



African Centre for
Technology Studies

Strategy 2009-2013



ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ACTS	African Centre for Technology Studies
A/F	Administration/Finance
Agenda 21	Agenda 21 is the plan of action to achieve sustainable development that was adopted by the world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992.
AU	African Union
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
LOM	Leadership/Overall Management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOVs	Means of Verification
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PRO	Programmes
QQT	Quality, Quantity, and Time
RECS	Regional Economic Communities
TI	Training Institute
UNCED	United Nations Commission on Environment and Development

Cover:

Without efforts to end hostilities and mediate peace, children will remain in both immediate and long term danger, with their rights to health care, education, protection and peace violated.

Pictures courtesy of UNDP



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Synopsis

This five-year strategic framework presents the main operational concepts intended to guide ACTS' work and organisational development during the period 2009-2013. The strategic concepts reflected in this strategy build on ACTS' work, priorities and gains of previous strategic periods, while sharpening focus during the period 2009-2013 to extend the organisation's reach, comparative advantages and influence to contribute to sound science and technology policy development and practice benefiting Africa and its peoples in the short and long-terms.

1.1 The Genesis

The African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS)– is an intergovernmental organisation (IGO) engaged in policy-oriented research, analysis and advocacy leading to formulation and practice of sound policies that protect the environment, promote sustainable development, and contribute to better living standards for all in Sub-Saharan Africa. Policy-shaping work done by ACTS is specifically related to the fields of agriculture and food security, biodiversity and natural resource management, and energy and water security. Cross-cutting themes are climate change, gender, and health.

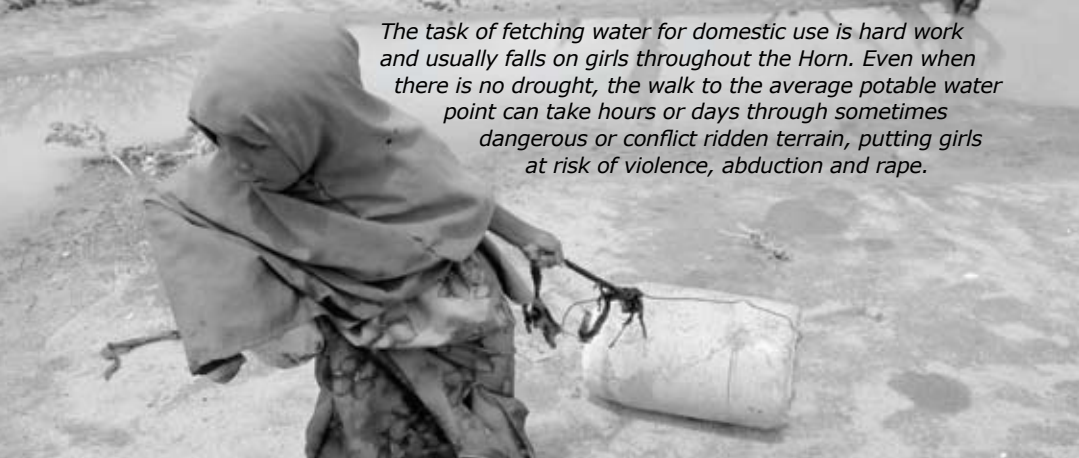
ACTS was founded in 1988 to address African development concerns through mobilisation of knowledge. In terms of operation and governance, ACTS has a Nairobi-based Secretariat led by an Executive Director, who reports to the ACTS Governing Council.

A brief historical background:

The ACTS formative years, 1988-1993, coincided with UNCED. During this period, ACTS demonstrated the feasibility of independent policy research on science, technology and environmental issues by building capacities of African countries to implement international agreements.

During the period 1994-1997, ACTS focused its work on Agenda 21 and related conventions on biological diversity and climate change. During the years 1997-2002, ACTS efforts centred on bio-safety and potentials for biotechnology.

During the strategic period 2004-2008, the guiding theme for ACTS work has been “harnessing science and technology for sustainable development”, with ACTS’ strategic objective being to enlarge the range of policy options and dialogue to support Africa’s quest for sustainable development.



The task of fetching water for domestic use is hard work and usually falls on girls throughout the Horn. Even when there is no drought, the walk to the average potable water point can take hours or days through sometimes dangerous or conflict ridden terrain, putting girls at risk of violence, abduction and rape.

Throughout ACTS' existence, it has been important for ACTS to have flexibility to adapt and respond to emerging scientific, technological and environmental developments crucial to Africa's development. With such flexibility in hand, ACTS has been able over the years to develop certain niches of competence while establishing numerous collaborative partnerships and wide networks of individuals and organisations of important stakeholders and contributors working for policies to protect the environment while improving the standards of living conditions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the upcoming strategic period, 2009-2013, ACTS intends to consolidate gains of the past, capitalise on opportunities of the present, and carefully expand the outreach and policy scope of its work in the future, while at the same time becoming a viable and sustainable organisation in its own right.

These are the main thrusts of the ACTS Strategy 2009-2013.



The pastoralist children of the Horn are often invisible, heightening their vulnerability when disasters strike.

1.2 Brief Overview

ACTS collaborates with governments and many types of public and private institutions to collectively contribute to development and practice of sound policies to promote sustainable development and better living conditions in Sub-Saharan Africa. The specific value-addition that ACTS brings to the policy arena is a science and technology focus for sustainable development, coupled with a wide, ever-growing network of African policy-makers, African governments, regional economic development entities, and African-based public and private institutions and organisations, coupled with experience and recognised leadership.

To capitalise on its relative advantages in the upcoming strategic period, it is important that ACTS continues to build on its past while remaining light-footed and flexible. Doing so helps ensure that ACTS will always be well-positioned to prioritise and carry out policy advocacy and capacity-building work related to long-term and emerging environmental and resource management issues ultimately affecting Africa's development.

The ACTS Strategy, 2009-2013, along with its specific programmatic focus in three areas, stresses (1) greater outreach, (2) greater focus on policy uptake, and (3) viability and sustainability of ACTS as an organisation, all to be achieved within the strategic period.

The ACTS Strategy 2009-2013 is guided by a Vision and Mission, as follows:

ACTS Vision:
knowledge for better livelihoods

ACTS Mission:

To strengthen the capacity
and policies of African
countries and institutions
to harness science and
technology for sustainable
development

1.3 Key Features

The ACTS Vision and ACTS Mission stated in the previous section provide the bases for the ACTS Strategy, 2009-2013. Key features of the Strategy 2009-2013 are briefly described in subsections below.

The ACTS Training Institute features prominently in the Strategy 2009-2013. The Training Institute will be built up and used more systematically and strategically to support and complement programmatic work, cross-cutting themes, policy-in-practice emphasis, expanded outreach, network and capacity-building, and learning and improvement aspects.

It bears emphasising that while ACTS is an independent organisation, it works in collaboration with many others. In the science and technology policy arena, ACTS has special roles to play. While ACTS can and does contribute many valuable inputs to the policy arena, so too do all other organisations and institutions that ACTS partners with to work collectively towards common goals. Accordingly, the attribution of positive results can never be seen to be solely related to ACTS, but will always be shared among all policy-makers, governments and partners who have worked for the achievement of sound policies and the positive impacts derived from such policies.

1.3.1 Three Strategic Programmatic Areas

The strategic programmatic focus of ACTS in the period 2009-2013 will be in three areas:

Agriculture and Food Security

Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management

Energy and Water Security

The three areas provide the broad programmatic focus for ACTS work in the period 2009-2013. The focus and drive of each area will be policy-related in the first instance via bringing together the proper balance of technology, applied results from natural and social sciences research, and hard evidence that ensures public-policy appropriateness, relevance and soundness. From the ACTS perspective, the policy context must always be contextualised to reflect gender considerations, plus whenever appropriate, other context-relevant dimensions such as a focus on the poor, health, HIV/AIDS and on climate change and adaptation.

Goals and typical outputs for the three programmatic areas are indicated in sub-sections of the next pages.

1.3.1.1 Agriculture and Food Security

Goal:

- Policies that improve agriculture production and food security in rural areas.

Outcome:

- Improved capacity of women to access and use science and technology for improving agricultural production and family food security.

Outputs:

- Established linkages and active collaboration in research, extension, education and communication to promote agricultural production and food security.
- Promotion of appropriate legal, policy and institutional frameworks related to agricultural production and food security policy-making.
- Information dissemination to improve knowledge of land degradation, its impacts and its causes.
- Strengthened capacity of African governments to implement regional and international agreements on agriculture and food security.

1.3.1.2 Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management

Goal:

- Policies for sustainable management of biodiversity, environmental governance, domestication of multilateral environmental agreements and understanding of linkages between ecology, conflicts and peace-building.

Outcome:

- Enhanced capacity of African governments to implement global environmental agreements and programmes.

Outputs:

- Strengthened capacity of African countries to foster biodiversity and environmental governance.
- Increased understanding of linkages between biodiversity, livelihoods, resource rights, gender and conflicts.
- Promotion of prevention and management of conflicts involving natural resources and the environment.
- Better policy advice to national and regional bodies such as national environment management authorities (NEMAs) and NEPAD.

1.3.1.3 Energy and Water Security

Goal:

- Policies that enable more people to have better access to safe, reliable, affordable energy and water supply.

Outcome:

- Better policies and institutional frameworks for decentralised energy and water services.

Outputs:

- Increased understanding and appreciation of appropriate technologies for efficient energy and water supply.
- Increased awareness about sustainable energy and water supply solutions.



Water can weigh as much as 70 percent of the carrier's body weight, burning up precious calories from limited dietary intake and eating into precious time.

1.3.2 Sound Policies

In today's information-rich world, there is ample opportunity for policy-makers to make good policies grounded on fact and best technology. Unfortunately it is not always the case that policy-makers, however well-intentioned, have sufficient information and knowledge readily at hand to do so.

This then is an important potential gap that ACTS helps fill, using its experience and wide contact networks and partnerships of individuals and public or private institutions with skills and competence in natural and social sciences.

Specifically, ACTS as an African IGO is uniquely positioned to:

- Bring together key stakeholders and knowledgeable policy-contributors in decision-making and policy-setting fora.

- Lead innovative work by public and private institutions to increase the evidence basis for sound policies within key programmatic areas.

- Support and enhance the innovative work of others to increase evidence basis for sound policies.

- Help establish linkages and increased cooperation between public policy-makers, policy implementers, and natural and social scientists.

- Conduct policy analyses, and advise policy and decision makers on technically sound approaches to be reflected in, and implemented by, good public policies.

- Work with regional and international bodies to increase knowledge, evidence bases and human competencies required for good policy-making and policy implementation.

- Work with governments to ensure understanding of, and compliance, with regional and international environmental and resource management agreements and covenants.

- Provide a channel for learning from experiences, leading to better performance by all concerned in the future.

1.3.3 From Policy Development to Policy Practice

If the phrase "policies that make a difference" vis-à-vis sustainable development and better living standards is to have real meaning, then evidence as input to possible policy-making can never be the sole ambition of responsible public officials, or of ACTS. Rather, a more systematic approach of engagement in the wider policy-making process is required to ensure that sound policies are formulated and then put into practice.

Looking forward towards 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the ever-pressing needs to address environment and development concerns through policy, it is important that ACTS shift its policy engagement from “merely stimulating” sound policy development to contributing in any way possible to putting sound policies into practice for impact. Making this shift will require a “realignment” of ACTS ways of working in the future, with changes to include:

Increased focus on policy and decision-makers actually using information and evidence generated by ACTS and its national, regional and international public and private institutional partners to make sound policies then put them into practice.

New, renewed, earlier and specific follow-up engagement with policy- and decision-makers before, during and after policy formulation.

Ensuring that collaborative projects and programmes build in elements related to policy-in-use wherever appropriate.

New and increased collaboration with African and African-based institutes with a policy focus.

Increased emphasis on important processes and the enabling environments that surround policy creation and implementation.

More strategic and systematic use of the ACTS’ Training Institute to build and maintain networks between policy and decision-makers on the one hand, and policy implementers on the other.

More strategic collaboration with Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AU, NEPAD and others related to policy follow-up, e.g. peer review of policies and implementation.



Tens of thousands of people were displaced and plunged into yet another stage of acute crisis by the floods of 2006, which followed the severe drought.

1.3.4 Greater Outreach

The ACTS, because it is Nairobi-based, has built up strong links with Kenya and neighbouring, East African and some other countries. With a wide contact network base, experience and reputation developed over 20 years as solid points of departure, it is natural and appropriate that ACTS now attempts to carefully expand its outreach to other countries on the continent. The rationale behind careful expansion is that more concerted cooperation together with the sharing of information and experiences related to policy processes can benefit all engaged in the African policy arena.

That AU, RECs, NEPAD and other economic development-oriented entities are much stronger bodies now than they were 5-10 years ago opens up new and better opportunities for African partners with policy interests to collaborate with and support African governments striving for economic improvement and sustainable development.

An outreach strategy for 2009-2013 with a clear statement of objectives will be developed by ACTS in early 2009 to guide priorities, desired partnerships and intended outreach results. However two points are clear already, namely that (1) ACTS must establish, strengthen and cultivate new strategic partnerships along with its existing ones, and (2) the ACTS Training Institute must be used more strategically and comprehensively to operationalise the resultant strategy, as well as add synergistic value to regional and continental partnerships and collaborative efforts.

In many parts of the Horn girls are particularly disadvantaged in terms of education - 2 of every 10 boys are estimated to attend school but only 1 of every 10 girls.





When water points dry up during the dry season, children may walk up to 60 kilometers with their animals in search of water.

1.3.5 Learning and Improvement

Learning for improvement, no matter what the field or development endeavour, is rarely done thoroughly or systematically enough. This is true too in the areas of policy-making, policy implementation and policy enforcement. If there are any areas where learning from experience should be important, it should be as related to policy, where there is so much potential for positive change and impact on the lives of people and on the environment.

In this regard, ACTS is considered uniquely positioned because of its experience to date, its special programmatic focuses, and the potential offered by strategic use of the ACTS' Training Institute to promote wide-spread learning throughout Africa related to such areas as political championing, gathering and using policy-related evidence, policy-making processes, moving policy into practice, policy enforcement, enabling conditions, the pitfalls to avoid, the skills required, the building of competence, etc.

Learning is therefore a niche area that ACTS intends to seek to actively to develop and support during the 2009-2013 period. As concerns outreach, for example, a strategy for 2009-2013 will be developed to guide development of this niche area so it will be useful, effective and appreciated. Also as in the case of outreach, the role and use of the ACTS Training Institute will feature prominently when putting the learning strategy into operation.

1.3.6 Consolidating and Strengthening of ACTS as an Organisation

Since its creation in 1988, ACTS has lived with funding uncertainties that have hampered security of existence and its abilities to plan and budget ahead. The difficulties associated with having to fund-raise in an uncertain funding market are obvious. Given that its value has been demonstrated over the years, ACTS will devote special attention during the period 2009-2013 to establishing itself as a viable, sustainable entity in its own right, not only structurally but financially. Efforts will be devoted to three areas in particular, these being (1) structuring ACTS functionally, (2) reviewing core staffing, and (3) efforts toward cost recovery.

1.3.6.1 Functional Organisation

Looking forward, it is important that the ACTS' Secretariat structure itself so it is properly aligned with the ACTS' Strategy 2009-2013 and can address the requirements necessitated by results and envisioned working methods. Besides being able to lead and respond functionally to the strategic requirements, it is time for the Secretariat to attain permanence of key core staff who represent institutional memory and the continuity of professional competence at senior levels.

At present, most Secretariat staff members are on contract, and there is regular turnover. While this has been acceptable in the past, it will not be so in the future if ACTS is to have long-term credibility and maintain significant presence.

The aim would not be to have a bloated and unwieldy Secretariat, but rather to establish a lean entity of core staff who fulfil the functions demanded of the ACTS Secretariat on a permanent basis. In so doing, certain professional services could and, indeed should be outsourced, but the Secretariat would always have the competence necessary to manage and assure quality of services outsourced secure in the knowledge that it would be the ACTS' name and reputation at stake.

The ACTS cost recovery policy (see below) takes into account the cost and income-generating implications of a lean Secretariat and its core staff.

Functionally, the Secretariat is responsible for – and therefore must carry out satisfactorily and efficiently – the following:

- Overall management of ACTS as an organisation with its vision, mission, strategy and workplans and budgets.
- Professional leadership both externally and internally quality assurance of everything ACTS does and stands for high-level political and governmental network-building and network maintenance.

- Strategic ACTS partnership and alliance relations and support.
- Competence-building via the ACTS Training Institute in connection with ACTS programme areas, cross-cutting themes, network-building, skills creation for key target groups, etc.
- Policy advocacy and follow-up in ACTS programmatic areas.
- Communication vis-à-vis ACTS stakeholders and target groups.
- General public and mass-media relations.
- Project and programme preparation and execution.
- Management of ACTS and ACTS-led projects and programmes.
- Management and quality control of outsourced professional services.
- Policy-arena learning on a wide-spread basis.
- Fund-raising.
- Proposal preparation.
- ACTS administration and finance.

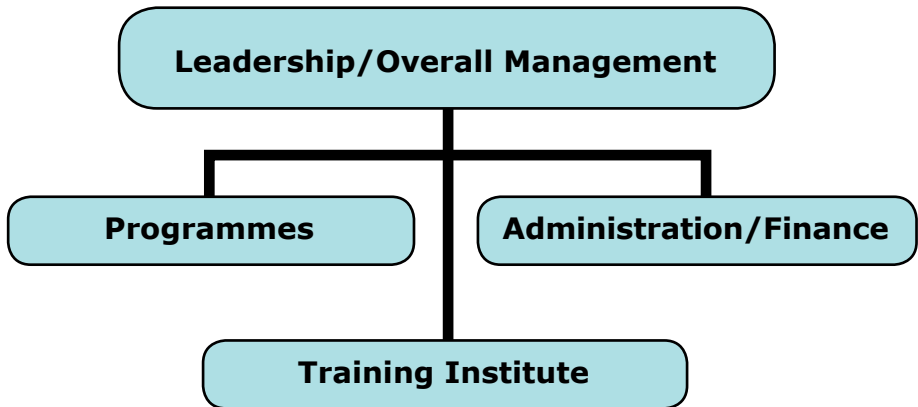
- Accountability to the ACTS Governing Council.
- Progress, achievement and expenditure reporting to the Governing Council and to ACTS donors.



In Kenya an average of 41 percent of pastoralists are cash poor living on less than a dollar a day, putting school out of reach for many.

Diagrammatically, all ACTS Secretariat functions to be performed by staff should be placed in the various organisation “boxes” shown in **Figure 1**,

Figure 1. Functional Diagram of ACTS Secretariat



Notably, **Figure 1** reflects a “new” importance and increased stature of the ACTS Training Institute.

The intention is that each of the four boxes shown in Figure 1 be headed by a full-time, permanently-employed senior professional, with these four individuals comprising the Secretariat’s Senior Management Team that will, among other things, ensure coordination and integration of efforts and sharing of ACTS human resources across the functional boxes. This will make it possible for ACTS to keep its permanently-employed core staff levels down to an efficient minimum.

As additional explanatory notes to **Figure 1**:

The figure is a functional organogramme, not an organisation chart of staff positions and their placement. As such, actual positions are not shown, but will eventually be placed within relevant functional boxes, e.g. the positions of (1) Executive Director and Personal Assistant are in LOM, (2) Finance Manager and accountants in A/F, (3) Programme Director, researchers and policy analysts in PRO, (4) TI Principal in TI, and so on.

The three boxes denoted functionally for PRO, A/F and TI can be considered as departments. Where appropriate, units can be included under departments to reflect specific functions when an ACTS structural organogramme is prepared.

Some staff positions will function in more than one box, e.g.

Communications Officer will work closely with and service the requirements of LOM, PRO and TI.

Generally speaking, the following competencies considered necessary for optimised efficiency and effectiveness of ACTS operations shall be reflected appropriately within and across the different functional boxes: management, advocacy, policy analysis, research, quality control (including that related to outsourcing of consultancy and professional services), networking, communications, external relations, fund-raising, financial control and administrative support.

Job descriptions and responsibilities for all permanent core staff positions shall be prepared, and more formal administrative procedures such as personnel evaluations shall be strengthened to ensure the Secretariat's permanence and viability as a functional entity to spearhead future ACTS work.

1.3.6.2 Staffing

The functional and organisational forms of the Secretariat need to be carefully thought through to ensure that the Secretariat can be lean and light-footed while at the same time viable, sustainable and highly efficient.

It goes without saying that the recruitment of highly-qualified staff to fill Secretariat core staff positions is of crucial importance.

1.3.6.3 Cost Recovery

If ACTS is to be financially viable and sustainable over the long-term, then it must be able to cover its fixed costs of operation. It is not possible to survive over the long-term without doing so. The importance of financial viability and sustainability in the specific case of ACTS is to ensure that ACTS can continue to make its unique contributions to the African public-policy arena.

Girls are made to work harder than boys. They walk long distances to fetch water and to sell milk. They milk goats, collect firewood, make tea and cook. They do everything.



An ACTS cost recovery policy has been developed (April 2008). Highlights from that policy are presented in **Annex A**.

1.4 Management Strategy

Reflecting latest current trends, ACTS's management strategy for the period 2009-2013 will comprise elements of results-based management, the logical framework approach, risk management and cost recovery, as briefly described in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Management Strategy for 2009-2013

Element	Comments
Results-based management (RBM)	A popular and internationally-recognised management strategy that focuses on performance and achievement of outputs, outcomes and impacts.
Logical framework approach (LFA)	A popular and internationally-recognised management tool for improving design of development interventions.
Risk management	In the ACTS context, the commitment to keep track of risks to policy formulation and successful implementation with a view towards mitigating such risks on a timely basis through (1) improved science and technology literacy, and better knowledge and understanding surrounding ACTS programmatic area issues, (2) improved competence and skills creation via ACTS Training Institute courses, and (3) shared learning from documented experiences.(see Section 1.3.5).
Cost recovery	In accordance with the policy referred to in Section 1.3.6.3 and presented in highlight form in Annex A.

1.5 Important First Steps

The strategic concepts reflected in the ACTS Strategy 2009-2013 build on ACTS' work, priorities and gains of previous strategic periods, while sharpening focus during the period 2009-2013 to extend the organisation's reach, comparative advantages and influence to contribute to sound policy development and practice benefiting Africa and its peoples in the short and long terms.

In guiding ACTS work, the ACTS Strategy 2009-2013 carries with it a number of implications related to focus, priorities and ways of working during the upcoming period.

Certain strategy-related actions need to be completed as early as possible to enable the strategy to be operationalised, and implemented as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Various required actions are listed in **Table 2**. The intention is that most if not all actions will be completed well before January 2009, to allow the new strategy to be fully operational from the very start.

Table 2. Required Actions Vis-à-vis the ACTS Strategy 2009-2013

Action	Comment
The previous strategy for 2004-2008 had four programmatic areas, the new one three. If/as required, align current projects and programmes to the new strategy's three programmatic area,	To be done by December 2008
Inculcate the new programmatic "demands" of the strategy (e.g. policy-in-practice, gender, learning etc.) among all ACTS staff and partners.	To be done by December 2008
Ensure that work in programmatic areas reflects planning and budgeting for putting policy into practice wherever appropriate.	To be done by on-going
Develop a comprehensive strategy and related plan for elevating the status and integrated use of the ACTS Training Institute into everything that ACTS does in the future.	To be done by December 2008
Develop a strategy and related plan for ACTS to extend its outreach.	To be done by July 2009
Develop ACTS strategies and related plans for internal and external learning.	To be done by on-going
Develop an ACTS strategy and related plans for targeted communication and mass media relations.	To be done by March 2009
"Design" the functional and organisational structures and systems required for the ACTS Secretariat to attain permanence.	To be done by July 2010
Staff the ACTS Secretariat as required.	To be done by on-going
Develop an ACTS cost recovery policy to enable ACTS to be financially viable and sustainable as an organisation	Completed (April 2008)
Develop a performance monitoring plan.	To be done by on-going
Develop a risk management monitoring plan.	To be done by September 2009

2 Expected Impacts, Outcomes and Outputs

Table 3 represents a preliminary logical framework (logframe) showing results (impacts, outcomes and outputs) that the ACTS Strategy 2009-2013 will be striving to achieve. **Table 3** should be considered indicative only, to be fleshed out in greater detail in annual log frames and budgets. Annual log frames will also specify QQT (quality, quantity and time) performance and progress indicators, including MOVs (means of verification), activities, and required inputs. Annual log frames will as well contain specific details concerning outputs, indicators, activities and budgets for work being carried out the three ACTS programmatic focus areas of the period 2009-2013, i.e. (1) Agriculture and Food Security, (2) Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management, and (3) Energy and Water Security.

The progress, achievements and expenditures related to annual log frames and approved budgets will be reported on annually in Annual Reports.



Children's issues, such as schooling and access to health care, need to be built into all action plans and specifically funded.

Table 3. Typical Results Associated with ACTS Strategy 2009-2013

Level	Typical Result
Impacts (typically 5-10 years after output achievement)	Sustainable development and better living standards for all in Africa, with no marginalisation of women, the poor or the sick.
Outcomes (typically 2-7 years after output achievement)	<p>Sound evidence-based public policies being implemented that protect the environment, promote sustainable development, and stimulate better living standards for all in Africa without marginalising women, the poor or the sick. Policies in place being monitored and enforced by Governments In-country policies in use being peer-reviewed by other countries (perhaps under the auspices of NEPAD) for impact, relevance and effectiveness.</p> <p>Scientifically-sound, appropriate policies for sustainable development being adopted and put in place</p> <p>Knowledge, capacity, will and enabling environments that allow sound evidence-based public policies to be formulated, practiced and enforced in place.</p>
Outputs (to be produced or in place within the 5-year strategy period)	<p>Policy-relevant research and analyses being conducted under the three programmatic pillars of the ACTS Strategy, with gender considerations always reflected. Networking, partnerships and collaboration that effectively promotes/creates/catalyses synergy among policy-makers, the scientific community, civil society and other key stakeholders) taking place. Greater ACTS policy-arena presence and influence in countries and regions of Africa.</p> <p>ACTS learning and experiences from policy process work being widely shared with others doing similar work and having similar interests, and vice versa. Research results, reports and publications disseminated and promoted to policy-makers and others in policy arena through ACTS "opportunity channels" (e.g. seminars, workshops, ACTS Training Institute courses, one-on-one meetings, etc.)</p> <p>The ACTS Training Institute being used optimally for its defined strategic purposes.</p> <p>Policy makers and policy implementers throughout Africa benefiting from ACTS Training Institute courses. Cross-cutting issues being successfully integrated into strategic programmatic areas in part because of good planning, and in part because of ACTS Training Institute competence-building efforts. The ACTS Secretariat being fully functional in relation to its tasks and responsibilities.</p> <p>ACTS financially sustainable as an organisation. External mid-term review carried out half-way through the strategic period, e.g. in 2011. ACTS well-positioned to meet science and technology literacy and policy challenges of the next strategic period (beginning 2014)</p>

3 Key Risks

There are a number of potential risks – both internal and external – to successful implementation of the ACTS Strategy 2009-2013. Some more prevalent ones are indicated below, along with rated likelihood of occurrence in **Table 4**. No matter if the likelihood of occurrence is rated low, medium or high, if the identified risk does take place without being mitigated, it will have high negative impact on ACTS and its ability to implement the ACTS Strategy 2009-2013 successfully.

Table 4. External and Internal Risks to Successful Strategy Implementation

Risk	Likelihood of Occurrence
External	
Re: outreach, AU, RECS and others are unwilling to collaborate with ACTS.	Low
Re: strategic programmatic areas, donors are unwilling or unable to fund work by ACTS and collaborative partners.	Medium
Re: overall focus and strategic programmatic areas, ACTS partners and donors do not consider it important to increase focus on policy-in-practice.	Low
Re: policy formulation and implementation, Governments – for whatever reasons – are unwilling or unable to prioritise development and practice of sound policies that promote sustainable development and better living conditions for their citizens.	Medium
Internal	
The required actions identified in Section 1.5, Table 2 are not done/carried out/completed in timely fashion.	Medium
ACTS is unable to staff the Secretariat at senior levels as required.	Medium
The ACTS cost recovery policy is not practiced or enforced.	Medium

Risks related to policy-in-practice will be identified separately (ref. **Section 1.5**, last point in **Table 2**).

4 Annex A. Highlights From ACTS Cost Recovery Policy

The ACTS cost recovery policy (developed in April 2008) provides the rationale, principles and practical modalities for ACTS to cover its permanent fixed costs of operation. The main headings of the policy are:

- Rationale for Policy
- Underlying Principles of Policy
- The Policy and Its Application
- Risks and Mitigating Actions

ACTS like any other sustainable organisation must be able to cover its fixed costs of operation. It is not possible to survive over the long-term without doing so. The importance of financial viability and sustainability for ACTS is to ensure that it can continue to make unique contributions to the African public-policy arena.

In the case of ACTS, fixed costs to be covered fall under the general categories of:

1. Staff salaries and related benefits
2. Office and running expenses
3. Capital equipment, e.g. vehicles, furniture, computers and other office necessities
4. Costs associated with governance (i.e. Governing Council)
5. Non-reimbursable costs related to acquisition (fund-raising), advocacy, promotion, etc.
6. Costs over and above grants and revenue re-couped from students associated with running ACTS Training Institute courses

Notes:

1. Reimbursable costs associated with projects and consultancies are re-couped from donors and clients, though lost opportunity costs associated with "carrying" reimbursable costs on the books from time of payment to suppliers to time of re-payment from donors and clients are not.
2. ACTS is in the fortunate position that it receives some core fund grants from donors. Ideally, such funds should be used to cover costs associated with the important non-reimbursable work that ACTS does, such as general advocacy, fund-raising, generating new income, and capitalising on fast-arising, unplanned but potentially high-impact opportunities not for buying paper clips or paying salaries.

3. Sources of revenue for ACTS are derived from:

- Core funds/non-tied grants
- Projects
- Consultancies
- Tuition and costs recovered from students related to the ACTS Training Institute courses
- Administrative fees and overhead charges
- Earnings from endowment funds

Certain principles form the basis for cost recovery of fixed costs of ACTS operation (as identified above), as shown in **Table A.1**.

Based on the above principles, the ACTS cost recovery policy comprises various elements, each of which is explained in detail in the full policy document.

Sale of ACTS core staff time to ACTS projects and consultancies.

Recovery of a management fee related to procurement, use, and quality assurance of work done by external researchers and consultants engaged by ACTS to work on ACTS projects and consultancies.

Use of a small transaction fee for procurement and administration of project-/consultancy-related expenses that are reimbursable.

Recovery of a minimum of X percent of total costs incurred in the running of ACTS Training Institute courses.

A reserve fund shall be created, into which extra revenues over and above fixed operational costs shall be deposited. Withdrawals from the reserve fund shall be permitted under specified general categories. How the reserve fund “works” is depicted in **Figure A.1**.

Figure A.1. ACTS Reserve Fund

<p>Typical Deposits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surplus from sale of ACTS core staff time Surplus from management fee Surplus from transaction fee Donor core fund grants Earnings from endowment fund investments Income from Training Institute courses Repayment of cash liquidity loans (see withdrawal column) Any additional non-tied funds received by ACTS 	<p>ACTS Reserve Fund</p>	<p>Typical Withdrawals, to cover costs associated with important non-reimbursable work, e.g. advocacy, fund-raising, generating new income, and capitalising on fast-arising, unplanned but potentially high-impact opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of running Training Institute courses. Replacement costs for worn-out/broken capital equipment. Loans to cover temporary cash liquidity requirements. Contingencies, including severe currency fluctuation and unexpected temporary shortfalls.
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Table A.1. Underlying Principles of ACTS' Cost Recovery Policy

Principle	Remarks
Full cost recovery of fixed costs (as identified above).	Anything less than full recovery means that (1) ACTS operates at a loss, and/or (2) there is dependency on someone else to subsidise ACTS operations, and/or (3) important ACTS work capitalising on opportunities does not get done.
Simple, transparent, uniform, cost recovery system.	A simple, transparent and uniform system is straight forward both in its presentation to others and in its application. If all understand, accept and follow the same system, it eliminates the need for constant negotiations between partners, dissimilar practices applying to different donors and clients, etc., all of which create tension between partners.
Sale of ACTS' time, i.e. all staff who can sell their time to projects and consultancies should sell their time, not give it away.	Sale of time is the main potential source of ongoing income for ACTS, and the one offering best chances for achievement of sustainable operation. If ACTS staff who can sell their skills instead give it away, it translates into major lost opportunities for ACTS to ever become sustainable.
Fee when ACTS-engaged consultants, researchers and institutions are used on projects and consultancies.	To avoid having to build up a large permanent staff (thus increasing its fixed costs and risk of carrying staff if there is a downswing in funded projects/consultancies), ACTS engages - and stands behind the quality of work of - external senior consultants and researchers working on ACTS projects and consultancies. In doing so, ACTS shall charge a management fee reflecting its role as a service contractor, a risk-taker, and a guarantor of quality work by the individuals concerned.
Small fixed fee as a percentage of reimbursable turnover.	When ACTS provides up-front procurement and both upstream and downstream administration services associated with project-/consultancy-related reimbursable goods, services, and transport costs, ACTS assumes certain risks related to procurement and reimbursement. ACTS also ties up money when it pays for goods and services up-front, but might have to wait long periods before capturing repayment from donors and clients.
No double payment by donors.	The above fixed fee for handing reimbursable costs, shall be waived on any project or consultancy funded by a donor that has already made a core grant to ACTS.
Creation of capital reserve fund for replacement of capital equipment when required.	Capital equipment such as vehicles, computers, office equipment, etc. wears out. There must be funds available to replace capital equipment when necessary.

Major risks to successful implementation of the cost recovery policy are indicated in **Table A.2**, along with comments and mitigating actions.

Table A.2. Risks to Successful Cost Recovery and Mitigating Actions

Risks	Comment	Mitigating Actions
The policy is not practiced consistently and/or not applied uniformly.	Non-practice and/or deviations and making continuous exceptions when applying the policy will undermine the chances for cost recovery being achieved, thereby negatively affecting ACTS's ability to sustain its operations over the long-term.	All ACTS staff to be made aware of this policy. The Executive Director and Finance Manager to ensure compliance with, and consistent, uniform application of, this policy by all staff.
Upper management and senior level research staff do not devote sufficient time to networking and proposal development.	This policy assumes that there will always be a sufficient portfolio of projects and consultancies to sustain the livelihood of ACTS as an organisation and its valued core staff.	The Executive Director and Finance Manager to monitor and ensure that sufficient project and consultancy work in line with ACTS's mandate, vision and strategy is generated at all times.
Upper management and senior level research staff do not devote sufficient time to supervising and quality assuring the work of researchers, research assistants and externally-recruited consultants and researchers.	The ability to obtain projects and consultancies in the future is directly dependent on the innovative and high quality work done in the present. It is important to continuously re-enforce ACTS's reputation as an important policy think tank that effectively works to harness science and technology for Africa's development.	(Under the overall direction of the Executive Director) Directors and Senior Research Fellows to ensure high quality work at all time, including the meeting of all deadlines on time with promised results within budget.

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