dimensions because of their importance in improving economic and social governance. Indeed, purpose-driven policies are critical for building the social contract that will promote higher levels of domestic resource mobilization. Domestic resources and additional support received from development partners must be utilized with integrity through sound public financial management systems to reduce wastage, misuse and corruption and to increase efficiency in addressing Africa's development priorities.

- **Domestic resource mobilization**

To support government efforts to increase domestic resource mobilization, we will build the capacity of selected tax training institutes to reform their curricula to introduce innovative approaches. We will also enhance the institutional capacity of selected ministries of finance and

government agencies to expand their tax and other revenue collection.

Our interventions will be in response to African governments' struggle to raise adequate fiscal revenue to finance public services and related expenditures. Figure 2 presents evidence of Africa's low tax-to-GDP ratio, one of the most widely used indicators of a government's ability to meet its expenditures.



Source: Revenue Statistics Africa – 2021

- **Public financial management (PFM)**

We aim to support governments in improving their public financial management by building leadership capacity in PFM institutions and improving the transparency and accountability of PFM institutions through purpose-driven and enhanced citizen participation in the PFM process.

Through our ongoing PFM program, we will supplement the support traditional partners provide to ministries of finance by focusing on developing leadership, management and coordination capabilities, thus focusing on soft skills and leaving technical training to traditional partners. The aim of our work

will be to reduce the overall inefficiency and waste often associated with leadership challenges. These challenges are reflected in poor planning, inadequate allocation of resources, poor decision making and lack of effective delegation of authority.

- **Economic policy formulation and implementation**

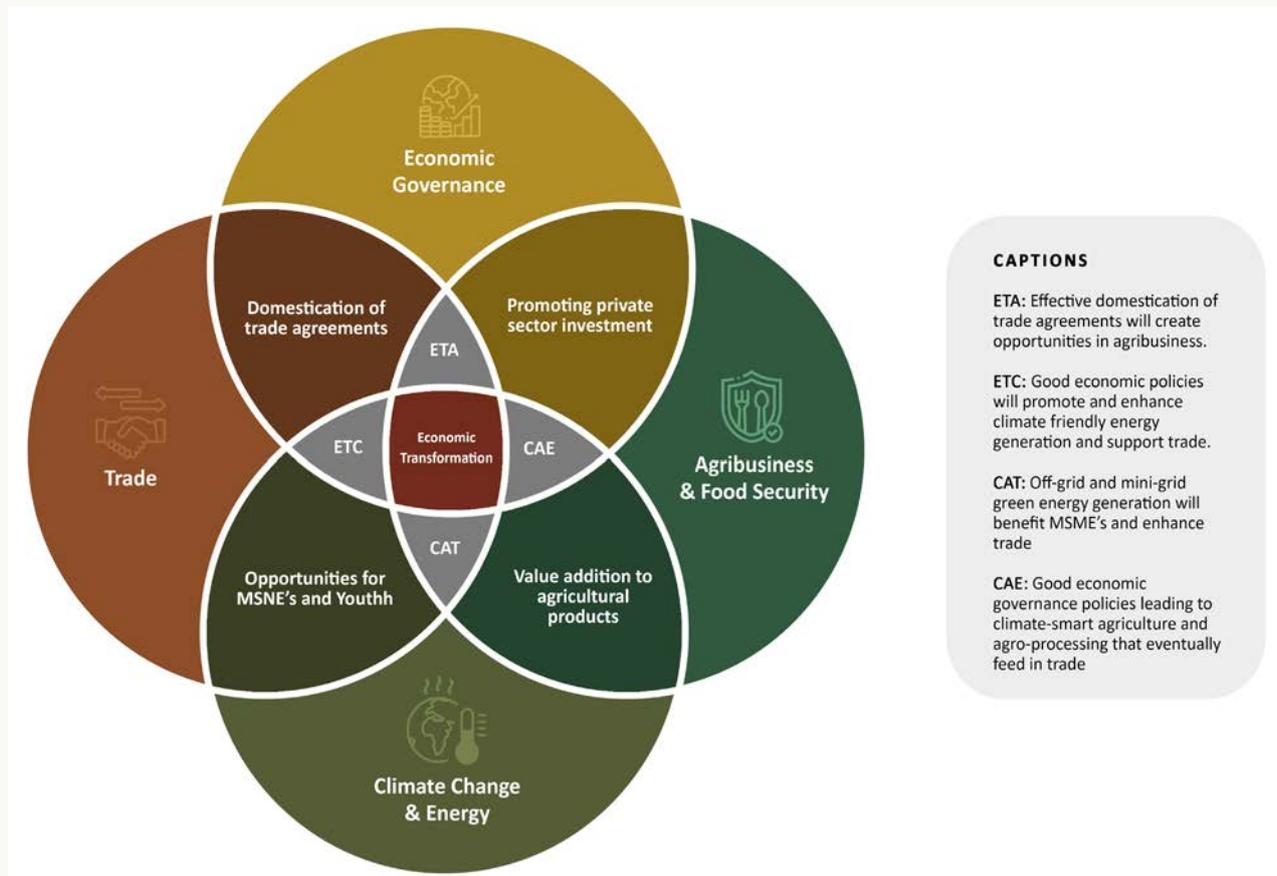
To support government efforts to improve economic policy formulation and implementation, we will develop the skills of staff in economic, finance and planning institutions in policy formulation and implementation and strengthen the capacity of these institutions for economic research. In doing so, our aim is to support the emergence of purpose-

driven policies and policy coherence across macroeconomic areas to enhance the ability of governments to create synergies across institutions. We will thus seek to address policy gaps in

macroeconomic and industrialization strategies, as well as in areas requiring innovative policies such as digitalization, gender equity and youth employment.

### 7.2.4. How our key impact areas are interrelated

Figure 3 illustrates the interconnections of our key impact areas.



Our Strategic Plan 2023-2027 works with the assumption that better economic and social governance will support the development of suitable policies leading to climate-smart agriculture and agri-business, food sovereignty and agriculture-led industrialization. We also believe that these good policies will promote the generation of green energy for productive use, for example, in agribusiness. Greater processing of agricultural products will help to address seasonality issues, post-harvest losses and food insecurity. Value addition in agriculture and natural resources, along with other manufactured products and tradable

services, will provide a basis for strengthening trade within Africa and with the world. It will also maximize opportunities for green industrialization. It is important to note the linkages between energy and agriculture, as exemplified by the use of renewable energy for farming. Thus, solar pumps can be used to irrigate farmlands and provide clean energy for the agricultural value chain – drying, processing, cold storage, packaging, etc..

Figure 3 illustrates the interconnections of our key impact areas.

## 7.3. Cross-cutting Issues

This Strategic Plan 2023-2027 deliberately embeds four pertinent cross-cutting issues. These are youth employment, gender, digitalization and data talent. Cross-cutting issues are those key elements that should be considered at every stage of the strategy process, as their relevance touches several key impact areas.



### 7.3.1. Youth employment

Throughout this Strategy period, we will proactively support initiatives that empower Africa's youth (female and male) in collaboration with our partner public and private sector institutions and CSOs. Working with governments, academia and training institutions, research institutions and other CSOs, we will support the formulation and implementation of policies and initiatives enabling the youth to develop to its full potential and thrive, with the active participation of youth-led associations. This will require developing youth-centered capacity-building throughout the public sector, private sector and civil society. It will also mean providing incentives for MSMEs to grow and expand as engines of entrepreneurship and job creation for the youth in agriculture and agribusiness, climate change, energy and trade. We will support complementary demand-side initiatives to develop the necessary technical, financial and managerial skills that meet industry demand, as well as entrepreneurship capabilities for self-employment.

ACBF will also encourage good policies and initiatives in the remote working space. The new world of work shaped by the COVID-19

pandemic has greatly increased remote working opportunities with international companies for young graduates and computer-savvy youth with access to the proper infrastructure. We will also promote policies and initiatives facilitating the entry of young people into Africa's rapidly emerging, fast-growing tech space. Africa's tech start-ups are attracting increasing investment, offering great opportunities for the youth. Finally, we will be intentional in opening our governance organs (Executive Board) and creating a Youth Advisory Board, with the mandate to advise on program design and implementation. Finally, our talent acquisition effort will deliberately ensure increasing representation of youth in our staffing.

Our interventions reflect the central emphasis this Strategic Plan places on impacting Africa's youth. This youth is the continent's biggest asset and will drive the continent's economic growth and sustainable transformation agenda, largely through internal trade in goods and particularly services. However, most African countries currently face the burning issue of youth unemployment and underemployment, with poverty and lack of opportunities fueling extremism, instability

and mass migration to other shores. Young people account for about 60% of Africa's unemployed. On average, close to 11 million young Africans enter the job market every year, which can cater for just 3 million people, leaving an annual job gap of 8 million. University graduates are a significant component of those entering the labor market and failing to find a job and they experience

frustration when the promise of a career does not materialize. Africa can reap the demographic dividend from its youth boom only if appropriate policies are formulated and implemented to meet the specific needs of the youth in terms of knowledge, skills and access to resources and opportunities.



### 7.3.2. Gender equity

In the implementation of this Strategic Plan, our Institutional Accelerator Model (IAM) will explicitly strengthen the capabilities of target institutions to ensure gender balance, especially in leadership positions. A significant proportion of ACB Academy activities will seek to enhance women's capacities to access leadership positions and ensure gender equity across our target institutions. We will endeavor to involve women in the design of IAM recommendations for each institution and the courses offered by the ACB Academy. We will promote gender equity together with external partners, umbrella CSOs, the AU Commission and its organs, other pan-African institutions, UN agencies, selected universities, research and capacity development institutions. This work will include offering technical assistance and advocacy, and contributing to the design and implementation of enabling policies and instruments to mainstream gender across our respective work areas. We will collect gender-disaggregated data through our monitoring and evaluation systems, and support initiatives to build gender-responsive budgeting capacity, accurately identify gender-relevant

issues, and design tailored capacity building for target groups on the basis of our Gender Strategy, which is under development.

The rationale for our work on gender equity stems from the fact that, from an economic and social governance perspective, African women continue to experience challenges in terms of access to resources such as land, education, financial services, energy and innovations due to traditional and conventional constraints prevailing across Africa. Similar challenges are observed in terms of access to management training and business development services, all of which hamper women from realizing their full potential. Despite being the major players in agriculture and trade in Africa, they still lack key economic opportunities, resources and rights. Women are typically the custodians of traditional climate adaptation and mitigation knowledge, but their low level of involvement in climate actions is restricting the use of this knowledge wealth. Significant capacity gaps remain to be addressed in our member states to achieve a gender-transformative environment.



### 7.3.3. Digitalization

ACBF will support initiatives promoting digitalization to improve efficiency and effectiveness in our four key impact areas. We will also use digital solutions as an integral part of our Institutional Accelerator Model (IAM). Our support will help strengthen e-government, improve effective and efficient public service delivery and accountability, and impart digital capacities for climate actions, clean energy generation and distribution, agro-processing and trade. Furthermore, we will encourage initiatives that embrace and develop artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things to advance sustainable and inclusive development. Digitalization will also improve ACBF's practices and delivery efficiency, internal communication and collaborative work.

Our rationale for prioritizing digitalization as a cross-cutting issue is its ability to disrupt and transform our economies and societies. It drives entrepreneurial innovation, productivity, and economic growth. It also has implications for the labor market, and political participation.<sup>2</sup> The continent's digital transformation is accelerating, bolstered by the increasing access to broadband connectivity. Governments, public institutions, the private sector, and development organizations are increasingly using digital tools and platforms to improve lives and fuel economic growth across the continent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has positively contributed to the acceleration of digitalization by forcing the adoption of remote work and services, with mobile broadband, enhanced data packages, and increased access to smartphones.

Digitalization has the potential to improve economic and social governance by increasing accountability and transparency in government institutions and raising productivity levels in agriculture and agro-processing. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), digital technologies can help reduce global carbon emissions by 15%. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has identified significant energy savings from digitalizing key sectors such as transport, agriculture, construction, energy, and manufacturing. The WEF and IEA both point out that digitalization is crucial to realizing the goal of a sustainable society that has chosen the low-carbon pathway for its cities, transport systems, buildings, energy, and communications. Digitalization also creates opportunities for businesses to increase cross-border trading, as testified by the rapid growth of global e-commerce.

<sup>2</sup> Digitalization of the Economy | Dossier | ifo Institute. <https://www.ifo.de/en/topics/digitalization-of-the-economy>



### 7.3.4. Data talent

This Strategy 2023-2027 will seek to support our target institutions, especially statistical training institutions, in developing students' skills in data analysis in preparation for emerging opportunities in this field. In addition, the ACB Academy will train individuals in data collection and analysis to improve the quality and coverage of official data produced by national, regional, and continental statistical systems. Our IAM offering will also focus on applying data for improved economic policy making and implementation. This will contribute to more effective economic management, appropriate sectoral policies (especially in agriculture), actionable climate adaptation and mitigation plans, and increased trade competitiveness. The rationale for our work in this area, with the advent of big data, is that African countries need to change their methods of collecting, analyzing and storing data. This requires building strong data and statistical capabilities to generate timely, accurate, complete, and reliable official data sets and statistics.

Data are critical for economic and social governance; they are the foundation of any country's information and knowledge systems and form the basis for effective decision making and implementation. For example, better data in agriculture in Africa will serve to improve productivity, streamline processes, and increase overall farm efficiency. Data also help to reduce food wastages (pre- and post-harvest), optimize the use of farm equipment, improve food security and safety, increase supply chain efficiency, and make the agricultural sector more attractive to potential investors. The world is increasingly harnessing data to generate climate models and guide climate decisions and actions. The world is also investing in greener and more efficient data infrastructure to sustain its energy revolution. Data on imports and exports play a key role in intra-Africa and international trade. Trade competitiveness depends on the quality and accuracy of these data. The current trends are set to intensify in the future, hence the importance for African countries to rapidly enhance and harness their data talent.



### 7.4. Special Programs

Special programs are interventions that are not necessarily aligned with any of the key impact areas of this Strategic Plan 2023-2027. The implementation of current special programs will continue as planned in the agreements with the respective partners. While we will place more emphasis on the four impact areas – particularly in developing new programs – we will continue developing human capital and strengthening institutions in other areas, provided there is a compelling case, available funding and the potential to complement at least one of the impact areas of this Strategic Plan.

# 8. THEORY OF CHANGE

## 8.1. Concept

Our Theory of Change (TOC) describes how and why this Strategic Plan expects to effect changes in our four key impact areas. The TOC focuses on mapping out what we consider to be the missing middle between what we will do in our interventions and activities and how that will lead to desired goals and objectives.

African countries face multiple and urgent challenges: weak economic and social governance, a volatile political environment, low agricultural productivity, persistent gender inequity, emerging climate crisis, heightened human and food insecurity, limited access to energy and non-competitive trade. Our TOC is built on the assumption that sustained human capital development and institutional capacity building in Africa's public sector institutions will boost the continent's ability to drive change and unleash the potential of the private sector and civil society.

We will package our interventions into a comprehensive, ACBF-branded product offering with three components: the Institutional Accelerator Model (IAM) for institutional strengthening, the Africa Capacity Building Academy (ACB Academy) for human capital development, and the Knowledge Hub for knowledge services. It will be a bespoke product that is demand-driven and designed to meet the capacity development needs of the target institution. It will include a scoping period and the piloting of specific intervention tools, followed by the scaling-up of the most valuable tools for the institution over a period of 1-5 years. Our interventions will primarily target government institutions. The key outputs we expect to produce will include: assessed government institutions' readiness to deliver on their mandate and implemented improvement plans; enhanced technical skills and knowledge of relevant actors;

strengthened systems and processes of target entities; completed advocacy campaigns for policy reforms and change in relevant areas; organized policy dialogues and high-level forums with decision makers; developed and disseminated knowledge products and designed and delivered training programs in key thematic areas.

To ensure effective implementation and scale, we will partner with country institutions, regional economic communities and other regional entities, the AU Commission and AU organs, international organizations and agencies. We will also need to enhance our internal human and institutional capacities and expand and improve our network of experts. Successful implementation of the foregoing steps will enable us to contribute to better economic and public financial management, improved private sector participation in Africa's agriculture and agro-processing value chains as well as in the supply and distribution of clean energy for productive use, enhanced capabilities for climate change adaptation and mitigation actions including greater access to green energy. We also expect better alignment of national trade and industrial policies with global instruments to help African countries participate fully in continental and global trade. The combined effects of these contributions are expected to feed into our long-term goal of achieving transformative and sustainable development across Africa.

## 8.2. Illustrated Theory of Change

The diagram below illustrates our Theory of Change

Impact: Enhanced development effectiveness and sustainability across Africa

### Primary Results:

1. Enhanced capacity for climate adaptation and resilience-building in member states
2. Improved capacity to promote wealth and job creation through increased investment in food sovereignty and value addition
3. Increased MSME access to Intra-African cross-border trade
4. Improved purpose-driven economic and social governance

### Intermediate Results:

Improved capacity of target institutions to develop bankable projects; 1.2. Increased ability of MSMEs to access green energy for their growth; 2.1. Improved State capacity for system reforms to promote private sector investment in food systems development; 2.2. Improved ability of MSMEs for value-addition to agricultural products; 3.1 Improved capacity to domesticate and implement trade agreements; 3.2. Improved ability of MSMEs to leverage the benefits of intra-African trade; 4.1. Enhanced evidence-based policy formulation and implementation; 4.2. Improved ability of tax administrations to increase domestic resources; 4.3. Improved performance and accountability of PFM institutions

### Key Outputs:

- Human capital and institutional capacity of tax administration enhanced; leadership skills and governance practice improved; dialogue platforms for structured consultations established
- Policy environment of private investment in agriculture improved; skills in agro-processing enhanced; institutional capacity for value addition to agricultural products strengthened
- Nationally determined contributions (NDCs) update mechanisms enhanced; expertise in renewable energy policy management improved; competencies in PPP for energy infrastructure development enhanced; functional policy dialogue platforms established
- National laws with international trade agreements aligned; usage of the provisions of international trade agreements by key actors increased; private sector engagement

### Targeted Groups:

Government ministries, departments and agencies; private sector (especially MSMEs); civil society organizations; youth and other institutions

### Types of Partners:

AU organs, regional institutions; strategic bilateral and multilateral development agencies; local capacity-development institutions; policy think tanks, training institutes; other service providers, etc.

### ACBF institutional arrangements:

- Enhanced internal capacities
- Improved experts' network

### CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY FOR PRODUCTIVE USE:

Building capacity to develop fundable climate adaptation projects Supporting growth of MSMEs operating in the green economy  
Building capacity of state for energy sector reform and regulation  
Building the institutional capacity of MSMEs offering off-grid and mini-grid energy solutions

### AGRO-PROCESSING & FOOD SOVEREIGNTY:

Supporting state capacity for system reforms to promote private sector investment in agriculture and food systems development  
Building capacity of MSMEs for value addition, processing and marketing of agricultural products

### TRADE AS AN ENGINE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Building the capacity of the state to domesticate trade agreements; Building business opportunity awareness of MSMEs; enhancing private sector capacity for export (quality, packaging and other non-trade barriers)

### ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GOVERNANCE:

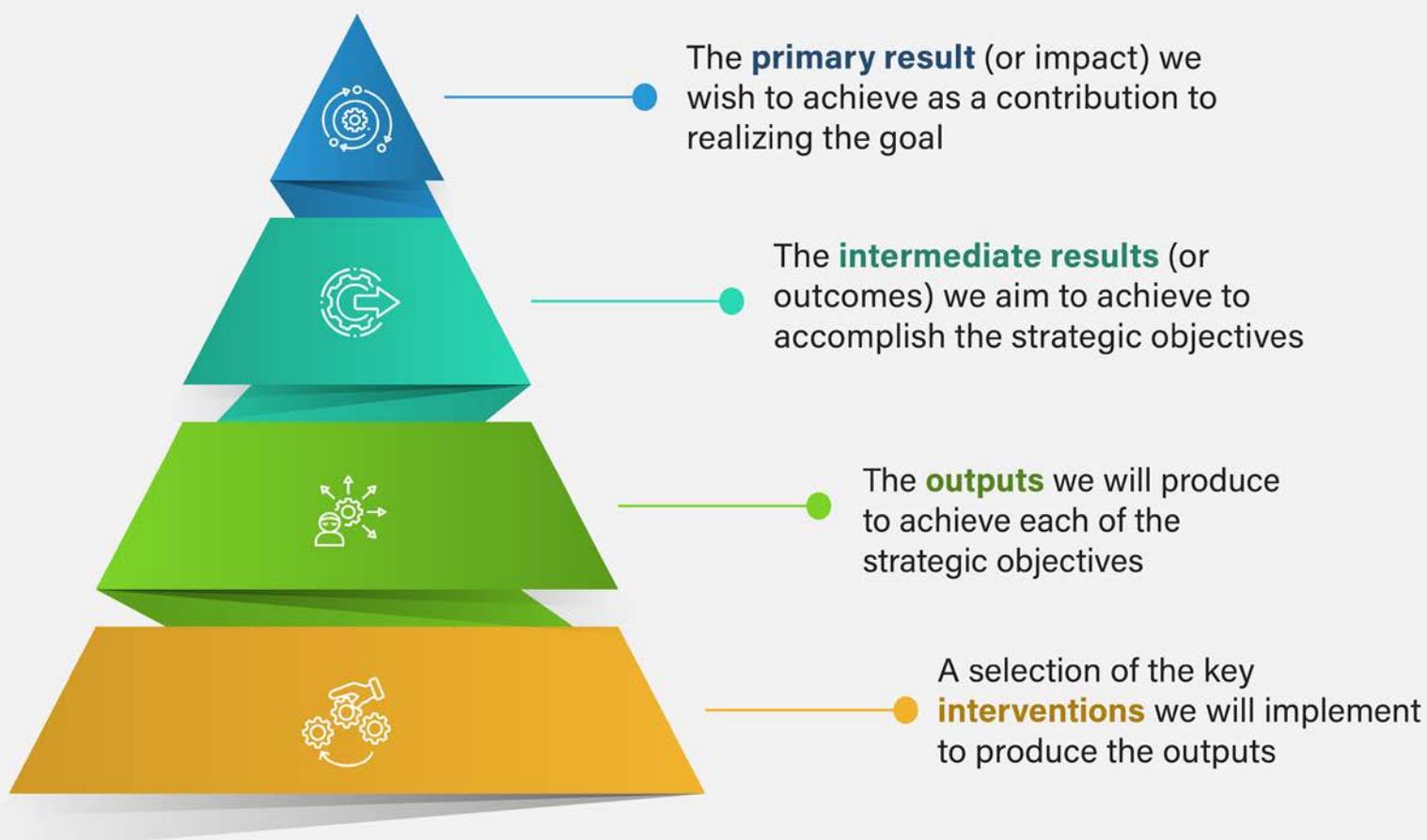
Building capacity of tax training institutes; enhancing institutional capacity of tax administrations  
enhancing leadership capacity in PFM institutions; improving transparency and accountability of PFM institutions; developing policy formulation and implementation skills of staff of economic institutions

Basic Assumption: Achieving socio-economic transformation for sustainable development in Africa requires unlocking capacity challenges in key areas considered as the top priorities in the development agenda across countries, including economic and social governance, agro-processing and food sovereignty, resilience to climate change and access to green energy, and Africa's trade

Main Issues: Ineffective economic and financial management systems; lack of evidence-based economic policies to inform investment; country vulnerabilities to climate change; low access to power; weak competitiveness of private sector; limited alignment of trade agreements with national laws and policies; low private sector investment in agriculture; high post-harvest losses

## 8.3. Strategic Results Chain

Our strategic results chain presents, for each key impact area:



The detailed result chains for the four key impact areas are presented in Annex I of the Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

# 9. STRATEGY DELIVERY MODALITIES

The implementation of this Strategy is articulated around a framework comprising the following elements: our unique product offering and brand; the tools we will use; our target institutions; our country and regional organizations prioritization; our partnerships and our cooperation with country and local capacity-building institutions.

# 9.1. Unique Product Offerings and Brand

Our unique product offering will consist of three elements, as described in Section 6.2. Our unique brand will consist in a high-impact approach through which we will communicate clearly, strategically and consistently. We will optimize this brand by refining its methodology for capacity development to make it instantly recognizable and a synonym of compliance with the highest professional standards.

## 9.1.1. Institutional Strengthening

For impactful support, we will offer a unique product that will target institutions in each of the four key impact areas. This unique product, the Institutional Accelerator Model (IAM), will be provided to selected institutions

over a period of 1-5 years. The IAM will have a standardized approach, a dedicated methodology, supporting materials and guides. It will be demand driven so it can flexibly cater to the target institution's various and evolving needs. The IAM will be fully designed by the launch of this Strategy.

### Box 2 - Institutional Accelerator Model (IAM)

The IAM will be delivered in four phases:

- **Scoping Phase:** exchanges with the target institutions to understand their institutional strengthening needs and challenges. Duration: 1-2 months.
- **Initial Support Phase:** application of one of the tools from our toolkit. Duration: 6-9 months.
- **Feedback Phase:** exchanges with the target institution on what is working, what is not working, and what else can be done to support. Duration: 6-12 months.
- **Deepening of Support Phase:** scale up to full support for a period of between 6 and 42 more months. The degree of scale-up will depend on the need.

Our support will be offered using a tiered approach:

- **Advanced Support:** a 3-5-year institution-building support program along the full IAM methodology and most of the tools in our toolkit.
- **Intermediate Support:** a 2-3-year institution-building program along the full IAM methodology and a selected number of our tools.
- **Basic Support:** a needs assessment and initial support, which could range from short-term training to up to one year of support with one of our tools. The assessment may not be necessary if the target institution clearly identifies its needs.

## 9.1.2. Human Capital Development

The second component of our unique product offering is the Africa Capacity Building Academy (ACB Academy) to support human capital development, as indicated in Section 6.2. This modality will make accessible high-caliber short courses for the staff of the target institutions. We will conduct a design-scoping exercise for this component during the first year of implementation of the Strategic Plan. The ACB Academy will provide courses in

areas where there is a gap, for example, in contract negotiation, and designing and implementing PPP frameworks.

## 9.1.3. Knowledge Generation and Sharing

The third component of our unique offering, the Africa Capacity Building Knowledge Hub (ACB-Knowledge Hub), collects and generates knowledge on capacity development that will be available (for a fee) to all capacity-building institutions in Africa.

## 9.2. Tools

Our approach will allow the target institution to select from our toolkit an initial tool that will be used for 6-9 months of support. We will then extend the support – with a possible financial contribution requirement for the use of additional tools – using other tools in the deepening phase of the support across the four key impact areas.



### ACB Academy Tools

- Organizational capacity needs assessment (including organizational structure diagnostic) and capacity-improvement planManagement and governance advisory to the leadership of the institution
- Embedded advisory for joint working, co-learning, coaching, and mentoring on the core mandate of target institutions or in a desired department of the target institution
- Team building and organizational culture advisory
- Problem-solving labs and work sessions on priority challenges of the target institution
- Digitalization and agile management tools for institutional strengthening
- Grant funding for ad hoc institutional strengthening needs



### Institutional Accelerator Tools

- Organizational capacity needs assessment (including organizational structure diagnostic) and capacity-improvement planManagement and governance advisory to the leadership of the institution
- Embedded advisory for joint working, co-learning, coaching, and mentoring on the core mandate of target institutions or in a desired department of the target institution
- Team building and organizational culture advisory
- Problem-solving labs and work sessions on priority challenges of the target institution
- Digitalization and agile management tools for institutional strengthening
- Grant funding for ad hoc institutional strengthening needs



### Knowledge Tools

- Access to a pool of experts and policy think tanks on a short-term or draw-down basis, managed via an up-to-date expert database. Experts will be on contract for quick deployment.
- Policy dialogue sessions
- Knowledge generation/ gathering and dissemination
- Data for policy and decision making, including data management systems
- Participation in ACBF institutional strengthening convening events
- Access to the ACBF knowledge database
- Monitoring, evaluation, learning, and reporting of results

## 9.3 Target Institutions

At country level, the ACBF Institutional Accelerator Model will be primarily offered to target institutions such as:



### Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use

- Government, including rural and renewable energy authorities; energy regulation agencies; energy utilities; NDC coordinators
- Private Sector, particularly clean energy providers including MSMEs
- Civil Society Organizations operating in the area of climate and clean energy, research institutions, academia



### Agribusiness and Food Sovereignty

- Government, including ministries of agriculture and rural development; rural development agencies; investment promotion agencies; agro-processing zone authorities
- Civil Society Organizations, including agro-processing farmer associations; women-in-agriculture associations.
- Private Sector Organizations, including agricultural SME associations



### Trade as an Engine of Development

- Government, including departments of trade; departments of industry; economics advisors to the President; trade portfolio committees; regional economic communities; AfCFTA Secretariat and other relevant AU trade organs/institutions
- Civil Society Organizations, including African think tanks; trade portfolio committees
- Private Sector associations



### Economic and Social Governance

- Government, including ministries of finance; PFM directorates; PPP units; tax administrations
- Civil society organizations, including citizens' representatives, research institutions, academia

The specific needs of the target institutions will always guide the use of each tool, the selection of the pool of experts, the nature of the technical assistance and policy dialogues to be offered.

While our primary focus is on national, regional and continental institutions where

there is demand, strong leadership and a compelling case for impact, we will also explore supporting institutional development at sub-national level. This is in recognition that in some countries, city, state, and provincial governments play a critical role in driving development implementation and the betterment of people's livelihoods.

## 9.4. Prioritization

This section applies to the IAM only, given that the ACB Academy is open to all African people and institutions. Given resource restrictions and the need to ensure and scale impact, countries will receive differentiated levels of support using a tiered approach:

### Tier 1: Maximum Impact Member States

- We will proactively select up to 10 countries to maximize impact.
- In each of these countries, we will adopt an ecosystem approach by targeting at least two institutions for IAM support per impact area and apply the Advanced IAM level over several years in the most critical institutions.
- The Intermediate and Basic IAM levels will be applied in other institutions within an ecosystem around an impact area.
- We will aim to support institutional capability development in more than one impact area and promote the ACB Academy. These countries need to contribute to project costs, as it was traditionally the case, and can be supported by development partners.

### Tier 2: Other Member States

- This support will be entirely demand driven.
- It will only support one institution in the member state, unless there is a compelling case for adopting an ecosystem approach in a particular impact area.
- The contribution by the member state will be higher than for Tier 1 countries.

### Tier 3: Non-Member States

- This support will be entirely demand-driven and fully funded by the requesting country.
- In addition to countries, our support will also be available to regional and continental institutions that play a critical role in the four impact areas.
- In addition to our IAM service, we will work with relevant partners to jointly support member states.

The selection of regional organizations will be based on their interactions and the ecosystem they form with prioritized country institutions. The prioritization will be based on the criteria included in the questionnaire in Box 3.

#### Box 3 – Our Country/Regional Institutions Prioritization Criteria

1. Is the country prioritizing this impact area at the highest level of government?
2. Does the country have a robust plan in this impact area?
3. Does the country have pressing capacity constraints that may impede its progress in the impact area?
4. Is demand for ACBF strong?
5. Can we ensure sufficient resources for adequate support through flexible or country-specific funding sources?
6. Is there a regional benefit to supporting neighboring countries in the same impact area (e.g., for regional value chain development purposes)?
7. Are we already operating in another impact area in that country, or are soon likely to, and might there be economies of scale, synergies or benefits from starting in another impact area and deepening our relationship with the country?

## 9.5. Partnerships

Partnership will be a key implementation approach for this Strategic Plan. In principle, we categorize partners in three types depending on the nature of the relationship:

**Partnership will be a key implementation approach for this Strategic Plan. In principle, we categorize partners in three types depending on the nature of the relationship:**



**Funding Partners** – partners who entrust us with their financial resources to implement our strategies and programs; we deliver value for money to these partners through effective implementation and regular reporting on results.



**Technical Partners** - partners with which we work towards achieving common goals and scaled results. These partners may lead on core technical issues, with ACBF supporting them with institutional strengthening efforts and skills development in critical government agencies and other key stakeholders in the four impact areas. One or two such partners will be engaged in each impact area and for each tool.



**Implementing Partners** - these are organizations that will assist ACBF in delivering the IAM, the ACB Academy, the tools, the mainstreaming of the cross-cutting issues, and in particular the scaling up of the outreach through local and regional partners. A partner can fit into more than one of these categories. We will also group partners by geography: global, continental, regional, and national organizations.

## 9.6. Building capacity of capacity-building institutions

To maximize our impact and reach, we will seek to work with local entities that can scale up our work and eventually take over from us at local and country levels while continuing to benefit from the ACB-Knowledge Hub. We will build capacity in these capacity-building institutions as an integral part of our approach.

# 10. ORGANIZATIONAL ENABLERS

To optimize the impact of the Strategic Plan 2023-2027, we will strengthen several organizational enablers within ACBF. The planned organizational enhancements will consolidate ACBF's leadership in Africa as a cutting-edge capacity-development organization. The organizational enablers include **Investment in People; Systems and Processes; Partnerships; Innovation; Communication; and Impact Measurement.**

## 10.1. Investment in People

**The effective delivery of this Strategic Plan will require six dedicated Program Units, namely:**

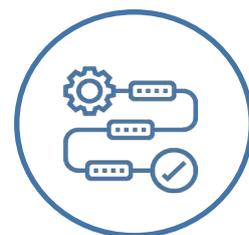
- Four dedicated Program Units, one for each of the four key impact areas.
- A Program Unit for research and development, which will be responsible for the tools and the products offered as well as the overall management of our innovation processes, including the continued adaptation of our services to the changing needs of our target institutions.
- A Special Programs Unit that will manage any ongoing program activities that cannot fit in any key impact area.



This Program Department will be supported by a strong business management environment. Therefore, the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan will require a good mix of talents and experience. As a knowledge-based organization, our main asset is our people. Our strategic approach to human resources and talent management is to ensure that our staff is motivated and empowered. We will also promote creativity and innovation by making sure that our workplace becomes more accepting and accommodating for novel ideas.

## 10.2. Systems and Processes

Successful implementation of this Strategic Plan will require accountability at all levels as well as effective systems and processes. We will conduct a business process reengineering exercise to improve our productivity, quality, efficiency and effectiveness. The process will involve an analysis of workflow, identifying inefficient processes and redesigning or replacing them to improve organizational performance. We will also continue to upgrade our digital platform to ensure all major processes are fully automated to further enhance productivity and reliability.



### 10.3. Partnerships



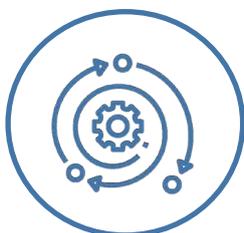
We will set clear expectations for each of our partnerships and ensure a strong connection with partner institutions in delivering in our key impact areas. We will consider our partners as part of our team and leverage potential on both sides to achieve success and scale. Our aim is to strengthen current partnerships that are compatible with our key impact areas while developing and nurturing new ones.

### 10.4. Communications

We recognize that public awareness of our work, especially of the results achieved, and regular engagement of our partners are critical ingredients for successful implementation of this Strategic Plan. This entails disseminating accurate and timely information on our operations using multiple communication channels. Our communications effort will not only showcase what makes ACBF unique and the results it has achieved so far but also articulate what we will do to support African countries according to their current and emerging capacity challenges. A separate Marketing and Communications Strategy will be developed to support the implementation of this Strategic Plan. It will target specific audiences with tailored messaging.



### 10.5. Impact Measurement



We will improve impact measurement in all our programs to ensure that we capture real change in people's lives as a result of our work, beyond nominal outputs. This will mean clearly capturing the outcomes of the implementation of the Strategic Plan by identifying the people who experience change, its importance to them and the lessons learned in terms of replicability. Our monitoring, evaluation and learning approach for the Strategic Plan 2023-2027 – described below in Section 11 – details our focus on impact.

# 11. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING



Effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) are key to sound results management, informed decision making, and efficient use of resources. Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2023-2027 will be monitored through a mechanism that tracks, generates and assesses timely and reliable information to ensure evidence-based management at all levels.

Periodic assessments of the Strategy's performance will enable us to act swiftly and effectively for the delivery of desired results. A comprehensive Strategy Results Measurement Framework (SRMF) is being developed as a critical instrument to support the results-based monitoring, evaluation, and learning mechanism for the Strategic Plan. ACBF's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) approach will be systematic and contribute to long-term development impact at the strategic level. However, special attention will be paid to MEL at operational level. Given

the diversity of capacity development actors on the continent and the complexity of challenges, we will aim to contribute to broader systems that can influence change. The primary role of ACBF's MEL mechanism is, therefore, to help answer key strategic questions that are critical for measuring ACBF's contribution to Africa's transformation ecosystem. In particular, this means the extent to which ACBF has strengthened institutions and systems and built their resilience; and the quality of support provided to enhance policy impact value chains for effective public service delivery in African countries. The overall concern is the effectiveness of our support to expanding technical skills and knowledge in response to human capital development needs in Africa.

The Strategy Results Measurement Framework (SRMF) is structured around the four impact areas of the Strategic Plan. It features key indicators strategically selected to measure progress towards the expected results in each impact area. The Framework is built on a set of primary and intermediate results defined in the Strategic Plan. There are 27 indicators to support the assessment of progress in delivering the Strategic Plan through its nine intermediate results and leading to four primary results. The Framework also provides details of data sources for each indicator, frequency of data collection, and performance targets for measuring progress against the baseline. A baseline study will be conducted at the launch of the Strategic Plan to determine the indicators' base values and to set realistic targets for each indicator. The impact of the Strategy will, whenever possible, be disaggregated by gender, age groups and geographical area, among other possible segmentation criteria.

The Strategic Plan will apply best practices to review results accountability, tracking of outputs and outcomes, and the ongoing development impact of the ACBF. The Strategy Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) will include the following aspects:



**Annual Internal Strategy Performance Review:** Regular monitoring will be conducted during the implementation of the Strategic Plan by analyzing delivery against planned outputs and continued tracking of primary-result indicators. ACBF's Annual Business Plan will be used as the basis for conducting the strategy monitoring, given its function as the key instrument for operationalizing the Strategic Plan. The monitoring findings, including lessons learned, will be consolidated into a strategy performance review report to be produced annually.



**Independent Mid-term Review of the Strategy:** A rigorous midway assessment will be conducted during the implementation of the Strategic Plan to evaluate the progress made so far in terms of performance and identify areas of improvement for the next half-period of the Strategy. The findings of the mid-term review, including the lessons learned, will guide strategic, operational and programmatic decisions and inform further refinement.



**Independent Final Evaluation of the Strategy:** An independent and objective evaluation will be undertaken at the end of the Strategic Plan period to assess the extent of achievement of the operational targets and strategic contributions made by ACBF towards Africa's transformation ecosystem. The design and execution of the Strategy's final evaluation will be guided by ACBF's Evaluation Policy and respond to international standards and best practices. The evaluation findings and key lessons drawn from the implementation will be used for various purposes, including accountability, learning, value addition, and prospective work.

Our Strategy Results Measurement Framework (SRMF) is presented in ANNEX II.

# 12. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are several potential risks to implementing this Strategic Plan, including the **adequacy and predictability of financial resources and human resource capacity constraints**. Therefore, risk must be regularly assessed to allow for mitigating measures to be taken in good time. As a first step, we have identified the key strategic risks, as presented in the matrix below. Following this, our priority is to ensure that improvement and mitigation plans are continuously developed to respond to risks that may arise. Successful enterprise risk management will increase the probability of achieving our objectives. Our risk management matrix is as follows:

Type of Risk	Implication/Description	Likelihood and impact (Low-Moderate-High)	Mitigation
Global Challenges and Funding Partner Fatigue	The current global tensions (Russia-Ukraine war, inflation, post-COVID-19 challenges) may affect funding partners' ability to fund the implementation of Strategic Plan 2023-2027		This risk will be mitigated through adequate planning, effective engagement of partners, a robust system to account for results, and effective communication to give funding partners value for money
Concentration and financial sustainability	This risk relates to the over-dependence on a single funding partner, which can affect the organization's sustainability if the support is terminated.		This risk will be mitigated by diversifying sources of funding, including retaining current funding partners, identifying new partners in the key areas of impact of this Strategy, recovering costs, and generating fees for innovative services.
Limited capacity	This risk emanates from the mismatch between the strategic aspirations and new areas of focus against the existing internal capacity of ACBF (organizational structure, skills, ICT platform, etc.)		A Comprehensive Institutional Review and an Administrative and Human Resources Strategy will accompany the Strategic Plan, including working with partners in terms of access to skills.
Mandate drift	Some funding partners may emphasize areas for support that are not aligned with ACBF's strategic priorities. If they succeed, this may lead to mandate drift, which will compromise the delivery of activities in the selected key impact areas.		ACBF will stick to its strategic priorities since they derive from Africa's stated priorities, while continuing to consider special complementary programs accompanied by project staff.



# 13. CONCLUSION

Our **Strategic Plan 2023-2027** is a game changer in the history of our institution as well as in terms of how capacity development has been conducted in Africa to date. For our institution, it marks the first commitment to impact specific and clearly identified areas. We have selected specific dimensions of the following key impact areas for greatest ACBF impact:



**Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use** because the continent's massive energy shortage is a clear and present threat to economic growth that must be ended using sources other than traditional fossil fuels, given the already visible effects of climate change on Africa.



**Agribusiness and Food Sovereignty** given the urgent need to end Africa's chronic food dependency on external suppliers and the need for agriculture to increase its contribution to the African economic growth and end the vicious circle of hunger on the continent.



**Trade as an Engine of Growth** because increasing intra-African trade and the continent's trade competitiveness with the rest of the world has the potential to provide to the continent its second chance for growth after the era of raw material exports.



**Economic and Social Governance** given the extent to which African countries and institutions need flexible resources to address their most urgent priorities, to manage these resources well to consolidate their social contract with the citizens and maintain an enabling environment that is conducive for private sector and civil society participation.

Capacity development is widely recognized to be the missing link between Africa's natural resources and its economic transformation and sustainable development. This Strategic Plan offers Africans and international partners a unique opportunity to focus on effective delivery of development programs and projects that serve the long-term interests of Africa's citizens. We will implement this Plan with strategic partners who share our vision of developing the lasting human capital and institutional strength required to achieve progress in the four key impact areas. Throughout the implementation of the Plan, we will pay particular attention to building capacity for gender equity, youth employment, digitalization and data talent to ensure that the results are inclusive, innovative, measurable and replicable.

# ANNEXES

## ANNEX I – RESULT CHAINS

### 1.1. Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use

PRIMARY RESULTS	
Enhanced capacity for climate adaptation and resilience-building in member states	
INTERMEDIATE RESULTS	
IR 1: Improved climate adaptation capabilities in target countries	IR 2: Increased access to green energy, protecting ecosystems and harnessing the benefits of nature-based solutions in target countries
SELECTED EXPECTED OUTPUTS	
O 1.1. Capacity of central and decentralized government and private sector entities developed to prepare “bankable” climate adaptation projects	O 2.1. Capacity of State developed for energy sector reform
O 1.2. Capacity of MSMEs developed to leverage climate adaptation opportunities to grow.	O 2.2. Institutional capacity of MSMEs built to develop off-grid and mini-grid energy solutions to grow
KEY INTERVENTIONS	
KI 1.1. Develop capacity of central and decentralized government and private sector entities to develop fundable climate adaptation projects	KI 2.1. Develop state capacity for energy sector reform and regulation
KI 1.2. Improve private sector capacity, especially of MSMEs operating in the green economy, to grow.	KI 2.2. Build the institutional capacity of MSMEs offering off-grid and mini-grid energy solutions

### 1.2. Agribusiness and Food Sovereignty

PRIMARY RESULTS	
Improved capacity to promote wealth and job creation through increased investment in food sovereignty and value addition	
INTERMEDIATE RESULTS	
IR 1: Increased investment of the private sector in agricultural production and food sovereignty in target countries	IR 2: Improved value addition to agricultural products in target countries
SELECTED EXPECTED OUTPUTS	
O 1.1. capacity developed for system reforms to promote private sector investment in food systems development	O 2.1 Capacity of MSMEs developed for value addition, processing and marketing of agricultural products to reduce post-harvest losses and improve food sovereignty
KEY INTERVENTIONS	
KI 1.1. Develop state capacity for system reforms to promote private sector investment in food systems development	KI 2.1. Develop capacity of MSMEs for value addition, processing and marketing of agricultural products to reduce post-harvest losses and improve food sovereignty

### I.3. Trade as an Engine of Economic Development

PRIMARY RESULTS	
Increased MSME access to Intra-African cross-border trade	
INTERMEDIATE RESULTS	
IR 1 Improved implementation of African and international trade agreements.	IR 2. Improved private sector, especially MSME, participation in intra-African and global trade
SELECTED EXPECTED OUTPUTS	
O 1. Capacity of the State developed for the effective domestication of trade agreements into national laws, regulations and playbooks	O 2.1. Awareness of MSMEs of the opportunities offered by trade agreements developed
O 1.2. Policy dialogue sessions organized and policy briefings on trade agreement benefits developed and disseminated.	O 2.3 MSMEs' capacity for export (including requirements for quality and packaging, and other non-trade barriers) developed
KEY INTERVENTIONS	
KI 1.1. Develop state capacity for effective domestication of international trade agreements into national laws, regulations and playbooks	KI 2.1 Increase awareness of the private sector, especially MSMEs, of opportunities offered by trade agreements
KI 1.2. Organize policy dialogue sessions and develop and disseminate policy briefings on trade agreement benefits	KI 2.2. Enhance private sector capacity for export (including requirements for quality and packaging, and other non-trade barriers)

### I.4. Economic and Social Governance

PRIMARY RESULT <i>(From the Strategic Goal)</i>		
Improved purpose-driven economic and social governance		
INTERMEDIATE RESULTS <i>(From Strategic Objectives)</i>		
IR 1 Effective and service-oriented tax administrations to enhance domestic resource mobilization efforts in target countries	IR 2 Improved performance and accountability of PFM institutions in target countries	IR 3 Enhanced coordination and delivery of economic policies and programs in target institutions
SELECTED EXPECTED OUTPUTS		
O 1.1 Skills of staff of public economic, finance and planning institutions developed in policy formulation & implementation	O 2.1. Capacity of tax training institutes to reform their curricula and introduce innovative tax collection approaches built	O 3.1. Leadership capacity in PFM institutions developed
O 1.2. Institutional capacity of economic, finance and planning institutions developed in economic research, policy coordination and delivery	O 2.2. Institutional capacity of tax administrations to expand tax & other revenue collection developed	O 3.2. Transparency & accountability of PFM institutions developed through purpose-driven and enhanced citizen participation in PFM processes
KEY INTERVENTIONS		
KI 1.1. Building capacity of tax training institutes to reform their curricula to introduce innovative tax collection approaches	KI 2.1. Enhancing leadership capacity in PFM institutions	KI 3.1. Developing skills of staff of public economic, finance and planning institutions in policy formulation and implementation
KI 1.2. Enhancing institutional capacity of tax administrations to expand tax and other revenue collection	KI 2.2. Improving transparency and accountability of PFM institutions through purpose-driven and enhanced citizen participation in the PFM process	KI 3.2 Improving institutional capacity of public economic, finance and planning institutions in economic research, policy coordination and delivery

## ANNEX II. STRATEGY RESULTS MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIATE RESULTS	INDICATORS	BASELINE (2023)	TARGET (2027)	FREQUENCY	DATA SOURCES
<b>Key Impact Area 1: Economic and Social Governance</b>					
<b>PR 1. Improved economic and financial management systems leading to effective public service delivery in African countries</b>	1. Proportion of target countries with an increased ratio of total tax revenue to GDP by at least 2%			At midway and completion	Country economy and fiscal reports
	2. Proportion of target countries with functional PFM institutions			At midway and completion	Survey reports by ACBF; Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) reports
IR 1.1. Effective and service-oriented tax administrations to enhance resource mobilization efforts in target countries	3. Proportion of target countries that have introduced innovative approaches in their tax administration systems following ACBF support			At midway and completion	National budget and country financial reports
	4. Proportional change in the ratio of domestic revenue to national budget in target countries			Annual	National budget and country financial reports
IR 1.2. Improved performance and accountability of PFM institutions	5. Proportion of supported PFM institutions in target countries having met their accountability obligations			Annual	Countries financial reports
	6. Proportion of stakeholders reporting an improvement in leadership practice in PFM institutions in target countries			At midway and completion	ACBF's survey report; country financial reports
IR 1.3. Enhanced coordination and delivery of economic policies and programs	7. Proportion of target countries with effective policy implementation review in place			Annual	National policy implementation reports
	8. Implementation rate of selected development interventions in target countries			At midway and completion	Country policy review and evaluation reports
<b>Key Impact Area 2: Agro-processing and Food Sovereignty</b>					
<b>PR 2. Enhanced agro-processing systems and food sovereignty in African countries</b>	9. Share in GDP of agro-processing gross value added			Annual	National agriculture policy; reports in the industry sector
IR 2.1. Increased private investment boosting agricultural production and food sovereignty in target countries	10. Proportion of target countries with policy to attract private sector investment in agriculture			At midway and completion	Survey reports by ACBF
	11. Proportional change in volume of private sector investment in agriculture in target countries			At midway and completion	Country financial reports and strategy progress reports
IR 2.2. Improved value addition to agricultural products in target countries	12. Proportion of target countries with post-harvest systems in place to ensure effective transformation of agricultural products			Annual	Country reports in the industry sector
	13. Proportion of supported MSMEs reporting an improvement of their capacity following ACBF support			At midway and completion	Capacity assessment reports by ACBF
<b>Key Impact Area 3: Climate Change and Energy for Productive Use</b>					
<b>PR 3. Improved climate-smart practices and sustainable energy utilization in productive sectors in African countries</b>	14. Proportion of target countries having improved their African Climate Change Adaptation Performance Index (ACCAP) by at least two points			At midway and completion	ACCAP reports and strategy progress reports
	15. Level of investment in the development of sustainable energy technologies in target countries			Annual	Country financial reports and assessment reports by ACBF
IR 3.1. Improved climate adaptation capabilities in target countries	16. Proportion of climate adaptation projects meeting climate change financing requirements in target countries			Annual	National strategy for climate change; ACBF assessment reports
	17. Proportional change in MSMEs operating in green economy in target countries			At midway and completion	ACBF assessment reports; Chamber of Industry reports
IR 3.2. Increased access to green energy-sustaining environmental protection in target countries	18. Level of implementation of sustainable energy in in target countries			Annual	Government reports in energy sector; ACBF assessment reports
	19. Proportion of MSMEs reporting an improvement in capacity for offering affordable green-energy solutions in target countries following ACBF support			Annual	Government reports in energy sector; ACBF assessment reports
<b>Key Impact Area 4: Trade as an Engine of Economic Development</b>					
<b>PR 4. Improved intra-African and global trade competitiveness</b>	20. Share of intra-African trade in total exports			At midway and completion	Africa trade reports; Government reports
IR 4.1. Improved implementation of African trade agreements.	21. Proportion of target countries having successfully completed the domestication of relevant trade agreements			Annual	National trade policy; Trade Ministries reports
IR 4.2. Improved private sector participation in intra-African trade	22. Proportion of MSMEs in target countries reporting an improvement in knowledge of the intra-African trade ecosystem following ACBF support			At midway and completion	Capacity assessment report by ACBF; Strategy progress reports.
	23. Proportional change in private sector-organizations in target countries having effectively engaged in trade activities under AfCFTA provisions			Annual	Strategy progress reports; trade ministry reports



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



[root@acbf-pact.org](mailto:root@acbf-pact.org)



<https://elibrary.acbf-pact.org/>



[https://twitter.com/ACBF\\_Official](https://twitter.com/ACBF_Official)



<https://www.acbf-pact.org>



[www.linkedin.com/company/africa-capacity-building-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/africa-capacity-building-foundation)



<https://www.youtube.com/user/ACBFafricaisnow>