



Concept Note

Workshop on building capacity and scaling up STI actions and adoption of countries' STI4SDGs Roadmaps in Africa

Oct. 12-13, 2023

Co-organized by DESA, ECA, and EC/JRC

supported by the Global Solutions [Summit](#) and the International Research Center of Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals ([CBAS](#))

ECA Conference Room, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

1. Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development highlighted the role of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as key means to promote the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, the Annual Multi-stakeholder Forums for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI Forum), supported by the Inter-Agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (IATT) as pillars of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) advocated for an increased mobilization of STI towards the SDGs. STI for SDGs Roadmaps are fully recognized as suitable instruments that can be used by countries to integrate SDGs in STI policy agendas. Three recent UN General Assembly resolutions ([A/RES/75/316](#), [A/RES/76/213](#) and [A/RES/77/150](#)), recognized this role and advocated for increased partnerships and collaborations. In particular, the GA resolution on information and communications technologies for sustainable development (A/RES/77/150) requested to explore a voluntary funding model for the full operationalization of all components of the TFM in collaboration with DESA and relevant UN entities.

Science, Technology and Innovation for SDGs Roadmaps are operational and concrete action plans and strategies useful in strengthening national, regional and local STI systems for SDGs and in effectively mobilizing national efforts and resources. The roadmaps also offer opportunities for countries' ownership and strengthening of capacities, as well as for international partnerships to harness STI for the achievement of the SDGs. As such, they are an important tool for building the capacity of government officials for integrating STI into their national development policies and strategies.

The workshop is the occasion to build on the work of the UN Inter-Agency Task Team sub-working group on STI for SDGs Roadmaps co-led by UN-DESA, UNESCO, and EC/JRC, and the recent discussions on STI roadmaps at the 2023 STI Forum and the Global Solutions Summit. It will share experiences and the expectations of existing and new roadmap countries and have a dialogue between them and international partners. It will also strengthen the STI capacity through a participatory approach. The workshop will hold back-to-back with [the Second Forum of the Alliance of Entrepreneurial Universities in Africa](#), to be held on 10-11 Oct. 2023. The theme of the Forum is "advancing entrepreneurship through education with a special focus on 'towards one

million start-ups and \$100 billion in revenues in a decade””, which provides unique perspective and inputs to the Workshop, presents a business case for implementing the STI roadmaps. Some speakers will attend both events and bring messages/finding across each other. As the key regional player for the STI4SDG roadmaps, ECA will identify and bring experts and partners to the workshop and provide logistical support to host this important workshop. The International Research Centre on Big Data for the SDGs (CBAS) will lead the discussion on strengthening capacities to access and use big Earth data for SDGs – a new workstream of the STI roadmap and support big data experts’ participation in this workshop.

2. Key Issues

The workshop will frame the discussion around roadmaps precisely because the designed roadmap creation programs can be an indispensable catalyst for sustainable development and the SDGs. In other words, the process of creating the roadmap is almost as important as the roadmap itself. Among other issues, to ensure a strong and sustainable roadmapping process, a voluntary funding model/mechanism needs to be established. In this connection, the workshop will discuss how roadmaps could help Africa mobilize youth, the Diaspora, innovation, and the private sector to add value to African manufacturing sector and/or to shift to more regenerative agricultural systems – the priority areas identified by the Coalition on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Africa’s Development during the first STI for Africa Day¹. In particular, the STI roadmap/action workshop will discuss:

- Strengthening innovation ecosystems through mapping STI potentials
- Funding and institutional mechanisms for promoting mission-oriented research to solve specific problems related to developing and deploying solutions to achieve a specific goal or objective, involving youth and the Diaspora in technology scouting and deployment;
- Funding and resources for strengthening capacities to access and use big Earth data for SDGs;
- Funding mechanisms and mobilisation of resources for roadmaps’ implementation
- Localisation of sustainability challenges for mission-led STI strategies
- Promoting roadmap actions through Africa Youth Programmes;
- Strengthening science capacity and research infrastructure building in Africa;
- Promotion of participatory approaches in the design and implementation of STI for SDGs roadmaps.

3. Objective:

The overall objective of the joint workshop is to support governments in assessing and advancing the implementation of STI roadmaps/actions and promoting partnerships. It intends to:

- enhance capacity on implementation of STI roadmap by better understanding on gaps, needs and challenges;

¹ See more details about the Africa Day and the STI Coalition at: <https://sdgs.un.org/events/science-technology-and-innovation-africa-day-2023-50188>

- identify roadmap partners and present the opportunity for the STI policy makers to meet with the potential donors;
- enhance capacity for and scale up adoption of the Member States' STI4SDGs Roadmaps and other tools to bring science, innovation and technology policy in line with sustainable development strategies; and
- mobilize resources through regional networks, such as the STI for Africa Coalition.

4. **Target countries:**

- The target countries of DESA's previous roadmap project from Africa: Kenya, Ethiopia, and Ghana. It also includes
- 6-8 African countries that are in the process of developing STI4SDGs roadmaps/actions: the Gambia, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles that are developing STI4SDG roadmaps with the support of the EC/JRC; as well as the co-leads of the newly established STI for Africa Coalition (South Africa, Morocco, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Cameroon) supported by DESA and ECA; and
- India and Mexico who are involved in the STI roadmapping work.

5. **Format and Participants**

The workshop will be held in person and virtual by invitation only with the participation of government officials, representatives of African diaspora and youth leaders, representatives from the UN system and international partners, including donor community, bilateral and multilateral partners, business leaders, youth and women groups, the media, and civil society. Due to limited resources, the workshop will be in English only.

6. **Co-organisers**

The co-organisers of workshop are DESA, ECA and EC/JRC, with the support of the Global Solutions Summit and the International Research Center of Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals (CBAS).

7. **Draft agenda**

(Latest programme in a separate document)

8. **Annex: Overall update on STI4SDG and related UN processes**

Under the IATT/TFM, UN DESA together with UNESCO and European Commission Joint Research Centre has built a network of partners throughout the UN system and beyond, undertaking substantial analytical and operational work on STI roadmaps and action plans for the SDGs. The STI4SDGs Roadmap has been proposed by IATT as a useful approach to strengthen country ownership and elevate the policy debate on STI4SDGs. The UN has also developed with partners an e-learning course on STI roadmapping. In 2019, the IATT launched the Global Pilot Programme on STI for SDGs Roadmaps with an initial group of five pilot countries (Ethiopia,

Ghana, India, Kenya and Serbia). In February 2021, Ukraine also joined the programme bringing the number of pilot countries to six. The programme supports pilot countries in developing their STI for SDGs roadmaps following the framework described in the "[Guidebook for the Preparation of STI for SDGs Roadmaps](#)". The Guidebook is accompanied by two background papers: on available STI roadmapping methodologies² and international partnerships³. The advancement and achievements on the development of STI for SDGs roadmaps in the six pilot countries are described in the [Progress Report](#).

Following the successful experience of the Global Pilot Programme, driven by the need to facilitate experience sharing and to allow more countries to engage in the development of roadmaps, the "[Partnership in Action](#)" was launched co-lead by Serbia and Ghana at the UN STI Forum in May 2022. It has served as a platform to strengthen the development and implementation of STI4SDG roadmaps.

UN and its partners carried out initial capacity building work in the context of its project on STI for SDGs, which was implemented from 2017 to 2021. As more countries are expressing interest in the development of STI for SDGs roadmaps and actions, additional initiatives and programmes are now being carried out. In 2022, the Joint Research Centre together with Directorate General for International Partnerships of the European Commission launched a project on STI for SDGs roadmaps in Sub-Saharan Africa, which focuses on the design of roadmaps in six countries in the region. Discussing the priority areas, identifying funding and other partners, jointly exploring a voluntary funding model, as mandated by GA resolution A/RES/77/150 are the key in the next phase of the implementation.

In 2023, a dedicated, one day special event on STI in Africa was held for the first time on 2 May. The event was organized jointly by DESA and ECA and it built on the African Regional STI Forum held in February 2023 in Niamey, Niger. A significant outcome of the STI in Africa Day is the launch of the STI for Africa Coalition, which is co-led by Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, and South Africa, supported by DESA and ECA. The Coalition will focus on promoting awareness and actions on the ground on science, technology and innovation in Africa and support the engagement of African countries in various STI processes at the United Nations and beyond.

² See [Background paper: Overview of the existing STI for SDGs roadmapping methodologies](#)

³ See [BACKGROUND PAPER: International STI collaboration and investment for Sustainable Development Goals](#)