

Coalition on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Africa's Development
Terms of Reference (ToR)

Oct. 07th, 2023

Introduction

The *Coalition on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Africa's Development (Coalition)* was launched on 2 May 2023 in New York during the first STI in Africa Day that was held on the margin of the 8th Science Technology and Innovation Forum. The Coalition responds to aspirations of African Agenda 2063 of the African Union and its science, technology, and innovation strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA-2024), and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism established by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to support the application of science, technology, and innovation (STI). The Technology Facilitation Mechanism aims to enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on, and for access to, STI and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms.

Agenda 2030 established the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (UN IATT) (A/RES/76/213) that encourages collaboration and joint planning and delivery of initiatives by various UN agencies to achieve greater impact. Examples of such initiatives include the STI Roadmaps and capacity building efforts on STI for the SDGs by the working groups of the IATT. Notwithstanding these efforts, many African countries are likely to miss several targets of the 2030 Agenda without significant upscaling of STI systems to meet existing and emerging challenges.

In this regard, African leadership and partnerships with the international community are needed to build a robust research, development, and innovation ecosystem capable of addressing the multiple challenges and realizing the numerous opportunities in Africa to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a first step, the UN IATT through UNDESA and UNECA hosted the first STI in Africa Day with a focus on some of the key levers that can help Africa accelerate its development and meet the goals in a mutually beneficial manner. These included:

1. ***Empowering Africa's youth:*** The largest population of young people on Earth (about 42% of the global youth population by 2030) will be in Africa. This is a key resource that is needed to drive growth today and in the future in Africa and the world. The right support measures to shape the potential of Africa's youth are needed now.
2. ***Enabling the contribution of the African Diaspora: The African diaspora is spread across the world with approximately 167 million in North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, and 4 million in Europe, among others.*** The African diaspora is an underutilized resource that can foster and support development, collaborations, and partnerships for good between Africa and the world to advance STI for the SDGs.

3. ***Leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA)***: The single largest market in the world currently with 54 countries, a population of 1.3 billion and a market value of USD3.2 trillion with household spending of approximately USD1.9 trillion with a growing unmet demand, Africa is home to almost all the key resources the world needs to meet its global challenges. While the private sector is taking the lead, the international community can ensure Africa's development is on a sustainable path to avoid costly retrofitting.
4. ***Building diversified supply and value chains for industrial development***: Taking into consideration the Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) initiative of the African Union, Africa has the opportunity to build competitive and sustainable industries by exploiting STI to produce value added services as well as enhance productivity in manufacturing and agriculture. The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the need to ensure STI plays a critical role in building Africa's own vibrant industries with diversified supply and value chains.

Objectives

The Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) for Africa Coalition is an endeavor focused on creating pathways for African countries to develop, deploy, and expand the use of STI in the context of the SDGs. The objectives of the Coalition will include:

- A. Mobilize and leverage the African diaspora and their partners to identify scalable STI solutions and investment opportunities for Africa's scientific and industrial development;
- B. Identify opportunities to empower African youths to enable them to become drivers of sustainable development;
- C. Create awareness of the immense opportunities that the ACFTA presents for investment in science and technology, and for development of new and diversified competitive and efficiency value and supply chains;
- D. Mobilize resources and support from partners to support capacity building for STI policies, strategies, and infrastructure in Africa, such as the STI Roadmaps for the SDGs;
- E. Develop and enhance the agenda of STI for Africa in UN processes and mechanisms located at its headquarters in New York City.

Scope of work

The Coalition is a multi-stakeholder, informal interest group that UN Member States wishing to share experiences, resources, and practices in addressing common complex challenges can utilise to nurture new initiatives that can benefit national, regional, and global STI capabilities to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs and the aspirations of their own people. The Coalition will serve as a global go-to-place and platform to identify and, refine scalable international action and cooperation that could be implemented in Africa.

Expected Activities

The activities of the Coalition shall include:

- I. Mobilize resources for STI development in Africa:

- This may entail mobilizing resources and the required investments from the African diaspora, international partners to enable them to support, interact and work with teams in Africa in the public and private sectors.
- II. **Advocacy and awareness**
The Coalition may advocate and raise awareness in emerging STI-related aspects likely to impact development in Africa through webinars, publications, statements, and also ensure key international and UN decisions include STI for Africa's development.
 - III. **Sharing experiences and good practices**
African countries are at different levels of development and have different areas of specialization which offers significant opportunities for intra-African co-learning and co-innovation for development. The Coalition will promote learning/exchange programmes among African STI stakeholders as well as between African, and diasporan and other relevant global STI actors.
 - IV. **Space for continental ideas for STI development**
The Coalition may host various events, working groups and task teams that could explore various aspects of STI for Africa's development, encourage teams to suggest and launch new initiatives in common areas such as human capital development, financing budding innovators and entrepreneurs, building robust infrastructure and design and implementation of policies such as the STI Roadmaps for the SDGs.
 - V. **Mobilizing resources, promoting networking and collaboration for research and development (R&D) activities in Africa.** Research and development can take many forms such as mobilizing research funding and fellowship programs, skill development, strategic analysis between countries on research and development, in particular North-South and South-South collaboration.

Organization and governance

Co-leads:

The co-leads serve as the steering committee of the Coalition. The current co-leads include Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, and South Africa. The co-leads are supported by UNDESA and UNECA.

The co-leads shall be the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations from the five regions of Africa (northern, central, southern, east, and west). The Chair of the co-lead Group shall rotate among the members for a period of at least one year. The first Chair shall be South Africa who is the co-chair of the 8th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, where the Coalition was launched).

Members: Members shall be the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of the African Group. The Chair of the co-leads will issue a call for expression of interest in joining the Coalition to all African countries through their Permanent Missions to the United Nations. Interested

countries shall submit an expression of interest in a written format to become members of the Coalition.

Friends of the Coalition: The co-leads will also issue a call for expression of interest in supporting the Coalition to become “Friends of the Coalition”. Members shall be the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations and other entities in the field of science, technology and innovation that can bring resources and/or contribute substantively to the Coalition.

Technical Committee: The Technical Committee shall consist of focal points of the co-leads, DESA, ECA and other strategic partners to be identified.

The Coalition will support its members and friends to increase their visibility by showcasing their organizations’ experiences and good practices through a global platform, such as side events of UN conferences on STI and the Global Solutions Summit. It will help to establish a practice that better aligns the principles and guidelines from the outcome of the deliberations of the UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism. The Coalition will serve as a bridge to connect daily technology practices, work and initiatives to the UN processes on STI for the SDGs. It will support them to expand the network of partners and to explore the available sources of funding for implementing STI for SDGs initiatives.

Working modalities

The Technical Committee shall meet at least once every month to ensure smooth operation of the Coalition and more regularly in the early stages or when needed.

The co-leads shall meet once every quarter (i.e., every three months) to provide overall oversight and guidance to the work of the Coalition.

The general members shall meet once a year subject to availability of resources. The co-leads shall determine the schedule of such meeting(s).

How to Support

Supporters of the Coalition can assist in any of the following ways: (i) lending their voice of support to the messages formulated by the Coalition; (ii) by supporting the implementation of the selected STI initiatives for SDGs as part of the STI4SDGs Roadmaps for Africa; and (iii) by contributing to the sustained operation of the Coalition.

For more details: please see [Concept Note of the Coalition](#).