Capacity Development Strategy

United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

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1. Introduction

The Capacity Development Strategy articulates how the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in its acknowledged areas of competence, supports its member States, the African Union, the regional economic communities and other pan-African institutions in order to strengthen their capacity to promote and achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and to accelerate structural transformation in the context of the African Union's priorities, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme and Agenda 2063.

1.1 African priorities

Recent analysis points to the great strides Africa is making with regard to development, conflict reduction and strong economic growth. Nevertheless, capacity development remains high on the list of the continent's foremost challenges. Efforts to build and strengthen Africa's capacities are as old as it's post-colonial history and interpretations of what "capacity development" encompasses differ widely. To some, capacity development is associated with skills development and building a critical mass of human capital, while others emphasize organizational development as the main entry point. Increasingly, a more advanced understanding has been influencing technical and political agendas, based on a perspective of systemic change that calls for an integrated approach to reinforcing social capital, governance and delivery systems, not only at the country level but also at the subregional and continental levels. It is this perspective, which is reflected in the **African Union's Capacity Development Strategic Framework**,[1] that underpins the Capacity Development Strategy of ECA.

The African Union's vision is that of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena". African priorities are articulated through regional and subregional processes, including African Union summits, the

1 African Union and NEPAD. 2010. Capacity Development Strategic Framework.

Box 1: Africa's transformation and capacity development

Africa is at a critical juncture in its development trajectory. The global economic and geopolitical changes of the past two decades have shifted the traditional power structures, allowing for the emergence of new powers from the South. This shift, driven largely by a revolution in information and communications technology, has led to substantial increases in cross-border capital flows and trade in intermediate goods, reflecting the rising importance of value chains. Changes in demography, rapid urbanization and a prolonged commodity-price boom have also made huge global changes, all of which present unprecedented opportunities for Africa to overcome its legacy and embark on a bold agenda that will see the continent emerge as a global economic power.[1]

Much of Africa's inability to implement programmes with far-reaching impacts stems from systemic weaknesses at the national, regional and continental levels, as well as at the institutional and individual levels. The relationship among these levels of governance has created vicious cycles in which poverty, limited capacity and bad governance are mutually supportive. The resultant effect of this has been further marginalization of the continent. There is also a realization that previous efforts and approaches to capacity-building have not delivered the desired results and that capacity constraints remain one of the major obstacles to development and, more specifically, to the achievement of the African Union's vision and the NEPAD priorities.[2]

1. ECA. 2013. Economic Report on Africa: Foreword.
2. African Union and NEPAD. 2010. Capacity Development Strategic Framework.

NEPAD programme and the regional economic communities. The most recent African Union Commission (AUC) Strategic Plan, approved by the Assembly of the African Union, gives prominence to strengthening the institutional capacity of the Union and all of its organs.[2] The United Nations Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union[3] articulates United Nations system support for the African Union's priorities and is coordinated through regional and subregional coordination mechanisms.

A major point of reference is the **African Union NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF)**, which was adopted as a regional strategy at the fourteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union in February 2010. It spells out a continental approach to capacity development. Currently, Africa is engaged in continent-wide consultations on a common vision for the next 50 years (Agenda 2063) and has prioritized African development goals, which are likely to become the main reference framework for Africa's transformation.

Africa's transformation agenda requires capable member States, strong leadership, effective regional, subregional and national institutions, and competent staff. Such transformation also depends on inclusive multi-stakeholder collab-

2 The AUC Strategic Plan 2014-2017 was approved by the Assembly of the African Union during its twenty-first ordinary session in May 2013. It sets out eight priority areas for AUC, including capacity development focusing on health, education, science, research, technology and innovation; agriculture and agro-processing; inclusive economic development through industrialization, infrastructure development, agriculture, trade and investment; peace, stability and good governance; mainstreaming women and youth into all activities; resource mobilization; building a people-centred Union through active communication and branding; and strengthening the institutional capacity of the Union and all of its organs.

3 United Nations General Assembly. 2011. Review of the ten-year capacity-building programme for the African Union: Report of the Secretary-General.

Box 2: Responsiveness and advocacy

The work of ECA is closely linked to Africa's priorities, as expressed in the strategic plans of pan-African organizations and in the African policy debate. Ongoing policy dialogue with pan-African partners is critical to ensuring ownership and alignment. At the same time, ECA is an outspoken and constructive advocate of policy options built on evidence-based policy research, and on the international norms and agreements of major global agendas and decisions, in the context of the United Nations.

oration across constituencies, strong political vision and adequate implementation capacity at all levels. The Capacity Development Strategy is designed to help address these challenges.

1.2 Mandate and role of the Economic Commission for Africa

The mandate of ECA is to promote the economic and social development of its 54 member States, foster regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development. ECA has a unique and dual role as the regional arm of the United Nations and as an integral component of the African institutional landscape. ECA has a long-standing history in capacity development, through which it has continued to make distinct and recognized contributions to addressing Africa's development challenges and needs. Its capacity development work is guided by various intergovernmental agreements on the implementation of regional and international development priorities and goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit, the work of the United Nations Development Group, the regional coordination mechanism, and regional and international norms and standards.

The ever-evolving global and regional trends and realities of the recent past have not only presented opportunities for Africa's transformative development, but also led to new and emerging needs and demands by member States and regional and subregional organizations. Acutely aware of these dynamics and the need to become much more strategic in its capacity development support, the Executive Secretary of ECA started a process of strategic reorientation and retooling of the Commission in October 2012.

The restructuring introduced a separation of roles between substantive divisions focused primarily on policy research in selected thematic areas and a Capacity Development Hub led by the newly established Capacity Development Division, which is responsible for knowledge delivery. The restructuring has further defined the scope of the Commission's areas of comparative advantage for enhancing support to member States and pan-African institutions through focused capacity-development interventions. The Strategy builds on the work of the ECA task force on capacity development

and on systematic consultations with all relevant ECA divisions and stakeholders.[4]

ECA is one of many providers of capacity development on the continent and is mindful of synergies, complementarities and reinforcement of current efforts in providing its capacity development services.[5] ECA has a unique strategic partnership with continental institutions, including the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Specifically, ECA capacity development:

- Uses evidence-based policy and programme formulation in selected substantive areas of competence, with a view to providing cutting edge, high quality and strategic research
- Offers strategic policy choices and spells out solution paths for implementation
- Strengthens the capacity of institutions, primarily the African Union and its organs, and the governmental and intergovernmental machinery of member States
- Supports high-impact initiatives for regional integration
- Delivers knowledge and facilitates knowledge-sharing

In time, the Commission's niche, as described above, will evolve and become more clearly defined with the implementation of the Capacity Development Strategy.

1.3 Structure of the document

The document is structured as follows: section 2 introduces the ECA approach to capacity development, articulates quality criteria and opportunity markers, and develops the theory of change that frames the Capacity Development Strategy; section 3 further develops the four core objectives of the Strategy, namely, policy research, knowledge-delivery services, institutional arrangements for its operationalization through an integrated and coherent approach, and alignment of corporate incentive and support systems. Finally, section 4 summarizes the implementation plan, priority actions and oversight, and the monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

4 Economic Commission for Africa. 2013. Towards sustainable and inclusive economic growth and accelerated structural transformation in Africa. Task Force on the Capacity Development Strategy for ECA.
5 Ibid.

2. Capacity development: framing a theory of change

"Capacity development is the process through which individuals, groups, organizations and societies deploy, adapt, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to define, plan and achieve their own development objectives on an inclusive, participatory and sustainable basis."

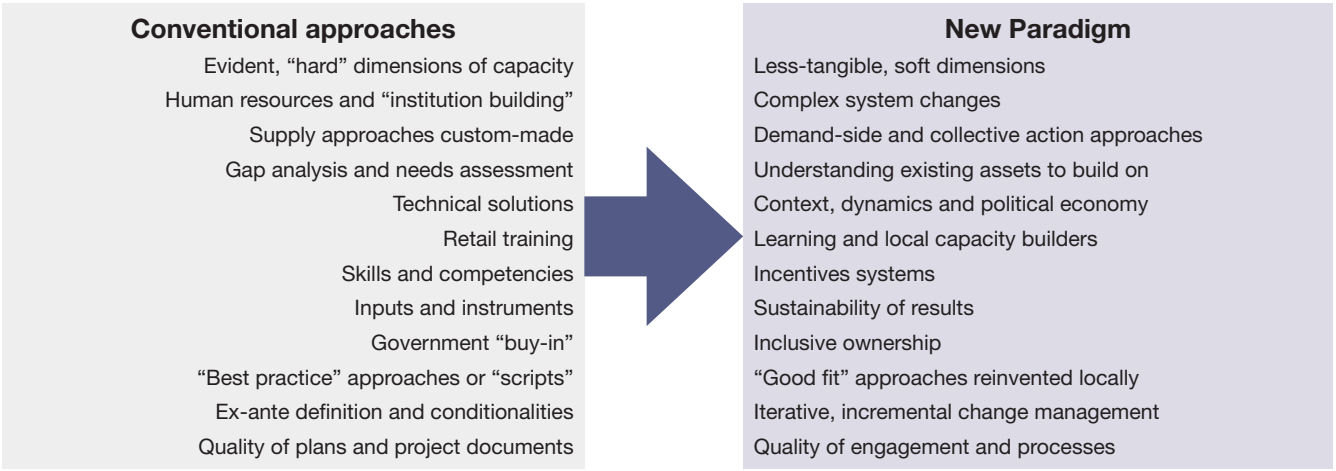
The above working definition was developed by the ECA task force on capacity development and is fully compatible with the definitions used by the African Union and the rest of the United Nations system.[6] Section 2 introduces a reference framework for capacity development, highlighting operational principles and spelling out the implications of ECA engagement in capacity development and the required shift in thinking as a theory of change.

2.1 Capacity development for systems change

The essential role of capacity development has been reiterated in political statements, strategies and evaluations, but the term still means different things to different people. Often retrofitted, it is still used by some to equal input categories such as training and technical assistance. However, over the past decade, use of the term has evolved, and communities of practice have formed around concepts and practices. The new paradigm has informed the

6 The Capacity Development Strategic Framework contains the following working definition: "A process of enabling individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies to sustainably define, articulate, engage and actualize their vision or developmental goals building on their own resources and learning in the context of a pan-African paradigm." The United Nations Development Group builds on the widely used definition of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee: "Capacity is the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully". Capacity development, on the other hand, is seen as "the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time". Hence, "Capacity is an attribute internal to people, organizations and groups or systems of organizations. Capacity development, then, is a change or transformation process from within".

Figure 1: Shifts in the understanding of capacity development



frameworks and tools adopted by various development actors.[7] The way in which concepts, capacity development that has been consolidated over the past decade.

Given the dual role of ECA as an integral component of the African institutional architecture and as a regional arm of the United Nations, its Capacity Development Strategy is anchored within both systems. The framework builds on the African Union's Capacity Development Strategic Framework as well as the framework developed by the United Nations Development Group. Both are fully compatible and build on the increasing body of knowledge on effective

The African Union's Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF) was adopted in 2010 as the guiding framework for the continent. It offers approaches for identifying and addressing fundamental systemic and individual capacity challenges, and articulates the paradigm shift in approaching capacity development. Beyond more evident capacity elements, it brings to light those that are less evident. CDSF is built on six pillars, namely: leadership transformation; citizen transformation; evidence-based knowledge and innovation; utilizing African potential, skills and resources; capacity of capacity developers; and integrated planning and implementation results. For each pillar, CDSF goes beyond conventional approaches to include innovation within an integrated approach to capacity development.

7 Conceptually, there has been a paradigm shift whereby the notion of capacity development is no longer limited to human resource development, but rather covers a broader scope that includes societal and organizational transformation and issues of national ownership, policy-level impacts and sustainability. It includes the creation of space for and management of dialogues, relationships, partnerships, knowledge networks and incentives for performance and accountability. Operationally, the emphasis is not only on outputs, but also on the processes and mechanisms that lead to these outputs. Institutionally, it is at the core of the work of countries and national governments as it is embedded in the national development strategies as well as subnational development plans (see "Enhancing the UN's contribution to national capacity development", a position statement of the United Nations Development Group).

It emphasizes that capacity initiatives must deal with the performance of the entire system: "in attempting to understand or address the capacity challenges confronted by a country and/or an organization, capacity development interventions need to analyse and address the systemic blockages of the whole organization or unit, rather than confine its analysis or solutions to selected component parts".[8]

The capacity development framework of the United Nations development system was adopted by the United Nations Development Group. Established in 1997, the Group unites the 32 United Nations funds, programmes, agencies, departments and offices that play a role in development. It also sets out a framework for United Nations engagement at the country level in a position paper entitled "Enhancing the UN's Contribution to National Capacity Development", which was prepared in 2006. Non-resident agencies, such as ECA, are expected to engage in coordinated United Nations capacity development initiatives at the national level and adjust their programming and approaches to be in line with a single, coherent plan of action at the country level.[9] In 2008, a more detailed United Nations Development Group capacity assessment methodology was added as part of a user guide for national capacity development.[10] In response to the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the United Nations development system, the Group prepared an action plan intended to further strengthen support for capacity development. The Group's guidelines are also relevant at various levels. The same agencies coordinate their support through the regional and subregional coordination mechanisms.

There is a wide range of other frameworks and approaches that ECA can draw on to operationalize its contribution in the region.[11] ECA pursues a pragmatic approach and will adapt, apply and improve on existing guidelines, tools and learning materials in its own work, as needed.

The Capacity Development Strategy builds on the conceptual understanding reflected in these other frameworks and shows clear understanding of the role of capacity development in supporting systemic change in complex multi-stakeholder settings at the country, subregional and regional levels. In line with the above discussion, a number of operational principles have been articulated to guide the

8 The outcome document of the eleventh session of the regional coordination mechanism (RCM-Africa) reflects a similar understanding: "Operationally, capacity development consists of a series of actions towards the creation of a critical mass of skills, knowledge and expertise, and the availability of the requisite financial resources and organisational instruments, processes and systems, for the effective formulation of policy and the realization of the objectives of programmes and projects."

9 United Nations Development Group. Enhancing the participation of non-resident agencies in UN country-level development activities: A preliminary inventory of current tools and mechanisms, obstacles and opportunities. New York, March 2006.

10 United Nations Development Group. UNDG capacity assessment methodology user guide: for national capacity development, February 2008.

11 Of particular relevance is the framework and related guidelines developed and applied by the United Nations Development Programme. Over the past decade, the Learning Network on Capacity Development has been an instrumental forum for developing a shared understanding of capacity development. The reference paper published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee, "The challenge of capacity development: towards good practice" (2006), which was developed closely with LenCD, has become a widely shared reference. It has also been adapted by the African Capacity Building Foundation and underpins its work on African capacity development indicators.

Box 3: Operational principles: quality criteria and opportunity markers

Quality criteria

1. **Capacity development as systems change:** ECA applies cutting-edge understanding of capacity challenges and approaches to conceive and deliver policy research.
2. **Integrated and coherent approach:** ECA applies an integrated approach to capacity development that brings together inter-related strands of work in each priority area and integrates key issues around capacity development through "opportunity markers". ECA provides comprehensive, rather than fragmented, support and advice.
3. **"Good fit":** ECA knowledge delivery is well-attuned to policy processes and highly sensitive to context and dynamics, seizing opportunities as they emerge. Inputs are sound, relevant, tailored, timely and influential.
4. **Quality of engagement:** ECA nurtures trustful and vibrant relationships where frank dialogue on issues is possible and maintains a high flexibility to adjust to evolving circumstances and opportunities.
5. **Evidence-based:** Policy options are based on clear evidence through calibrated research, sound statistics and continued learning, including capacity development challenges and solutions.
6. **Results-oriented:** ECA contributions are strategic in nature and aim at effectively influencing development outcomes that make a difference in Africa's transformation.
7. **Partnerships:** ECA makes its contribution in areas of comparative strength in complementarity and/or synergy with the United Nations Development System and other regional and country-level partners.
8. **Capacity development traction:** In delivering policy options and knowledge, ECA leverages African potential and strengthens relevant regional and country set-ups, think tanks and universities as knowledge providers and capacity development agents for the continent.

Opportunity markers

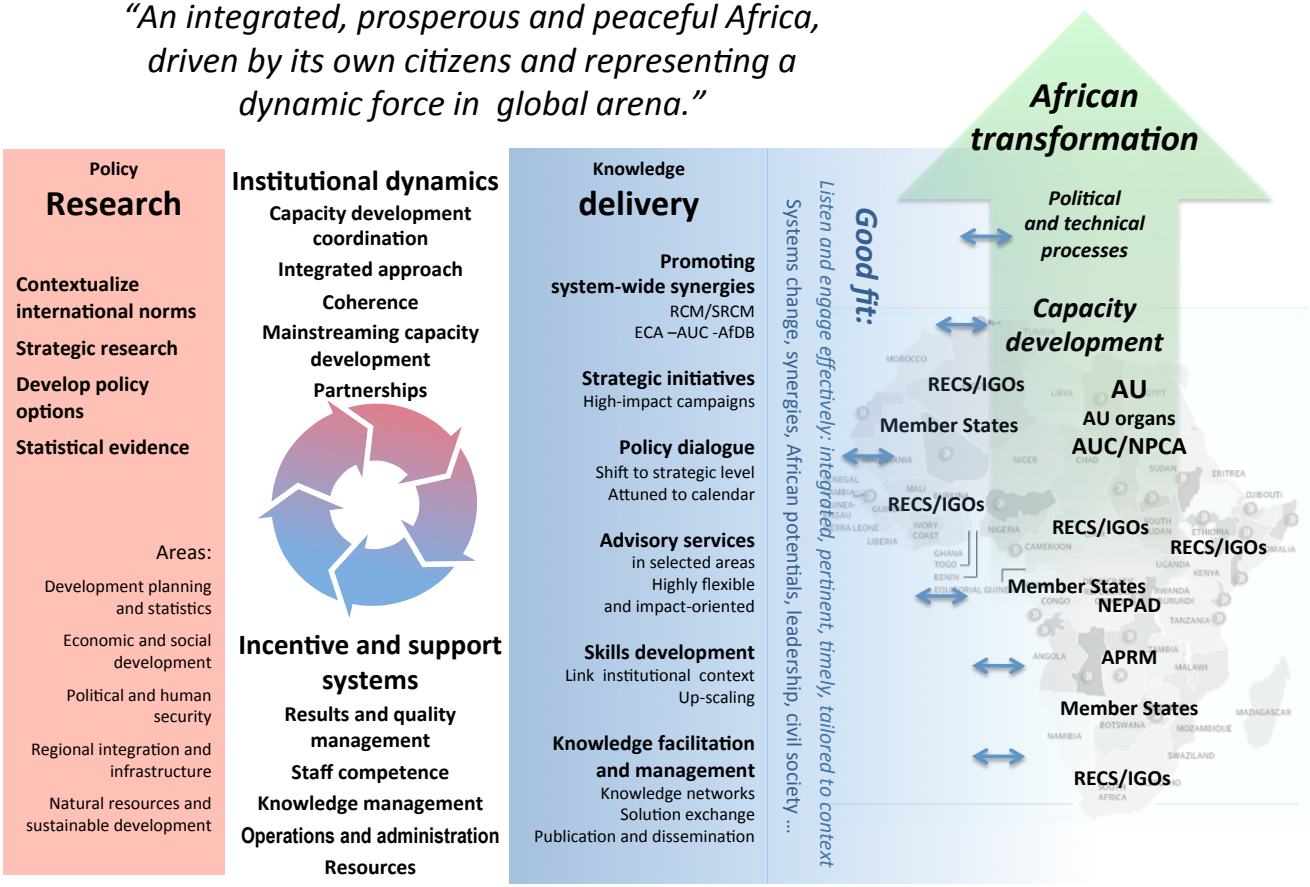
- Leadership transformation
- Citizen transformation: inclusion, participation, equity and empowerment
- Evidence-based knowledge and innovation
- Utilizing African potential, skills and resources
- Capacity of capacity developers
- Integrated planning and implementation results
- Public sector accountability and access to information
- Human, material and financial resources
- Advancement of women and gender parity
- Environmental sustainability (including reducing the carbon footprint of ECA

work of ECA. They constitute "quality criteria" that will inform all ECA programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. ECA further uses "opportunity markers" that reflect some of the critical issues to be taken into account, including the six pillars of the African Union's Capacity Development Strategic Framework. Quality criteria and opportunity markers are summarized in box 3.

2.2 Making a difference: towards a theory of change

ECA contributes to political and technical processes that are led by African stakeholders, including member States, the regional economic communities, other intergovernmental organizations, the African Union and its organs including the AUC, and the NEPAD Planning

Figure 2: ECA support for capacity development: towards a theory of change



and Coordination Agency. ECA engages with these African stakeholders in order to strengthen their capacity to move steadily towards the African Union's vision of an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena".[12]

To be effective as a change agent, the ECA business model aims at scaling up impact by building firmly on the evolving understanding of capacity development as set out above. This has implications at several levels for the work of ECA, as reflected in figure 2.

ECA contributes to Africa's transformation through targeted policy research and delivery

12 African Union's vision and mission statement. Available from: http://www.au.int/en/about/vision.

of relevant knowledge to member States and pan-African processes. These constitute the first two externally oriented levels with distinct contributions to African transformation.

Level 1: Policy research focuses on areas where ECA has acknowledged competence and complies with the highest professional standards. Policy research has to be strategic in nature in order to fill the evidence gaps and advance technical and political discourse and decision-making. It contextualizes international norms for the African continent and, based on sound statistics, develops concrete policy options to broaden the solution paths available to member States. Building on an advanced understanding of change promotion, policy research also needs to take full account of the capacity challenges faced by member States and pan-African organizations, and provide options on how to address them.

Level 2: Knowledge delivery goes beyond dissemination of flagship reports and seminal studies. Policy options will be packaged and delivered in ways that actually make a difference to the policy dialogue. ECA engagement in policy dialogue, policy advice and skills development needs to comply with the "good fit" principle. This means engaging effectively, in an integrated, pertinent, timely and tailored manner, to promote and support systems change, and harness synergies. To be relevant and influential, ECA capacity development support services should be optimally attuned and delivered on time.

To translate research into policy effectively and to deliver knowledge, ECA makes internal institutional arrangements at two additional levels:

Level 3: Institutional dynamics that foster an integrated and coherent approach to making contributions to Africa's transformation need to be in place. Several mechanisms that foster collaboration between research-oriented divisions and the Capacity Development Hub need to be developed in order to bring relevant knowledge fully to bear. Further, institutional dynamics that promote continued learning and mainstreaming of capacity development concepts and approaches across divisions within ECA and through extended partnerships around substantive agendas need to be established or strengthened.

Level 4: Corporate incentive and support systems that underpin all of the above operations and institutional processes will be aligned to make them effective for capacity development. These include ECA results and quality management, staff competence, development and performance systems, as well as knowledge management. It also implies that the Capacity Development Strategy should be fully integrated to become part and parcel of ECA corporate systems and operational support systems, including procurement, financial management and results-oriented budgeting.

3. Putting theory into practice for Africa's transformation

The four areas identified as fundamental for making relevant and sustained contributions to Africa's transformative agenda are summarized as the core objectives that the Capacity Development Strategy needs to address. This will ensure that:

1. ECA policy research and statistics are strategically relevant, include an analytic capacity lens and are of consistently high quality;

2. ECA knowledge delivery is strategic, a "good fit", and inputs, products and engagement are sound and influential in promoting the transformation agenda;

3. ECA operationalizes an integrated and coherent approach to capacity development through effective inter-divisional cooperation and substantive partnerships;

4. Incentive and support systems are aligned, including results and quality management, staff management, operations and budget allocations, in order to promote the above objectives effectively.

These four objectives will be further explored in the following sections.

3.1 Cutting-edge policy research: ECA focus areas (objective 1)

Objective 1: Ensure that ECA policy research and statistics are strategically relevant, include an analytic capacity lens and are of consistently high quality.

The key agents for promoting objective 1 are the five substantive divisions that together make up the research wing of ECA (see box 4). These divisions have thematic sections and host a number of African centres with diverse specialities. The substantive focus of ECA is expressed in the very structure of the organization and has been explained in a number

Box 4: ECA Substantive Divisions and respective section and centres

Macroeconomic Policy Division
Finance and Private Sector Section - Renewal of Planning Section
Forecasting Section - Governance and Public Sector Management Section

Regional Integration and Trade Division
Industrialization and Infrastructure Section - Investment Policy Section - Food Secutity, Agriculture and Land Section - African Trade Policy Center (ATPC)

Social Development Policy Division
African Center for Gender - Employment and Social Protection Section - Population and Youth Section - Urbanization Section

Special Initiatives Division
New Technologies and Innovation Section - Green Economy and Natural Resources Section - African Climate Policy Center (ACPC) - African Minerals Development Center (AMDC)

African Center for Statistics
Economic Statistics and National Accounts Section - Demographic and Social Statistics Section - Statistical Development Section -Geoinformation and Sectoral Statistics Section - Data Technology Section

of strategic documents, such as the business plan.[13] The recent restructuring of ECA has added new facets. Naturally, areas of focus continue to evolve within the mandate, as ECA responds to the needs of member States and pan-African institutions.[14]

While ECA subprogrammes and institutional structure may change over time, the Capacity Development Strategy identifies five thematic areas as a robust framework that covers the Commission's substantive mandate. The clusters offer a rationale for focusing work on themes by connecting related programmes and strands of work across divisions and by integrating cross-cutting themes (see box 5) relevant to all areas.

Cluster 1: Development planning and statistics

Over the past decade, there has been a resurgence of comprehensive development planning.[15] Countries such as Ethiopia, Nigeria and Uganda have adopted long-term development visions and planning frameworks. The new

13 Under the current business plan, ECA operates nine subprogrammes, which may eventually change. Similarly, the clusters defined in the Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme are bound to evolve.

14 16 African Union's vision and mission statement. Available from: http://www.au.int/en /about/vision.

15 Development planning has a long history in Africa. The early plans (1960s) had limited success, with some exceptions, notably Botswana, Cabo Verde, Ghana and Zambia. In the 1980s and 1990s, development plans were overtaken by structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), followed by poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) in the early 2000s. For more information, see: http://www.uneca.org/es-blog/50-years-development-planning-africa-lessons-and-challenges.

generation of plans is more attuned to a mix of State and market-based approaches, is more consultative, and takes into account global and continental development goals and frameworks such as NEPAD. However, there are challenges, such as ensuring credible consultation processes, prioritizing funding in line with development aspirations, coordinating donors, strengthening capacity to implement projects and programmes, and developing effective monitoring and evaluation systems that feed back into the policymaking process.

ECA provides multi-fold support in this area. The new structure aims at strengthening country statistics and continental data as the basis for sound planning. ECA policy research aims to share knowledge on various aspects of development strategizing and planning in Africa, including policy formulation, coordination and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. At the continental level, Agenda 2063 offers a promising framework for bottom-up consultations for building consensus on the next generation of African development goals.

To move towards these goals, development planning needs to address critical implementation issues. Experience with the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), for instance, suggests that progress has been made where conducive implementation mechanisms have been put into place. Through its capacity development support, ECA can help member States to move from promising policy ideas to action, by providing traction with domestic institutions and achieving the desired development results.

Cluster 2: Economic and social development

Despite significant progress in economic and social development since 2000, many challenges remain, including insufficient economic growth (at least 7 per cent GDP growth per annum over a sustained number of years is required for poverty to be substantially reduced), widening savings-investment gaps, high unemployment (especially among secondary school and tertiary education graduates), low student enrolment ratios beyond primary level, and low access to health facilities (especially in rural areas, where over 60 per cent live), among other factors. For Africa to become a global growth pole, the continent needs to develop and implement innovative economic and social policies and programmes to boost growth and transformation, promote industrialization and trade, and transform its labour force and overall population into an educated and healthy society.

ECA consistently advocates for predictable and sound macroeconomic policy frameworks that are supportive of inclusive growth, private sector development, employment, value addition, economic transformation and sustainable development. Through its publications, such as the *Economic Report on Africa*, the Commission disseminates promising practices in spe-

Box 5: Cross-cutting themes

Notwithstanding that the cluster thematic areas overlap with one another, other ECA cross-cutting themes include:

Gender: The African Centre for Gender provides technical support to member States to address gender inequality and women's empowerment by developing tools and providing evidence for policy formulation and effective implementation. The Centre also facilitates the monitoring of the implementation of commitments and declarations made by member States.

Innovation and technology: Building on the experience of the implementation of the African Information Society Initiative and the African Innovation framework, ECA is focusing on assisting African countries and regional economic communities in the formulation, adoption and implementation of new technology and innovation policies that will help them accelerate the transformation process to improve the competitiveness of their firms and the welfare of their citizens, including ensuring their collective and individual security.

Governance: Effective institutions, visionary leadership and participatory governance mechanisms are key ingredients of the transformative agenda in Africa. Underscoring the centrality of accountable, inclusive and effective public administration in the process of development, ECA continues to deepen its work in the areas of illicit financial flows, anti-corruption, public financial management and efficient public sector practices for better service delivery.

cific aspects of economic management within Africa. The Commission's long-term approach focuses on tracking and analysing trends in economic growth, finance and governance in all the African countries, and making recommendations on measures for wealth creation and poverty reduction. ECA undertakes national and regional policy studies on economic reforms, domestic resource mobilization, illicit financial flows, external debt and exchange rate management. It also supports the fostering of an enabling environment for development of the financial sector, entrepreneurship and private sector operations.

Cluster 3: Political and human security

Africa's conflicts have had a devastating effect on its people and have caused immense human suffering and loss of life, assets, livelihoods and personal security. They have also triggered increased threats from poverty, famine, disease and repression, with far-reaching consequences on the safety of individual human beings and their socioeconomic conditions. Such threats have brought the issues of human security and livelihoods to the fore, as these are central to ensuring sustainable peace and development. Political decisions are inherently about people: Governments have a responsibility to protect their citizens against social deprivation, political hostilities and economic setbacks. The emerging consensus on human security has both intrinsic and instrumental facets. The intrinsic facet relates to qualities such as "human rights, good governance, access to education and healthcare and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential"[16] while the instrumental facet includes people-centred development and political stability.

Under the Commission's new orientation, the objectives of the political and human security

16 Kofi Annan. "Secretary-General salutes International Workshop on Human Security in Mongolia." Two-Day Session in Ulaanbaatar, 8-10 May 2000. Press Release SG/SM/7382.

Box 6: Partnerships: universities, research institutes and civil society organizations

ECA will step up its partnership building with African universities, research institutions and civil society organizations working on development issues. Research by universities and through fellowships offer scope for expanding knowledge generation and delivery in areas of common interest. There are multiple ways in which ECA can team up with universities, think tanks, the media and other civil society organizations for knowledge delivery, from guest-lecturing during training courses, to high-impact advocacy campaigns.

cluster are to strengthen the capacity of member States, the regional economic communities and the African Union and its organs to promote synergies in policies and activities on major development issues, including political and human security, peacebuilding, good governance and democracy. Africa's growth trajectory needs State capacity to provide security, which is inextricably linked to political and economic development. There is a need to support and consolidate the trend towards peace, stability and development, in which citizens are recognized as important stakeholders with valuable inputs to offer. In this regard, ECA has made it a priority to deepen and strengthen its collaboration and partnerships in response to the priorities and demands of its member States at the regional, subregional and continental levels. As such, it seeks to promote a new approach to understanding and analysing the interrelated issues that threaten human dignity by "promoting peace, which is essential to political, social and economic development in Africa".[17]

Cluster 4: Regional integration and infrastructure

Regional integration remains a key strategy for accelerating Africa's sustainable economic development, industrialization and trade. With the exception of a few countries, most economies are small and non-diversified, with very little trade between countries. Through regional integration, African countries can pool their economies so as to play a competitive role in the global marketplace.

To deepen Africa's regional integration agenda, ECA undertakes research and policy analysis of the drivers of economic development in general and major sectors such as infrastructure, industrialization, and investment and trade (both goods and services), in particular. For instance, while infrastructure development is an essential component of regional integration through physical connectivity, a regional approach to infrastructure development can substantially reduce infrastructure costs through economies of scale – especially in the energy sector. Understanding this dynamic helps countries to leverage each other's comparative advantage.

The overarching focus of ECA is to promote policies and programmes that strengthen economic cooperation and integration, in line with the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and the Constitutive

17 The first edition of the African Governance Report (AGR I), ECA 2005.

Act of the African Union. Through its support to the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, ECA has consistently helped to build capacity to implement the PIDA and CAADP programmes, and strengthen the institutional capacity of the Planning and Coordination Agency to carry out its mandate.

In the area of trade, special emphasis has been placed on helping member States to develop strategies for boosting intra-Africa trade (BIAT) and creating a continental free trade area (CFTA), as well as enhancing skills and negotiation capacity based on well-researched, informed positions on trade relations with external countries, economic communities and the World Trade Organization. In addition to research, policy analysis and the articulation of policy options, ECA has developed tools such as the regional integration index, which helps African countries and the regional economic communities to assess their performance in different aspects of integration.

Through IDEP, ECA also provides for the development of human and institutional capacities on the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of major policies, plans and programmes which is fundamental for the achievement of the African Union's regional integration mandates and for the sustainable development of the continent.

Cluster 5: Natural resources and sustainable development

Africa is endowed with a diverse and bountiful natural resource base, on which the livelihoods of a large percentage of its population depends. Mining and the extractive industries act as the key driver of economic growth in the region. In recent years, the sharp global increase in demand for natural resources has opened up a historic opportunity for Africa to utilize its natural resources to effectively fuel its structural transformation. At the same time, however, Africa remains one of the most vulnerable continents, with increasing poverty levels and worrying trends of natural environmental degradation.

Within that context, ECA support is anchored on the production and dissemination of policy-oriented research to support policy, legal and regulatory frameworks for the proper management of natural resources in Africa. Furthermore, ECA seeks to enhance the knowledge base needed to strengthen human and institutional capacities and broaden stakeholder participation with regard to the management of Africa's natural resources and the protection of its environment. In practice, this consists of supporting member States in their implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which gave a direct mandate to the United Nations regional commissions to "support developing countries upon request to achieve sustainable development".

ECA also assists stakeholders in the development and implementation of action plans, in line with the African Mining Vision and the African Union's Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa. Special emphasis is also placed on assisting member States in the development of common positions in international negotiations, and enhancing the skills of African negotiators to get optimal deals for their countries and subregions during bilateral and international negotiations.

3.2 Knowledge delivery: ECA capacity development services (objective 2)

Objective 2: Ensure that ECA knowledge delivery is strategic, a "good fit", and that inputs, products and engagement are sound and influential in promoting the African transformation agenda.

Knowledge delivery is the prime responsibility of the ECA Capacity Development Hub (see box 7). This Hub, which includes the Capacity Development Division, ensures that ECA engages closely with its partners and delivers relevant, targeted and effective knowledge and capacity support in a timely manner to member States and pan-African organizations.

The capacity development services of ECA are further summarized in the accompanying chart (see figure 3). For each service line, the Capacity Development Division assigns a focal point and team and develops more detailed guidelines that are regularly reviewed and updated, based on experience.

Capacity development service 1: Promoting system-wide synergies

Given that ECA is a regional arm of the United Nations system, it has an overall mandate to leverage the United Nations system in support of the regional integration and capacity development of the African Union and its organs and the regional economic communities. The prime mechanism at the continental level is the regional coordination mechanism (RCM), which coordinates United Nations system support. RCM has the potential to evolve into a highly strategic forum, effectively combining coordination with policy dialogue and knowledge exchange. The African Union's Agenda 2063 provides an excellent framework for rationalizing and energizing United Nations system capacity development support. Similarly, at the subregional levels, the subregional coordination mechanisms (SRCMs) are operational in most subregions, with East and Southern Africa having joined forces, with a similar arrangement under review for Central and West Africa, in support of the regional economic communities and their priorities.

ECA will explore ways of enhancing not only coordination and coherence but also mechanisms for leveraging the United Nations system's contribution to an approach centred on capacity development. An important step

Box 7: Capacity Development Hub

The Capacity Development Hub is structured as follows:

The Capacity Development Division focuses on the organizational and institutional/systemic levels. It is mainly responsible for orchestrating capacity development support and facilitating an integrated and coherent approach.

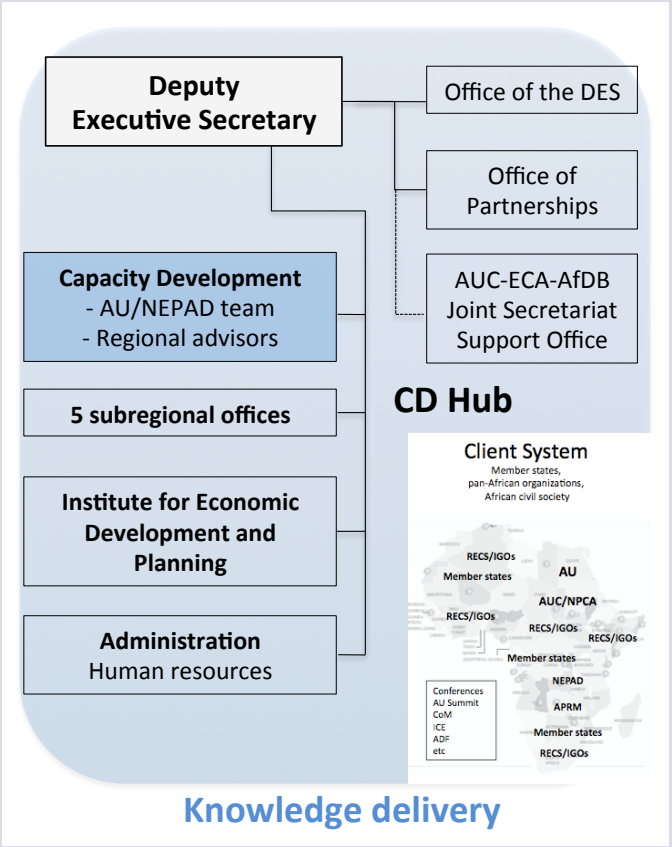
The subregional offices play a critical role in developing relations with and supporting the regional economic communities and member States in their respective subregions.

At the individual level, the **Institute for Economic Development and Planning** (IDEP), which is located in Dakar, is responsible for skills development through training and other approaches.

Within the **Human Resource Services Section**, a system has been put into place to identify, develop and leverage the knowledge and services of ECA staff across the organization.

The Hub also strengthens and develops substantive partnerships in close collaboration with the **Office of Partnerships** and through the **AUC-ECA-AfDB Joint Secretariat Support Office**.

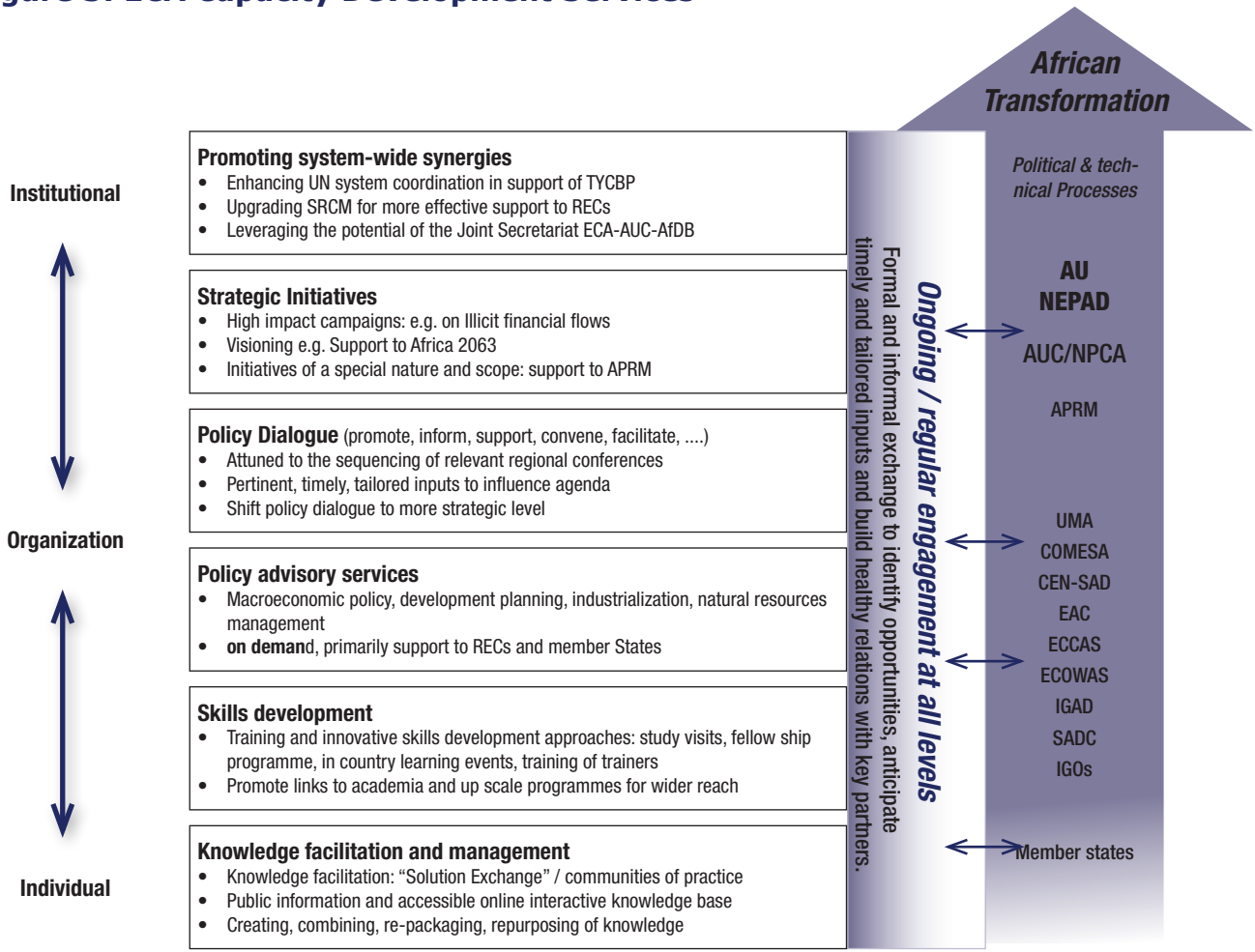
While independent of the Capacity Development Hub, the **Public Information and Knowledge Management Division** assists in facilitating the delivery of capacity development services.



in this direction is the new Multi-agency Capacity Development Support programme for regional economic communities, which aims to strengthen their capacity to deliver on regional integration mandates.[18] ECA will also explore ways to develop a broader dynamic for capacity development, involving all clusters and agencies.

18 The multi-agency task team for the African Union's capacity development support programme for regional economic communities includes AUC, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, UNDP and ECA, along with the respective policy units in countries where the regional economic communities are headquartered.

Figure 3: ECA Capacity Development Services



Another opportunity for developing synergies has been institutionalized through the ECA-AUC-AfDB Joint Secretariat. The Secretariat was established in 1991 and operationalized through the Joint Secretariat Support Office in 2011 to enhance coherence and cooperation in support of Africa's development agenda. The Secretariat has a great deal of potential to build synergies among these three foremost African organizations. With all three working together, they can extend their reach much further.

Finally, ECA will further develop the synergies between processes, notably between its statutory meetings, including the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning, and

Box 8: Partnership: United Nations agencies and beyond

The considerable potential for enhancing the combined effectiveness of support was discussed above. ECA will support the AUC, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency and the regional economic communities in managing development partner coordination, including by enhancing the effectiveness of the RCM and SRCM. ECA will participate actively in shaping the common approach of the United Nations system to capacity development through enhanced engagement in the United Nations Development Group. There is significant potential to promote synergies beyond the United Nations system through the tripartite partnership with the African Union and AfDB and with development partners.

Economic Development and African strategic processes,[19] between SRCM and RCM; and between the United Nations system and AUC coordination and collaboration, through the Joint Secretariat.

Capacity development service 2: Strategic Initiatives

Strategic initiatives respond to particular opportunities for advancing Africa's integration and transformation agenda. Aimed at the continental or subregional levels, these will be identified through regular programming, from specific demand through ongoing policy dialogue as well as normative considerations building on global agendas and policy analysis. Without deliberate efforts, important policy options may not get adequate attention or reach the critical intensity and length of debate required to eventually make a difference.

Strategic initiatives need to bundle forces, energy and resources in a campaign approach to make a convincing case for policy action. There will thus be a few well-targeted campaigns to encourage action at all levels and foster coalitions for change. The capacity development approach helps to focus on how momentum can be gained and maintained for promoting policy breakthroughs. To achieve this, strategic initiatives use all registers of ECA services, including promotion of system-wide synergies and the capacity development service lines. These are further detailed below. Experience will refine this campaign instrument over time.

Box 9: Examples of strategic initiatives

- **Agenda 2063** is a key African initiative that will require a significant degree of collective energy to organize consultations and eventually build consensus around the goals and scenarios on how to implement these goals and the monitoring framework.
- **"Track it, Stop it, Get it" is** a campaign of the High-level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows intended to reduce flows from Africa and spur action among Governments, journalists and other stakeholders to address a problem that causes major damage to Africa.
- **Strategic support for the African Peer Review Mechanism** to broaden adherence across the continent and demonstrate how self-assessments can effectively be carried out and integrated into national development plans and related processes.

19 This includes AU-ECA annual meetings combining the African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Capacity development service 3: Policy dialogue

Over the years, ECA has been engaged in policy dialogue with African policymakers. Based on its research, it has been able to contribute to informed debate and the concrete advancement of regional integration. A trustworthy and constructive relationship with the African Union and NPCA has been of fundamental importance. ECA will further deepen policy dialogue by seeking to become even more attuned to the relevant processes, more pronounced in articulating well-targeted policy options and more intelligent in delivering knowledge where and when it is needed. ECA now publishes a calendar of events with a view to optimizing its capacity for anticipation, packaging and delivery of inputs for "good fit" and impact.

The Commission's services are shifting to a more strategic level. To enhance the quality of policy dialogue, there is a move away from less strategic services, such as mainly functional support to meetings. ECA wants to position its support based on evidence, in order to break new ground in terms of policy options, removal of systemic bottlenecks, fostering of agreements for a higher level of collective ambition, and shifting implementation into a higher gear. Mindful of the political economy dimensions, ECA promotes a deeper understanding of the implications and aspirations of capacity development and identifies feasible implementation strategies. That is, the Commission can help to identify the "How" in getting from policy to action and results. Efforts aim to maximize impact, including widening partnerships and building dynamic coalitions. Selected processes will be upgraded to strategic initiatives to leverage stakeholders, and raise the visibility of critical issues and resources. This includes stronger policy positioning in the subregions through subregional offices engaging closely with the regional economic communities and member States on strategic areas of priority, with particular emphasis on planning and statistics.

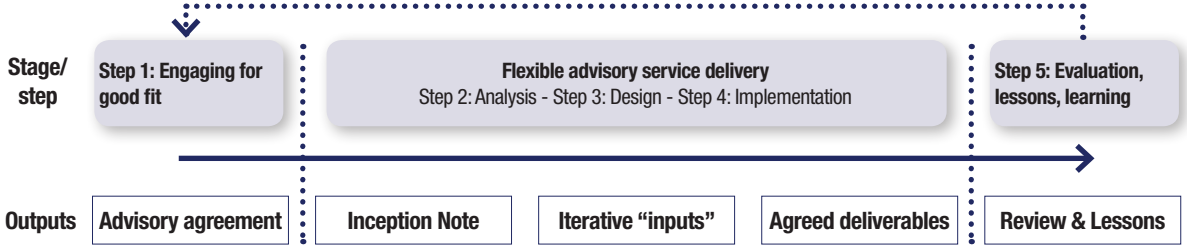
Box 10: Broadening the solutions path for ECA member States

An important part of ECA capacity development work aims at offering its member States a basket of policy options and practical solutions to their development challenges. This naturally focuses on cutting-edge research in the thematic areas (see section 3.1) and cuts across all the service lines. Solution paths necessarily include promising policy options that go beyond established agreements and implementation options. As a part of the dialogue, due account must be taken of the context, risk-taking, political economy, "good fit", and adequate level of ambition, among other things.

Capacity development service 4: Policy advisory services

ECA provides advisory services, upon request, to the African Union and its organs, the regional economic communities, member States and intergovernmental organizations in its thematic areas of competence. The Capacity Development Division coordinates these advisory services and draws on staff across ECA divisions for implementation. The Division has stepped up collaboration with the policy centres that

Figure 4: ECA process for formulating and delivering advisory services



have specific mandates to support capacity development for their respective constituencies.[20]

Given that advisory capacities and resources are limited, ECA is not able to respond on-demand to all requests received. Requests have to be carefully screened to determine whether support would fall into the Commission's areas of competence and to decide on the likelihood of assistance yielding sustainable results. Screening examines, for example, the change readiness in the stakeholder system, including political leadership. Once a request is accepted, it follows a three-staged approach with five steps, as depicted in figure 4.

During the first stage, agreement on the "good fit" approach is established, based on an open-minded exchange on options. Delivery is purposefully kept highly flexible and iterative to allow adaptations as the analysis becomes clearer with experience. Post-intervention, there will be a systematic review of the operations, their impact and outcomes, as well as a distillation of lessons for learning purposes, to enhance the approach to future advisory services of a similar nature.

Capacity development service 5: Skills development

Support for skills development will remain an important element in the ECA service mix. The Commission's efforts to enhance learning at the individual level have been dominated by training approaches. These are often ad hoc in nature, and delivered by different parts of the organization using different standards, as a result a clear and comprehensive understanding of actual impact and follow-up has been lacking. In the new structure, all capacity development support at the individual level is to be delivered through IDEP, with harmonized quality standards. IDEP pursues greater diversification of the thematic focus drawing on the evolving research at ECA and on integration of cutting-edge knowledge, including the heterodox alternatives that are available in different domains of development planning and economic governance.

20 Policy centres and programmes hosted by ECA include the African Trade Policy Centre, the African Climate Policy Centre, the African Minerals Development Centre, the Land Policy Initiative, the African Centre for Gender and the African Centre for Statistics.

ECA and IDEP are mindful of the fact that training has often been used as a quick-fix solution indiscriminately thrown at very complex capacity problems. Beyond training, skills development will increasingly be supported through innovative approaches[21] and in ways that better bridge individual learning and changes in the institutional environment. Innovations to be further developed and consolidated include the integration of content on promoting capacity development and requiring changes in course curricula; use of decentralized, contextualized seminars at the country and organizational levels; and sound arrangements for study visits and fellowships. IDEP continues to scale-up its programmes for wider outreach, through online courses, and development of partnerships with universities and peer institutions such as the African Development Institute. IDEP also wants to increase the mobilization of its extensive alumni network for capacity development resources.

Capacity development service 6: Knowledge facilitation and management

Recognizing that the availability, access and flow of knowledge are key determinants of development effectiveness, ECA is strengthening its knowledge management services. The knowledge management strategy lays down the foundation of the Commission's interventions on knowledge capturing, sharing, exchange and dissemination. ECA provides knowledge management services to a range of clients, including communities of practice where practitioners share knowledge, expertise and experience towards finding sustainable and well-researched solutions to problems. Solution Exchange is an initiative coordinated by United Nations agencies to sponsor a free space to link up practitioners across the region. Two recently created knowledge networks, African Planners[22] and African Statisticians,[23] will be operationalized through Solution Exchange. Based on the experiences of these two, networking services will eventually be expanded.[24]

Furthermore, library, learning, knowledge and information services are being enhanced for African stakeholders and development partners. ECA is also creating awareness on information society issues and the role of information in development, and offers a one-stop-shop access point for African knowledge collections, including a repository of digitized and indexed knowledge products produced by ECA and its offices. Access to Scientific and Socioeconomic Knowledge in Africa (AKSIA) and the African Virtual Library and Information

21 Beyond training as such, there are many alternative approaches to explore, such as: blended learning, coaching and mentoring, communication, customized training, degree-level study overseas, distance learning, e-learning, experiential learning, exposure, external training courses, knowledge management, leadership development, organizational strengthening, partnerships and networks.

22 Available from: http://appablog.wordpress.com/2012/10/02/uneca-to-assist-african-development-planners-launch-community-of-practice-platform/.

23 Available from: http://ecastats.uneca.org/acsweb/Default.aspx?alias=ecastats.uneca.org/acsweb/askn.

24 A regional community of practice for capacity development already exists through the African Platform for Development Effectiveness (APDev). ECA will use and strengthen this electronic forum for promoting learning on capacity development solutions and approaches that naturally cut across any of the more technical areas. Available from: http://www.africa-platform.org/.

Network (AVLIN) as Africa-wide resources has increased. These link African libraries, documentation centres and archives for sharing locally produced information and pooling resources across organizations virtually, thus expanding the range of materials that can be made available to the ECA network of policymakers and other stakeholders.

3.3 Dynamics for an integrated and coherent approach (objective 3)

Objective 3: Ensure that ECA operationalizes an integrated and coherent approach to capacity development through effective interdivisional cooperation and substantive partnerships.

Divisions and units naturally tend to work within manageable programmes and this tends to increase the risk of functioning in a "silo" fashion. Implementation of the ECA Capacity Development Strategy requires spaces that foster joint strategizing, constructive collaboration and continued learning. These spaces are the glue to the dynamics required to deliver together effectively.

Creating and maintaining the dynamics of collaboration between divisions with differing assignments, thematic orientations and stakeholder systems is challenging. In fact, the challenge is bi-directional. In one direction, ECA research, knowledge and expertise are being leveraged and shaped for timely and tailored delivery. In the other direction, strengthening capacity development dimensions and integrating other cross-cutting issues are promoted as an integral part of policy research.

Thematic strategy teams

Figure 5 shows the ECA organization chart, and reflected on the left side is the research wing, and on the right is the Capacity Development Hub (see sections 3.1 and 3.2 respectively). The figure also reveals that the collaborative arrangements are nested in the spaces in between policy research and knowledge delivery. Oversight is provided by the Interdivisional Committee on Capacity Development. Five Thematic Strategy Teams, depicted in the centre of the figure, function as collaborative forums that bring divisions and units together through common agendas and instruments.

The five Thematic Strategy Teams (TSTs) constitute the critical "make-or-break" hinge between policy research and knowledge delivery. The five Teams are:

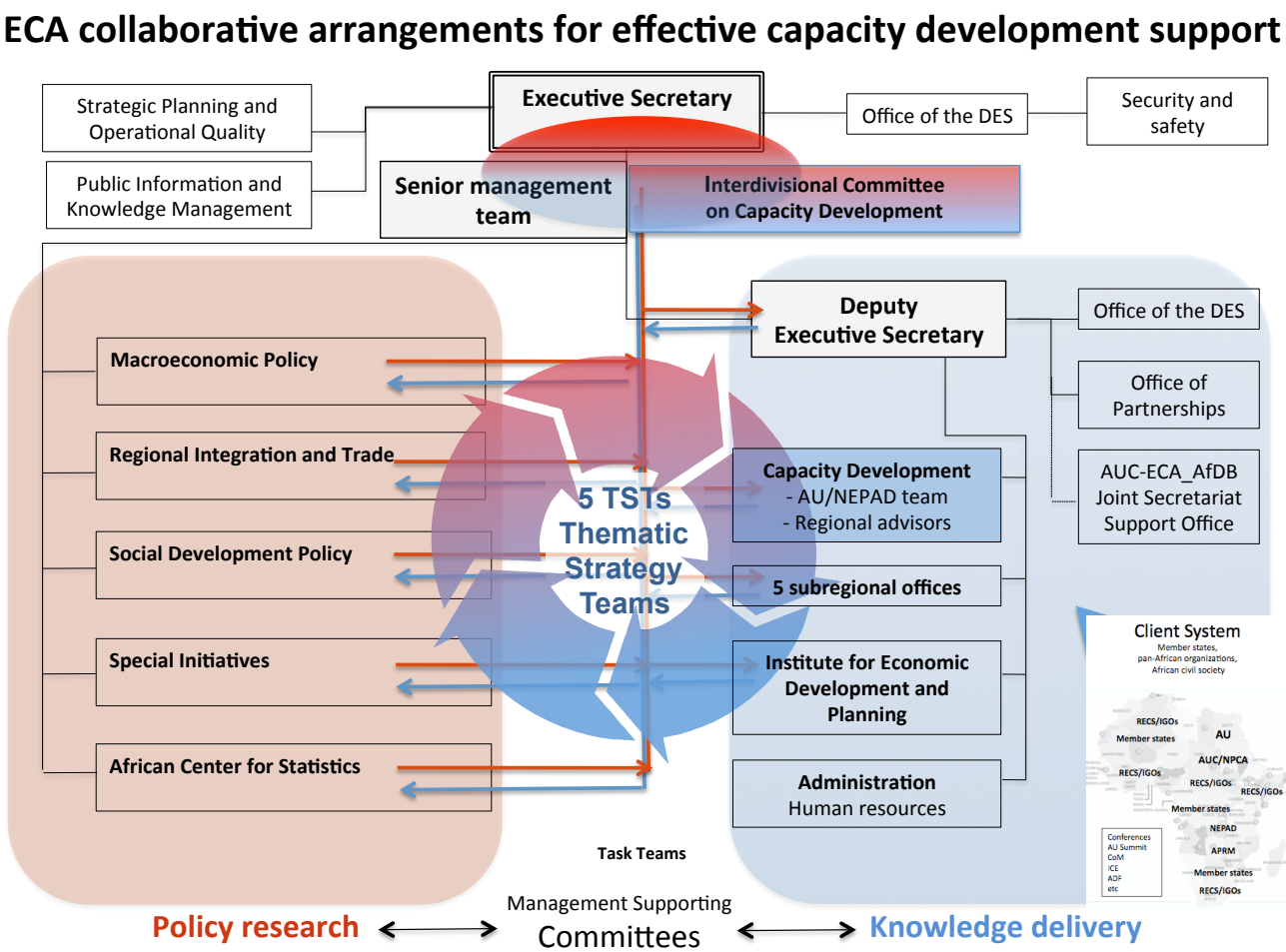
1. TST-DPS: Development Planning and Statistics

2. TST-ESD: Economic and Social Development

3. TST-PHS: Political and Human Security

4. TST-RII: Regional Integration and Infrastructure

Figure 5: ECA collaborative arrangements for effective capacity development support



5. TST-NRSD: Natural Resources and Sustainable Development

The role of TSTs is to bring together all relevant substantive strands of work, including those that are pursued in different divisions, units and centres, for joint strategizing, action and learning for the purpose of delivering capacity-building support to stakeholders (see box 11).

Opportunities, initiatives and learning

While each TST is flexible in defining the most suitable working arrangements, all TSTs have agendas or standing tasks that constitute the backbone of their work as related to their respective thematic focus. These agendas include the following:

Identify and respond to opportunities

This agenda aims at identifying emerging opportunities and collectively anticipating meaningfully and timely capacity development support. Opportunities can arise from ECA research results, through technical and political processes, or simply because an issue is on the political agenda. Members of each TST maintain a calendar of events and share insights that allow for the scoping and shaping of appropriate responses, including partnerships (see box 11).

Mapping and matching expertise

The Human Resources Services Section, in collaboration with the Capacity Development Division, manages an inventory process, mapping skills profiles and interests beyond the current staff positions. Each TST uses its substantive and contextual knowledge to inform the process and sort out any resource issue around the implementation of the capacity development services in the respective cluster.

Product development and campaign planning

Using a campaign approach, other subsidiary products are tailored to respective audiences and occasions as relevant, including executive presentations and popularized versions, among others. In close collaboration with the Public Information and Knowledge Management Division and the Capacity Development Hub, each TST identifies which knowledge products are to be developed, what the various units can contribute and how this should be done.

Formulate and manage strategic initiatives

This may be the policy-relevant dissemination of a flagship report, such as the Economic

Box 11: Thematic Strategy Teams and agendas

TSTs convene the relevant units, conceive strategic initiatives, map relevant content, take decisions on allocating staff resources for policy support and advisory services, identify opportunities, discuss challenges and coordinate concrete action and time tables. They also avoid a proliferation of multiple processes and establish accountability for collaboration and collective results. TSTs are co-chaired by the key substantive division and the Capacity Development Division. With guidance from the Interdivisional Committee on Capacity Development, all TSTs decide on the focus, form and shape of working arrangements for their respective agendas.

Each TST has a set of standing agendas and can incorporate any other area of work found to be useful. Generally, each agenda has an associated task leader and other staff as members of a dedicated working or reference group. The TSTs, supported by the Capacity Development Division and the Office of Partnerships, are responsible for developing substantive partnerships in their areas of activity; bringing partners into the relevant planning processes as necessary and pertinent; and engaging in relevant partner-led activities.

Report on Africa, but it could also crystallize around a top priority issue articulated by the African Union or ECA. Strategic initiatives are approved at the highest level to ensure that ECA can access and use all relevant channels and service lines for enhancing impact.

Analysis, post-action reviews and learning
TSTs are critical forums for institutional learning in their respective thematic areas. While learning from research has direct implications for policy messages, lessons drawn from knowledge delivery, training or a strategic initiative are also bound to have implications for practice in research and services.

Mainstream capacity development and cross-cutting issues into research and statistics
This agenda promotes the integration of capacity development dimensions and other cross-cutting issues, such as gender, into research and statistics. The analysis of capacity dimensions is critical to policy options and paths to transformation.[25]

Partnerships

The important role of partnerships has been flagged throughout the Capacity Development Strategy. Africa's transformation is essentially the result of collective efforts; recognizing that multiple partners bring diverse strengths and complementarities to the table. Cooperation and leveraging on synergies will support Africa's transformation more effectively than fragmentation, duplication of efforts or competition. Therefore, the work of all TSTs will increasingly rely on substantive partnerships for identifying, articulating and promoting policy options. Coordinated by the Capacity Development Division and supported by the Office of Partnerships, each TST will take the lead in developing the relevant substantive partnerships in its respective scope of work. Partnerships may be of a strategic nature or time-bound for a specific initiative. They are as relevant in generating policy options as they are in disseminating and promoting them among African constituencies. The guiding question should be "How can this partnership promote Africa's transformation agenda, and what can it contribute?"

25 Since 2011, the African Capacity Building Foundation has been publishing the African Capacity Indicators. Any attempt to capture country or regional c`apacity and trends in capacity development is daunting and it would pay to combine the contributions of the African Capacity Building Foundation with the Economic Commission for Africa's strength in statistics.

3.4 Aligning corporate incentives and support systems (objective 4)

Objective 4: Ensure alignment of incentive and support systems, including results and quality management, staff management, operations and funding in order to effectively implement the Capacity Development Strategy.

Given the fundamental importance of the capacity development agenda, ECA takes major interest in effective alignment of incentives and support systems. A dedicated working group and the Capacity Development Division ensure that its incentive and support systems are well aligned for effective capacity development support, including results and quality management, staff management, operations and budget.

Results and quality management

The results framework is perhaps the strongest element in the incentive structure. If it is not aligned, it can easily induce counterproductive pressures and motivations. The Economic Commission for Africa's results framework needs to incorporate measures beyond numbers and to put emphasis on the quality of human interaction and reflection. While fulfilling accountability functions, results management should primarily cater for learning and continuous improvement of practices in research and knowledge delivery.

For monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this Strategy, several important elements have been introduced in section 2. Operational principles articulated as "quality criteria" represent an important reference framework for all ECA work, and the notion of cornerstones or key issues in capacity development, translated into "opportunity markers", offer useful, checklist-type instruments at all stages of programming and engagement. Both instruments, when applied, shape the accountability and reporting model dashboard.

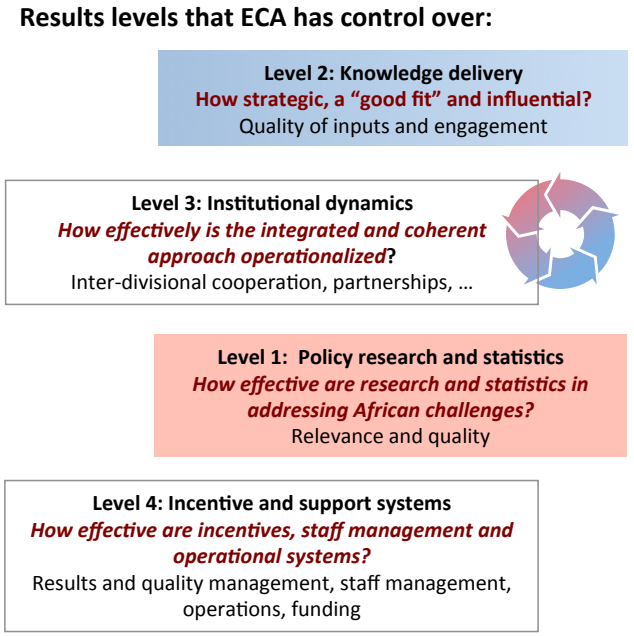
The key element is the theory of change underpinning this Strategy, as discussed in section 2.2. It provides the contours of a results management system for the Strategy, which is to be integrated into the Commission's corporate results and quality management system.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the results levels and how they relate to transformational results at the continental level. These are to be established and integrated into the corporate framework in close collaboration with the Commission's Strategic Planning and Quality Management Division.

Personnel development and management

The Commission's most valuable asset is its staff. ECA is going through a re-profiling exercise, as a result, staff members will need to grow into new or refocused functions. Deepening of professionalism is an important aspect across the organization. This applies to policy research, statistical services and capacity development competence. A sustained effort is

Figure 6 : Results levels that ECA has control over



required to enhance the knowledge and competencies of staff, many of whom are comfortable with conventional approaches, such as training and advisory services. A strategic approach to capacity development is much less familiar and requires a change in mindset. Staff learning programmes will be tailored to staff groups and include a minimum mandatory element for exposure to capacity development in the new context. Staff will be encouraged to engage in knowledge networks and to deepen their knowledge in the context of occupational groups (see box 12).[26] A corporate system for closing learning loops will be important, with a view to reinforcing an institutional culture of learning and for the gradual improvement of capacity development as a practice in ECA.

There is need to build a pool of capacity development specialists[27] with specialized competencies in change management, brokering, process facilitation and other related competencies. The skills mix can be improved through adequate matching of posts, learning opportunities, dedicated courses and recruitment. The learning culture can be further reinforced through regular team reflection on how capacity development work is approached. Problems need to be turned into opportunities to learn. Capacity Development Hub staff, in particular, will become capacity development specialists, through dedicated training and external learning opportunities.[28] Connecting to the cutting-edge of the capacity development debate through networks such as APDev and LenCD[29] will be vital.

26 The occupational group on mining policy in ECA is a typical example of a functional community of practice of mining experts devoted to expanding the body of knowledge on sustainable mining practices, through a fluid exchange of ideas and relevant bibliography, and online policy debates. It comprises staff in Addis Ababa, Lusaka and Kigali. The group has been active since 2007. It constituted the core of the International Study Group on the Review of Africa's Mineral Regimes, which published a landmark study entitled "Minerals and Africa's Development" and spearheaded the formulation of the Africa Mining Vision, adopted by the African Union Heads of State and Government in February 2009 as the blueprint for mineral policy reforms on the continent.

27 Since 2011, the African Capacity Building Foundation has been publishing the African Capacity Indicators. Any attempt to capture country or regional capacity and trends in capacity development is daunting and it would pay to combine the contributions of the African Capacity Building Foundation with the Economic Commission for Africa's strength in statistics.

28 For instance, the learning package and e-learning course developed by the Learning Network on Capacity Development. Available from: http://www.lencd.org/learning.

29 APDev. Available from: www.africa-platform.org and from LenCD: Learning Network on Capacity Development, http://www.lencd.org.

Box 12: Occupational groups

To further strengthen professional competence in specific areas, ECA also promotes occupational groups. These are staff networks of specialists working in a specialized field or with specialist expertise. Occupational groups can associate with external specialists as necessary. The aim is to boost cutting-edge thinking, improve the quality of policy support services in specialist fields such as mining and climate change, and promote energy, transitions and capacity development.

Sensitization of managers, research staff and newcomers

Beyond the Capacity Development Hub, it is also important to raise the level of capacity development understanding and competence across all staff categories. Managers are of particular importance, since they lead the way in setting priorities, shaping motivations, defining staff work plans, evaluating performance and encouraging cross-divisional cooperation. Research staff will be expected to dedicate time for advisory services or to act as resource persons in IDEP's skills development programmes. The mapping mentioned earlier will be critical for matching demand and available skills. Staff development efforts will incorporate modules aimed at sensitizing staff to the capacity development concepts and principles, while induction courses for newcomers will integrate a capacity development module.

Other support systems

ECA will also keep a close eye on strategic planning issues. A programming cycle requiring the preparation of a strategic plan two years before it enters into effect requires close monitoring as programme activities and budget allocations can easily get out of synchronization with quick moving realities. Also, too tight knitted business plans and programme budgets can become inflexible. Beyond regular programme implementation, ECA research and capacity development services need to safeguard space for flexibility and emerging opportunities.

Administrative bottlenecks, delays in contracting, inefficiencies in arranging travel and other problems in operational processes are not simple externalities. They have an impact on delivery and can have very detrimental effects where "good fit" requires flexibility and timeliness. These issues are not easy to address but they need to be kept under consistent review for effective delivery of capacity development services and for improvement of ECA performance.

4. Implementation priorities, oversight, monitoring and evaluation

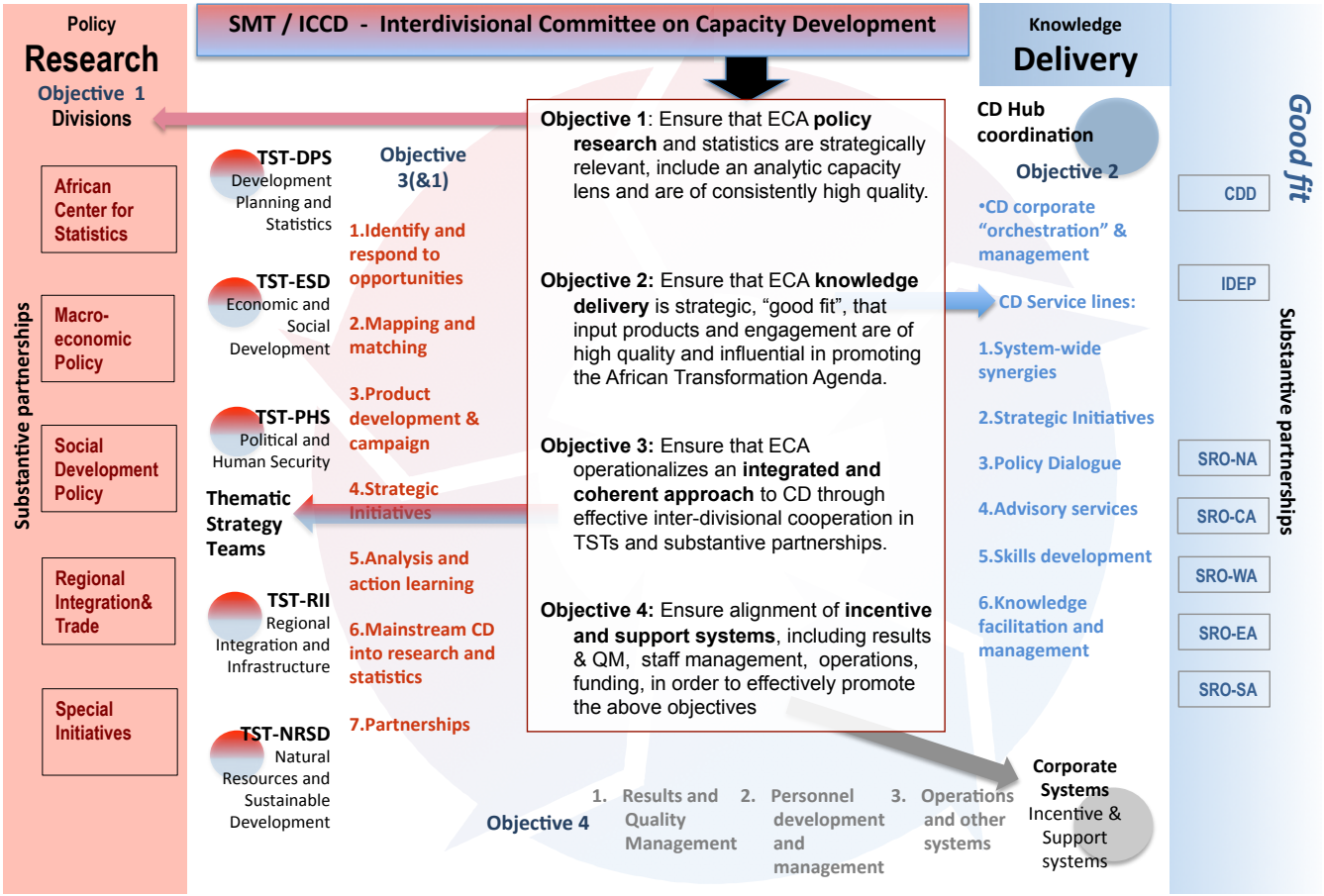
The Capacity Development Strategy will be implemented through concerted efforts at all levels and across divisions. Emphasis has been given to the collaborative arrangements required to realize a truly integrated and coherent approach to supporting the capacity development processes that underpin the African Union's transformative agenda. This section provides an overview of the implementation plan and articulates the oversight role of the Interdivisional Committee on Capacity Development (ICCD). Further, priority actions and monitoring and evaluation arrangements are highlighted.

4.1 Implementation plan

The implementation plan mirrors the theory of change developed in section 2.2 and provides details on implementing the core objectives. An overview of the structure of the implementation plan is summarized in figure 7 below, reflecting the collaborative arrangements and the respective agendas.

Most of the institutional arrangements have been introduced in earlier sections. The role of the ICCD is to support the Economic Commission for Africa senior management team (SMT) as the overall decision-making body for executive guidance and strategic oversight, and for implementation of the Capacity Development Strategy. The Committee has senior participation from all relevant divisions. It is chaired by the Deputy Executive Secretary and facilitated by the Capacity Development Division. It guides and promotes the implementation of the Strategy and all related agendas required to promote and operationalize an ECA corporate approach to capacity development. It oversees the TSTs and ensures that each one provides the space and dynamics for a joint focus on specific agendas and strategic initiatives, as a catalyst for bundling attention, pooling energies and maximizing impact in its

Figure 7: Overview of the ECA Capacity Development Strategy implementation plan



thematic area. It ensures that clusters do not operate as silos but rather have communication and cross-fertilization across the spectrum of programmes. The ICCD also ensures the alignment of the corporate incentive and support systems either within existing arrangements or through a dedicated working group. It further promotes substantive partnerships for capacity development.

It is important to note that operationalization of the Strategy will start with priority actions to establish the required mechanisms. Implementation will then be iteratively defined through the ICCD and the respective teams and working groups in response to the evolving context and in consultation with partners and in the context of regular work planning.

4.2 Priority action

This section emphasizes priority actions that are instrumental in establishing the operational mechanisms for the implementation of the Capacity Development Strategy. Each element will be organized through the respective teams that adopt, validate and renew their priorities on a rolling basis, as agreed with ICCD. Priority actions include:

Dissemination and consultation

The Strategy is a statement of the strategic direction ECA is taking. It articulates an understanding of capacity development and how ECA, together with its partners, can put the theory of change into practice. The Capacity Development Strategy thus needs to be discussed with partners at the policy level. It may be helpful in reinforcing the African Union NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency Capacity Development Strategic Framework and efforts to implement it. The Strategy also provides the framework for the operational systems and ground rules that need to be put in place for its implementation. Internally, dissemination will require a concerted effort to help staff at all levels to get acquainted with the concepts and arrangements. Briefings, discussions and other learning opportunities will be arranged to integrate the Strategy into the ECA business approach. Consistency and clear articulation from ECA senior management will be critical throughout the implementation.

Ensuring that the collaborative arrangements are established

ICCD needs to be installed as the umbrella for the system, supported by the Capacity Development Division, which has a key role in the orchestration and facilitation of the implementation of the Strategy. It is responsible for guiding the establishment of the TSTs and other working groups. To become fully functional, ICCD, the TSTs and the working groups need to agree on their starting composition, adopt their terms of reference and agree on priorities. Care must be taken to ensure that working arrangements do not become hierarchical or rigid. Since the collaborative arrangements bring ECA staff into spaces beyond their own subprogrammes and units, it is essential that, from the start, staff incentives are stacked in a way that encourages participation and cooperation on initiatives that are collectively carried across divisions.

Operationalizing the integrated and coherent approach to capacity development

The cluster-based TSTs are positioned at the heart of the collaborative arrangements between policy research and knowledge delivery. All TSTs should, from the outset, develop an understanding of what an integrated and coherent approach implies for the respective cluster area and identify areas that will build up momentum for joint work. The strategic initiatives may offer a conducive way of growing

into the new working mode. By establishing a good understanding between staff from policy research divisions and staff from the Capacity Development Hub, the TSTs can take up the range of issues on its agenda. Engagement needs to remain dynamic, with team spirit and an entrepreneurial sense of opportunity and potential for increasing connections, and mutually reinforcing collaboration and coherence in capacity development support. This includes ensuring that the external partners are involved in research and/or in knowledge delivery.

Capacity development management systems and guidance

Other priority actions focus on establishing the ground rules, systems and guidelines needed for the implementation. Most of these have been discussed in earlier sections. Guided by ICCD, the Capacity Development Division will take the lead in collaboration with the relevant in-house partners and with all TSTs in building the systems. Priorities include:

- Guidance on managing policy dialogue and advisory services
- Guidance on integrating capacity development into research and statistics
- A system for mapping and matching substantive expertise and knowledge delivery
- A comprehensive calendar of events and processes for identified opportunities
- Arrangements to promote seamless linkages between individual, organization and institutional support

Alignment of incentives and support systems

Staff performance agreements need to include a generic goal that states that all professional staff are expected to participate in and contribute constructively to the work of TSTs and capacity development service delivery. Such a generic goal can then be further delineated when the system starts working. Staff development and institutional learning are critical for ECA to move to the next level for operationalizing the capacity development strategy. This requires a well-targeted and sustained effort by all, not just the staff of the Capacity Development Division but the entire organization. Shaping a corporate results framework that fully integrates capacity development elements at all levels fundamentally underpins implementation, including results and quality management, staff and consultant management, operations and budget. All are of fundamental importance for effective implementation of the relevant priority actions outlined earlier in section 3.4. As part of the implementation plan, a corporate working group that brings the respective divisions and units together needs to be established as a matter of urgency.

4.3 Monitoring, knowledge flows and evaluation

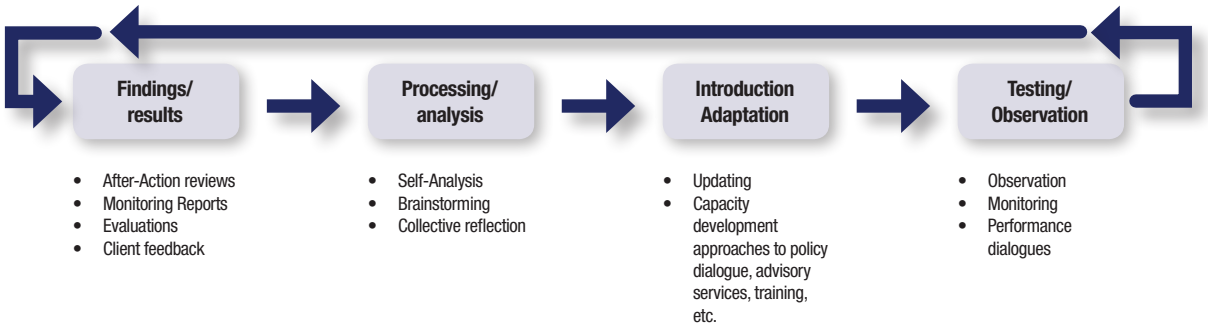
The Capacity Development Strategy will eventually be implemented, monitored and evaluated as part and parcel of corporate results and quality, and staff management systems. As indicated, oversight is exercised by the senior management team through ICCD. Performance indicators are to be adopted for all four objectives of the Strategy in close collaboration with the Strategic Planning and Operational Quality Division and the Human Resources Services Section. Emphasis will be placed from the outset that the integration of the capacity development incentives and support systems with corporate results, quality and staff management systems takes place effectively.

During the first biennium of implementation, special monitoring and evaluation arrangements will apply. TSTs and all relevant working groups will report through ICCD to the senior management team at its regular meetings on progress made in the implementation and integration of the Capacity Development Strategy. Supporting ICCD, the Capacity Development Division will be instrumental in promoting, orchestrating and monitoring delivery across all four objectives.

Systematic post-action reviews will be conducted for corporate learning and improvement over time. The corporate knowledge management and learning system will be coordinated by the Public Information and Knowledge Management Division and applied across ECA business processes.

Given the Commission's two-year planning cycle, it is envisaged that the impact of the Strategy will be evaluated after 2 or 3 years of implementation or based on a period to be decided by ICCD and the senior management team.

Figure 8: Knowledge flows for improving capacity development support



4.4 Conclusion

In the coming years, ECA aims to become a significantly more effective partner in Africa's transformation through well-targeted, "good fit" capacity development services. It is important to realize that the potential of this Strategy will not come overnight and that it is in itself a transformational process that builds on the solid experience and assets of the Commission.

The framework laid out in the document emphasizes that the transformation requires the involvement of the entire organization at all levels and across all divisions. Careful sequencing and targeting of results is as important as keeping sight of the vision. Many of the initiatives identified through the TSTs could be turned into "quick wins" to boost and maintain momentum. These include selected strategic initiatives that combine multiple efforts in-house and with external partners, leveraging synergies beyond ECA for higher impact. Creativity is needed to bring everybody together with a sense of common purpose and positive energy.

Capacity development is a critical factor in Africa's transformation, and it needs to be addressed by bringing the most appropriate knowledge and approaches to where the evolving challenges are, with a spirit of continued learning. The Capacity Development Strategy will enable ECA to make this shift towards becoming a more effective partner in Africa's transformation.