

Strategic Plan

2022-2026





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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL



On behalf of the Governing Council of the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), I am delighted to present the ACTS' Seventh Strategic Plan (2022-2026), which will guide our research, dissemination and policy engagement activities for the next five years. The Strategic Plan builds on the achievements and lessons learnt from the Sixth Strategic Plan (2019-2021), which also provided the foundation for the immortalisation of Prof. Calestous Juma (1953-2017)—who founded ACTS in 1988 and later became its Executive Director until 1995. Prof. Juma was an internationally-recognised authority in the application of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for sustainable development; and ACTS remains one of his lasting legacies.

This Strategic Plan has been built on successes and experiences accumulated by ACTS over the past 33 years. Today, ACTS is a well-recognised African STI Policy Think Tank, with a strong network of partners, collaborators and donors; qualified and dynamic staff and a focused management. This Plan has also been informed by the experience from and opportunities created by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected all spheres of life since 2020. During this difficult period, ACTS demonstrated its resilience by quickly adjusting its operations and emerging stronger than most think tanks in the region. In the period 2022-2026, ACTS will continue with the three programmes it pursued during the 2019-2021 strategic period. These programmes are: Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security (AFNS); Climate Resilient Economies (CRE) and Science, Technology, Innovation, Knowledge and Society (STIKS). In addition, two new programmes – Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy (DIKE) and Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development (GYID) – have been introduced. Furthermore, technology transfer and brokerage will be strengthened as a cross-cutting theme.

On behalf of the Governing Council of ACTS, I would like to sincerely thank all our stakeholders who worked with us during the implementation of the Sixth Strategic Plan (2019-2021). The Governing Council counts on your continued support to enable ACTS to realise its mandate of supporting African countries to harness STI for sustainable development and post-Covid-19 recovery efforts.

Prof. Alfred A. Oteng-Yeboah

Chairman – Governing Council, ACTS

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



On behalf of the staff of ACTS, I am delighted to share with you our Seventh Strategic Plan (2022-2026). Through this Strategic Plan, we express our aspirations and commitments to support African countries and institutions to tap into the enormous potential of STI for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development. This Plan responds to real challenges facing African countries through the following five programmatic areas: Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security (AFNS); Climate Resilient Economies (CRE); Science, Technology, Innovation, Knowledge and Society (STIKS); Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy (DIKE), and Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development (GYID). This is even more important considering that African nations are trying to recover from the social and economic impacts of Covid-19.

Under AFNS, ACTS will focus on resilient smallholder-focused agri-food systems that include climate smart and circular agriculture, digitisation of agriculture, leveraging regional trade for sustainable and inclusive agri-food systems, sustainable, innovation-driven agro-industry development for inclusive healthy food systems transformation and technology brokerage. Under Climate Resilient Economies (CRE), ACTS will provide policy choices that support generation, uptake and utilisation of climate change-related science, technologies and innovations for sustainable and diversified livelihoods in Africa, taking into consideration the aspiration of the recently concluded 26th Conference of Parties (COP-26). The programme will focus on the following areas: climate change mitigation, adaptation and negotiation; access to climate finance and technology; green recovery and clean, affordable energy. ACTS will advance research and analyses of the interplay between STI, knowledge and society through STIKS.

The Centre will support the development of a cadre of Africa-centred researchers, analysts and policy makers on STI, knowledge and society, STI capacity building, knowledge utilisation, technology transfer, intellectual property, STI roadmaps for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and evaluation of the impact of STI on the development of African countries. The Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy (DIKE) programme aims to support widespread and effective development, uptake, deployment and adoption of responsible digital technologies for sustainable development. This will be achieved through policy research, capacity building and technology brokerage. The reintroduction of Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development (GYID) demonstrates

prioritisation of inclusivity issues in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which includes efforts to enhance access of women and youth to technologies for economic empowerment and job creation.

Finally, I wish to sincerely thank all ACTS' funders, development partners and stakeholders for their continued, invaluable support during the implementation of this Strategic Plan (2022-2026).

Prof. Tom P. M. Ogada

Executive Director, ACTS

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ACTS	African Centre for Technology Studies
AFNS	Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
CJ	Calestous Juma
CJLF	Calestous Juma Legacy Foundation
AfricaLics	African Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation & Competence Building Systems
CRE	Climate Resilient Economies
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern & Southern Africa
COP	Conference of Parties
DIKE	Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy
DFA	Director of Finance and Administration
DIP	Director of Impact and Partnership
DRI	Director of Research and Innovation
GYID	Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development
ICT	Information Communication & Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PhL	Post-harvest Losses
R&D	Research & Development
RMS	Resource Mobilisation Strategy
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SGCs	Science Granting Councils
SGCI	Science Granting Councils Initiative
SMEs	Small & Medium Enterprises
STI	Science, Technology & Innovation
STIKS	Science, Technology, Innovation, Knowledge and Society
STISA	Science, Technology & Innovation Strategy for Africa
SP	Strategic Plan
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States Dollars

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1.1 Building on the Sixth Strategic Plan (2019-2021)

This is the Seventh Strategic Plan (2022-2026) for the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), which builds on the achievements and lessons learnt from the Sixth Strategic Plan (2019-2021). A mid-term evaluation of the Sixth Strategic Plan was undertaken in late 2020 to determine its success in the realisation of the set objectives. The evaluation included what worked well and what did not, lessons learnt and best practice; the impacts and opportunities of the Covid-19 pandemic on ACTS as an organisation; and recommendations for the Seventh Strategic Plan (2022-2026). The results of the review influenced the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.

1.1.1 Programmatic Focus

In 2019-2021, ACTS pursued three programmes: Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security (AFNS); Climate Resilient Economies (CRE); and Science, Technology & Innovation, Knowledge and Society (STIKS); with Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development (GYID) as cross-cutting.

Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security (AFNS): In the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan, the programme focused on four areas: Sustainable, innovation-driven agri-food systems development; climate smart agri-food systems; sustainable commercialisation of agri-food systems; and reduction of post-harvest losses, value addition and agro processing. Due to staffing challenges, the programme's implementation was rated as inadequate and since these areas were and remain a priority for Africa, deliberate effort was made to strengthen the human resource capacity of the programme—with four additional staff being recruited in 2021, including the head of the programme. The foundation laid in 2021 will be continued in the new 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. The programme will also introduce new areas such as circular economy and application of digital technologies to agriculture.

Climate Resilient Economies (CRE): In 2019-2021, the programme focused on the following key areas: climate change mitigation, adaptation and negotiation; access to climate finance; green growth; African sustainability hub; African regional climate innovation network, and clean and affordable energy. During the period, the

programme performed extremely well and attracted several projects and eight additional staff. Climate change remains a priority issue in Africa, with the outcome of COP 26 expected to generate more interest on climate change amongst African policy makers; and the planned COP 27 to be hosted in Africa is expected to create more awareness and attention to this area during the implementation period of the 7th Strategic Plan. As a result, ACTS will strive to sustain the excellent performance realised during the 6th Strategic Plan period and which will build into the new Strategic Plan 2022-2026. The new areas of emphasis will include climate financing and access to climate change technologies.

Science, Technology, Innovation, Knowledge and Society (STIKS): This remains the biggest achievement of the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan—strengthening STI research, which is the core of ACTS policy research. STIKS pursued the following areas: capacity building of the Science Granting Councils in Africa, Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer, evaluation of the socio-economic impact of STI, development and implementation of STI roadmaps for SDGs; capacity building of African innovation and development research professionals; and executive STI training of policymakers. Like CRE, the programme performed very well, managing to secure several projects both multi-year and short term. However, training on STI policy was not implemented. The programme will continue pursuing projects in these areas in the new Strategic Plan but also plans to introduce new areas such as eco-innovation. The programme will also revisit the STI policy training.

Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy (DIKE): The review identified digital economy as an important area for ACTS. Globally, the digital economy is increasingly becoming a critical driver of the economy with trends showing a steady increase in its contribution towards the global and individual national economies. In 2016, the digital economy accounted for 15.5% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and is projected to reach 25% by 2026. In Africa, the digital economy is projected to contribute about 5.2% of GDP by 2025, with countries like Kenya expecting the digital economy to contribute 9.24%. As a result, several African countries are striving to put in place policies, legal frameworks, strategies and plans as well as infrastructure to help drive the digital economy to maximise the expected benefits. Furthermore, the impact of Covid-19 just re-emphasised the importance of the digital economy, which is currently seen as key to post-Covid-19 economic recovery. In 2019-2021, ACTS, under STIKS, secured four projects related to digital technology. Through these projects, critical staff have been brought on board to help drive the programme in the new Strategic Plan. Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy will therefore be the fourth programme to be pursued by ACTS in the new Plan.

Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development: Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development was a cross-cutting theme in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan. This means that issues related to gender, youth and inclusive development were embedded in individual projects secured under the various programmes. However, this approach has made it difficult for ACTS to document and demonstrate its contribution to addressing the challenges of youth and women regarding access and utilisation of STI for inclusive socio-economic empowerment, job creation and sustainable development. Since these issues remain a priority for Africa, ACTS has decided to make it a substantive programme in the new Strategic Plan 2022-2026.

1.1.2 Implementation of Programmes

To guide the research activities pertaining to the above programmes in 2022-2026, ACTS will prepare and implement a research strategy.

1.1.3 Outreach and Communication

Whereas ACTS achieved a programme implementation rate of over 90% during the period 2019-2021, and surpassed several targets in terms of research outputs, Covid-19 slowed down ACTS planned activities related to policy outreach and engagements. Furthermore, a survey undertaken in 2020 with ACTS key stakeholders recommended the need to strengthen ACTS communication and outreach. To address this gap, in 2021, ACTS brought on board a Communication and Outreach Officer, and appointed a Director of Communication, Impact and Partnership. These interventions are expected to be strengthened in the new Strategic Plan (2022-2026), which will also include the re-establishment of ACTS Press. In the Plan period 2022-2026, a communication and outreach strategy will be developed to guide in the implementation of the various communication and outreach activities.

1.1.4. Outputs, Outcomes and Impact

A monitoring, evaluation and learning framework will be developed to guide documentation, measure progress, generate lessons/best practices within the context of the Strategic Plan. The model will be premised on a result-based framework focusing on key outputs, outcomes and impacts of key programmes and projects implemented by the Centre.

1.1.5 Mobilisation of Resources to Implement the Strategic Plan

The unique approach used in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan was the costing of the Strategic Plan and the development of a resource mobilisation strategy. The overall objective of the resource mobilisation (RM) strategy (2019-2021) was to ensure availability of adequate resources to finance the Strategic Plan (2019-2021) and to transform ACTS into a more sustainable organisation by 2021. The target for resource mobilisation for the three years was estimated at US\$ 7 million, 85% of which was mobilised through project funding, whereas the remaining 15% was raised through non-project sources. The mid-term revenue showed that ACTS was on course towards realising its resource mobilisation target but was lagging behind in realising sustainability due to small margins provided by most grant projects. As a result, in 2020, ACTS introduced a new financing strategy that raised the percentage of revenue to be financed by non-project grant sources to 25%. Whereas ACTS met its target for 2019-2021 of US\$ 7 million, the non-project revenue accounted for less than 10%, and coupled with the impact of Covid-19, the organisation only managed to break-even overall. It is clear that the current operational approach will need to radically change to move the organisation to the 75:25 financing strategy to enable it become sustainable from 2022 onwards.

1.1.6 Immortalisation of Prof. Calestous Juma

Dedication: The Strategic Plan (2019-2021) was dedicated to the late Prof. Calestous Juma, the founder of ACTS. Prof. Juma (1953-2017) was an internationally-recognised authority in the application of science and technology for sustainable development. At the time of his demise, he was serving as a Professor of the Practice of International Development and Director of the Science, Technology and Globalisation Project, at the Harvard Kennedy School, USA. He was also a member of many global and African initiatives. He was the co-chair of the High-Level Panel of Prominent African and Diaspora Scientists that developed the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024). Prof. Juma was the pioneer head of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and an advisor to many governments, the African Union (AU), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).



A Lasting Legacy, ACTS: Prof. Juma founded ACTS in 1988 and was its Executive Director until 1995 when he was appointed Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity. ACTS is an African Intergovernmental STI think tank, non-partisan and non-profit organisation. Its core mandate is to pursue policy-oriented research to strengthen the capacity of African countries and institutions to harness STI for sustainable development. In pursuit of this mission, ACTS has been instrumental in enlarging the range of policy choices for

sustainable development in Africa through high quality research. These include Kenya's industrial property legislation; policy and environmental impact assessment standards in Eastern and Southern Africa, the formulation of bio-energy and biofuels policy in Eastern and West Africa; as well as in most African countries' agricultural, bio-diplomacy, biotechnology, biosafety and climate change policies.

Prof. Calestous Juma Lecture/Seminar Series: To immortalise Prof. Calestous Juma (CJ), ACTS, in collaboration with the Calestous Juma Legacy Foundation (CJLF), launched the Prof. Calestous Juma Lecture Series in August 2021, on Knowledge and Innovation for Development. This first seminar series had its focus on re-igniting Africa's industrialisation through inclusive knowledge and innovation. The discussions during the launch focused on: the lessons for Africa in relation to knowledge, innovation and industrialisation; building capabilities for sustainable industrialisation; and policies for local content capacity building and sustainable industrialisation in developing economies. The second lecture series focused on agriculture and aquaculture. The third lecture series themed accelerating the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) solutions aimed to explore how AI and ML solutions can be deployed to accelerate realisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa. This seminar series – to be held every quarter - will be continued in the next Strategic Plan. During the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan period, it's envisaged that the Calestous Juma Institute will be established to coordinate the implementation of the CJ seminar series and other related activities.

2

STRATEGIC DIRECTION, OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMMES (2022-2026)

2.1 Strategic Direction


The ACTS strategic direction for the period 2022-2026 shall be guided by key pillars – vision, mission, goal, value proposition, strategic objectives and programmes – as represented in Table 1.


Table 1: Vision, mission, goal and value proposition


VISION	Knowledge for better livelihoods
MISSION	To strengthen the capacity of African countries and institutions to harness science, technology and innovation for sustainable and inclusive development.
GOAL	To position ACTS as a think tank of choice for policy-relevant research in the application of STI in strategic thematic areas, including climate change, energy, digital innovation, agriculture and food security, gender, youth and inclusive innovation through quality research, policy analysis, dialogues, capacity building and outreach.
VALUE PROPOSITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To conduct high quality research, policy analysis, capacity building and outreach on the application of science, technology and innovation policies for sustainable and inclusive development. b) To facilitate and convene evidence-based policy dialogues and debates. c) To inform, influence and enhance sustainable and inclusive development theories, policy and practice. d) To put critical issues of science, technology and innovation on the development agenda, with special focus on agriculture, food and nutrition security; digitalisation; climate change and energy; new technologies, and gender and youth development. e) To provide independent and objective policy options and business models to African governments and institutions, regional economic communities, private sector, civil society and put issues critical to Africa’s development on global, regional and national agenda. f) To broker and leverage STI research, knowledge and expertise for trade and development policy, practice and entrepreneurship in Africa. g) To promote science diplomacy for global development.

2.2. Strategic Objectives

ACTS will pursue three key strategic objectives during the period 2022-2026 as outlined below:

- 

Strengthen and sustain the recognition of ACTS as a centre of excellence in policy-relevant research and development in STI, climate change, energy, agriculture and new technologies including digital technology and gender, youth and inclusive development;
- 

Enhance ACTS' influence and impact through policy advocacy, improved communication, capacity building, knowledge and technology transfer and partnerships;
- 

Build a strong funding base for ACTS by developing and implementing an effective resource mobilisation strategy.

2.3. Programmes (2022-2026)

During the 2022-2026 period, ACTS will pursue five programmes as shown in Figure 1. These programmes will be delivered through policy research, capacity building, policy engagement and knowledge brokerage as well as through the planned CJ Institute.

Vision	Programmes	Value proposition	Potential pathways
STI for Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security (AFNS) • Climate Resilient Economies (CRE) • STI, Knowledge and Society (STIKS) • Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy (DIKE) • Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development (GYID) 	Policy Research, Capacity Building, Knowledge Brokerage, Policy Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CJ Institute • Virtual Academy

Figure 1: Programmes to be pursued by ACTS during the 2022-2026 period

2.3.1. Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security (AFNS) Programme

Programme Motivation

This programme is motivated by the following socio-economic and development challenges and opportunities shaping Africa's agri-food systems:

- a) **Food insecurity, undernourishment and dietary transitions:** The triple burden of malnutrition (under-nutrition, over-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies) continues to hamper progress towards food and nutrition security in SSA. Estimates in 2020 indicate that the number of hungry people in Africa increased by 46 million to 282 million, while the prevalence of undernutrition was up from 18.1% in 2015 to 21.5% in 2020. On the other hand, the burden of over-nutrition including child and adult overweight and obesity is on the increase. Notably, there are gender disparities, with women more negatively affected than men. These trends reflect diet-related risks for non-communicable diseases and are linked to dietary transitions occurring in the region with increased consumption of over-processed foods. This is occurring even as healthy, nutritious diets remain beyond the reach of many.
- b) **Impact of climate change and other emerging shocks on resilience of agri-food systems:** Climate variability and extremes on the continent continue to undermine agricultural production, even as the dominant agricultural systems also contribute to climate change, posing vulnerability risks to many, majority being women whose livelihoods are dependent on agriculture. This is a key driver to the increased food and nutrition insecurity. Moreover, emerging shocks (such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic) have interrupted food systems, further aggravating food and nutrition insecurity in the continent. This points to the need for food-health-environment nexus approach to catalysing the transition toward sustainable, healthy and equitable, low-carbon resilient agri-food systems.
- c) **Regionalisation and agri-food systems' transformation through trade:** Most SSA countries are net importers of agri-food products from global markets, resulting in a steady increase in import dependency that has negative implications on economic growth and food and nutrition security. Intra-regional trade on agricultural produce and products between countries was estimated at 20% as of 2021, one of the lowest in any region across the world. The introduction of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA), ratified by 39 African countries, has the potential to catalyse intra-regional trade for sustainable and competitive agri-food systems and employment creation. The concern is to ensure an innovation-led, sustainable, competitive and inclusive regional trade that provides opportunities for smallholders and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), especially for marginalised groups including women and youth.

d) **Challenge of post-harvest loss and waste and the imperative to accelerate sustainable agro-industry:** Post-harvest Losses (PhL), which is estimated to be around 37% in SSA, is a major threat to Africa’s food and nutrition security. The threat is related to the volumes of food lost as well as quality and safety of food. Linked to high post-harvest loss is limited value addition practices that relate to low investment in sustainable agro-processing and manufacturing. The agro-food industry holds the most promising prospects for Africa and, with the right policies and enabling environment, has the potential to increase GDP, create employment opportunities, reduce food loss and waste, increase trade and incomes and strengthen food security and enhance nutrition.

Programme Vision, Mission and Goal

The vision, mission and goal of the agriculture, food and nutrition security programme is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Programme vision, mission and goal of AFNS programme

Programme vision	To contribute towards realising a sustainably food and nutrition-secure Africa.
Programme mission	To develop a world-class programme that contributes to the efforts of the African Union (AU) partners and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to enhance food and nutrition security and improve livelihoods in Africa through harnessing STI for sustainable and inclusive agri-food systems.
Programme goal/ Strategic objective	To accelerate sustainable, inclusive agri-food systems’ transformation for food and nutrition security through cutting-edge STI-focused, policy-relevant research and knowledge brokerage.
Programme focus (Key areas)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resilient and climate smart small-holder agri-food systems; 2. Digital innovation for sustainable and transformational agri-food systems; 3. Supporting regional trade through sustainable and inclusive agri-food systems; 4. Innovation-driven, market-led, healthy and sustainable agri-food systems; 5. Cross-cutting issues on inclusive, gender-transformative agri-food sector transformation through strategic partnerships.

2.3.2. Climate Resilient Economies (CRE) Programme

Programme Motivation

Globally, climate change remains a big challenge to humanity and its impacts are vast, interlinked and widely documented. These impacts vary across regions, with developing countries bearing the biggest brunt. Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change due to a combination of factors, including:

- a) heavy dependence of livelihoods and economic activities on rain-fed agriculture and natural resources;
- b) natural fragility of its ecosystems (degradation and desertification accounts for 67% of Africa's surface area);
- c) poorly developed infrastructure (especially water, energy, ICT and transport) that can hardly survive extreme weather events such as floods and drought; and
- d) weak economies, relatively lacking in financial and technological resources for climate adaptation and mitigation.

Climate change remains relevant in our activities due to several reasons. Firstly, the Paris Agreement commits the international community to an ambitious collective goal to hold global warming well below 2 degrees with efforts to limit warming to 1.5 degrees; an aim for greenhouse gas emissions to peak as soon as possible and achieve a net zero emission in the second half of the century; and a requirement for mitigation measures of individual countries to be expressed in nationally determined contributions (NDCs). The recently concluded 26th Conference of Parties (COP 26) in Glasgow, UK, reinforced these commitments. Secondly, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 commits the international community to take urgent action to combat climate change. Similarly, the African Union (AU) Agenda-2063 requires African governments to act with a sense of urgency on climate change and environment. This commitment has been taken up by STISA-2024 under priorities 4 "protection of our space" and 5 "living together-build the society" that provide opportunities for enhanced application of STI.

Programme Vision, Mission and Goal

The vision, mission and goal of the Climate Resilient Economies programme for the period 2022-2026 are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Vision, mission and goal of the CRE programme

Programme vision	Inclusive, pro-poor and thriving climate change resilient economies for economic, social and environmental sustainability in Africa.
Programme mission	To provide policy choices that support the generation, uptake and harnessing of climate change-related STI for sustainable and diversified livelihoods, socio-economic development and biodiversity conservation in Africa.
Programme goal/ Strategic objective	To support the development of enabling capacities, policies, organisations and institutions for harnessing applications of climate change-related sciences, technologies and innovations for energy access and security, water quality and security, biodiversity and natural resource management in Africa by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mobilising resources and funds for building climate-resilient economies; b. Strengthening the research quality and messaging within international discourses through the climate change policy laboratory; c. Strengthening knowledge and learning systems on climate change through the virtual academy; d. Leveraging strategic partnerships for influence and outreach on policy, research and training.
Programme focus (Key areas)	Building on the achievements of ACTS over the last 10 years under the Climate Resilient Economies programme and, considering the projects that are transiting to the 2022-2026 period, this programme focuses on supporting African countries and institutions to tap into global and regional opportunities in climate discourse. Specifically, during the 2022-2026 period, the programme will build the capacity of African countries and institutions in the following areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate change mitigation, adaptation and negotiation; 2. Access to climate finance and technology; 3. Green recovery; 4. Clean and affordable energy; 5. Disaster risks and response; 6. Cascading climate change effects on sustainable development; 7. Climate change innovation and development; 8. Climate change action training; 9. Gender inclusive climate action; 10. The blue economy.

2.3.3. Science, Technology & Innovation, Knowledge and Society (STIKS) Programme

Programme Motivation

STIKS motivations arise from past achievements of ACTS on STI policy research and training as well as three on-going multi-year projects. These are SGCI-2, Evi-Pol Project (2020-2023), which seeks to strengthen the capacities of Science Governing Councils (SGCs) in SSA; AfricaLics (2012-2022) that focuses on understanding innovation and learning in the context of Africa, both from theoretical and practical perspectives; and the Transformative Innovation and the 4th Industrial Revolution for Sustainable Development (2019-2023) that aims to strengthen African scholarship for examining transformative innovation, and developing transformative innovation policy, in the context of the 4IR. The programme is looking into expanding its outreach, particularly in the area of eco-innovation and circularity and start-ups. The gender dynamics of STI will remain a cross-cutting aspect of the programme implementation.

Programme Vision, Mission and Goal

The vision, mission and goal of the STI, Knowledge and Society programme are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Vision, mission and goal of the STIKS programme

Programme vision	An African continent that effectively creates and utilises research findings on the interplay between STI, knowledge and society to formulate development strategies, policies and practice.
Programme mission	To advance key research and analysis of the interplay between STI, knowledge and African society to formulate development strategies, policies and practice.
Programme goal/ Strategic objective	To undertake key STI research and support the development of a cadre of researchers, analysts, policy makers, entrepreneurs, businesses and communities in Africa on the interplay of STI, knowledge and society, specifically related to the African context.
Programme focus (Key areas)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research: Strengthen undertaking of action, policy-oriented and transdisciplinary research to generate evidence for policy and practice; 2. Capacity building: Strengthen the capacity of Africa's Science Granting Councils and support capacity building in the field of innovation and development; 3. Policy; 4. Knowledge and technology transfer: Promote knowledge and technology transfer for sustainable development; 5. Impact and communication: Strengthen evaluation of impact of STI and communication.

Programme Focus

Building on the achievements of ACTS over the last 10 years under the Science, Technology & Innovation, Knowledge and Society (STIKS) programme, and, considering the projects that are transiting to the 2022-2026 period, this programme focuses on supporting capacity building of Africa's councils; and to enable PhD students and post-docs engage in innovation and development. Specifically, during the 2022-2026 period, this programme will focus on research, policy and capacity building activities in the following six areas:

- a) Use of evidence in STI policy making in Africa;
- b) Innovation and development of postgraduates and academic professionals;
- c) Innovation and development mentorship and training for innovators/ entrepreneurs/ policy makers and civil society;
- d) Promoting sustainable circular innovation;
- e) 4IR and new technological innovations (expanding the ongoing projects);
- f) Intellectual property and technology transfer;
- g) Evaluation of the socio-economic impact of STI;
- h) Development and implementation of STI roadmaps for SDGs.

2.3.4. Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy (DIKE) Programme

Programme Motivation

Globally, the digital economy is increasingly becoming a critical driver of the economy with trends showing a steady increase in its contribution towards the global and individual national economies all over the world. In 2016, the digital economy accounted for 15.5% of the global GDP and is projected to reach 25% by 2026. In Africa, the digital economy is projected to contribute about 5.2% of GDP by 2025, with countries like Kenya expecting the digital economy to contribute 9.24%. As a result, several African countries are striving to put in place policies, legal frameworks, strategies and plans as well as infrastructure to help drive the digital economy and maximize the expected benefits. Furthermore, increasingly remote-based trends at work just re-emphasised the importance of the digital economy, which currently is seen as key to economic recovery from phenomena such as Covid-19.

Programme Vision, Mission and Goal

The vision, mission and goal of the Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy Programme are shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Vision, mission and goal of the Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy programme

Programme vision	Application of responsible digital innovation & knowledge economy for sustainable and inclusive development in Africa.
Programme mission	To enhance the development, deployment and adoption of responsible digital technologies for sustainable and inclusive development in Africa through capacity building, policy research and technology brokerage.
Programme goal/ Strategic objective	<p>To unlock the potential of state-of-the-art digital technologies, such as 4th industrial revolution technologies, for driving the economies of African countries.</p> <p>The strategic objectives of the digital innovation and knowledge economy programme are to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct policy research in enhancing effective application of digital solutions in Africa; 2. Strengthen post-graduate training and research in responsible digital technologies in Africa for sustainable development; 3. Promote uptake, deployment and adoption of digital technologies for sustainable development; 4. Enhance the growth and financial sustainability of the digital innovation and knowledge economy programme; 5. Build the required human resource capacity for the digital innovation and knowledge economy programme.

Programme focus (Key areas)

Box 1: Focus areas for the Digital Innovation and Knowledge Economy programme

The programme will undertake policy research, capacity building and technology brokerage on development, uptake and deployment of responsible digital solutions in the following areas:

Manufacturing, health, education, agriculture, e-commerce, informal sector, water & sanitation, climate change, energy, transport & logistics, financial sector and gender and youth

2.3.5. Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development Programme

Programme Motivation

The following factors provide motivation for ACTS to re-establish and pursue this programme:

- a. The programme recognises the potential of STI's role in enhancing the contribution of women to sustainable development in Africa. Women in Africa are the majority contributors to family food security through smallholder subsistence farming. With increasing vulnerabilities, their capacity to feed Africa shall be limited. Furthermore, the participation of women in economic activities along the agricultural value chains has also remained negligible. In addition, women are more vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Enhancing access to STI by women, such as agro-technologies, climate innovations and digital solutions can contribute towards addressing the socio-economic challenges facing African women today.
- b. Africa is the fastest growing and most youthful population in the world, with implications for job creation and stability. Almost 60% of the population in Africa is under the age of 25 years. This burgeoning youth population is both an opportunity and a challenge. The population provides an opportunity for the continent to address Africa's sustainable development challenges, tapping on the existing natural resources and using the creativity and innovation of its youthful population to catalyse economic transformation. On the other hand, the increasing youth population, coupled with high levels of unemployment is a time bomb and a nightmare for several policy makers in Africa. Using STI to create more employment opportunities for the youth, and enhancing access to technologies for self-employment are some of the interventions towards addressing these challenges

Programme Vision, Mission and Goal

The vision, mission and goal of the programme are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Vision, mission and goal of the Youth, Gender and Inclusive Development programme

Programme vision	To empower women, youth and vulnerable groups to harness science, technology and innovation for economic, social and environmental sustainability in Africa.
Programme mission	To provide policy choices that exploit the potential of women, youth and other marginalised groups to harness STI for sustainable and diversified livelihoods and socio-economic development in Africa.
Programme goal/ Strategic objective	To support the development of enabling policies, organisations and institutions for harnessing the potential for application of science, technology and innovation.

Programme Strategic Objectives

During the 2022-2026 period, the Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development programme will pursue the following strategic objectives:

- a) To undertake policy research that promotes the uptake of STI solutions (by youth, women and marginalised persons) to self-reliance;
- b) To package research results into knowledge products for dissemination, outreach and policy engagement;
- c) To undertake technology brokerage and transfer of innovations that provide sustainable solutions to meet the needs of women, youth and marginalised communities;
- d) To ensure growth and financial sustainability of the programme.

Programme Focus

In 2022-2026, the Gender, Youth and Inclusive Development Programme will work closely with the other programmes to ensure gender issues are mainstreamed into programmatic activities. In addition, resource mobilisation will target specific projects that span between gender and sectors of relevance to the continent. These include gender and energy; gender and digital innovation; gender and agriculture etc.

3

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This chapter focuses on governance and management, resource mobilisation, implementation mechanism, partnerships and networks, human resource management, and monitoring and evaluation that are necessary for effective implementation of this Strategic Plan (2022-2026).

3.1. Governance of ACTS

ACTS is committed to continuously enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and impacts of its governance and management structures. During the 2019-2021 period, a new organisation structure was developed (Figure 2), which takes care of the aspirations of the new Strategic Plan (2022-2026).

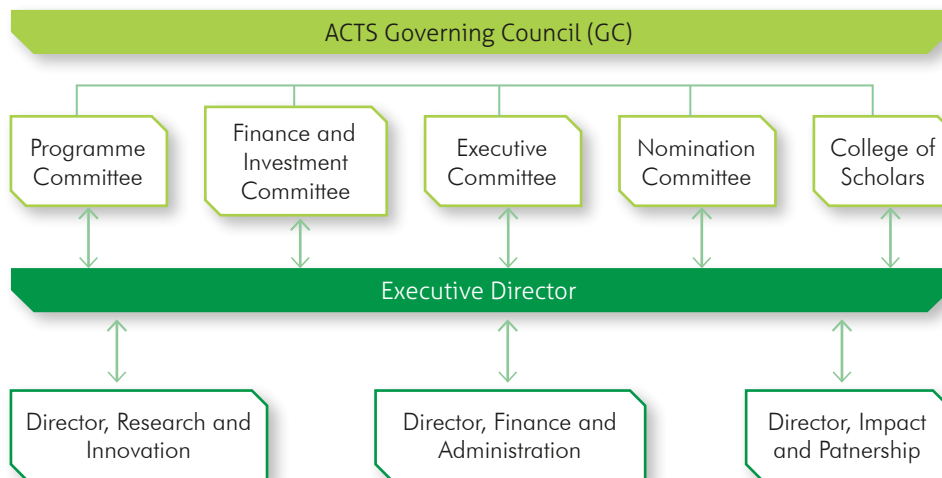


Figure 2: Governance structure of ACTS

During the 2022-2026 Plan period, the advisory support given to the ACTS Secretariat by the various sub-committees of the Governing Council will be enhanced through regular physical and virtual meetings. The College of Scholars that has been operationalised since 2021 will advise the programme committee and the Secretariat on the necessary strategic research direction. The finance and investment committee, apart from overseeing the financial performance of the organisation, will spearhead implementation of the resource mobilisation strategy and investment projects. The programme committee will oversee

the implementation of the Strategic Plan (2022-2026), while the executive committee will continue providing oversight and coordination roles to the Secretariat on matters of implementation. To support the Executive Director in the management of the Council Affairs, both the Director of Research and Innovation and the Director of Impact and Partnerships will facilitate the meetings of the programme committee; the Director of Finance and Administration will facilitate the meetings of the finance committee, while the Director of Impact and Partnerships will facilitate the meetings of the College of Scholars.

3.2. ACTS Secretariat

At the Secretariat level, the Executive Director, supported by the Director of Finance and Administration (DFA), Director of Research and Innovation (DRI) and the Director of Impact and Partnership (DIP), will provide closer supervision and coordination of all matters related to finance, administration and programmes (Figure 3). The DFA will be supported by the ICT Officer, Finance Manager, Procurement and Logistics Officer and HR Officer. The Heads of Programmes and Communication and Outreach Officer will report to the Executive Director on matters of resource mobilisation and overall growth of the programmes; to DRI on matters to do with research; to DIP on matters to do with outreach and impact; and to DFA on matters to do with finance.

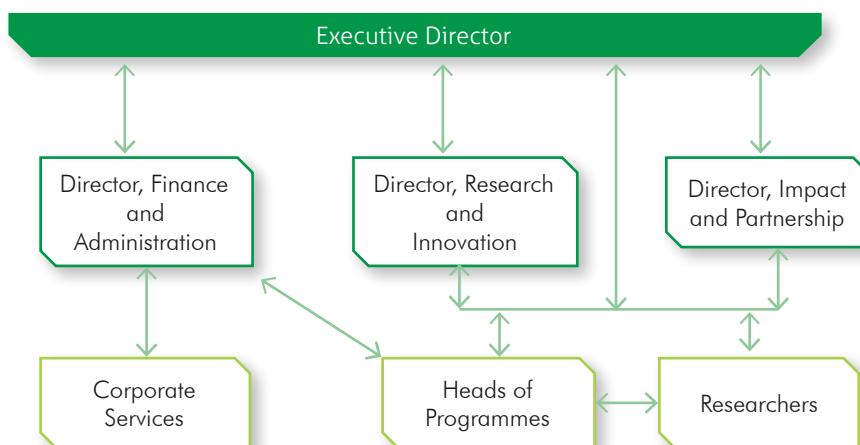


Figure 3: Heads of Programmes

3.3. Resource Mobilisation

To implement this Strategic Plan, a resource mobilisation strategy (RMS) has been developed. The overall objective of the resource mobilisation strategy is to ensure availability of adequate resources to finance the Strategic Plan (2022-2026) and to transform ACTS into a more sustainable organisation by 2026. The total projected costs of implementing this Strategic Plan (2022-2026) is about US\$ 20 million, whereas the available income from the projects that are transiting to 2022 stands at US\$ 5 million. Therefore, the financial gap to be filled through resource mobilisation is estimated at US\$ 15 million.

3.4. Research and Innovation

Under this Strategic Plan, research and innovation are the overarching themes that define ACTS' operations. The Strategic Plan anticipates high quality research that will inform policy analysis, capacity building and outreach on the application of STI. The Centre therefore recognises the role of reputable research and innovation, and the promotion of internationally-competitive research as a core strategic goal. To ensure that the Centre can compete in a globally competitive environment, this commitment to research is aligned with the Centre's imperative to support the development of a cadre of Africa-centred researchers, analysts and policy makers on STI, knowledge and society.

The STI portfolio is dynamic and therefore it is important that the research (including innovation support programmes and projects) take advantage of the benefits provided by increased use of technology including digital innovations. A research strategy has been developed to guide this process.

3.5. College of Scholars' Engagement

The College of Scholars will enhance ACTS' work through the creation of awareness with regard to research findings, education, and transforming the knowledge paradigm. The College assesses programme activities so as to inform strategic planning of the Centre. The College will further conduct seminars, symposia and other relevant events from time to time, and also plan an Annual Policy Research Conference for the Centre.

3.6. Implementation Mechanisms

Under this Strategic Plan, ACTS will continue deploying three implementation mechanisms, namely: high-quality research, policy analysis and dialogues and capacity building and outreach. During the 2022-2026 Plan period, ACTS will also pay special attention to technology-driven innovation brokerage. Key players shall remain to be ACTS' regular researchers supported by non-resident research fellows and ACTS' partners and collaborators. The College of Scholars and the programme committee will also play central roles in the implementation process. Key outputs will include books, journal papers, working papers, policy briefs, position papers and high-level policy dialogues. During the 2022-2026 period, a research strategy will be developed and implemented.

3.7. Management of Partnership and Networks

In the 33 years of its existence, ACTS has established and maintained a huge list of partners, ranging from development partners, universities, research organisations, international NGOs as well as community-based organisations. These organisations have been beneficial to ACTS through capacity building, fundraising and delivery of its mandate. Therefore, the Centre will develop and implement a plan to improve on the management of these partners, which will see the strengthening of existing partnerships and securing new strategic ones. A communication, outreach and partnership strategy will be developed and implemented.

3.8. Human Resource Management

During the 2022-2026 Plan period, special focus will be given to attracting, retaining and mentoring quality staff, both corporate and researchers. ACTS will continue implementing the career progression guidelines supported by the flexible contract policy developed in 2021. In addition, a staff development and mentorship programme will be developed and implemented. The staff force is projected to grow from 40 in 2022 to 52 by 2026. During this period, the research staff is projected to grow from 30 to 40, whereas the corporate staff will grow from 10 to 12.

3.9. Monitoring and Evaluation

ACTS considers Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) as key to enhancing its overall efficiency and effectiveness. The key features of the M&E framework are shown in Box 2.

Box 2: Key features of the ACTS M&E framework

Monitoring: This will encompass tracking of the implementation of the research activities and outputs and measuring their contribution to outcomes. Monitoring of outcomes will help to determine the success of ACTS' interventions. Information will be collected on a half-year basis by the programme managers.

Evaluation: In the next five years, two major evaluations will be carried out. These will include the mid-term review to assess the level of realisation of the objectives of the Strategic Plan (2022-2026) and suggest necessary adjustments, and the final review will assess the overall success of the Strategic Plan. The mid-term review will be undertaken internally, whereas the final review will be done by an external consultant.

Reporting: Quarterly, half-year and annual reports shall be prepared to capture the status of implementation of each annual plan. Monthly reports will be for discussion with ACTS Senior Management Team while quarterly, half-year and annual reports will be for presentation to the executive committee, finance committee, programme committee, Governing Council and development partners. Other reports shall be prepared to respond to the specific requirements of development partners, including project level, technical and financial audit reports.



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