



# Capacity Development Strategy

# Capacity Development Strategy



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa



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# 1. Introduction

*This Capacity Development Strategy articulates how the Economic Commission for Africa, in acknowledged areas of competence, supports its member States, the African Union, 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 African Union (AU) priorities and its New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme as well as the upcoming African Union Agenda 2063.*

## 1.1 African priorities

Recent analysis points to the great strides Africa is making in development and the opportunities to build on achievements made in reducing conflict and in the high pace of economic growth. At the same time, there is hardly any analysis that would not place capacity development very high on the list of Africa's foremost challenges. Efforts to build and strengthen capacities are as old as Africa's post colonial history. To some, capacity development is associated with skills development and building critical mass of human capital, while others emphasize organizational development as the main entry point. Increasingly, a more advanced

understanding has made its way on to technical and political agendas. It builds on a perspective of systemic change and calls for an integrated approach to reinforcing social capital, governance and delivery systems not only at country but equally at subregional and continental levels. It is this perspective, equally reflected in the African Union Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF)<sup>1</sup> that underpins the ECA Capacity Development Strategy.

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1 AU/NEPAD (2010): Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF).

## 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 last two decades have shifted the global traditional power structures and witnessed 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, thus 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 legacies and embark on a bold agenda that will see the continent emerge as a global economic power."<sup>1</sup>

"Much of Africa's inability to implement programmes with far reaching impact stems from systemic weaknesses at the State, regional, and continental levels, as well as 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 the 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 still remain one of the major obstacles to development and specifically to the achievement of AU Vision and NEPAD Priorities."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ECA, Economic Report on Africa 2013, Foreword.

<sup>2</sup> AU/NEPAD (2010): Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF).

The vision of the African Union (AU) 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 the AU Summits, NEPAD programme and regional economic communities (RECs). The most recent African Union Commission (AUC) Strategic Plan, approved by the AU Assembly, gives prominence to strengthening the institutional capacity of the Union and all its organs.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>2</sup> AUC Strategic Plan 2014-2017 agreed upon by the AU Assembly during its 21st Ordinary Session in May 2013. It stipulates eight priority areas for the Commission, including capacity development focusing on health, education, science, research, technology and innovation; Agriculture and agro processing; Inclusive economic development through industrialization, infrastructure development, agriculture and trade and investment; Peace, stability and good governance; Mainstreaming women and youth into all our activities; Resource mobilisation; Building a people-centred Union through active communication and branding; and Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Union and all its organs.

United Nations Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union<sup>3</sup> (UNTYCBP-AU) articulates United Nations system support to AU priorities and is coordinated through regional and subregional coordination mechanisms. A major point of reference is the AU/NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF)<sup>4</sup>, adopted as a regional strategy by the 14th African Union Assembly in February 2010. It spells out a continental approach to capacity development. Currently, Africa is engaging in continent wide consultations towards a common vision for the next 50 years (Agenda 2063) and prioritized African Development Goals that are likely to become

<sup>3</sup> UN General Assembly (5 February 2011) *Review of the ten-year capacity building programme for the African Union: Report of the Secretary General*. New York: UN.

<sup>4</sup> AU/NEPAD CDSF (2010).

the main reference framework for Africa's transformation.

Africa's transformation agenda requires capable member States, strong leadership, effective regional and subregional and country institutions, and competent staff. Such transformation also depends on inclusive multi-stakeholder collaboration across constituencies, political vision and implementation capacity at all levels. The ECA Capacity Development Strategy is designed to help address these challenges.

## 1.2 ECA mandate and role

The ECA mandate is to promote the economic and social development of its 54 member States, foster intra-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 (CD), through which it has continued to make distinct and recognized contributions to addressing Africa's development challenges and needs. Its work in capacity development is guided by various inter-governmental agreements on the implementation of regional and international development priorities and goals including the Millennium Development Goals, the 2005 World Summit Outcomes, the work of the United Nations Development Group and the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) as well as regional and international norms and standards. The ever evolving global and regional

trends and realities in the recent past have not only presented opportunities to Africa's transformative development, but also led to new emerging needs and demands by member States, 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.

### Box 2: Responsiveness & Advocacy

ECA work is tightly linked to African priorities, as expressed in 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, international norms and agreements as related to major global agendas and decisions in the context of the United Nations.

The restructuring introduced a separation of roles between substantive divisions focused primarily on policy research in selected thematic areas and the Capacity Development Hub (CDH) lead by a newly established Capacity Development Division (CDD) responsible for knowledge delivery. It further defined the scope around ECA areas of comparative advantage in order to enhance support to member States and pan-African institutions through focused capacity development interventions. This strategy builds on the work of the Task Force on Capacity Development and systematic consultations with all relevant ECA divisions

and stakeholders.<sup>5</sup>

ECA is one of many providers of capacity development on the continent and is mindful of synergies, complementarity and reinforcement of current efforts in providing its capacity development services.<sup>6</sup> ECA has a unique strategic partnership with continental institutions, including AUC/NPCA and African Development Bank (AfDB). Its specific niche can be further defined as focusing on:

- Evidence based policy and programme formulation in selected substantive areas of competence aiming at cutting edge, depth and quality.
- Offering strategic policy choices and spelling out solution paths for implementation.
- Strengthening the capacity of institutions primarily those of the AU and its organs including member States' governmental and intergovernmental "machinery".
- Supporting high impact initiatives for regional integration.
- Delivering knowledge and facilitating knowledge sharing.

Overall, the contours of the ECA niche will evolve and become sharper with implementation of this strategy. The Capacity Development Strategy provides the signposts for the new ECA approach to capacity development.

## 1.3 Structure of this document

The document is further 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 capacity development strategy. Section 3 further develops the four core objectives of the strategy related to policy research, knowledge delivery services as well as the institutional arrangements for its operationalization through an integrated and coherent approach and alignment of corporate incentive and support systems. It also provides highlights on the institutional set up. Finally, Section 4 summarizes the implementation plan, priority action and oversight, monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

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<sup>5</sup> ECA (June 2013): Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth and Accelerated Structural Transformation in Africa, Task Force on the Capacity Development Strategy for ECA.

<sup>6</sup> ECA (June 2013): Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth and Accelerated Structural Transformation in Africa, Task Force on the Capacity Development Strategy for ECA.

## 2. Capacity Development: framing a theory of change

*“Capacity development is the process through which individuals, groups and organisations, 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.”*

This working definition stated above was developed by ECA Task Force on Capacity Development. It is fully compatible with those used of the AU and the United Nations development system.<sup>7</sup> This section introduces a reference framework for capacity development with operational principles and spells out implications for ECA engagement in a theory of change.

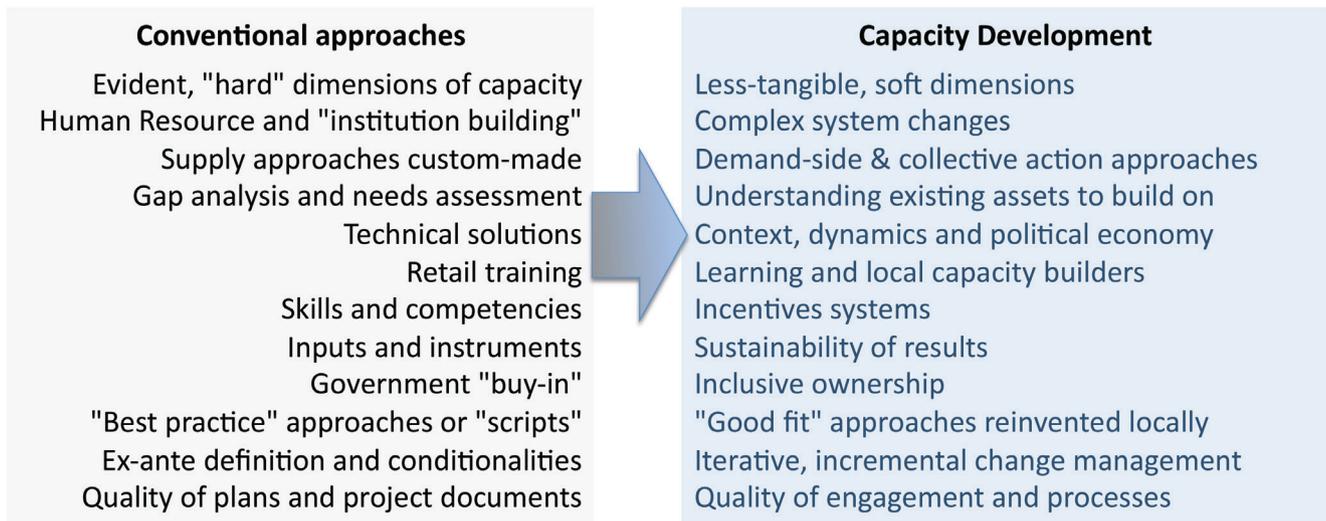
<sup>7</sup> The CDSF uses the following working definition: “A process of enabling individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies to sustainably define, articulate, engage and actualize their vision or developmental goals building on their own resources and learning in the context of a pan-African paradigm. The UN Development Group builds on the widely used OECD/DAC definition: **Capacity** is the “ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.” While **Capacity development** is 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”.

### 2.1 Capacity development for systems change

The essential role of capacity development has been reiterated in political statements, strategies and evaluations. The term still means many things to many people. Often retrofitted, it is still used by some to equal input categories like training and technical assistance. However, over the last decade, the understanding has much evolved, communities of practice have formed around concept and practice, and the new paradigm has informed frameworks and tools adopted by many development actors.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> “**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 the issues of national ownership, policy-level impacts, and sustainability. It includes the creation of space for and management of dialogues, relationships, and partnership; knowledge networks; and incentives for performance and accountability. **Operationally**, it no

**Figure 1: Shifts in the understanding of capacity development**



The way understanding, priorities and approaches have shifted is summarized in the figure 1.

Given the dual role of ECA as an integral component of the African institutional architecture and as a regional arm of the United Nations, the strategy is anchored within both systems. The framework builds on the AU-NEPAD Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF) as well as the framework developed by the UN Development System. Both are fully compatible and build on the increasing body of knowledge on effective capacity development that has been consolidated over the last decade.

*longer emphasizes outputs, but also processes and mechanisms that lead to outputs. Institutionally, it is at the core of the work of countries and national governments as it is embedded in national development strategies as well as sub-national development plans.” United Nations Development Group (October 2006). Enhancing the UN’s Contribution to National Capacity Development. A UNDG Position Statement. New York: United Nations Development Group.*

**The AU-NEPAD Capacity Development Strategic Framework (CDSF)** was adopted in 2010 by the African Union as the guiding framework for the continent. It offers approaches for identifying and addressing fundamental systemic and individual capacity challenges. The framework articulates the paradigm shift in approaching capacity development. Beyond the “more evident capacity elements” it brings to light those that are “less evident”. The CDSF is developed around six corner stones namely: Leadership transformation; Citizen Transformation; Evidence-based knowledge and innovation; Utilizing African potential, skills and resources; Capacity of capacity developers; Integrated planning and implementation results. For each cornerstone it points beyond conventional approaches to innovation under an integrated approach to capacity development. The CDSF emphasizes that capacity initiatives must deal

with the performance of the entire system, “In other words, 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 etc, rather than confine its analysis or solutions to selected component parts.”<sup>9</sup>

**The capacity development framework of the UN Development System** was adopted by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). Established in 1997, it 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’s engagement at the country level in a position paper entitled “Enhancing the UN’s Contribution to National Capacity Development” prepared in 2006. Non-resident agencies, such as ECA, are expected to engage in coordinated United Nations capacity development initiatives at the national level to adjust their programming and approaches in line with a single, coherent plan of action at the country level.<sup>10</sup> In 2008 a more detailed UNGD capacity assessment methodology was added as part of a user guide for national capacity development.<sup>11</sup> In response to the 2012

Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of the United Nation Development System, UNGD’ prepared an action plan intended to further strengthen United Nations Development System support to capacity development. UNGD guidance is equally relevant at the regional and subregional levels, where the same agencies coordinate their support in the Regional and Subregional Coordination Mechanisms. (RCM and SRCM)

There is a wide range of other frameworks and approaches that ECA can draw on to operationalize its contribution in the region.<sup>12</sup> ECA pursues a pragmatic approach and will adapt, apply, and improve existing guidance, tools and learning materials in its own work as needed.

The ECA Capacity Development Strategy builds on the conceptual understanding that is reflected in the above frameworks and a clear understanding of the role of capacity development in supporting systemic change in complex multi-stakeholder settings at country, subregional and regional levels. In line with the above discussion a number of operational principles are articulated to guide ECA’s work. They constitute “quality criteria” that will inform all ECA programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and “opportunity markers” that reflect some of the critical issues to be taken into account, including the six

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9 AU/NEPAD CDSF (2010). The AU/UN RCM 11, outcome document reflects a similar understanding: “Operationally, CD 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 organizational instruments, processes and systems, for the effective formulation and prosecution of policy, and the realization of the objectives of programmes and projects’.

10 United Nations Development Group (March 2006). *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: United Nations Development Group.

11 United Nations Development Group (February 2008): UNGD Capacity Assessment Methodology, User Guide: for national capacity development.

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12 Of particular relevance is the framework and related guidance developed and applied by UNDP as key partner at country level. Over the decade, the Learning Network on Capacity Development has been an instrumental forum for developing a shared understanding of capacity development. The OECD/DAC reference paper “The challenge of capacity development: Towards good practice” (2006), developed closely with LenCD, has become a widely shared reference. It also has been adapted by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and underpins their work on African Capacity Development Indicators.

### Box 3: Operational principles: Quality criteria and opportunity markers

Quality criteria	Opportunity markers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Capacity development as systems change:</b> ECA applies cutting edge understanding of capacity challenges and approaches to conceive and deliver policy research.</li><li><b>2. Integrated and coherent approach:</b> 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 piecemeal support advice.</li><li><b>3. “Good-fit”:</b> 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.</li><li><b>4. Quality of engagement:</b> 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.</li><li><b>5. Evidence-based:</b> Policy options are based on clear evidence through calibrated research, sound statistics and continued learning, including on capacity development challenges and solutions.</li><li><b>6. Results oriented:</b> ECA contributions are strategic in nature and aim at effectively influencing development outcomes that make a difference in Africa’s Transformation.</li><li><b>7. Partnerships:</b> 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.</li><li><b>8. Capacity development traction:</b> 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.</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership transformation</li><li>• Citizen transformation; inclusion, participation, equity and empowerment</li><li>• Evidence-based knowledge and innovation</li><li>• Utilising African potential, skills and resources</li><li>• Capacity of capacity developers</li><li>• Integrated planning and implementation results</li><li>• Public sector accountability and access to information</li><li>• Human, material and financial resources</li><li>• Advancement of women and gender parity</li><li>• Environmental sustainability (including reducing ECAs carbon footprint)</li></ul>

cornerstones of the AU CDSF. Quality criteria and opportunity markers are summarized in Box 3.<sup>13</sup>

## 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, RECs and other Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and the AU and its organs, the African Union Commission, the NPCA and the NEPAD programmes. ECA engages with the stakeholders and strengthens their capacity to move steadily towards the AU vision, an “integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Development Group (February 2008): UNDG Capacity Assessment Methodology, User Guide: for national capacity development.

representing a dynamic force in global arena.”<sup>14</sup>

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 laid out above. This has implications at several levels of ECA work as reflected in figure 2.

ECA contributes to Africa’s Transformation through targeted policy research and pertinent delivery of relevant knowledge to member States and pan-African processes. These are the **two externally oriented levels** with distinct contributions to Africa’s Transformation.

**Level 1: Policy research** focuses on areas where ECA has acknowledged competence and complies with the highest professional standards. Policy research is to be strategic in nature to fill evidence gaps in order to help advance the 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 members 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 provides options on how to address them.

**Level 2: Knowledge delivery** goes beyond 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 to context manner in order 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 “just in time” to African processes.

To effectively translate research into policy and to deliver knowledge ECA makes internal institutional arrangements at 2 additional levels:

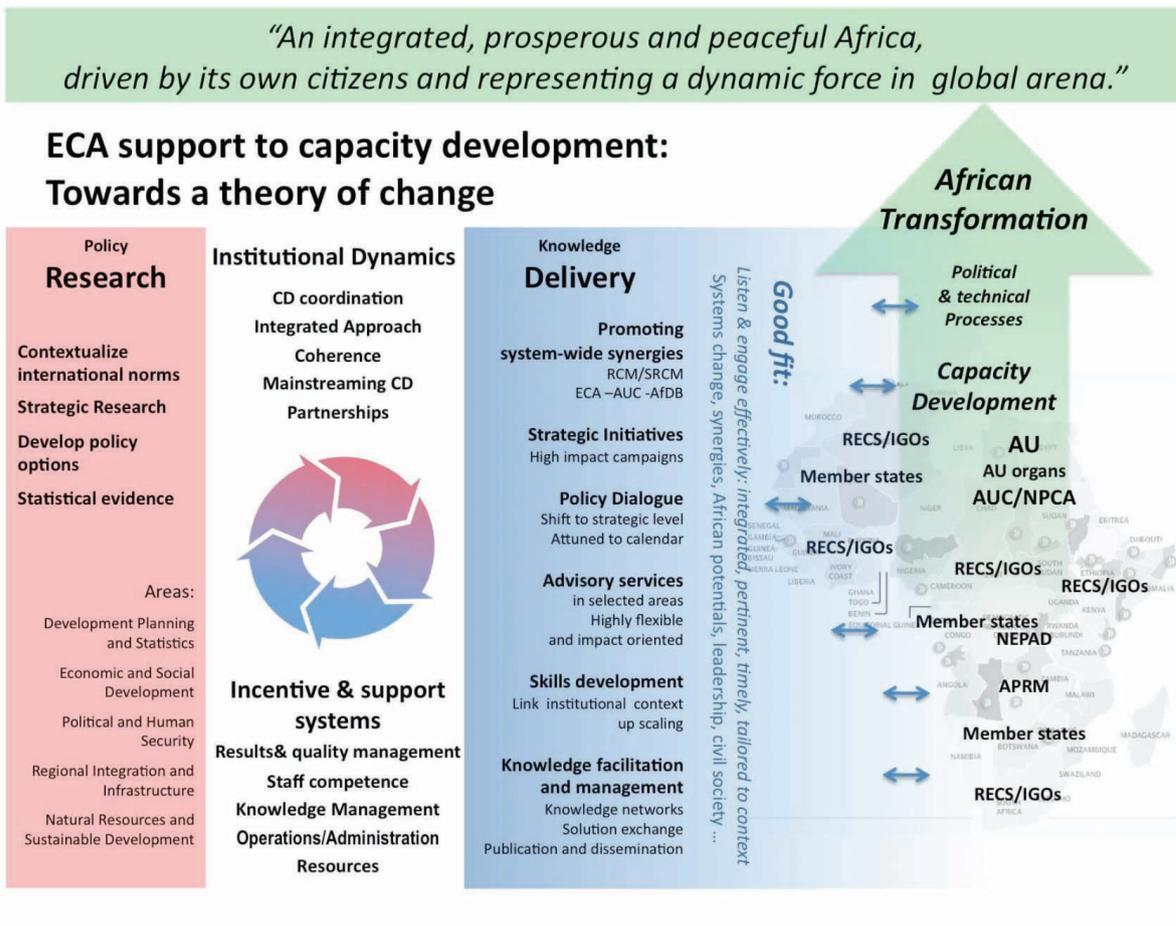
**Level 3: Institutional dynamics** that foster an integrated and coherent approach to making contributions to Africa’s Transformation need to be in place. Several mechanisms that foster collaboration between research-oriented divisions and the Capacity Development Hub need to be in place in order bring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

**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 (KM). It also

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14 AU vision from website.

**Figure 2: ECA support to capacity development - Towards a theory of change**



implies that the capacity development strategy is to be fully integrated and become part and parcel of ECA corporate and operational

support systems, including procurement and financial management, and results oriented budgeting.

## 3. Putting theory into practice for Africa's Transformation

The four key areas identified as fundamental for making relevant and sustained contributions to Africa's transformative agenda can be articulated as the core objectives that the capacity development strategy needs to address. These objectives 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 Africa's 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, budget allocations, in order to effectively promote

the above objectives.

The four objectives are further explored in the sections that follow.

### 3.1 Cutting edge policy research: ECA's 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 to promote this objective are the five substantive divisions that together make up ECA "research wing" (Box 4). These divisions have thematic sections and host a number of African Centres with diverse specialities. The substantive focus of ECA has been expressed in a variety of ways through its very structure and in different strategic documents, such as the Business Plan<sup>15</sup> and

<sup>15</sup> Under the current Business Plan ECA operates with nine subprogrammes, which may eventually change. Similarly the clusters defined in the TYCBP are bound to evolve.

#### 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 Security, 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

the recent restructuring has added new facets. Naturally, areas of focus will evolve within the mandate of ECA to respond to the needs of member States and pan-African institutions.

While ECA subprogrammes and institutional structure may change over time, capacity development strategy identifies five thematic areas as a robust framework that covers the commissions substantive mandate. The Clusters offer a rationale for working around themes by connecting related programmes and strands of work across divisions and by integrating cross-cutting themes relevant to all areas.

#### Cluster 1: Development Planning and Statistics

Over the last decade there has again been a resurgence of more comprehensive development planning.<sup>16</sup> Countries like Ethiopia, Nigeria and Uganda for instance have adopted long-term development visions and planning frameworks. The new generation of plans is more attuned to a mix of State and market based approaches, more consultative and take into account the global and continental development goals and frameworks such as the NEPAD Programmes. There are challenges such as ensuring

<sup>16</sup> Development planning has a long history in Africa. The early plans (1960s) had limited successes with the exception of some to include Cabo Verde, Ghana, Zambia and Botswana. In the 1980/1990s, development plans were overtaken by Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) and then by Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) in the early 2000s. <http://www.uneca.org/es-blog/50-years-development-planning-africa-lessons-and-challenges>

credible consultation processes, prioritizing funding in line with development aspirations, coordinating donors, strengthening capacities 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 basis for sound planning. ECA policy research aims to share knowledge on various aspects of development strategy and planning in Africa, including policy coordination and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. At the continental level AU Agenda 2063 offers a promising framework for bottom up consultations to for building consensus on the next generation 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 to bring the “How to” move from promising policy ideas to action, provide traction with domestic institutions and achieve desired development results to the fore front.

## **Cluster 2: Economic and Social Development**

Despite significant achievements in economic and social development recorded since 2000, many challenges remain including economic growth (at least 7 per cent growth of GDP 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 and tertiary graduates), low student enrolment ratios beyond primary level, low access to health facilities (especially in rural areas, where over 60 per cent of the population lives), etc. 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 educated and healthy society.

ECA consistently advocates for a predictable and sound macroeconomic policy framework that is 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 of specific aspects of economic management within Africa. The long-term approach focuses on tracking and analyzing trends in economic growth, finance, and governance, in countries of the region, and making recommendations on measures for wealth creation and poverty reduction. ECA undertakes national and regional policy studies

### Box 5: Cross-cutting themes

Notwithstanding that the cluster thematic areas intersect with each other, other ECA cross cutting themes include:

**Gender:** The African Centre for Gender (ACG) provides technical support to member States to address gender inequality and women's empowerment through developing tools and providing evidence for policy formulation and effective implementation. It also facilitates the tracking and monitoring of the implementation of the agreed commitments and declarations.

**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 (RECs) 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, the welfare of their citizens, including ensuring their collective and individual security.

**Governance:** Functional 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.

on economic reforms, domestic resource mobilization, international and illicit financial flows, external debt, and exchange rate management, and supports the fostering of an enabling environment for the 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 assets, livelihoods and personal security not to mention 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 issue of human security and livelihood to the fore as central to addressing sustainable peace and development. Political decisions are inherently about people, and encompass the need to protect them against social deprivation, political hostilities and economic setbacks. The emerging consensus towards human security has both intrinsic and instrumental value. The intrinsic value relates to qualities such as "human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential"<sup>17</sup> while its instrumental value promotes a people centred development and political stability.

Under the new ECA orientation, the objective of the Political and Human Security cluster is to strengthen the capacity of member States, RECs, AU and its Organs, promote synergies in policies and activities on major development issues to include political and human security, peace building, good governance and democracy. Africa's growth trajectory needs State capacity to provide security, which is

<sup>17</sup> 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.

inextricably linked to its political and economic development. There is need to support and consolidate the trend towards peace, stability and development, which is cognizant of and characterized by its citizenry. 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 level. As such, it seeks to promote a new approach to understanding and analyzing the interrelated building blocks that threaten human dignity through “promoting peace, which is essential to political, social and economic development in Africa”<sup>18</sup>.

#### **BOX 6: Partnerships: Universities, research institutes and civil society organizations.**

ECA will step up developing partnerships with African universities and research institutions, as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) working on development issues. Research by universities and 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 and other civil society organization including the media in knowledge delivery, from guest-lecturing in training courses, via integration of new knowledge, to high-impact advocacy campaigns.

### **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 of African countries are small and non-diversified, with very little trade relations between the countries. Through regional integration African countries can pool their economies together so as to play a competitive role in the global market place.

To deepen Africa’s regional integration agendas, the Commission undertakes research and policy analysis of the drivers of economic development and of major sectors such as infrastructure, industrialization, investment and trade (both goods and services). 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 on each others comparative advantage.

The ECA overarching focus is to promote policies and programmes that strengthen the process of economic cooperation and integration in furtherance of the Abuja Treaty, establishing the African Economic Community and the Constitutive Act of the African Union. Through providing support to the NEPAD Agency, the Commission has consistently supported the implementation of the PIDA and CAADP programmes and has assisted in the building of institutional capacity of the NEPAD agency to carry out its mandate. In the area of trade special emphasis has been placed on assisting member states in the development of Boosting Intra-Africa Trade (BIAT) and Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) strategies,

18 African Governance Report I, ECA, 2005.

as well as enhancing skills and capacities for negotiations based well researched, informed positions on trade relations with external countries, economic communities and the WTO. ECA develops tools such as the Regional Integration Index, which aims to help African countries and the regional economic communities to diagnose their performance in different aspects of integration.

The development of the capacities of African countries and institutions by working with policymakers in the formulation and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the major policies, plans and programmes is critical to the achievement of the AU Regional integration mandates and for sustainable development in general.

### **Cluster 5: Natural Resources and Sustainable Development**

Africa is endowed with a diverse, bountiful natural resource base, on which the livelihoods of a large percentage of its population depends 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 effectively utilize its natural resources to fuel its structural transformation. At the same time, however, Africa remains one of the most vulnerable continents with deepening poverty levels and worrying trends of natural environmental degradation.

Within that context, ECA support is anchored around 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, the Commission 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. Presently, most this work is very closely aligned with supporting member States in the implementation of the outcomes of the Rio+20 conferences, which gave a direct mandate to the United Nations Regional Commissions (RCs) to "support developing countries upon request to achieve sustainable development". The Commission also assists stakeholders in the development and implementation of action plans in line with the African Mining Vision, and the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa. Special emphasis is also placed on assisting member States in the development of common positions towards international negotiations as well as in enhancing the skills of African negotiators to get optimal deals for their countries and region from bilateral and international negotiations.

### **3.2 Knowledge delivery: ECA Capacity Development services (Objective 2)**

**Objective 2:** Ensure that ECA knowledge delivery is strategic, "good fit", that inputs, products and engagement are sound and influential in promoting Africa's Transformation Agenda.

## Box 7: The Capacity Development Hub

The CD Hub is structured as follows:

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

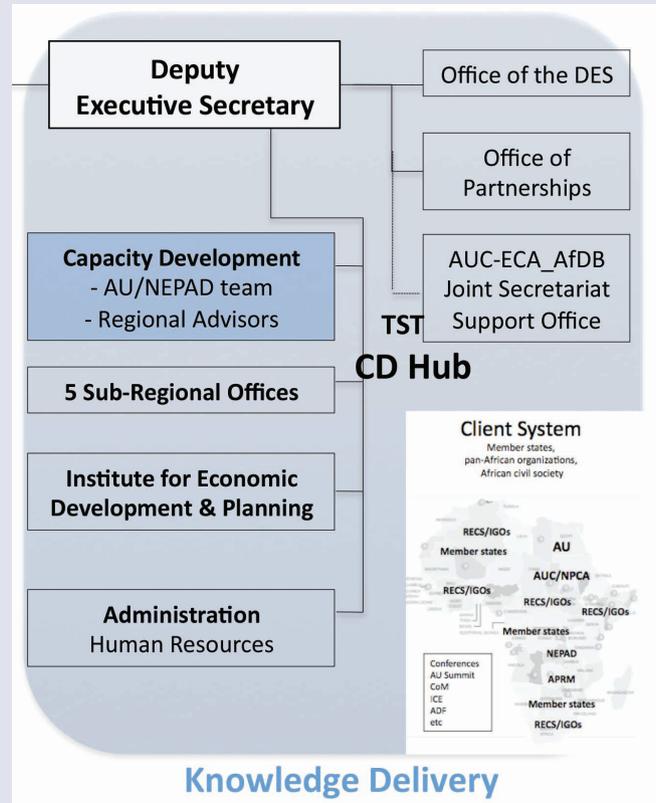
The *subregional offices (SRO)* have a critical function in developing relations and supporting the RECs and member countries in their respective region.

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

With the *Human Resource Services Section (HRSS)* a system is put in 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 (OP)* and through the *AUC-ECA-AfDB Joint Secretariat Support Office*.

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



Knowledge delivery is the prime responsibility of the ECA Capacity Development Hub (Box 7). The Capacity Development Hub including the Capacity Development Division ensures that ECA engages closely with partners and delivers relevant and targeted knowledge and capacity development support timely and effectively to member countries and pan-African organizations.

ECA capacity development services are further summarized in the accompanying chart (Figure 3). For each service line CDD assigns a focal point and team, and develops more detailed guidance that will be regularly reviewed and updated, based on experience.

## Capacity Development Service 1: Promoting system-wider synergies

Given that ECA is the regional arm of the United Nations System it has an overall mandate to leverage the United Nations system in supporting regional integration and capacity development of the AU and its organs as well as the Regional Economic Communities. The prime mechanism at the continental level is the Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCM) that coordinates United Nations system support. The Mechanism has potential to evolve into a highly strategic forum, effectively combining coordination with policy dialogue and knowledge exchange. Agenda 2063 provides an excellent framework to rationalize and energize UN 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 up and a similar arrangement under review for Central and West Africa in support of the RECs and their priorities. ECA will explore ways of enhancing not only coordination and coherence but also mechanism for leveraging the United Nations Systems contribution around a capacity development centred approach. An important initiative in this direction is the new Multi-agency Capacity Development Support for RECs (M-CDP) that aims to strengthen the capacity of the RECs to deliver on regional integration mandates.<sup>19</sup> ECA will explore ways to develop a broader dynamic around capacity development

<sup>19</sup> The Multi-agency Task Team for the AU CD Support Programme for RECs includes AUC, NEPAD Agency, UNDP and ECA along with the respective Policy Units (PUs) in countries where RECs are headquartered.

involving all clusters and agencies.

### Box 8: Partnership: UN Agencies and beyond

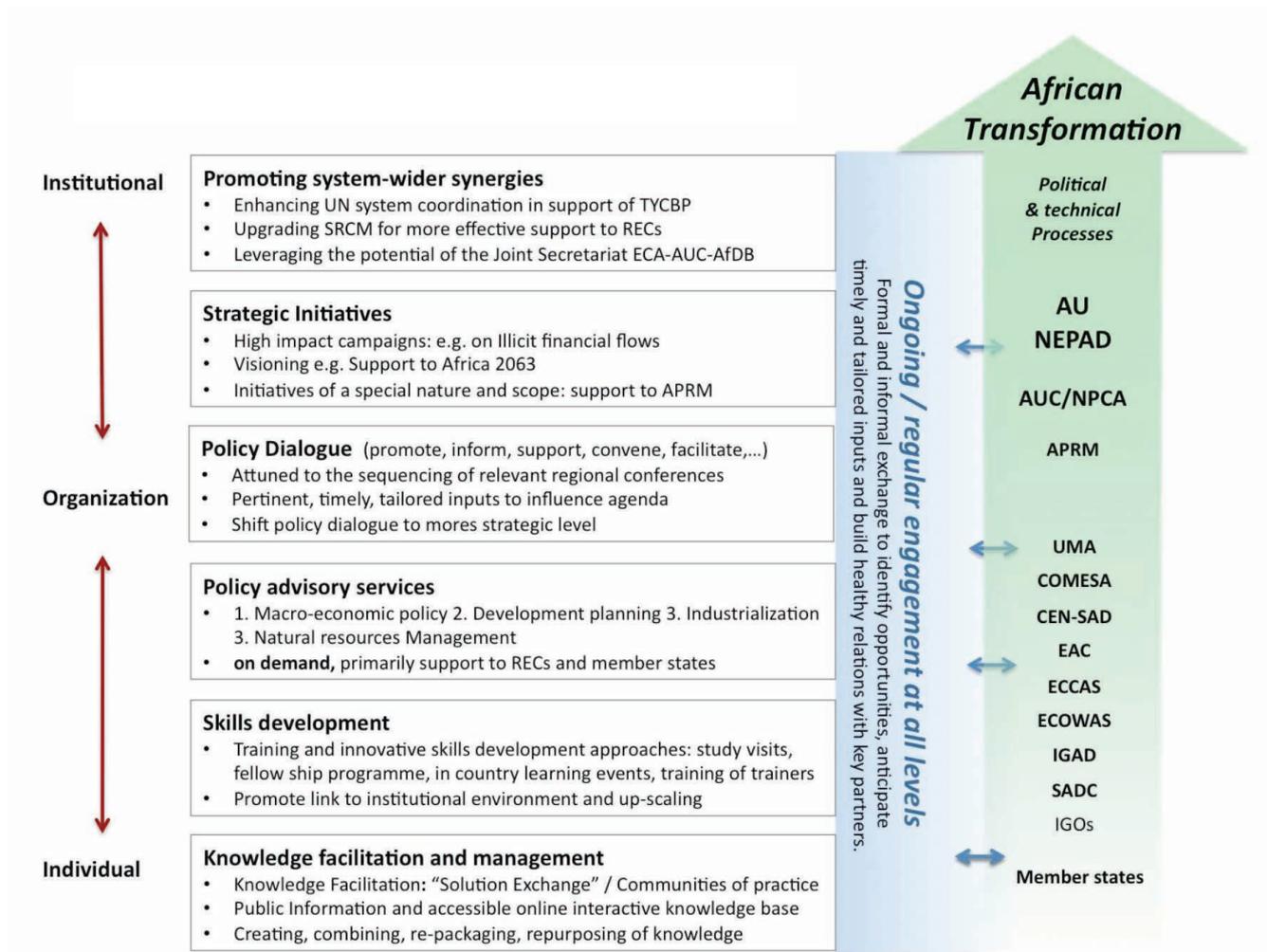
The considerable potential for enhancing combined effectiveness of support has been discussed earlier. ECA will support the AUC/NPCA and RECs in managing development partner coordination including by enhancing the effectiveness of the RCM and SRCMs. ECA will participate actively in shaping the UN System common approach to capacity development through enhanced engagement in the UN Development Group. There is significant potential to promote synergies beyond the UN System through the Tripartite Partnership with AU and AfDB and with Development Partners.

Another opportunity for developing synergies has been institutionalized through the Joint Secretariat between ECA, the AUC and the African Development Bank. The Joint 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 Joint Secretariat has high potential to build synergies among these three foremost African organizations and the partners they can leverage beyond their own organizations.

Finally, ECA will further develop the synergies between processes, notably between its statutory meetings, including the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and African strategic processes<sup>20</sup>; between SRCM and RCM;

<sup>20</sup> This includes AU-ECA annual meetings combining the AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of the ECA.

**Figure 3: ECA Capacity Development Services**



between UN System / AUC coordination and collaboration through the Joint Secretariat.

### Capacity Development Service 2: Strategic Initiatives

Strategic initiatives respond to particular opportunities for advancing the African agenda

for integration and transformation. Aimed at the continental or subregional levels, these will be identified through regular programming, from specific demand through ongoing policy dialogue as well as based on normative considerations building on global agendas and policy analysis. Important policy options may not get adequate attention or reach the critical

intensity and length of debate required to eventually make a difference without deliberate effort.

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 few well-targeted campaigns to encourage action at all levels and fostering coalitions for change. The capacity development approach will help focus on “how” momentum can be gained and maintained for promoting policy breakthroughs. Strategic initiatives will use all registers of ECA services, including promoting system-wide synergies and all the capacity development service lines that are further spelled out below to achieve this and experience will refine this campaign instrument over time.

### Box 9: Examples of strategic initiatives

- **“Agenda 2063”** as a key African initiative that will require a significant degree of collective energy to organize consultations and eventually build consensus around the goals, scenarios on “how” to implement them and the monitoring framework.
- **Track It, Stop it and Get it** a campaign of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows to reduce flows from Africa and spur action among governments, journalists and other constituencies to address a problem that cause major damage to Africa.
- **Strategic support to 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.

## Capacity Development Service 3: Policy Dialogue

Over the years, ECA has been engaged in policy dialogue with African policy makers. Based on its research it has been able to contribute to informed debate and advancements in regional integration. A trustful and constructive relationship with the AU and NEPAD programmes has been of fundamental importance. ECA will further deepen policy dialogue by even becoming 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. Attuned and based on a disciplined calendar of events, ECA will optimize anticipation, packaging and delivery of inputs for good fit and impact.

ECA services will shift to a more strategic level. To enhance the quality of policy dialogue there will be a move away from less strategic services, such as mainly functional support to meetings. ECA will position its support based on evidence that can break new ground in terms of policy options, remove systemic bottlenecks, foster agreements for a higher level of collective ambition, and shift implementation into higher gear. Mindful of the political economy dimensions, ECA will promote a deeper understanding of implications of capacity development aspirations and help identify feasible implementation strategies, i.e. the “How” to get from policy to action and results. Efforts will aim at impact, including widening partnerships and building dynamic coalitions. Selected processes will be upgraded to

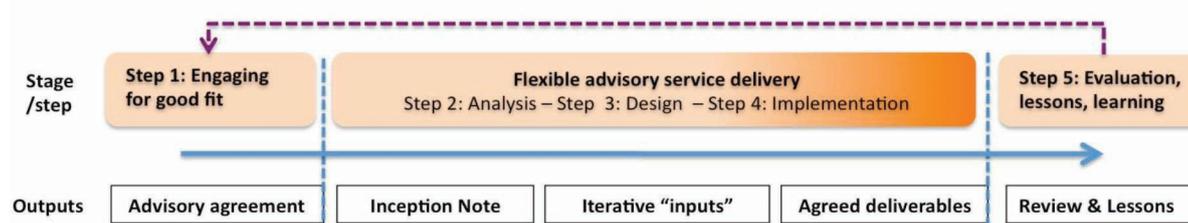
strategic initiatives to leverage stakeholders, and visibility of critical issues and resources. This includes stronger policy positioning in the subregions through SROs engaging closely with RECs and member States on strategic areas of priority with particular emphasis on planning and statistics.

### 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 (indicated in section 3.1.) and cuts across all the service lines. Solution paths necessarily include promising policy options going beyond established agreements as well as implementation options. Taking due account of context, risk taking, political economy dimensions, identifying “good fit” and adequate level of ambition, to mention a few, need to be part of the dialogue.

## Capacity Development Service 4: Policy Advisory Services

Figure 4: ECA process for conceiving and delivering advisory services



ECA provides advisory services, upon request, to the AU and its Organs, RECs,

member States, and IGOs in its thematic areas of competence. Advisory services are coordinated by the CDD and draw on staff across ECA divisions for the implementation. CDD will step up collaboration with the Policy Centres that have specific mandates to support capacity development for their respective constituencies.<sup>21</sup>

Given that advisory capacities and resources are limited, ECA will not be able to respond to all demands. Requests will be carefully screened to determine whether support falls into ECA areas of competence, the likelihood of yielding sustainable results, and 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 pertinent “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. Post-

21 Policy Centres and Programmes hosted by ECA include: the African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC), the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), the African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC), the Land Policy Initiative ((LPI), the African Centre for Gender (ACG), and African Statistics Centre (ASC).

intervention there will be a systematic review of the experience, impact and outcomes, and 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 to skills development will remain an important element in the ECA service mix. ECA efforts to enhance learning at the individual level have been dominated by training approaches. Often ad hoc in nature, delivered by different parts of the organization and using different standards, 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 the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) with harmonized quality standards. The institute pursues greater diversification of the thematic focus drawing on ECA's evolving research and integrating cutting edge knowledge, including on the heterodox alternatives that are available in different domains of development planning and economic governance.

ECA and IDEP are mindful of the fact that training has often been used as a “quick fix” solution that has indiscriminately been thrown at very complex capacity problems. Beyond training, skills development will increasingly be supported through innovative approaches<sup>22</sup> and in ways that better bridge individual

learning and changes in the institutional environment. Innovations to be further developed and consolidated include integration of content on promoting capacity development and change in course curricula, decentralized “contextualized” seminars at country and organizational levels, sound arrangements for study visits and fellowships, and more. IDEP will continue to scale-up its programmes for wider reach through online courses, developing partnerships with universities and peer institutions like the African Development Institute, and mobilizing its extensive alumni network.

### **Capacity Development Service 6: Knowledge Facilitation and Management**

Recognizing that the availability, access and flow of knowledge are key determinants of development effectiveness success, ECA is strengthening its KM 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, including for communities of practice (CoPs) 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 as a free, UN-sponsored space linking practitioners across the region. Two recently created knowledge networks, African Planners<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Beyond training as such there are many alternative approaches to explore, as for instance, Blended learning, Coaching and Mentoring, Communication, Customised training, Degree level study overseas, Distance learning, E-learning, Experiential

learning, Exposure, External training courses, Knowledge Management, Leadership Development, Organizational strengthening, Partnerships/Networks ...

<sup>23</sup> <http://appablog.wordpress.com/2012/10/02/uneca-to-assist-african-development->

and African Statisticians (ASK Net)<sup>24</sup> will be operationalized through Solution Exchange. Based on experiences with these two, services will eventually be expanded.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, library, learning, knowledge and information services are being enhanced for African stakeholder and development partners. ECA will also create awareness on information society issues and the role of information in development, and offer a “one-stop-shop” access point for African knowledge collections, including the Institutional Repository of digitized and indexed knowledge products produced by ECA and its offices. Access to Scientific and Socioeconomic Knowledge in Africa (AKSIA) and set up the African Virtual Library and Information Network (AVLIN) as an Africa-wide resource linking African libraries, documentation centres and archives to share locally produced information and pool resources across organizations virtually, expanding the range of materials that can be made available within 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.

planners-launch-community-of-practice-platform/

<sup>24</sup> <http://ecastats.uneca.org/acsweb/Default.aspx?alias=ecastats.uneca.org/acsweb/askn>

<sup>25</sup> A regional community of practice around capacity development exists already on 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 see <http://www.africa-platform.org/>

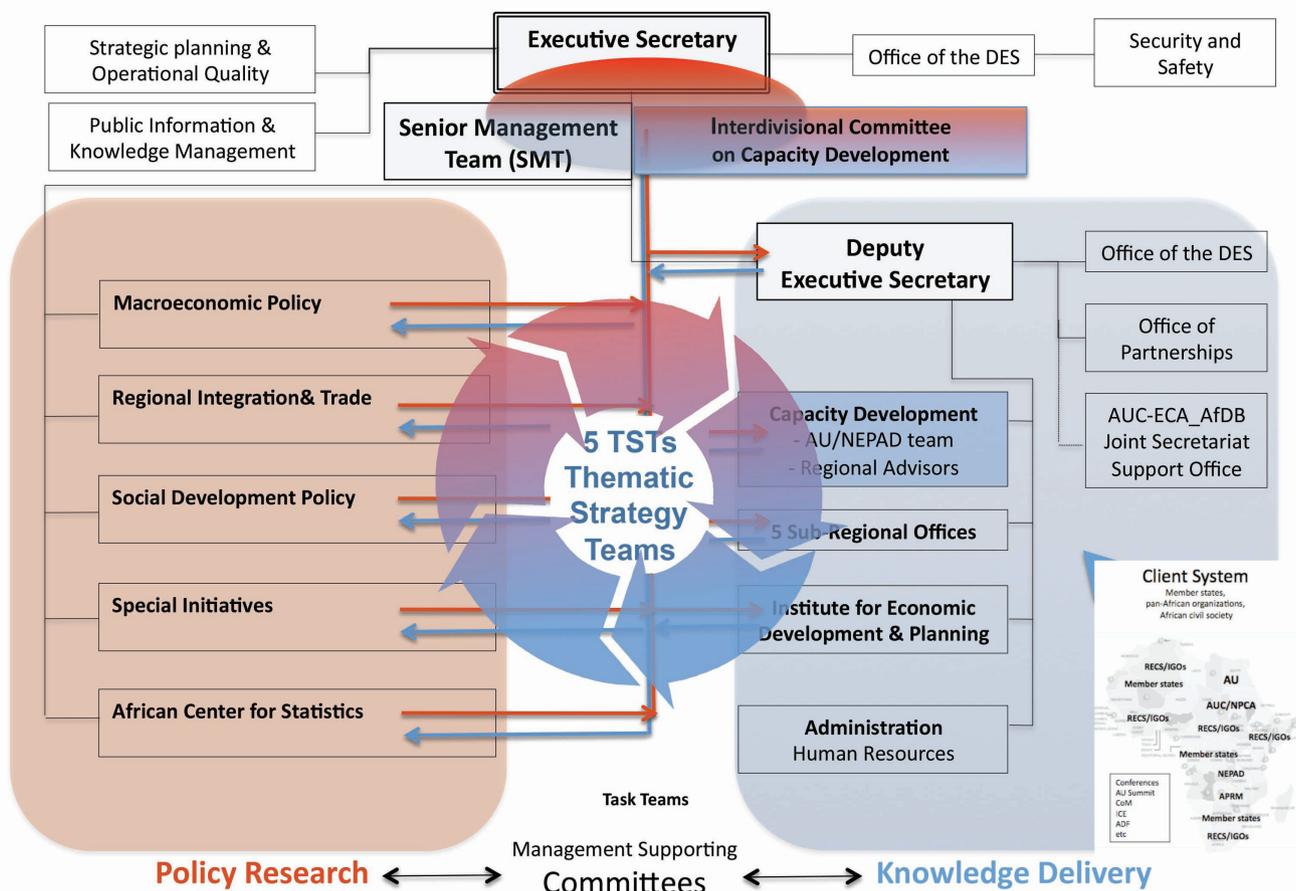
Divisions and units naturally tend to work around manageable programmes and risk functioning in a “silo” fashion. The implementation of this Capacity Development Strategy requires spaces that foster joint strategizing, constructive collaboration and continued learning. These spaces are the “glue” and dynamics required to effectively deliver together.

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 is being leveraged for timely and tailored delivery and in the other direction, strengthening capacity development dimensions, as well as integrating other cross-cutting issues, is promoted as an integral part of policy research.

#### Thematic Strategy Teams (TST)

The ECA organogram (Figure 5) reflects the ‘left’ research wing and the “right” Capacity Development Hub both explained in sections 3.1. and 3.2. respectively. The top shows senior management and corporate services. It further shows the collaborative arrangements nested in the spaces “in-between” policy research and knowledge delivery. Oversight is provided by the Interdivisional Committee on Capacity Development (ICCD), which will be further discussed later in this document. Five Thematic Strategy Teams (TSTs) depicted at the centre, function as collaborative forums bringing together divisions and units around common

**Figure 5: ECA collaborative arrangements for effective CD support**



agendas and instruments.

The five TSTs constitute the critical “make or break” hinge between policy research and knowledge delivery. They 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
5. **TST-NRSD:** Natural Resources and Sustainable Development

The substantive TSTs have the orientation of the five capacity development division clusters and their corresponding thematic

focus have been discussed in section 3.1. The role of TSTs is to pull 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 (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 the team maintain a calendar of events and share insights that allow scoping and shaping appropriate responses, including partnerships (Box 11).

**Mapping and matching expertise:** The Human Resources Service Section (HRSS) in collaboration with CDD manage an inventory process, mapping skills profiles and interests beyond the current staff positions. The TST uses its substantive and contextual understanding to inform the process and sort out any resource issue around implementation of capacity development services in the

respective cluster.

### **Box 11: Thematic Strategy Teams (TSTs) and agendas**

These interdivisional teams 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 accountabilities for collaboration and collective results. TSTs are co-chaired by the key substantive division and the CDD. With guidance from ICCD, all TSTs decide on the focus, form and shape of working arrangements around the respective agendas. Indicative arrangements are further discussed below.

Each of the TSTs has a set of standing agendas and can decide on any other area of work as useful. Generally, each agenda has an associated task leader and other staff as members of a dedicated working or reference group. Standing agendas are further discussed below in the context of the respective TST. The TSTs, with support of the CDD and the Office of Partnerships, are responsible for developing substantive Partnerships in their areas of activity; bring in partners into the relevant planning processes as useful necessary and pertinent; or engage in the relevant processes led by partners.

**Product development and campaign planning:** Using a campaign approach products are tailored to respective audiences and occasions as pertinent, including executive presentations, popularized versions etc. In close collaboration with PIKMD and the Capacity Development Hub, each TST identifies what knowledge products are to be developed, what different units can contribute and how this should be done.

### **Conceive and manage strategic Initiatives:**

This may be the policy relevant dissemination of a flagship report, like the Economic Report on Africa (ERA), but it could also crystallize around a top priority articulated by the AU. Strategic initiatives would be agreed on at the highest level to ensure that ECA can combine the necessary energies and use all relevant channels and capacity development service lines for enhancing impact.

### **Analysis, post-action reviews and learning:**

TSTs are critical forums for institutional learning in their respective thematic areas and in a bi-directional way. While learning from research has direct implications for policy messages, lessons drawn from knowledge delivery, trainings, or strategic initiatives are also bound to have implications for practice in research and capacity development 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 ECA research input into policy options and paths for transformation.<sup>26</sup>

## **Partnerships**

The important potential and roles of partnerships has been flagged throughout this

<sup>26</sup> Since 2011, ACBF 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 ACBF contributions with ECA strength in statistics.

strategy. Africa's Transformation is the result of collective efforts and multiple partners bring diverse strengths and complementary energy. Cooperation and synergy are likely to support Africa's Transformation more effectively than fragmentation, duplication of efforts or competition. The work of all TSTs will thus increasingly rely on substantive partnerships in identifying, articulating and promoting policy options. Coordinated by CDD 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 around 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 "Partnership for what" in terms of promoting Africa's transformation agenda.

## **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 promote the above objectives.

Given the fundamental importance for the capacity development agenda, ECA takes major interest in effective alignment of incentives and support systems. A dedicated working group and CDD will ensure that ECA 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 ECA results framework needs to incorporate measures beyond numbers and 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 ECA practices in research and knowledge delivery.

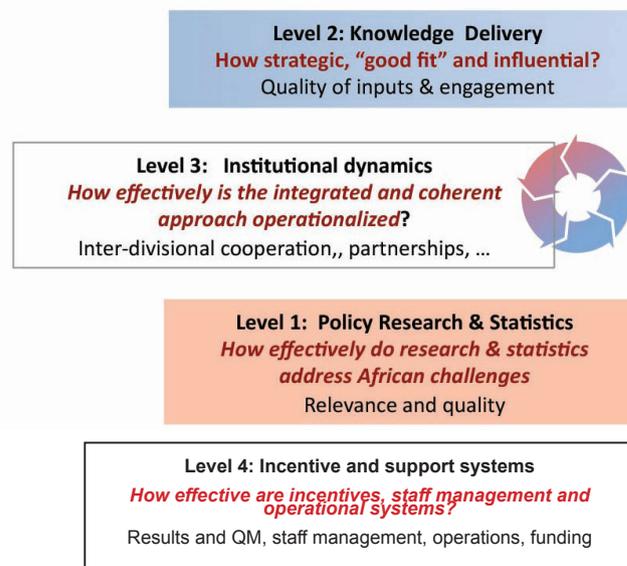
For monitoring and evaluating implementation of this strategy several important elements were introduced in section 2. Operational principles “**quality criteria**”, applied across all ECA work represent an important reference framework and the notion of corner stones or key issues in capacity development, translated into “**opportunity markers**”, offer useful (checklist-type) instruments at all stages of programming and engagement. Both instruments, if applied, shape the results and management systems.

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 this strategy to be integrated into ECA corporate results and quality management system.

Figure 6 provides an overview of the results levels and how they relate to transformational

results at continental and corporate levels. These are to be established and integrated in the corporate framework in close collaboration with the ECA Strategic Planning and Quality Management Division (SPOQD)

## Figure 6: Results level that ECA has control over



## Personnel development and management

The staff is the Commission’s most valuable asset. ECA is going through a re-profiling where staff needs 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 equally to capacity development competence. A sustained effort is required to enhance the understanding 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 also requires changes in mindset. Staff learning programmes will be tailored to staff groups and include a minimum mandatory element of 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 (Box 12).<sup>27</sup> A corporate system for “closing learning loops” will be important to reinforce an institutional culture of learning for gradual improvement of capacity development as a practice.

### 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. They must aim at pushing the cutting edge thinking and quality of policy support services in fields requiring specialization, such as mining, and climate change, to promote energy, transitions, or capacity development.

There is need to groom a pool of **capacity development specialists** with specialized competencies in change management, brokering, process facilitation and other related competencies. The skills mix can be

<sup>27</sup> 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, sharing of relevant bibliography and on-line policy debates. It comprises of 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 (ISG) which published the landmark study “Minerals and Africa’s Development” and spearheaded the formulation of the Africa Mining Vision (AMV), adopted by the African Union Heads of State and Government in February 2009, as the blueprint for mineral policy reforms on the continent.

improved through adequate matching of posts, learning opportunities, dedicated courses and recruitment. The learning culture can be reinforced through regular team reflection on how the capacity development work is approached. Problems need to be turned into opportunities to learn. CD Hub staff in particular will develop a profile of capacity development specialist, including through dedicated training and external learning opportunities.<sup>28</sup> Connecting to the cutting edge of the capacity development debate through networks, such as APDev and LenCD,<sup>29</sup> will be vital.

### Sensitization of managers, research staff and new comers:

Beyond the CD Hub it is also important to raise the level of capacity development understanding and competence across 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 capacity development and induction courses for **newcomer** will integrate a capacity development module.

<sup>28</sup> As for instance the learning package and e-learning course developed by the Learning Network on Capacity Development, see <http://www.len.cd.org/learning>.

<sup>29</sup> APDev: African Platform on Development Effectiveness ([www.africa-platform.org](http://www.africa-platform.org)) and LenCD: Learning Network on Capacity Development, see <http://www.len.cd.org>

## **Other support systems**

ECA will equally keep a close eye on strategic planning issues. The **programming** cycle requiring 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, 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 continued review for effective delivery of capacity development services and for the improvement of the ECA overall performance.



## 4. Implementation priorities, oversight, monitoring and evaluation

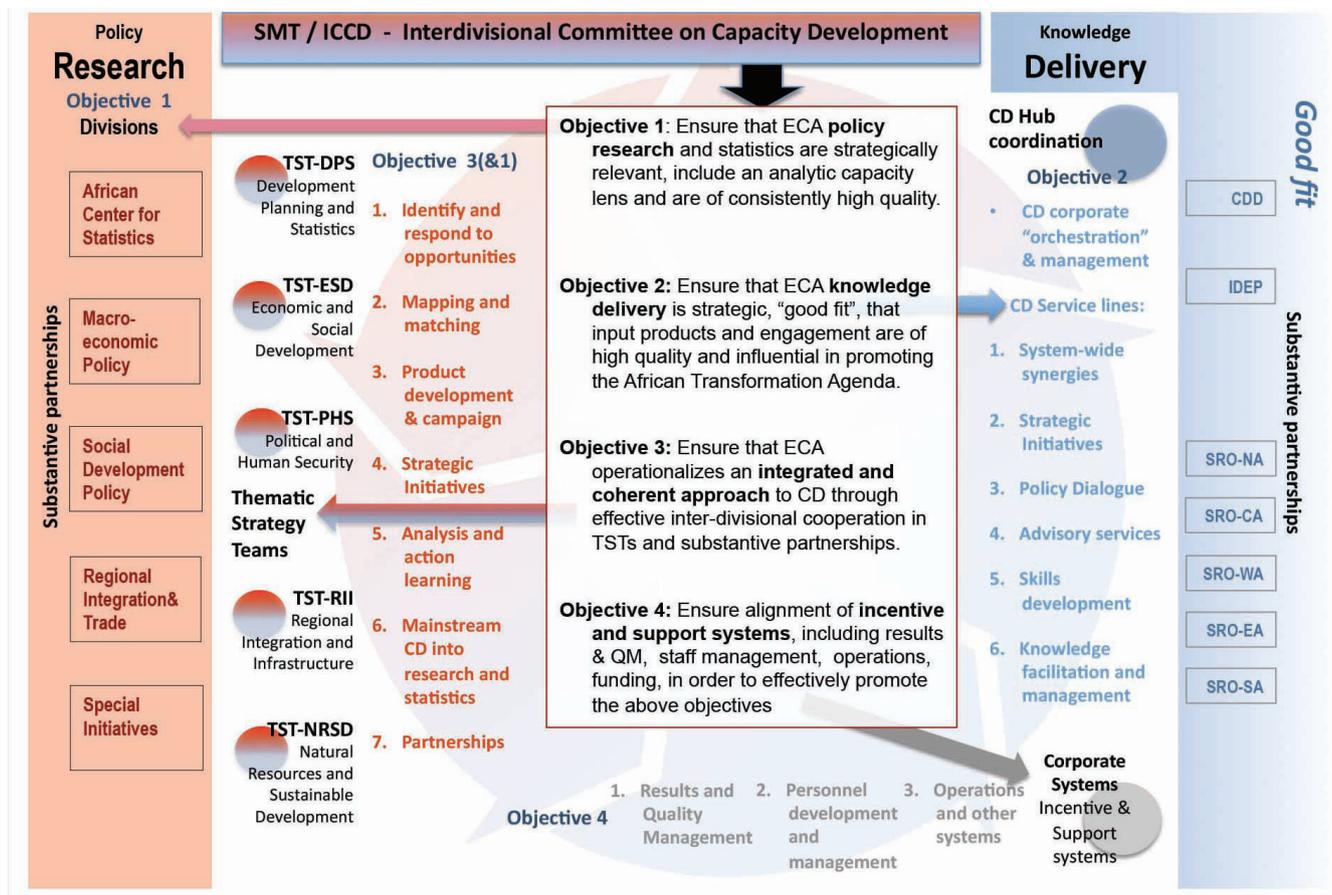
The Capacity Development Strategy will be implemented through concerted efforts at all levels and across divisions. Emphasis has been given to the collaborative arrangements required to realize a truly integrated and coherent approach to supporting the capacity development processes that underpin the AU'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 The Implementation Plan

The implementation plan mirrors the theory of change developed earlier 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, reflecting the collaborative arrangements and agendas.

Most of the institutional arrangements have been introduced in earlier sections. What remains is to emphasize the role of the ICCD in supporting the ECA Senior Management Team (SMT) as the overall decision-making body for executive guidance and strategic oversight for the implementation of the capacity development strategy. The Committee has senior participation from all relevant divisions. It is chaired by the Deputy Executive Secretary (DES) and facilitated by the Capacity Development Division (CDD). The ICCD guides and promotes the implementation of this 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 catalyst for bundling attention, pooling energies and having impact. It ensures that clusters do not operate as new silos but rather have communication and cross-fertilization across the spectrum of programmes. The

**Figure 7: ECA CD Strategy Implementation Plan - Overview**



ICCD also ensures the necessary processes to align corporate incentive and support systems (ISS) take place either within existing arrangements or through a dedicated working group. It further promotes the development of substantive partnerships around capacity development.

It is important to note that operationalization of this strategy will start with priority actions to establish the systems and to get it running.

Implementation will then be iteratively defined through the ICCD and the respective teams in response to the evolving context and in consultation with partners and in the context of regular work plan.

## 4.2 Priority action

This section emphasizes priority actions that will be instrumental in establishing the operational mechanisms for implementation of

this strategy. Each element will be organized through the respective teams that adopt, validate and renew their priorities on a “rolling basis” as pertinent and agreed with the 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 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 AU 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 ECA business approach. Consistent and clear articulation from ECA leadership will be critical throughout the implementation.

**Ensure that the collaborative arrangements are established:** ICCD needs to be installed as the umbrella for the system. The ICCD will be responsible to guide the establishment of the TSTs and other working groups, supported by CDD, which has a key role in the orchestration and facilitation of capacity development strategy implementation. To become fully functional, ICCD and TSTs, need to agree on their starting composition,

adopt their terms of reference and agree on priorities. Care needs to be taken 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 naturally encourages participation in TSTs and cooperation on initiatives that are collectively carried across divisions.

### **Start 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 to identify areas that will allow building up momentum around joint work. 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 CD Hub, the TSTs can take up the range of issues on its agenda. Engagement in the TSTs needs to remain dynamic, with team spirit and an entrepreneurial sense of opportunity and potential for growing connections, mutually reinforcing collaboration and coherent capacity development support. This includes external partners to be associated in research or in knowledge delivery as pertinent.

### **Capacity Development management systems and guidance:**

Other priority actions centre on establishing the ground rules,

systems and developing the guidance needed for operationalizing the capacity development strategy. Most of these have been discussed in earlier sections. Guided by the ICCD, the Capacity Development Division (CDD) 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 identifying opportunities;
- Arrangements to promote seamless links between individual and institutional capacity development support.

#### **Align incentives and support systems:**

Staff performance agreements need to include a generic goal that states that all professional staff members are expected to constructively participate and contribute to the work of TSTs and ECA corporate capacity development service delivery. Such a generic goal can then be further specified when the system starts working. Staff development and institutional learning is critical for ECA to move to the next level in understanding and operationalizing capacity development as outlined in this strategy. This requires a well targeted and sustained effort by all, not just the staff of CDD 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. Both are of fundamental importance for effective implementation of this strategy and relevant priority action has been outlined earlier in section 3.4. A corporate working group that brings together the respective divisions and units needs to be established as a matter of urgency.

### **4.3 Monitoring, knowledge flows, evaluation**

The Capacity Development Strategy will eventually be implemented, monitored and evaluated as part and parcel of the ECA corporate results, quality and staff management systems. As indicated, oversight is exercised by the Senior Management Team (SMT) through the Interdivisional Committee on Capacity Development (ICCD). Performance Indicators are to be adopted for all four objectives of the strategy in close collaboration with SPOQD and HRSS. Emphasis will be placed from the outset, that this integration with corporate results, quality, and staff management systems effectively takes place.

TSTs and all relevant working groups report through the ICCD to the SMT at its regular meetings on progress made in the Capacity Development Strategy implementation and integration. Supporting the ICCD, the Capacity Development Division will be instrumental in

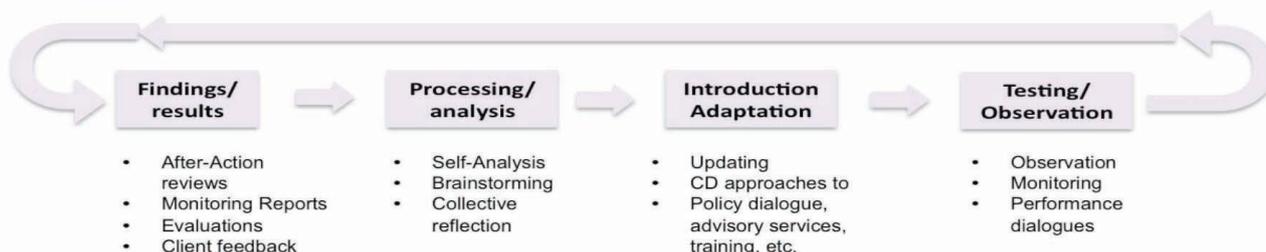
promoting, orchestrating and monitoring the delivery across all four objectives.

Systematic post-action reviews will be conducted for corporate learning and improvement over time. The corporate Knowledge Management and learning system

will be managed by PIKMD and be applied across ECA business processes.

In view of the ECA two-year planning cycle it is envisaged that the impact of the strategy will be evaluated after 2-3 years of implementation or based on a period to be decided by the

**Figure 8: Knowledge flows for improving capacity development support**



ICCD/SMT. During the first biennium of implementation, special monitoring and evaluation arrangements will apply.

## 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. Realizing the potential of this strategy will not come over night. It is in itself a transformational process that builds on the solid experience and assets of the Commission and embraces important changes in the way it works.

The framework laid out in this document emphasizes that this transformation requires the involvement of the entire organization at all levels and across all divisions. Careful

sequencing and targeting intermediate results is as important as well as not losing sight of the vision. Many of the pathways articulated in this strategy may be turned into “quick wins” to gain and maintain momentum. These include selected strategic initiatives that combine multiple efforts in-house and with partners, leveraging synergies beyond ECA contribution for higher impact. Some creativity will be needed to bring everybody together with a sense of common purpose and positive energy.

Capacity development is critical for Africa’s Transformation, and it needs to be addressed bringing the most appropriate knowledge and approaches to where the evolving challenges are, with a spirit of continued learning from experience. This strategy should enable ECA to make the shift towards becoming an effective partner in Africa’s Transformation.

