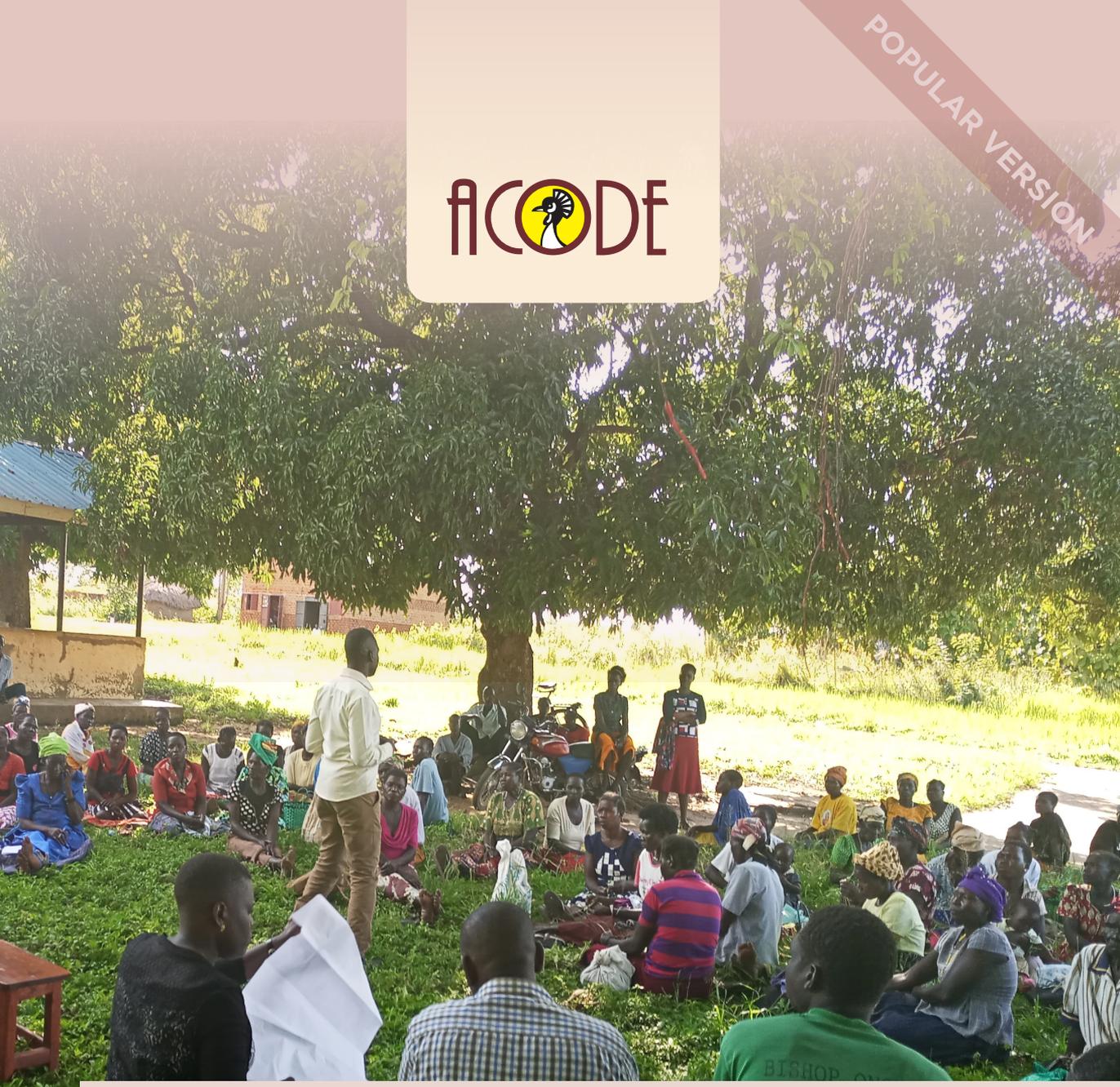


POPULAR VERSION



Strategic Plan 2019 - 2028



Civic Engagement Action Plans (CEAPs) meeting in Anaka Town Council, Nwoya District, Uganda, August 2019



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Cover: Civic Engagement Action Plans (CEAPs) meeting with communities in Dogayago Town Council, Nwoya District, Uganda.

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Acronymns

ACCU	Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda
ACODE	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
AJWS	American Jewish World Service
AU	Auditor General
CEAP	Citizen Engagement Action Plan
CEM	Citizen Engagement Meeting
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern & Southern Africa
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DGF	Democratic Governance Facility
EAC	East African Community
EASTECO	East African Science and Technology Commission
ENR	Environment and Natural Resources
GAPP	Governance, Accountability and Participation Program
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIVOS	Humanistisch Instituut voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (International Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries)
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDSUK	Institute of Development Studies, United Kingdom
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IIED	International Institute on Environment and Development
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights

KM	Knowledge Management
LED	Local Economic Development
LGCSOI	Local Government Councils Score Card Initiative
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDAs	Ministries, Agencies and Departments
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NDPs	Uganda's National Development Plans
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMS	Short Messaging Service
SP	Strategic Plan
STI	Science Technology and Innovation
STON	State of the Nation Platform
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
TAI	The Access Initiative
TTI	Think Tank Initiative
UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development



Members of the Board of Trustees

1. Introduction and Background



Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance



Ban Ki-moon, A South Korean Politician and Diplomat who served as the 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations

In spite of the impressive economic growth statistics for many of the African countries over the last two decades, the continent continues to be be-devilled by poverty and underdevelopment in many aspects. Improved economic performance has not translated into improved quality of life for the people. The majority of citizens continue to be trapped in poverty, poor health, and limited opportunities for improved livelihoods. The eradication of poverty from the face of Africa calls for formulating and implementing policies and strategies that tackle the barrier and constraints that hamper efforts to eradicate it. This standpoint informed the decision to uphold ACODE's Mission namely, *'To Make Public Policy work for People'*. The Vision has been revised to reflect the Africa that ACODE desires, which is, *'Inclusive, Sustainable and Prosperous Societies in Africa'*.

This is the third ACODE strategic plan. The first five-year strategic plan was implemented between 2003 and 2008. This was followed by a ten-year strategic plan and programme of work for the 2009 – 2018. ACODE adopted a ten-year strategic plan timeframe in consideration of the long-term and strategic nature of its programmes. The long-term planning period is best suitable for aligning with other overarching planning frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (2015 – 2030), The Africa Agenda 2063, the East African Community Vision 2050 and Uganda's Vision 2040. Uganda's third National Development Plan (NDP III) will also move away from five-year planning timeframes and be for ten years.

This strategic plan builds on ACODE's work of the last eighteen years (2000 – 2018) and focuses on strengthening the design and implementation of public policy to build a dynamic and vibrant Africa that responds to the needs and aspirations of its citizens. The focus of this strategy is the Eastern and Southern Africa region, with

Uganda as the springboard in cascading good practices and sharing lessons learned across the region.

1.1 From Inception to date: A Record of Achievements

The formation of ACODE in 2000 was inspired by the need to respond to policy analysis gaps and facilitate effective policy implementation through research, analysis and advocacy. Over the last 18 years, ACODE has grown to become a leading think tank in Africa and globally. For the

last six consecutive years, ACODE has been ranked among the top global think tanks. In 2017, ACODE was ranked in the *Global To Go Think Index* as the number one think tank out of the rated three in Uganda; number four out of 18 in East Africa and number 23 out of 94 in Sub-Saharan Africa. Among think tanks with the best advocacy campaign, ACODE was ranked as the first in Uganda, third in East Africa, sixth in Africa and thirty-first globally. ACODE's ratings of the last six years are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: ACODE Rankings 2012 - 2017

Top Think Tanks in Sub-Saharan Africa	Top Think Tanks by Special Achievement - Best Advocacy Campaign
25 out of 50 (2012)	38 out of 75 (2012)
24 out of 50 (2013)	30 out of 75 (2013)
23 out of 65 (2014)	29 out of 75 (2014)
23 out of 92 (2015)	29 out of 90 (2015)
23 out of 94 (2016)	31 out of 90 (2016)
22 out of 90 (2017)	15 out of 90 (2017)

ACODE has become a well-known and respected player and leader in cutting-edge public policy research and analysis on a range of themes focusing on: improving governance; peace and democracy; environment and natural resource management; science, technology and innovation in Africa, and specifically the Eastern Africa Sub-region with a major focus on Uganda where the organization is located. ACODE is known in the sub-region and beyond for its evidence-based advocacy that has influenced a number of laws, policies and programmes for positive

impact on people's lives, particularly the poorest in the Eastern Africa region, and Uganda in particular. Key achievements have included:

- I. **Contributed to evidence-based public policy making through generation of new knowledge.** ACODE has made significant input in policy and legislative reforms on a wide range of issues in various sub sectors; extractives sub sector, water and environment sector, land sector, public finance management and local governance. For the past

19 years, ACODE's research and policy analysis has culminated into 87 Research Papers; 63 Public Service Delivery and Accountability Reports; 47 Policy Briefing Papers; 37 Fact Sheets and 32 policy dialogue reports among other research products. ACODE Researchers have also published a number of journal articles and book chapters in various International Journals and books respectively. By 2018, ACODE had also moved to publish a number of edited book volumes with international publishers;

- II. **Contributed to global agenda on access to information, public participation and justice in decision-making for the environment.** ACODE worked with the Government of Uganda to establish a national committee on Partnership for Principle 10 – a Type II Partnership launched in South Africa during the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). This effort galvanized the enactment of Access to Information Act, 2005 that provided for Information Officers in all government agencies and to actualize citizens' right of access to public information held by government. In 2010, together with Washington-based World Resources Institute, ACODE hosted the 3rd global gathering of The Access Initiative (TAI) – the world's largest civil society network dedicated to ensuring that citizens have the right and ability to influence decisions

about the natural resources that sustain their communities. The Gathering of over 250 members from 60 countries worldwide converged in Uganda, among other things to share new ideas; strategies, revise TAI tools and recommit to TAI mission;

- III. **Enhanced sustainable utilization of natural resources and saved conservation of protected areas from illegitimate de-gazettement.** ACODE engaged the Government of Uganda, Parliament and the Judiciary in a number of evidence-based advocacy campaigns and saved some of the country's natural assets that have a bearing on the environment from predatory politics of land acquisition for private investment. Key among these included; Pian-Upe Game Reserve in North-Eastern, Butamira Forest Reserve in the East and Mabira Central Forest Reserve in Central Uganda;
- IV. **Promoted the growth of public interest litigation as an advocacy tool and environmental legislative representation in Uganda.** ACODE instituted a number of public interest litigations to address environmental challenges and secured judicial decisions that re-enforced advocacy on environmental issues. In collaboration with other like-minded organizations, ACODE also held a series of symposia with Judges and Magistrates on environmental law and jurisprudence. ACODE supported a

section of Members of Parliament to draft and table petitions on the floor of Parliament that elevated environment and natural resource issues to the national level;

V. **Contributed to a transformational reform in public finance management.**

Prior to FY2008/09, the cost of public administration on the national budget was growing at an annual rate of 16% at the expense of other sectors that were critical for economic growth. ACODE held a series of high level meetings with different actors and presented a case for reforming the budget architecture and channeling more resources for infrastructure development especially roads and electricity as key drivers of economic development. ACODE scored on this front and for the past 11 fiscal years, Government priorities have gradually changed to financing massive infrastructure developments across the country which has facilitated economic growth;

VI. **Contributed to improved transparency and accountability in public finance management and budget processes in Uganda.**

Building onto the recommendations of the Open Budget Index to Uganda, ACODE in collaboration with the Overseas Development Institute worked with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), within the structure of the Budget Transparency Initiative, to increase access to

simplified national budget information to the public. Through a budget website, the MoFPED now avails simplified budget data to the public at both national and local levels. This has enhanced citizen participation in the budget processes;

VII. **Contributed to transparency and accountability in Uganda's nascent extractives sector through building the capacity of Members of Parliament on legislating for the oil and gas sub sector.**

This raised the quality of Parliamentary debate on oil/gas and environmental legislation resulting in passing of progressive environment, petroleum and public finance laws that enhances transparency and equity. ACODE has advocated for Uganda's subscription to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative – a global standard for good governance of oil, gas and mineral resources – which government approved and incorporated in the oil and gas policies. Government is now taking efforts to subscribe to the initiative;

VIII. **Contributed to deepening social accountability and strengthening local governance through annual performance scorecards for district councils and leaders at that level.**

For the past 10 years, ACODE has promoted the demand-side of democracy through civic engagement. This has overtime empowered communities to demand

for better delivery of public goods and services at the local community level and empowered district councils and political leaders through continuous capacity building on their roles as envisaged in the law under the decentralization policy;

IX. Contributed to the legal and policy making processes on science, technology and innovation in the East African especially with regard to agricultural biotechnology.

Since 2003, ACODE has made a significant contribution to the debate on biotechnology, and in particular to agricultural biotechnology. Over the years, ACODE has engaged different stakeholders and actors through a series of high-profile conferences by making a case for a legal and policy framework based on the precautionary principle as articulated in the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity. ACODE has also made contribution to Uganda's Genetic Engineering Regulatory Bill, 2018 which is currently before Parliament.

Through its outreach, ACODE stands out as a 'think to do' think tank in Uganda that has continued to link issues at the community level to national, regional and global agendas.

Through its convening power, ACODE hosted policy dialogues at national and sub-national levels in Uganda involving politicians, civil servants, the academia, the private sector, civil society and

independent citizens to discuss and influence policy. ACODE's convening power has helped build bridges across the political divide. For example, under the State of the Nation' (STON) platform alone, ACODE hosted 74 sessions. The platform brings together policy makers, legislators, civil society and the private sector to deliberate on contemporary policy issues in Uganda and the Africa region. These high-level dialogues are held once a month. ACODE also convenes regional dialogues within Uganda.

These achievements have been made with the support of various partners and donors including: IDRC through the Think Tank Initiative (TTI) the American Jewish World Service (AJWS), the Government of Denmark through the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA); UKAID through its Department for International Development (DFID); the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF); DANIDA, DanChurchAid, Embassy of Ireland, the Ford Foundation; USAID through Governance, Accountability and Participation Program (GAPP); Hewlett Foundation; the Humanist Institute for International Development (HIVOS); the International Development Research Centre (IDRC); Institute of Development Studies (IDS-UK); International Institute on Environment and Development (IIED), the MacArthur Foundation; the Netherlands Embassy in Uganda; the Access Initiative (TAI); the Rockefeller Foundation; the Think Tank Initiative (TTI); UNICEF; the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); and, the World Bank.

ACODE has also worked with various Government Ministries, Agencies and Departments (MDAs).

1.2 The strategic planning process

The strategic planning process that produced this plan was initiated in 2017 with preliminary internal discussions and engagement of a consultant to facilitate the process. This was followed by strategic thinking and reflection sessions on the strategic direction of ACODE with senior management and staff. Various stakeholders were engaged to make input into the strategic thinking processes. The stakeholders consulted included ACODE partners in civil society; Donors and Development Partners, Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs); and the academia. The ACODE Board of Trustees put in two days to review the first draft of the strategic plan and provided guidance on the strategic direction of the organization for the next ten years.

2. 2019 - 2028 Strategic Focus



Sustainable development requires human ingenuity. People are the most important resource



Dan Shechtman, Professor of Materials Science, Israel Institute of Technology and Iowa University and a 2011 Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry

2.1 The ACODE Identity

Our Vision: *Inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies in Africa.*

Our vision speaks to the Africa we want as articulated in Agenda 2063, an embodiment of the aspirations of the African people. Our vision is also informed by the Vision 2050 of the East African Community and reflects the aspiration of each of the six states of the East African Region.

Our Mission is: ***To make public policy work for people***

We are an independent professional Think Tank

Living our core values:

Academic and intellectual freedom: The ideals of intellectual and academic freedom will be respected and promoted as the bedrock for individual

intellectual creativity. ACODE will remain an independent, professional and non-membership organization.

Non-partisanship: We are non-partisan organization and are not aligned to any political party or political organization. However, in recognition of the centrality of politics to the development process, ACODE's research and advocacy agenda will address central political issues of constitutionalism, rule of law and political accountability in a bi-partisan manner.

Integrity: ACODE staff adheres to the highest ethical standards in all official obligations and personal responsibilities to society and the organization. Integrity is the core foundation of individual and corporate actions and shall be manifested through honesty, trustworthiness, honouring commitments and taking full responsibility for our actions, both successes and failures.

Non-discrimination: ACODE is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and equal opportunity for all persons regardless

of race, colour, religion, creed, gender identity or disability. The organization is also committed to compliance with all applicable laws regarding non-discrimination.

Excellence: ACODE adheres to the highest standards of professionalism in the delivery of our work and providing intellectual leadership in specific areas of our competence.

Deliberate and cross-cutting strategies are employed to help us achieve our mission and these are: Research and Analysis; Outreach and Advocacy; Capacity Building; Civic engagement; Partnership and Institutional Capacity Strengthening.

Through *research and analysis*, ACODE builds new knowledge and innovative tools for governance and supports governments and international development agencies to expand the range of policy choices to confront challenging and sometimes controversial public policy problems.

Through *policy outreach and advocacy*, ACODE contributes to the formulation of public policies that support sustainable development, thereby expanding livelihood and income opportunities for poor people.

Through *capacity building*, ACODE empowers communities to demand for justice, and promotes public participation and citizens' demand for accountability in making decisions that affect their livelihoods and the environment.

Through *civic engagement*, ACODE empowers citizens to demand for accountability and hence shaping public

policies that are just and equitable.

Through partnerships, ACODE works strategic actors at regional and national levels to influence public policy processes, reach different audiences and bring in new knowledge.

Institutional capacity development: We will strategically strengthen our governance and management systems and functions, human and financial resources to achieve our mission of making public policy work for people and thus contribute to our vision of inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies in Africa.

2.2 ACODE theory of change

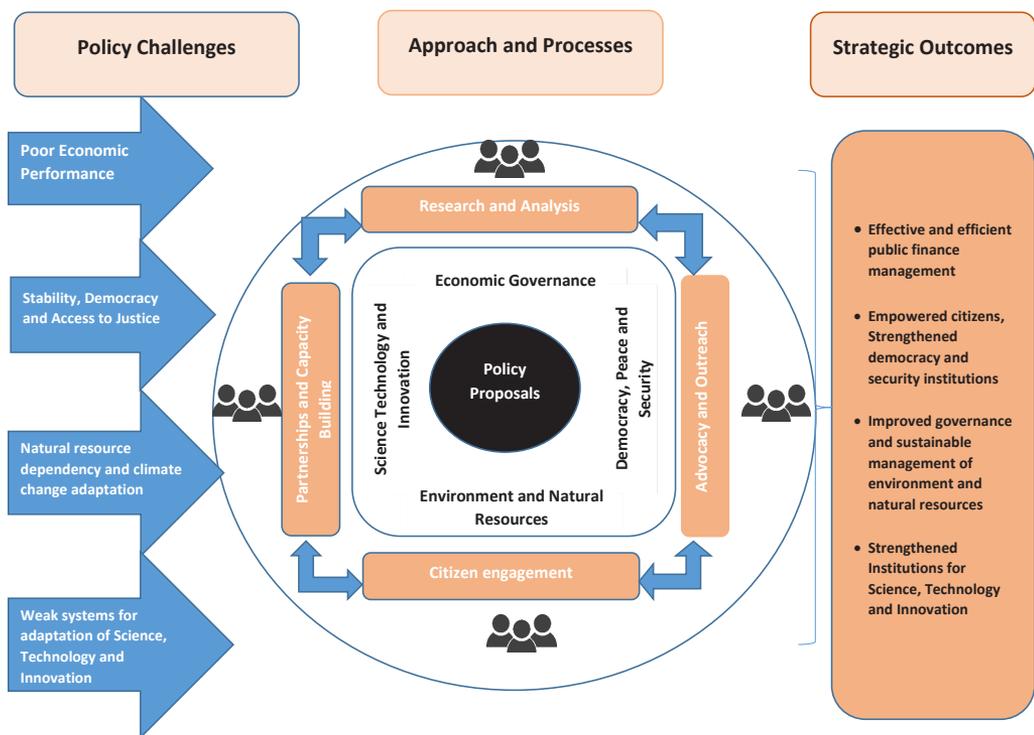
ACODE's theory of change posits that by undertaking and availing timely evidence-based research on relevant policies, national governments and policy makers will utilise this research to improve policy making processes. The second tenet of ACODE's theory of change is that through regular capacity building interventions in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government at both central and local level, the execution of their mandates and service delivery to citizens will improve a great deal. Thirdly, it is expected that through advocacy and outreach, ACODE will build the civic competence of citizens who will not only demand their rights but will also execute their duties, roles and obligations; ultimately improving service delivery and political accountability.

This theory of change is underpinned by ACODE's mission, vision and values.

It is also guided by ACODE's strategic objectives and expected outcomes. Through ACODE's programming; dialogue, reflection and debate will be fostered. The 10-year period will focus on addressing the key policy challenges of poor economic performance; stability, democracy and access to justice; natural

resource governance and systems for adaptation of science, technology and innovation through research, advocacy, capacity building and citizen engagement. it is hoped that this will result into efficient and effective governance leading to inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies.

Visualising our theory of change



2.3 Strategic objectives, outcomes and outputs

For the period 2019 – 2028, ACODE will focus on five strategic objectives. These will be:

- To strengthen public finance management and increase economic opportunities for women, men and youth
- To strengthen democracy and security institutions
- To improve governance and

sustainable utilisation of environment and natural resources

- d. To strengthen institutional capacity and enable policies for harnessing science, technology and innovation for sustainable development
- e. To foster internal (within ACODE) institutional development

To achieve desired results and outcomes, ACODE will pursue attainment of the above objectives though working on four programme areas:

- I. Economic Governance
- II. Democracy, Peace and Security
- III. Environment and Natural Resources
- IV. Science, Technology and Innovation

2.3.1. Economic Governance Programme

“Productive and sustainable job creation, along with increased and better-targeted social expenditure is the only route to permanently beat the poverty trap and to bring our social indicators on par with developed countries”

The Economic Governance program is aimed at strengthening economic policies and institutions for achieving economic transformation of Africa with special focus on Eastern and Southern African economies. The Program places emphasis on the effective implementation of the 'Piyush Goyal. Blog: 'Narendra Modi's agenda vs Congress' agenda for India's economy'. Published: February 18, 2014 09:35 IST. <https://www.ndtv.com/blog/blog-narendra-modis-agenda-vs-congress-agenda-for-indias-economy-by-piyush-goyal-551158>

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa Vision 2063 and attainment of middle-income status of regional countries. There are two basic drivers behind the program area. First, improving effectiveness and efficiency of public expenditure through transparent and accountable public financial management, citizens will access quality public services. Second, improving capacities for local economic development at grassroots level will create more economic opportunities particularly for women and the youth who are usually excluded. The strategic objective of the program is to strengthen public finance management and increasing economic opportunities for women, men and youth. This will be achieved through, i) greater transparency and accountability of Public Financial Management, ii) Improving capacities for Local Economic Development and iii) increasing transparency and participation in formulation and implementation of trade (including regional) policies.

2.3.1.1. Increased transparency and accountability in public finance management

ACODE's work on transparency and accountability is premised on the thesis that: (i) there is varied transparency in Public Financial Management in Uganda, with more transparency on the revenue mobilisation aspect of the budget, while public debt and public investment management remain limited and accountability weak; and (ii) even where there is greater transparency, it has not necessarily translated into accountability

due to disjointed demand and supply sides of accountability which undermine the accountability framework. In this area, ACODE will promote the adoption of policies and practices for transparent, accountable, effective and efficient Public Financial Management. Work under this area will focus on four strategic actions:

- » Reviewing PFM policies and practices
- » Strengthening institutional capacities for transparency and accountability of PFM
- » Strengthening citizens' capacities to effectively participate in PFM
- » Deepening citizen-government engagement in PFM

2.3.1.2. Improved capacities for Local Economic Development (LED)

ACODE's work on Local Economic Development (LED) is based on the view that poverty persists and income inequality continues to grow due to limited economic opportunities, inadequate safety nets especially for the elderly and limited capacities to exploit the available economic opportunities. Capacity limitations include, among others: limited skills; limited access to capital, land and other productive resources; and, limited access to financial resources. Moreover, the poverty and lack of economic opportunities is greater among women and the youth. Under this area ACODE will seek to strengthen capacities for LED through three strategic actions:

- » Reviewing economic policies, frameworks and performance
- » Building capacities for local government and the private sector to undertake LED
- » Economic empowerment of men, women and youth

2.3.1.3. Transparency and citizen participation in trade policy formulation

The interest in trade policy is premised on its capacity to impact on economic opportunities by spurring production and increased access to markets. Lack of opportunities for participation and the absence of transparency and accountability in trade policy formulation are major causes of failure to exploit all the varied opportunities that would be available. It also limits the benefits of good policies due to weak strategic focus and being outmanoeuvred by more strategic and stronger players on the regional and international trade arenas. These weaknesses sometimes generate suspicion which at times boils into resistance and social strife.

At the regional level, while the East African Community (EAC) has registered several achievements, there are indications that intra-regional trade remains abysmal at 9% of total regional trade. The challenges that have greatly impeded progress of regional trade and integration include: (i) suspicion among citizens of the member countries of citizens of other countries and the perception that some countries will benefit more; (ii) major discrepancies

in political and economic agendas of EAC member states; (iii) disruptions of regional trade and integration by persistence of non-tariff barriers and unequal national legislations. ACODE's work under this area will seek to increase transparency and citizens' participation in trade policy formulation at national and regional levels through four strategic actions:

- » Reviewing national and regional trade policies and instruments
- » Facilitating trade policy debate and discussions at national and regional levels
- » Strengthening capacity of CSOs and the private sector to participate in trade policy formulation at national and regional levels
- » Deepening engagement among actors at national and regional levels (government MDAs, private sector, regional trade blocs etc.)

2.3.2. Democracy, Peace and Security Programme

"It's widely recognized that there is no peace without development and no development without peace; it is also true that there is no peace and sustainable development without respect for human rights"²

Under the Democracy, Peace and Security programme, ACODE recognizes that violent conflicts and political insecurity

²Antonio Guterres, a Diplomat who is the 9th Secretary-General of the United Nations, Vision statement. <https://www.antonio-guterres.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/antonio-guterres-vision-statement.pdf>

have undermined Africa's democratic and development potentials and possibilities. The violent protected conflicts that dominated the last decade of the 20th century led to the description of Africa as a hopeless continent by some scholars and analysts in 2000. To this end, ACODE through this program seeks to implement strategic initiatives and activities aimed at deepening democratic governance, conflict resolution and peace building in Africa with particular emphasis on Eastern and Southern Africa. The Democracy, Peace and Security Programme is underpinned by the understanding that there is a nexus between peace and democracy and sustainable development and that each of them reinforce each other.

Democracy preserves peace while peace makes democracy and development possible. The strategic objective of the program is to strengthen Democracy and Security Institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa. This will be achieved through, i) strengthening national political and administrative institutions, ii) Supporting democratic, legal and policy reforms iii) supporting security sector reforms, and iv) supporting regional peace-building initiative and Security Institutions.

2.3.2.1. Strengthened national democracy institutions (parliament, judiciary, executive, electoral commission and political parties)

ACODE's engagement with national institutions that are mandated to ensure the building and sustenance of democracy in the country, namely, parliament, the judiciary, executive, electoral commission

and the political parties has shown that there is need to build partnerships, and engage and dialogue persistently at all levels. This will ensure that all the reforms that are required for the people to participate actively in the building of these institutions are implemented to guarantee the citizens' democratic rights; and that the institutions are delivering to the people's expectations. The relationships among these institutions over the years manifest the need for strengthened engagement and dialogue to ensure that the people's rights as enshrined in the Constitution are promoted and protected. In the same regard, the promotion of democratic practice and culture at the national level is paramount if the country is to participate effectively in building regional democratic institutions and promoting dialogue unrelentingly towards regional peace and security.

ACODE will build on its past record to work with the respective national institutions and political parties towards the strengthening of these institutions to ensure that they promote democracy in the country and contribute to the strengthening of regional democracy, peace and security. In this context, strategic interventions will focus on three major areas:

- i. Legal and policy reforms (lobby for and facilitate review of laws and policies on governance aligned to priority development areas; influence the formulation processes of legal and policy frameworks; build capacity on legal and policy reforms)
- ii. Capacity and effectiveness of

democratic institutions (research on effectiveness of democratic institutions; training and capacity building; promote inter and intra institutional learning among democratic institutions; building partnerships with state and non-state anti-corruption institutions including Parliament, Inspectorate of Government (IG), Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC), Auditor General (AG), Civil society organizations such as the Anti-Corruption Coalition of Uganda (ACCU);

- iii. Strengthening Government-Opposition relations (research and analysis on GORs; facilitate interparty dialogues; training and capacity building for political parties and CSOs.

2.3.2.2. Strengthening security sector in uganda

The building of peace and democracy can only be done in a situation where there are effective security institutions to maintain internal peace and security and ensure national security and protection against external aggression. It can also only be sustained if good relations are promoted and maintained between the security institutions and the civilian population. This is more relevant in the Ugandan situation which has witnessed a past of political instability, abuse of human rights and interference of the military in political governance. The promulgation of the new Constitution in 1995 was precisely aimed at providing cures for these

past ills and establishing new modus operandi in relations between the security institutions and the civilian government and population and ensuring that there is sustainable peace and security that are very necessary for the citizens' enjoyment of democratic rights and participation in economic development.

The foregoing also means that in situations where the security institutions deem sections of the civilian population to have overstepped the norms in exercising their democratic rights, there should be avenues for dialogue and resolution of conflicts and misunderstanding to ensure that minor issues do not develop into destructive conflicts. There should also be provisions for the security institutions to constantly review the quality of civil-security relations so that potential threats are addressed before they disrupt the peace and appropriate forms of communication with the civilian population maintained.

Building on our past interventions, ACODE regards the promotion of sustainable and good civil-military relations as paramount and will apply the following strategic interventions to contribute to discussion and dialogues towards this end:

- i. Civil-military relations (research and analysis on the state of civil-military relations; organizing joint activities; dissemination of research results);
- ii. Police accountability (research and analysis on the state of police accountability; facilitate community policing activities; dissemination of research findings).

2.3.2.3. Supporting regional peace processes and regional security

ACODE's avowed interest in contributing to the promotion and maintenance of regional peace and security is in line with the organization's general regional outlook in its search for solutions to development problems and issues. The organization's core concerns regarding peace, democracy and development mean that matters that cascade beyond national confines and borders should be handled with the participation of regional partners. It is an indisputable fact that the East African region has had a fair share of cases of political instability that force citizens to flee to neighbouring countries. At the same time, the region has pastoralist populations that are sometimes forced to migrate with their herds across borders in search of pasture and water. More so, the needs of economic production and transportation demand that there be conducive atmosphere in the region to guard against undue and costly disruptions.

ACODE will use the following strategic interventions to promote discussion and dialogue among regional countries and their security institutions so as to ensure unhindered regional cooperation and understanding and the multiple benefits that come with it.

- » Supporting peace processes and peace building (research and analysis on regional conflicts; mediating in regional peace processes; dissemination of research findings; organizing regional security

platforms/roundtable discussions/dialogues).

- » Work on migration and refugees (research and analysis on migration and refugees' situations; strategic partnerships with OPM, local governments, CSOs and international organizations; capacity building for local government – host communities).
- » Supporting work on boundaries and shared resources (research and analysis on boundaries and shared resources; establish cross-border CSO and research institution platforms/networks).

2.3.3. Environment and Natural Resource Governance Programme

"We owe it to ourselves and to the next generation to conserve the environment so that we can bequeath our children a sustainable world that benefits all"³

The Environment and Natural Resource Governance Program is driven by the realization that most of the countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and indeed African continent are dependent on natural resources and environment. In the last one decade, there has been renewed effort by the multi-national companies and African governments to exploit natural resources especially petroleum and mineral resources to meet the growing international energy demands and national development

³Wangari Maathai, founder of Kenya's Green Belt Movement and the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate <https://www.nuria.co.ke/product/the-challenge-for-africa>

needs. Other than minerals and petroleum deposits, Africa is endowed with diverse vegetation, water resources, diversity of soils and fresh air; and an enviable land resource that are all attractive to the rest of the world.

Consequently, the expansive and invasive explorations of the "lithosphere" (land), "hydrosphere" (water), "biosphere" (living things), and "atmosphere" (air) in Africa will continue. For instance, the increase in massive land acquisitions leaving communities, of especially women and youth more vulnerable to poverty show a likelihood of continuation. The situation has worsened by the fact that, most of the natural resources in not only across Eastern and Southern Africa but in continental Africa are poorly governed, and have been captured by the ruling elites to control political power to the detriment of the majority poor. The consequence of this elite capture and bad governance breeds political instability, violence and chronic underdevelopment of the continent.

ACODE believes that democratizing access, control and management of natural resources in Africa will ultimately result into sustainable peace and development. The situation of environmental degradation and natural resource capture across much of the third world coupled with climate change and its negative environmental consequences that is being felt across the world poses a serious threat to achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) reported that the planet's average surface temperature has

risen to about 1.62 degrees with most of the warming (0.9 degrees Celsius) occurring in the last 35 years. The warming has been driven largely by increased carbon dioxide and other human-made emissions into the atmosphere. There has been increased occurrence of disasters such as extreme weather and hunger related to climate change.

Sustainable environmental governance is one of the climate change mitigation measures. Africa and most of the developing regions has the least capacity to adapt to climate change effects. Yet the regions environment and natural resources governance is changing very fast, and for the worse. In the case of Uganda, the, last two decades have witnessed unprecedented depletion and deterioration of its environment and natural assets.

Fragile ecosystems including water catchment areas, hilly and mountainous areas, riverbanks, lakeshores and rangelands are being heavily encroached on and degraded. The rate of deforestation and forest degradation is unacceptably very high. According to the State of Uganda's Forestry Report 2016, in the last three decades alone, Uganda's forest cover reduced from 4.9 million hectares in 1990 to 1.8 million hectares in 2015. This means that in just 25 years, Uganda lost more than half of its forest cover.

The strategic objective of the Natural Resource Governance program at ACODE is to improve governance for sustainable management of environment and natural resources. This will be achieved through;

i) Strengthening governance frameworks and improved practices that support sustainable management and utilization of environment and natural resources, and ii) Increasing civic competence to demand for transparency, accountability and equity in the management of environment and natural resource.

2.3.3.1. Governance and sustainable management of environment and natural resources

While Uganda has the legal and policy frameworks in place providing for the governance and management of ENR, it has been variously acknowledged that there are shortfalls in the protection of the resources due to human and other resource shortages; lack of capacity and skills especially at the local government levels; and some provisions being too out-dated to provide effective protection. ACODE will therefore seek to apply the following strategic interventions to catalyse the review and development of effective laws and policies to manage ENR.

- » Review existing laws and policies governing environment and natural resources;
- » Monitor implementation of environment and natural resource laws and policies, not only on public but also on private land;
- » Build capacity of local governments to manage environment and natural resources sustainably;
- » Participate in national, regional and international environment and

natural resource policy processes;

- » Advocate to inform and influence environment and natural resource decision making and implementation processes;
- » Invest in networking, collaboration and partnerships building for the cause of improved governance and sustainable management of environment and natural resources

2.3.3.2. Citizenry and civil society that participates in natural resource governance

The acknowledged rapid increase of Uganda's population which translates into rapid exploitation and degradation of the environment and natural resources – notably vegetation, forest cover, wetlands, swamps, rivers and lakes – still demands for more and better targeted sensitization and advocacy of both local government institutions and the communities. The rush by individuals to alienate tracts of land including the resources that are legally under government protection points to practices that have the potential to lead to the marginalization of the poor and weak and hence exacerbate poverty levels and environmental degradation in the country. This also has strong potential to cause social strife, political instability and insecurity.

ACODE will maintain its research and advocacy in these areas and collaborate with the responsible government institutions to ensure the protection and sustainable use of the country's natural

resources. It is vital that we build the capacity of the communities to participate effectively in governance of the natural resources. There will also be need to mobilize the private sector and civil society to participate in this governance. It will also be necessary to have effective collaboration and networking among all these groups and government for maximum effect and results. ACODE will undertake a number of strategic actions to empower the citizens, private sector and civil society namely:

- » Build capacity of citizenry to participate actively in environment and natural resource decision making processes;
- » Build capacity of citizenry and private sector to manage environment and natural resources sustainably;
- » Build capacity of CSOs to participate in environment and natural resource governance;
- » Strengthen networking, learning, collaboration and partnerships among CSOs, private sector, citizens and government for efficient governance of natural resources.

2.3.4. Science, Technology and Innovation Programme

“Sustainable solutions based on innovation can create a more resilient world only if that innovation is focused on the well-being of its inhabitants. And it is at that point - where technology and human needs intersect - that we will find meaningful innovation”⁴

⁴Frans van Houten, Contributor. Chief Executive Officer, Royal Philips Electronics. Making Humans More Resilient Through Meaningful

Globally, the role of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as an engine of development has been underscored.^{5,6,7} ⁸ It is known that the application of STI increases efficiency of production systems and enhances industrial competitiveness. In fact, what gives a nation competitive edge is the speed with which it can identify, utilize and diffuse new knowledge. ⁹Therefore, Eastern and Southern Africa and indeed Africa must harness STI to guarantee and sustain development. Production systems in developed economies are known to be driven by the utilization of STI. It is vital to put in place explicit strategies, mechanisms and institutions to translate scientific knowledge into development.

ACODE recognizes the low technological innovation capabilities of productive sectors in Uganda and Africa and appreciates that the few available STI policies are not evidence-based and understands that

Innovation.01/22/2013 10:21 am ET Updated Mar 24, 2013. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/davos-2013-innovation_b_2525972

⁵United Nations (5 June 2018). Critical Role of Science, Technology, Innovation Cannot Be Ignored, Economic and Social Council President Tells Multi-Stakeholder Forum. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ecosoc6925.doc.htm>

⁶United Nations (Seventy-second session Bangkok, 15-19 May 2016). Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Science, technology and innovation for sustainable development Note by the secretariat. https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/E72_32E.pdf

⁷United Nations (2019). The Role of Science, Technology and Innovation in Promoting Renewable Energy by 2030. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/dtlstict2019d2_en.pdf

⁸Joseph Amankwah-Amoah (2016). The evolution of science, technology and innovation policies: A review of the Ghanaian experience. *Technological Forecasting & Social Change* 110 134–142

⁹Prusak, L. (1996). *The Knowledge Advantage. Strategy & Leadership*. V. 24, No. 2, pp 6-8.

there is limited use of evidence in related decision making. The strategic objective of the STI program at ACODE will engage in processes that increase application of Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development in the region and Africa as whole. This will be achieved through;

- iii. Increasing access and adoption of appropriate technologies in the agricultural sector,
- iv. Increasing agricultural productivity and improved livelihoods, and
- v. Strengthening legal and policy framework for STI in agricultural sector.

3.3.4.1. Increased access and adoption of appropriate technologies in the agricultural sector

ACODE will seek to contribute to the mobilization and raising of awareness among sections and groups of citizens that have potential to participate in the adoption of appropriate technologies in the agricultural sector. ACODE will also raise awareness and build capacity of policy makers to enact laws to regulate the use of the technology. ACODE will engage in processes that will catalyse the following:

- » Reviewing of laws and policies on access and adoption of technologies in the agricultural sector;
- » Monitoring of access to and adoption of appropriate technologies in the agricultural sector;

- » Raising awareness about technologies in the agricultural sector among citizens;
- » Capacity building for policy makers (parliament, local governments) to formulate policies and enact laws to regulate agricultural technologies.

3.3.4.2. Improved quality of agricultural technologies

Given that the STI technologies in agriculture are new and that laws and policies to govern their application are being developed on an on-going basis, there is need to monitor the implementation of these laws and policies. At the same time, the fact that these are new technologies implies that there is need to raise awareness in farmers about their use and relevance to the quality and quantity of agricultural production, and the problems involved in applying these technologies.

ACODE will therefore employ the following strategic interventions towards the improvement of the quality of agricultural technologies:

- » Monitor the implementation of laws, policies and regulations on access and adoption of agricultural technologies;
- » Raise awareness among farmers about the quality of agricultural technologies;
- » Strengthen the inter-institutional coordination and effectiveness.

3.3.4.3. Strengthened legal and policy framework for Intellectual Property Rights

New technologies require new laws and policies to regulate their application and use. Therefore, the existing legal and policy frameworks need to be reviewed in the context of the need to introduce new technologies in the agricultural sector. The development of new technologies should bring forth the need to protect Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) pertaining to them. There is also the need to monitor the implementation of the laws governing the new technologies in the agricultural sector, more so since the whole regime and its regulatory framework will be new. ACODE will therefore deploy the following strategic interventions to strengthen the legal and policy framework for intellectual property rights in the agricultural sector.

- » Review existing policy and legal framework on Intellectual Property Rights in the agricultural sector;
- » Create awareness on Intellectual Property Rights in the agricultural sector;
- » Monitor implementation of policies and laws on IPR in the agricultural sector;
- » Increase collaboration with national, regional and international bodies/institutions on IPR.

3. Context Underlying our Strategic Plan 2019-2028

3.1 Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals

With a mission to making public policies working for people and a vision of inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies in Africa; ACODE's Strategy (2019-2028) resonates and captures the soul and spirit of global, continental and regional frameworks. For instance, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 by Heads of State covering the period stretching from 2015-2030 provide the global guiding framework for addressing poverty and other forms of inequalities and challenges facing the world. The 17 SDGs are hinged on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which galvanized a global campaign from 2000-2015 to end poverty in its various dimensions. The MDGs had eight targets which guided global action. The United Nations hailed MDGs as *"the most successful anti-poverty movement in history"*¹⁰. The

¹⁰United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (1st July 2015) Final MDG report evaluates most successful anti-poverty movement in history. Vol 19. No. 7. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/newsletter/>

same report indicates that, *"MDGs helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, to make inroads against hunger, to enable more girls to attend school than ever before and to protect our planet"*. The report indicates that the target of reducing extreme poverty rates – people living on just \$1.25 a day – by half (MGD1) was met five years ahead of the 2015 deadline; reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. An analytical synthesis of ACODE's SP (2019-2028) reveals that the anticipated programming will be feeding into realising aspects of nearly each of the 17 SDGs. ACODE's work cuts across most of the SDGs and directly relates to specific targets for Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16 and 17.

3.2 The African Agenda

In 2015, African leaders adopted Agenda 2063 as the continent's new long-term vision for the next 50 years¹¹. The African Agenda 2063 captures the African Union African vision of *"an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena"*. The aim is to optimise the use of Africa's resources for the benefit of the continent's people. This African Agenda 2063 is premised on seven aspirations for *"The Africa We Want"* and these are:

- i. A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable

[feature/2015/07/15109.html](https://www.un.org/development/desa/newsletter/feature/2015/07/15109.html)

¹¹The New Partnership for Africa's Development is the development agency of the African Union (NEPAD). <https://www.nepad.org/cop/agenda-2063>

development

- ii. An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance
- iii. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- iv. A peaceful and secure Africa
- v. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics
- vi. An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of
- vii. African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children
- viii. Africa as a strong, united and influential global player and partner

Again, the vision and mission of ACODE's Strategy (2019-2028) resonates with all the 7 aims and vision of the African Agenda 2063. ACODE will continue to work with African institutions and development partners to advance the aspirations contained in Agenda 2063 for the transformation of the continent.

3.3. Key Challenges for Africa

3.3.1. Economic performance

The global and domestic shocks in 2016 slowed the pace of growth in Africa. However, according to the Africa Economic Outlook 2018¹², signs of

recovery had started to manifest in 2017. Real output growth was estimated to have increased by 3.6 per cent in 2017; up from 2.2 per cent in 2016, and accelerated to 4.1 per cent in 2018. In some of the countries, domestic resource mobilization had exceeded that of some Asian and Latin American peers. However, this is still insufficient to meet the high level of financing to scale up infrastructure and human capital development. Although domestic revenue mobilization improved substantially, tax-to-GDP ratios remain low in most African countries. With the lower external official development assistance and greater need for borrowing to finance infrastructure and social sectors, many African governments have turned to international capital markets to meet their financing needs.

Major investments in infrastructure, financed principally by external borrowing are raising concerns about the ability of countries to pay back without undermining their capacities to meet the critical needs of future generations. While it is understandable that Africa needs more development financing, the build-up of debt needs to be consistent with country development needs and capacities to service the loans without compromising fundamentals for future growth. Debt must be deployed in productive investments that yield income streams for self-financing and growth of the economy, in order to build capacity for increased domestic resource mobilisation that can wean countries from foreign debt and prevent potential debt distress. The infrastructure–investment

¹²African Development Bank Group: Africa Economic

Outlook 2018

drive across Africa, financed largely by external borrowing, needs careful analysis to ensure that revenue streams (generated in local currencies) are strong enough to meet the debt obligations when they fall due.

Sustained growth should create jobs, which drive poverty reduction and make growth more inclusive. Recent Africa's high economic growth rates have not been accompanied by high job growth rates. The lack of job growth has retarded poverty reduction. Although the proportion of poor people in Africa has been declining, the number of poor people increased. Also, inequality increased, with the Gini coefficient rising from 0.52 in 1993 to 0.56 in 2008 (the latest figure available in 2018). Africa will become the youngest and most populous continent in the next few decades. Its labour force was expected to rise from 620 million in 2013 to nearly 2 billion in 2063 (African Agenda 2063). In the face of rapidly growing populations and heightened risks of social unrest or discontent, increase in joblessness is the most serious concern for African policy makers.

The East African Community (EAC) is said to be one of the fastest growing regions in Sub-Saharan Africa with an average GDP growth of 6.2 per cent in 2015. It is also one of the largest regional economic blocs, and has the second largest single market in Africa with a total population of 148 million. Available data indicate that real GDP growth in EAC Partner States varied during 2014, and was driven by diverse factors. In Burundi, real GDP growth was

5.2 per cent in 2014, slightly higher than the 4.6 per cent registered in 2013, with agriculture and construction remaining the main drivers of growth. In Kenya, real GDP grew by 5.7 per cent in 2014 compared to 4.9 per cent in 2013 due to lower tourism income on the back of security concerns and reduced agricultural performance related to erratic weather. In Rwanda, real GDP growth increased to 7.0 per cent in 2014 from 5.6 per cent in 2013 due to recovery in the agriculture and service sectors and strong growth in industry. Strong annual real GDP growth of 7.2 per cent was recorded for Tanzania in 2014, up from 7 per cent in 2013, driven mainly by industry, agriculture, and service sectors.

Uganda's real GDP growth was 6.6 per cent in 2014, compared to 5.2 per cent in 2013. The increase was mainly due to the expansion in the service sector, specifically hotels, restaurants, transport and communications (EAC Facts and Figures, 2014). Kenya had the highest per capita income of US\$ 1,055.2, while Burundi recorded the lowest at US\$ 294.2 (EAC Facts and Figures, 2014). The Human Development Report (March 2017) categorizes most of the East African countries (except Kenya) under the low human development category. Tanzania ranked at 159 and Uganda 163 out of 188 countries. Only Kenya was categorized under the medium human development category ranked 146 out of 188.

Inclusive development and socio-economic transformation is a high priority for East Africa and a number of other aspirations

rotate around this objective. Other critical issues include fighting corruption, addressing high unemployment, especially among the youth, and improving the environment for inter and intra-regional trade and investment. Corruption remains a big challenge for countries in the East African region. Governments in the region have instituted measures to address corruption. Rwanda is known to have the lowest levels of corruption, while Uganda is rated as having the highest.

Uganda has taken several measures to curtail corruption, including the development of a National Anti-Corruption Strategy, an Anti-Corruption Act in 2009, and the establishment of a specialized anti-corruption court within the judiciary. A number of institutions, including the Inspectorate of Government, the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Auditor General, the Directorate of Ethics and Integrity and the Judiciary, have also been mandated to fight corruption and investigate wrongdoing. While these institutions have recorded prosecutions of low-level corruption and for small amounts of money embezzled, there has been little action against grand-scale corruption and prosecutions and convictions have been very few. Pushing for accountability of high-ranking and politically influential individuals has been limited. In practice, the judicial institutions are chronically underfunded, understaffed, and have sometimes been mentioned as being involved in syndicated corruption cases.

Corruption-related challenges in the country are a result of a lack of separation

between the public and private spheres, leading to extensive patronage and widespread political corruption. Such corruption challenges are exacerbated by weak law enforcement, which fuels a culture of impunity, particularly with regard to high-ranking officials involved in corruption¹³. In many respects the above are symptoms of weaknesses in governance and evidence of societal disempowerment.

ACODE's interventions in the area of public expenditure governance and stewardship of common good public resources for the next 10 years will focus on promoting transparency and accountability at national and local government levels, promoting local economic development and increasing transparency in formulation and implementation of trade policies within the East African region. The package of interventions by ACODE will contribute to empowering citizens, increasing transparency and accountability, strengthening local economic governance and enhancing competitiveness.

3.3.2 Stability, democracy and access to justice

Democracy, peace and security have largely remained elusive across much of Africa and almost eclipsing the hopes championed by South Africa's Thabo Mbeki and other Afro-optimists in the early 1990s of an 'African renaissance'. Violent conflicts have afflicted Africa and exacted a heavy toll on the continent's

¹³Human Rights Watch (2013). "Letting the Big Fish Swim": Failures to Prosecute High-Level Corruption in Uganda. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/uganda1013_ForUpload_0.pdf

societies, politics and economies, robbing them of their developmental potential and democratic possibilities. The causes of conflicts are as complex as the challenges of resolving them are difficult. But their costs and the need to resolve them cannot be in doubt; hence the urgency for the continent to do so if it is to navigate the 21st century more successfully than it did in the past centuries when depredations and colonialism led to regrettable legacies¹⁴

The East and Horn of Africa unfortunately suffer from ownership of porous borders, conflicting and competing political interests; and are neighboured by countries that have historically provided safe havens or more concrete support to rebel groups opposed to other regimes in the same region. Many regions, including areas bordering neighbouring countries, are remote and without any state presence. As analysts point out, some international borders separating some countries exist merely in name, most especially for pastoralist communities who are constantly crossing such international borders in search of water and pasture for their livestock.

The East African sub-region continues to experience terrorist threats especially in Uganda and Kenya. Massive unemployment, especially among the youth, puts East African countries at risk for social instability. ACODE will continue to work in partnership with key institutions of the region (Common Market for East and Southern Africa [COMESA], the East

¹⁴Zezeza, P. T. (2008) *The Causes and Costs of War in Africa: From Liberation Struggles to the 'War on Terror'*, Pretoria, UNISA Press.

African Community [EAC], and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development [IGAD]) and other relevant institutions to foster peace and security in the region.

3.3.3 Natural resource dependency and climate change adaptation

Deforestation, forest degradation and poor forest governance practices are known to result in the release of carbon into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. Since 1990, global forests have lost carbon stored in their biomass in almost all regions, adding to global carbon emissions. Environmental issues such as climate change undermine the realization of a broad range of internationally protected human rights: rights to health and even right to life; rights to food, water, shelter and property; rights associated with livelihood and culture; with migration and resettlement; and with personal security in the event of conflict. The connections between environment and human life are deep and complex and the worst effects of climate change are likely to be felt by those individuals and groups whose rights protection is already precarious.

The member states of the East African region are committed to “realizing effective natural resource and environmental governance and conservation with enhanced value addition” (East African Vision 2050). The EAC region, like most of Africa, is suffering from the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, which ultimately is affecting agriculture and perpetuating food insecurity through extended droughts and heavy floods in parts of the region.

Uganda's Vision 2040 makes specific commitments to protection of the environment and natural resources. Paragraph 293 of Vision 2040 states that: *“Over the Vision 2040 period efforts will be undertaken to attain a green and clean environment with no water and air pollution while conserving the flora and fauna and restoring and adding value to the ecosystems”*. Paragraph 297 of Vision 2040 also states that: *“Conservation and wise use of environment and natural resources and cultural diversity for collective benefit of the present and future generations and adoption of patterns of production, consumption and reproduction that safeguards the environment will be undertaken as a matter of urgency”*. These commitments have been translated into the National Development Plans (NDPs) I (2010-2015 and II (2015-2020). In addition, the country has a number of policies to regulate land use and impact on the environment. These include: The National Wetlands Policy (1995), the Environmental Impact Assessment Resolutions (1998), and the National Environment Management Policy (1994). The National Environment Act (1995), National Climate Change Policy (2015) and the National Forestry Policy (2001), among others are some of the few. In spite of existence of such frameworks, there is a clear gap between the existence of laws and policies to regulate environmental use and their actual implementation. In reality, natural resources such as forests and wetlands continue to be depleted; an indication that the existing regulatory framework is not

effectively enforced. A culture of secrecy within government bodies, a distrust of civil society organizations and media as well as the politics of patronage remain substantial challenges for fair and equitable governance of natural resources.

During the next 10 years, ACODE will focus on strengthening environment and natural resource governance frameworks and enhancing practices that support sustainable management and improved livelihoods. It will also focus on increasing civic competence for environment and natural resource governance, transparency and accountability in the management of natural resources.

3.3.4 Weak systems for adaptation of Science, Technology and Innovation

The contributions of science and technology to foster development in the world cannot be overemphasized. Science and technological progress has had impact in sectors such as infrastructure, energy, industry, health, education, communication, financial management, entertainment, transport, agriculture, and environmental protection, to name but a few. These effects have not been limited to the improvement of society's material wealth, but have also extended to altering the existing paradigms under which society operates.

Sub-Saharan Africa (except South Africa) is among the least developed in terms of science and technological advancement. The AU Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Strategy for Africa is aimed at social transformation and economic

competitiveness through human capital development, innovation, value addition, industrialization and entrepreneurship and places STI at the epicentre of Africa's socio-economic development and growth. A key challenge for Africa is related to deficit in infrastructure to develop new technologies. While the entrepreneurial spirit in Africa is high, the anticipated progress is hampered by sluggish and weak policy and legal frameworks that would otherwise facilitate the adoption, absorption and diffusion of technologies to spur advancement and development¹⁵.

The East Africa Community (EAC) recognizes the fundamental role of Science, Technology and Innovation for the economic development of the region. In accordance with the provisions of the same treaty, the 5th Extra-ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State established the East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) on 18 June 2007 as an institution of the EAC.

The EASTECO's specific objectives include, among others: *to enhance cooperation in the development of regional science and technology policies; to encourage joint mobilization, use, governance and development of resources, both material and human, for the development of science and technology in the EAC region; to promote scientific and technological innovation within Partner states.* As a regional body, EASTECO's role is to provide support mechanisms to facilitate the harnessing and application of STI.

Given the importance of STI, ACODE intends to occupy and utilize the available space in order to reconcile regional and national STI policy frameworks with the view to harnessing STI for agricultural development and transformation.

ACODE's intervention shall provide a basis for research and capacity building activities in the adoption and scaling up of STI in agriculture in Uganda, and will share good practices and lessons across the region.

¹⁵UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). (2007) The Least Developed Countries Report 2007: Knowledge, Technological Learning and Innovation for Development. New York and Geneva, UNCTAD.

4. Implementation Strategies

Over the next 10 years, ACODE will seriously contend with the challenge of sustaining and enhancing the high profile attained over the last 18 years and strengthening its capacity for greater impact. This will be in line with its original aim of becoming the premier public policy research and advocacy organization in Africa. To this end, ACODE will strengthen its strategies that have so far spurred the delivery of research, policy analysis and advocacy products which have propelled the organization to national and regional prominence.

Based on lessons learnt from performance over the last ten-year strategic plan period, ACODE will eliminate practices and approaches that are likely to alienate key stakeholders and constituencies.

Given the dynamism and unpredictability of socio-economic and political environment underlying the space of operation, a number of imperatives will characterise the institutional development strategy of ACODE. These will include;

- i. Strengthening and adopting modern approaches to policy research and advocacy
- ii. Strengthening and expanding civic engagement;
- iii. Investing in capacity development of partners

at regional, national and local governance levels;

- iv. Investing in capacity development of the ACODE human resource
- v. Strengthening partnerships at local, national, regional and continental levels;
- vi. Reaching out and eliciting partnership of the private sector to participate in ACODE programming
- vii. Mainstreaming gender and equity in ACODE's scope of work and using a rights-based-approach in pursuit of excellence;
- viii. Strengthening the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) function to enable implementation tracking to inform tactical and timely changes for greater effectiveness and impact;
- ix. Strengthening knowledge management through creation of specialized units;
- x. Strengthening the on-going ACODE Internship Programme

4.1. Strengthening Policy Research and Advocacy

ACODE will continue to improve the quality of its public policy research outputs by ensuring that it sustains the recruitment, training and retention of researchers with requisite and versatile competences. ACODE will specifically continue to recruit researchers with Master's and PhD qualifications that have proven track

record in policy research and advocacy to not only do what they know best but also mentor and train junior researchers. Strong researchers who may not have written with advocacy in mind will be oriented to ensure that their papers can be shaped into advocacy products. ACODE appreciates the fact that a think tank whose research products can also be used to generate advocacy issues and messages for targeted audiences is more relevant to the public it serves. ACODE will invest resource in acquisition of contemporary data capture, management and analysis tools,

4.2. Capacity Building and Advocacy at Local, National and Regional Levels

The quality of service delivery at local government levels demands that ACODE sustains its work of complementing government programmes of building the capacity of councils and local administrations in planning, budgeting and monitoring the performance of annual budgets. While it is understood that ACODE's work cannot cover all districts in the country, there is documented evidence that the performance of districts where ACODE has been interacting with councillors over two or three years in Uganda is far better than those where no such interaction has been witnessed.

ACODE will therefore scale up its capacity building and advocacy work regarding plans and budgets at the district and sub-county levels by extending into new districts to expand its geographical reach as well as up-scaling country coverage.

Ultimately, arrangements will be made through partnerships for districts that have not benefited from this advocacy to learn from those that have been reached by ACODE.

4.3. Strengthening and Expanding Civic Engagement

The demand side of democracy and the civic population's ability to monitor its implementation and sanction government and its agencies where need arises largely depend on the civic population's level of awareness of the legal and policy provisions in place to protect their rights and the actions they can take to guarantee them. Levels of awareness are especially low; and in conditions of poverty and marginalization, citizens in many regions tend to wait for what government or other donors will hand over to them instead of seeing it as their right to participate effectively in ensuring that the necessary services are in place and operational. To address this problem, ACODE adopted the Civic Engagement Action Plan (CEAP) methodology in 2015 to facilitate citizens to work with their elected leaders to develop action plans. By the end of 2018, the CEAP methodology had registered a number of successes that will be expanded in other local governments.

As part of its work in the districts and sub-counties, ACODE will invest time and other resources in strengthening and expanding the citizens' capacity to engage in demanding for services and monitoring to ensure accountability in their delivery.

4.4. Strengthening Continental, Regional, National and Local Partnerships

ACODE will strengthen its regional reach through partnerships in Eastern and Southern Africa. Where appropriate, ACODE will also pursue relevant opportunities and participate in strategic processes in the region. Over and above Eastern and Southern Africa, ACODE will strategically look out for partnerships with other like-minded entities and organizations in the rest of Africa to increase her reach enhance learning and share experiences. ACODE will be more deliberate and bankroll on these partnerships to enhance her international visibility and demonstrate her potential in influencing policy processes.

These partnerships will help ACODE to contribute solutions to issues and problems of a regional as well as continental nature and which are of serious concern to all the citizens of these countries. Such problems and issues can be seen in the areas of regional communications and trade, citizen migration due to political instability, the search for job opportunities, the search for pasture and water by pastoralist groups that cross national borders when there is drought in some regions, and security of persons including the control of the illegal flow of small arms, among others.

The flow of regional trade, the search for employment across borders, the movement of refugees and other migrants due to political instability, and pastoralist groups searching for pasture and water are currently high on the agendas of the regional countries and provide room

for ACODE and other regional partner organizations to engage and contribute to the solution of emerging problems.

4.5. Mainstreaming Gender and Equity

The Uganda Gender Policy defines gender as “the social construct of roles, responsibilities, attributes, opportunities, privileges, status, access to and control of resources and benefits between women and men, boys and girls in a given society” (MGLSD, 2007). Social-cultural construction in Uganda largely favours men and boys and discriminates against and marginalizes women and girls in society.

Equity refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, rights and responsibilities in society. There are vulnerable groups that may not easily access/benefit from government policies and programmes: for example, internally displaced people, orphans and abandoned children. Addressing equity issues entails ensuring that all vulnerable groups are accessing or benefiting from services generated through the implementation of government policies and programmes.

The beneficiaries of ACODE’s work represent great diversity in gender, age, ethnicity and abilities. Each of these diverse beneficiary groups is affected by public policies in many different ways. In particular, women and the youth are affected disproportionately when public policies fail to work for people. In its approach to programme design, implementation and monitoring, ACODE will make deliberate

efforts to pay particular attention to such inherent structural prejudices that reduce the intended positive impacts of public policy while increasing the vulnerability of different social groups. A gender and equity mainstreaming policy and strategy will be developed and capacity for gender and equity analysis strengthened within the organization. ACODE will build on its on-going gender work and train programme staff in gender and equity analysis and programming. The objective is to ensure that the staffs have the skills to integrate gender and equity concerns in all aspects of ACODE's programmes.

4.6. Knowledge Management and Resource Mobilization Unit

One of the major attributes of a Think Tank is knowledge management (KM). This entails the planning, solicitation, generation, processing, production, dissemination, storage, and retrieval of knowledge on public policy issues of a think tank's interest. It also includes deliberate synthesizing of lessons learned from past phases of programme interventions, and making available those lessons both to the public for awareness; and to programme developers and senior management for possible replication in new programme phases. Knowledge management can draw a lot from on-going monitoring of program implementation; on impact evaluations, and also on research findings. Knowledge thrives where there are effective communication mechanisms for different target audiences. As the organization shares its knowledge with different audiences, this can be a good

foundation for retaining partner interest and other resources. For ACODE knowledge management is critical for effectiveness and impact of its work. Accordingly, a new Knowledge Management Unit will be established and will comprise of the following functions: Knowledge management, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning; Information, Communications and Technology (ICT), and Resource Mobilization. The unit will address people, processes, technology and do so in view of emerging contexts (environment).

4.6.1. Strengthening the monitoring, evaluation and learning function

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) is a key function in ACODE. The M&E section in ACODE will lead the technical aspects of MEL work in the wider framework of Knowledge Management (KM). The KM Unit will work towards ensuring that M&E becomes a stronger element of the work culture at ACODE. The KM unit will ensure that monitoring will become the responsibility of all staff in ACODE.

A detailed monitoring and evaluation framework that outlines key elements, structure, roles and tasks for this SP has been developed. This framework will establish a linkage with program and financial monitoring and provide reporting timelines and feedback. The M&E framework for this Strategic Plan outlines the key milestones which include; quarterly review and planning meetings, annual review meetings, midterm evaluation and final evaluation.

4.6.2. Strengthening the communication function

A major aspect of improved KM in this SP will be the formation of a digital, internet-based television channel. In the long run, this will be a medium through which ACODE's knowledge products and processes will be shared. In the medium term, the focus of ACODE's communication efforts will include:

- » Maintaining several digital communication channels that are useful in managing and processing information at ACODE. This will include: electronic and traditional media, the ACODE Website(s), SMS platforms, and the Citizen Mobile App as well as Social Media.
- » Strengthening offline communication channels, notably; publications; dialogues, conferences and workshops.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all communications, including reports (annual, quarterly, monthly and weekly), evaluation reports, reports from debates and public dialogues, etc., are timely.

4.6.3. Information, Communication and Technology (ICT)

Apart from deliberate efforts to promote technology and related innovations in the Agriculture sector; ACODE will make deliberate efforts to improve its exploration and exploitation of IT for internal and external communications as part of KM. To the extent possible, ACODE will improve the storage, retrieval, and access of soft

versions of its reports and publications by embarking on an e-library. Appropriate efforts will also be undertaken to improve day-to-day finance and accounting as well as back-up systems. The aim will be to use ICT to enhance efficiency and security of ACODE's information.

4.7. Strengthening ACODE's Internship Programme

ACODE's internship programme will be redesigned to provide experience that is relevant to future careers in policy research advocacy, outreach and networking. It will offer mentoring opportunities and formal training to young professionals and students. On average, most internship placements will last about three months. However, there will be exceptional internship placements that will last more than three months, given peculiarities of placement. ACODE will have two types of internships:

- i. **Research interns** – will provide research assistance to the research directorate, and contribute their research, analysis and writing skills to research intended for publication in different research areas. Responsibilities will include primary research, literature reviews, survey design, data collection, data analysis (qualitative or quantitative) and technical and editorial writing.
- ii. **Programme and project interns** – will provide assistance to ACODE's programmes and outreach initiatives, and develop knowledge and skills necessary to manage successful programming in a think

tank environment. Responsibilities will include database design and management, event hosting and co-ordination, communication,

office administration, personnel management, financial management and outreach.



5. Strategic Institutional Development

In order to deliver on strategic priority areas and achieve outcomes of this Strategic Plan, ACODE will strengthen its human resource capacity, internal systems and structure; as well as refine its strategies and processes for Implementation. The organization will revitalize its senior leadership as well as governance for greater efficiency, effectiveness and impact. Resource mobilization is of strategic importance and will be strengthened further to generate the required resources for implementation of the strategy.

5.1. Strengthening Human Resource Capacity

ACODE's aspiration is to operate in a way where it contributes building blocks to national and regional development paths and to maintain and improve its premier think tank status over the next decade. This will require an efficient and effective workforce that will easily adapt to the demands of fast-changing conditions in the region. All staff will need to be more conversant with the developments in the continent and the region (but more specifically, in Eastern Africa, and Southern Africa).

On the other hand, ACODE recognize the need to improve skills and competences of staff significantly in key areas in order to increase the overall effectiveness of the workforce. ACODE will recruit

or reallocate individuals with specialization in technical fields of our priority areas to provide leadership to programmes. For instance, the Science, Technology and Innovations Programme will be headed by a scientist with technical expertise in that area. The Environment and Natural Resources Programme will also be headed by someone with relevant technical expertise. In order to strengthen the technical capacity to deliver on commitments, ACODE will ensure that apparent gaps in technical expertise will be addressed through recruitment or repositioning of core staff, taking into account that ACODE programmes are interrelated and implementation strategies are cross-cutting. This will require some of the staff to work across programmes. Where necessary, some roles will be merged for greater efficiency.

All staff will be oriented and equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver competitive results. ACODE will carry out a skills audit at the earliest possible time; and thereafter use in-built human resource performance monitoring measures to regularly determine available skills amongst staff in the delivery of the expected outputs. ACODE will build on experience in staff performance measurements to identify areas where staff skills need to be upgraded. ACODE will ensure that the knowledge and technical skills to provide avenues for this to happen will be available.

Specific actions to be undertaken will include:

- i. Maintaining a high-calibre of a core

team for each programme area and core support functions and creating a pool of associate consultants/researchers for specific tasks and deliverables. Some of the current fulltime staff may fall into this category.

- ii. Ensuring that all senior staff acquires fundraising and other resource mobilisation skills, more especially through writing concept notes and proposals for soliciting for funding. A resource mobilisation unit will be established to lead and coordinate fund-raising efforts.
- iii. Strengthening of current staff performance system and review of the human resource performance monitoring and appraisal mechanisms to allow gauging the efficiency and effectiveness of staff in the delivery of the expected results. Periodic staff appraisals will be undertaken and specific human resource decisions will be communicated after every major staff performance appraisal.
- iv. Reviewing the reward system to link pay to accomplishment of agreed upon deliverables.
- v. Promoting a culture of ensuring that staff are effectively oriented and equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver competitive results. Mentoring will be a key approach to strengthening human resource capacity within ACODE.

vi. Continuing to encourage self-improvement and continuous learning among all staff through attachments and supporting targeted practical skills development in critical areas of ACODE's work.

vii. Reducing the current gender imbalance at senior management level. A few female staff will be recruited or competent current female staff elevated to senior management levels to address the current situation where senior management are all male. The intention is to have at least 40% female staff at senior management level by 2021.

viii. Refocusing the strategic roles of Senior Management. ACODE will work to refine its management systems so as to create an atmosphere that stimulates creativity and diligence among the staff to realize the best out of them.

5.2. Strengthening Structures and Delivery Systems

The primary objective around the planned improvements in ACODE's organizational structure will be three-fold. These will be to: (i) ensure all key staff are placed where they have the competences to deliver and where the organization will get best value for money from their input; (ii) eliminate redundancies and ensure maximum cost-efficiency, and, (iii) pursue optimal effectiveness and efficiency for each role for maximum results. Accordingly, the following strategic actions will be taken

towards strengthening the organizational structure and delivery systems over the next ten years.

5.3. Strengthening Institutional Governance

ACODE will continue to be committed to strengthening its institutional governance processes and structures. ACODE has had a very strong Board of Trustees that has provided guidance, support and oversight to the organization over the years. There are currently 13 members of the Board of Trustees. Some of the members who have faithfully served the organization since inception have indicated a desire to hand over their roles to other members. Timely board renewal will be pursued to ensure that ACODE's governance maintains cutting-edge performance. It will also ensure that the Board of Trustees provides the best quality of overall direction and support to the senior management of ACODE. Specific actions will be undertaken to enhance the effectiveness of governance and overall leadership of ACODE.

ACODE will continually refine its governance practices and management systems and create an environment that stimulates creativity and diligence with the aim of delivering highly competitive products. Management and administrative practices will be constantly monitored to ensure that they give sufficient room to staff to participate in decision-making and be inspired to put in their best. The organization will promote a learning culture to orient the staff towards aspiring for qualitative improvement based on

accumulated achievements and good practices. It will also periodically review and update its overall decision-making and financial management practices in response to expected institutional growth and networking and changes demanded by the introduction of new technology. This will enable ACODE to revitalize its governance and contribute to a sharpening of its identity as one of the leading think tanks in Africa.

5.4. Shared Values

The strategic planning process entailed, among other things, reflections, consultations and refining or reaffirming ACODE's core identity elements – the Vision, Mission, Core Values and its primary strategic intent at programme and institutional levels. Accordingly, ACODE will reorient all staff on the refined core identity elements and their implications in terms of their day-to-day work. An abridged version of ACODE's Strategic direction for the next ten years will be made available to facilitate dialogue with ACODE's key partners as appropriate. The organization will establish mechanisms for continuous reflections on the new identity elements as part of on-going learning.

ACODE believes that once the above strategic actions have been undertaken, the institutional capacity of ACODE will be greatly strengthened and be able to take the organization into its desired future.

6. Enhancing Strengths and Opportunities; Confronting Challenges and Threats

ACODE is cognizant of the reality of its own situation. ACODE's strengths in research and advocacy have propelled the organization to remain at the helm of achievement. During the next 10 years, ACODE will work to enhance its strengths and exploit available opportunities to deliver on its commitments. ACODE is also cognizant of the challenges, threats and risks that exist in the operating environment and will work to minimise the negative forces that have the potential to constrain greater achievement. Through a SWOT analysis during the strategic planning process, ACODE postulates measures to enhance strengths and opportunities and to reduce the threats and risks. Table 3 presents the SWOT analysis of the organization.

6.1. SWOT Analysis

Actions to enhance strengths

- » Increase multidisciplinary team nature and maintain standards;
- » Recruit people of other relevant disciplines such as scientists
- » Maintain working relations with key stakeholders;
- » Establish new strategic partnerships;
- » Maintain non-confrontational, nonpartisan approach of engagement
- » Keep improving on professional competencies via training
- » Undertake collaborative research with likeminded and reputable research institutions;
- » Train key staff in new research methodologies;
- » Establish research infrastructure e.g. refereeing software
- » Train and develop Board continually;
- » Recruit from other relevant regional countries e.g. Burundi
- » Strengthen systems for supporting leadership, such as delegation function
- » Pursue adequate rewarding system based on performance and deliverable.
- » Peg internship services to clear and specific program interventions.
- » Keep controls strong
- » Adopt and adapt to ICT systems that enhance staff work in programming, monitoring & reporting and resource mobilization.

Addressing internal weakness

- » Improve systems by overhauling M&E approaches and tools; recruiting and deploying critical staff.
- » Review staff reward system.
- » Complete ACODE home/endowment facility
- » Create innovation periods (e.g. innovation weeks per quarter), receive and test new ideas
- » Set clearer targets for international publishing and pursue them, work with top-notch think tanks and co-publish in their outlets
- » Identify key international players, create partnerships with top-notch think tanks
- » Deliberately diversify sources of funding and develop internal local sources.
- » Plan clearer diversified funding sources
- » Develop fundraising and resource mobilisation strategy
- » Establish a designated resource mobilisation office/team

Visualizing our SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Multi-disciplinary team ◇ Convening power ◇ Professional Competencies ◇ Strong research capability ◇ Strong, high calibre and professional regional Board of Trustees ◇ Committed Leadership ◇ Highly motivated human resource ◇ Internship programs ◇ Financial management and controls ◇ Strong ICT infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Weak Systems (M&E, Human resource, Communication) ◇ Office space and working environment/ lack of permanent home ◇ Innovation sluggishness ◇ Limited focus on international publishing ◇ Lack of collaboration with top notch think tanks ◇ Donor dependency ◇ Failure to diversify funding sources ◇ Lack of focus in resource mobilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Good/improved working relationship with governments ◇ Receptive/partnerships with like-minded CSOs ◇ Participatory legal framework and processes ◇ Existence of like-minded CSOs ◇ Existence of relevant issues to address ◇ Changing technology ◇ Good organizational reputation ◇ Partnerships with Government ◇ Funding aligned to our programming ◇ Regional integration processes ◇ democratisation processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Shrinking space for CSOs ◇ Limited/declining and stringent funding sources/opportunities ◇ basket funding by donor community ◇ Political uncertainty ◇ Changing technology ◇ regional insecurity ◇ Low level of constitutionalism and rule of law

Harnessing opportunities

- » Maintain/improving relations with governments.
- » Craft strategic MOUs;
- » Organize strategic meetings with governments so they can participate more in ACODE activities
- » Keep cooperation with like-minded CSOs
- » Undertake collaborative research;
- » Do joint policy advocacy;
- » Do joint convening of events and joint fundraising
- » Keep working on specific aspects that keep improving ACODE's ranking at global level
- » Keep good working relations with government
- » Keep networks and collaborations working
- » Target specific issues that can ensure high-end visible impact
- » Keep adapting new/latest technologies
- » Exploit good organizational reputation to expand operations.
- » Participate in policy processes;
- » Use impact stories to push for increased funding in ACODE's priority programming areas
- » Convening events around regional integration
- » Deliberately engage those in authority and other stakeholders on quality of democratization

Mitigating threats

- » Maintain good working relations with government
- » Promote increased civil society engagement with governments in the region;
- » pursue evidence-based policy advocacy
- » Diversify funding sources
- » Explore alternative funding opportunities that are long term;
- » Flexible strategic engagement with donor community/donor groups
- » Pursue excellence and top quality, high impact results with utmost efficiency.
- » Continue advocating for constitutionalism, rule of law and peaceful conflict resolution
- » Be adaptive to changing technologies
- » initiate and support on going peace processes
- » Undertake research and policy advocacy;
- » initiate processes that support legal and constitutional reforms;
- » partner with key likeminded institutions/government e.g. Uganda law society, Human Rights Commission

About ACODE

The Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) is an independent public policy research and advocacy think tank based in Uganda. ACODE's core business is policy research, advocacy and capacity building. Since its establishment in 1999, ACODE has become one of the leading think tanks in Sub-Saharan Africa. ACODE has been ranked among the 100 top think tanks globally in the Global Think Tanks Index Report (2017) published by the University of Pennsylvania's Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP).



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Cover Image: Civic Engagement Action Plans (CEAPs) meeting with communities in Dogayago Town Council, Nwoya District, Uganda



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