

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK



1st Meeting of the Friends of the Chair Group on Economic Statistics

UNHQ, New York, USA

28-30 May 2019

AfDB policy perspective on the future system of economic statistics

1 Context

African strategies for the development of economic statistics are numerous and initiated by various national, sub-regional, regional and international African organizations, often in a consultative framework. The African Development Bank is a strong player in this sector, although, formally, there is no strategic document specifically dedicated to economic statistics.

In 2013, the African Development Bank's Board approved a Ten Year Strategy covering the period 2013-2022, entitled At the Center of Africa's Transformation (TYS). The overarching twin objectives of the YYS are the achievement of inclusive growth and the transition to green growth through five operational priorities: infrastructure development, regional economic integration, private sector development, governance and accountability, and skills and technology. In addition, the YYS highlights three areas of special emphasis: gender, fragile states, and agriculture and food security. In this strategic document, statistics in general and economic statistics in particular have been described as indispensable for monitoring and evaluating the various economic and social transformation programs of African economies. This strategic importance was reiterated by the AfDB President during his speech on September 1, 2015 about the 5 development priorities for the Bank (The High 5s):

- Light up and power Africa
- Feed Africa
- Industrialize Africa
- Integrate Africa
- Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa

These focus areas are essential in transforming the lives of the African people and therefore consistent with the United Nations agenda on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To date, the important AfDB Statistical Development Strategy document that exists is the strategy for the harmonization of statistics in Africa (SHaSA). It is jointly led by the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and African capacity building Foundation (ACBF) since 2010 and whose second generation 2017-2026 has just been approved in January 2018.

2 AfDB intervention strategies for the development of economic statistics

2.1 Targeted intervention strategies

Related to the high 5s for transforming Africa, the bank's strategy in the statistical field can be summarized as follows:

- The Bank's Statistical Capacity program provides technical and financial support to Regional Member Countries (RMCs) to strengthen their statistical capacity and to produce reliable and timely data to inform the results based agenda;
- Special focus is on monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Africa's Agenda 2063 and the Bank's High 5s Agenda;
- Increased focus of the international community on statistics as global public goods transcending national boundaries with multifarious strategic purposes with national, regional and global impacts.
- In pursuit of best practice – collaboration with various development partners characterizes the implementation process.
- The Bank successfully collaborated with other development partners and Regional Member Countries (RMCs) in the preparation and implementation of (SHaSA.2). The African Heads of State and Government Summit endorsed this updated strategy in January 2018. One of

SHaSA.2's key tenets is the development of the NSDS in Regional Member Countries (RMCs) amplifying priorities for meeting data needs for national development, SDGs and Agenda 2063 (Over years, the Bank has supported 48 RMCs develop their NSDS).

The AfDB implementation approach is guided by the rationale for ensuring international cooperation and uniform standards in data production and management to facilitate regional and global comparisons.

2.2 The Bank'S High 5s

The Bank's statistical capacity building activities were aligned to the Bank's High 5s in 2017.

2.2.1 Light Up and Power Africa

Through the ongoing Africa Infrastructure Knowledge Program (AIKP), the Bank has made tremendous strides in expanding the knowledge base on the state of infrastructure in Africa; Key areas of emphasis, include

- Building sustainable statistical capacities in RMCs and mainstreaming infrastructure data collection and processing as part of regular activities;
- Defining and developing analytical knowledge products to increase the knowledge base on Africa's infrastructure – developing investment forecasting models for the infrastructure subsectors (Power, Transport, ICT, and Water and Sanitation);
- With the regular computation of the Africa Infrastructure Development Index (AIDI), annual reporting by country on various infrastructure sectors guarantees the accumulation of relevant information for decision making with time.

2.2.2 Feed Africa

With an objective of informing national agricultural policies in Africa, the "Feed Africa" agenda, SDGs and Africa's Agenda 2063, the Banks' key statistical activities focus on:

- ❑ The development of Strategic Plans for the Development of Rural and Agricultural Statistics (SPARS): 23 countries have so far developed their SPARS;
- ❑ The compilation of Minimum Set of Core Agricultural Data (MSCD) to inform various Agricultural policies in RMCs. 50 RMCs routinely provide MSCD informing various agricultural policies.

2.2.3 Industrialize Africa

Transforming African economies through industrialization is one of the Bank's High 5s.

- ❑ The following key Statistical Statistical Capacity Building activities; attempt to inform the "Industrialize Africa" Agenda among other uses:
 - ✓ Collaborative work with UNIDO in the production of industrial statistics;
 - ✓ Improving the quality and availability of National Accounts data through;
 - ✓ Technical and financial support in rebasing Gross Domestic Product (GDP), reflecting the evolution and transformational shifts of economies and adherence to best practice,
 - ✓ Implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts;
 - ✓ Related technical and financial assistance focus on the development of Statistical Business Registers (SBRs) – that provide basic data used for designing sampling frames for economic surveys;
 - ✓ The Bank endeavors to lay a foundation in the harmonization of economic statistics programs in Africa as a process.

2.2.4 Integrate Africa

Regional Integration is at the center of Africa's transformation and its economic prosperity.

- Collaboration with RECs (SADC, COMESA, ECOWAS, ECCAS, and MAU) and other development partners in the coordination of the International Comparison Program (ICP) provides reliable estimates, on individual country GDP; continental GDP, and Global GDP: 48 Countries in the 2005 ICP round; 50 Countries in the 2011 ICP round and 50 Countries in the ongoing 2017 ICP cycle of activities. ICP activities provide a platform of African statistical capacity building;
- The measurement of inflation from a comparable methodological framework is indispensable for the assessment of macroeconomic convergence, the measurement of price stability, and the international comparison of inflation.

2.2.5 *Improve the Quality of Life for the People of Africa*

Improving the quality of life for the people of Africa is a multidimensional activity and requires a mix of statistical domains:

- a. The Bank's approach includes among others:
 - ✓ Preparation of poverty profiles identifying the poor and their characteristics;
 - ✓ Collaborative work with the ILO in the development of labor statistics, conduct of labor force surveys, and stimulating relevant indicators for the Bank's Enabling Youth Employment among other uses.
- b. The Bank's concerted collaborative work with other development partners within the remit of the African Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD);

In addition to these priority strategies, the bank is implementing other economic statistics development projects in Africa, such as Africa Information Highway.

2.3 **The Africa Information Highway**

Responding to the request by African Heads of State at their July 2012 Summit; requesting pan African organizations to assist RMCs improve data collection, management and dissemination systems; The Bank launched the AIH in 2012; revolutionizing data management and dissemination systems in RMCs in the process.

AfDB priorities for transformation of African economies

