



Specialized Technical Group on National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (STG-18)

Term of Reference

4 September 2024

**DECISION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE
HARMONISATION OF STATISTICS IN AFRICA (SHASA)**

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The Executive Council,

1. COMMENDS the progress made since the inception of the SHaSA in rallying along countries to give priority to statistical development, especially in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, Civil Registration and Vital Statistics and Economics Statistics, among others.
2. WELCOMES the efforts by the Commission and the African Development Bank (AfDB), in collaboration with the African Capacity Building Foundation, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States to develop a draft of Second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA-II).
3. ADOPTS the Second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA-II) as the Continental Strategy for the Development of Statistics in Africa for the next 10 years; and its action plan, financing plan and resources mobilization strategy.
4. REQUESTS AfDB with the support of Commission, UNECA and ACBF to lead the preparation of resource mobilisation strategy in support of SHaSA-II; and mobilize the sustainable financial resources for the effective implementation of SHaSA-II.
5. REQUESTS:
 - i. Member States to allocate 0.15% of their national budgets to finance statistics.
 - ii. The Commission to coordinate with UNECA, AfDB and other relevant stakeholders on the implementation of the Second Strategy for the Harmonisation on Statistics in Africa (SHaSA-II), and report regularly to the Assembly on the progress made.

1. Background

Following the request of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistical Offices (CoDGs) made during their annual session of November 2015 in Libreville, Gabon, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Foundation for Capacity Building (ACBF) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) developed the second Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA-II) - 2017 -2026, its Action and Financing Plans and Resource Mobilization Strategy. SHaSA-II was developed to support the implementation of Agenda 2063, the African Development Bank's (AfDB's) High Five transformational agenda for Africa for 2015-2025, the UN's "Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and national development programmes and plans.

The Executive Council of the thirtieth African Union Summit, held in Addis Ababa on 28 and 29 January 2018, adopted SHaSA-II with its action plan, financing plan, and strategy for resource mobilization as a continental strategy for the development of statistics in Africa for the next ten years (2017-2026) and invited Member States to implement it.

The implementation of SHaSA-II involves statistics stakeholders, policymakers, the private sector and all statistics stakeholders in Africa. It is carried out through the activities of continental organizations and regional and national statistical systems. This approach involves the establishment of a coherent pyramid scheme that allows the African Statistical System (ASS) to respond to the need for quality harmonized statistics at the national, regional, continental and international levels.

SHaSA-II operationalization relies on Specialized Technical Groups (STGs). The strategy established one for each of its eighteen priority focus areas, including the STG-18 on National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), named STG-18. This document aims to specify STG-18's areas of competence and precisely define its mandate, composition, and rules of operation.

The STGs are vitalized to continue their activities in each identified statistical area under the coordination of countries and the responsibility of the Pan African Organizations. They are streamlined and better oriented toward achieving results.

2. Objectives of the STG-18

The specific objectives for the STG-18 (NSDS) under SHaSA-II include:

- To harmonize statistical methodologies across Africa to ensure consistency and comparability in data reporting at national, regional, and continental levels.
- To support Member States in the development and implementation of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).
- To adapt international statistical standards and norms to the African context, considering local realities and priorities.
- To monitor the implementation of SHaSA-II across Member States, ensuring that common standards and methods are adopted and followed.
- To address emerging statistical issues in Africa, and propose solutions that are both practical and aligned with international standards.
- To promote the use of new data sources and statistical tools, encouraging innovation in statistical systems across African nations.

3. Delineation and mandate of the STG-18

The Specialized Technical Group on NSDS (STG-18) will provide guidance to the African Statistical System on statistical harmonization and capacity building in response to issues not covered by other SHaSA-II Specialized Technical Groups and those emerging issues from recent developments. In this direction, STG-18 will prepare and implement sectoral action plans for statistical harmonization and develop or propose for adoption of international standards and methodological guidelines for statistical harmonization in relation to NSDS.

The main roles of the STG-18, among others, are as follows:

- To adapt international norms and methods to African realities;
- To develop standards and methods for the harmonization of statistics in Africa;
- To monitor the implementation of common standards and methods adopted by African countries;
- To prepare progress reports on the implementation of SHaSA-II in their various areas;
- To address new statistical issues in Africa
- Coordinate/synchronize their activities with similar groups of other regional/continental frameworks/programs such as SDGs (IAEG-SDGs), Agenda 2063, etc.
- Prepare and implement sectoral action plans and guidelines for statistical harmonization in the area concerned.

More specifically, the STG-18 will:

- ✓ Compile, promote and disseminate best practices, success stories and lessons learned in the development and implementation of NSDSs’;
- ✓ Create a centralised repository for NSDS best practices, success stories and lesson learned that all AU member states can access. Repository to be hosted by STATAFRIC;
- ✓ Develop and propose harmonized guidance on the use of NSDS in enhancing production of in official statistics;
- ✓ Review and harmonize regional and national statistics framework to establish agile and resilient statistical systems;
- ✓ Encourage, promote and strengthen the integration of statistics and the use of new data sources for statistical purposes;
- ✓ Identify challenges with the modernization of national statistical systems and propose harmonized solutions;
- ✓ Establish the programs of activities on NSDSs;
- ✓ Encourage countries to conduct evaluation of the implementation of NSDSs

The STG-18 on NSDS reports to EC-SHaSA-II, the EC-SHaSA II reports to African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) and the ASCC reports to the Committee of Director Generals (CoDGs) of the National Statistics Offices of the African Union.

4. Composition of the STG-18 on NSDS

The STG-18 will consist of statisticians, planners, demographers and, other professionals from Member States, pan-African institutions, RECs, Statistical training schools, specialized agencies, regional and international agencies, civil society, the private sector, and other experts in the areas under review.

Membership in the STG-18 is voluntary and on rotating basis between countries for a five-year mandate. SHaSA-II African Group on NSDS's Secretariat will send a call for membership to stakeholders and national statistical offices.

At most, 25 members will be selected from the responses, considering geographic and linguistic representativeness without compromising the continuity of the work.

5. Rules of operations

STATAFRIC, with the support of the AfDB, ECA, ACBF and other partners, ensures the STG-18 Secretariat. The STG-18 Secretariat is for preparing concept notes and agendas of meeting, providing support for the preparation of technical documents and the organization of meetings.

The STG-18 will elect a lead country (LC) or champion to lead the STG-18 for a period of five (5) years and is designated to lead the STG-18 for the effective implementation of SHaSA-II. The country or Champion leadership must have demonstrated its engagement in responding to statistical issues adequately.

The chairmanship of the STG-18 must be rotating between the five (5) AU regions.

The STG-18 shall also design three (3) Vice-Champions/Vice-chairs and one (1) Rapporteur to coordinate the activities of the STG 18-NSDS.

The bureau composed by the chairman, the 3 Vice-Champions and the rapporteur will work within the framework of the program of activities agreed by STG-18 Secretariat according to the following TORs:

- To promote statistical development and harmonization in the areas of intervention for the STG-18;
- To convene, in collaboration with STG-18 secretariat, meetings of the STG-18;
- To ensure coordination of the implementation of common standards and methods adopted at the country level, with a view to effective implementation of the Strategy (SHaSA-II) in their respective fields; and
- To report to the Executive Committee of SHaSA-II, to the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) and to the Committee of Director Generals (CoDGs)

The mandate of the Bureau of STG-NSDS shall be five years and the leadership of the STG shall be rotated among the regions. The STG-18 shall hold at least two meetings per year. Most of the work and meetings will happen remotely, using information and communication technologies. However, the members of the STG-18 shall physically meet at least twice a year, in preference back-to-back with regional events. Decisions taken shall be based on consensus.

To the extent possible, STG-18 should coordinate and synchronize its activities with similar groups in other regions or continental frameworks and programmes.

Depending on the needs, the STG-18 can invite resource persons to participate in some or all of its activities.

6. Expected Outcome

The STG-18 aims to achieve the following key outcomes:

- A harmonized African Statistical Systems where there is consistent and unified statistical framework across African countries that ensures the comparability and reliability of data across regions and sectors.
- Strengthened Capacity of National Statistical Systems where Member States are empowered with the technical skills, infrastructure, and resources needed to produce high-quality statistics.
- Increased use of data for informed policymaking, planning, and monitoring of development goals, including the SDGs, Agenda 2063, and national development plans.
- Sustainable financing for statistics, with Member States allocating 0.15% of their national budgets to finance statistics.
- National statistical systems and the African Statistical System (ASS) adopt best practices for data collection, management, and dissemination, leading to more resilient and agile systems.
- Effective synchronization of statistical activities across countries, regional economic communities (RECs), and continental institutions.

7. Funding

Activities of the STG should be borne by the AUC and shall finance the costs of participation of representatives of Member States as well as the RECs and invited experts and specialists. AUC could raise funding from other Pan-African institutions, partners or donors if needed. Other STGs members and observers should fund their own participation in the STGs.

8. Quorum

A simple majority of all members of the STG-18 will be sufficient to conduct a meeting.

9. Languages

- a) The working languages of the STG-18 shall be those of the AU (Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese);
- b) Statements made in any of the AU working languages shall be interpreted into the other working languages;
- c) All reports and working documents of the STG-18 shall be translated into the AU working languages.

10. Entry into Force

These Terms of Reference shall enter into force upon their adoption by the CoDGs.

11. Pan-African Institutions Roles

Pan-African Institutions (ACBF, AfDB, ECA, ABCA and AU STATAFRIC) provide the secretariat for the various groups and are designated according to their areas of competence to provide the secretariat for the STGs.

- Assist the AU Member States in the implementation of these standards and methodologies through technical assistance missions, regional workshops, national training, immersion courses, knowledge sharing and South-South cooperation, etc.
- Commit to enhancing the statistical capacity of AU Member States and RECs.

Stakeholder	Key Responsibilities
AUC	Coordination of SHaSA-II implementation across Member States and RECs; Policy guidance, monitoring, and evaluation
AfDB	Resource mobilization and financial support; Capacity building and technical assistance
RECs	Facilitate regional implementation and harmonization of statistical standards; Organize regional workshops and provide technical support to Member States
Member States	Implementation of NSDSs and advocating for allocation of financial resources (0.15% of national budgets); Produce harmonized statistics and report on NSDS development and implementation progress as well as respective NSS maturity levels
Rotating Chairperson	Leadership and coordination of STG-18 activities, organizing meetings; and ensuring alignment with action plans; Reporting to the EC-SHaSA 2, ASCC, and CoDGs
Civil Society	Promote advocacy, capacity building and collaboration, monitor and evaluation of NSDSs
Private Sector	Provide technical support, including capacity building, tools and solutions needed to monitor and evaluate NSDSs

12. Conclusion

In accordance with the African Charter on Statistics, the legal mandate to produce official statistics of countries is the exclusive responsibility of the national statistical authorities. This is a matter of national sovereignty.

Annex: List of 18 specialized technical groups

No	Specialized Technical Groups	Secretariat	Composition (Other members)
01	STG-GPS (Governance, Peace and Security)	AUC/AfDB	ECA, AfDB, ACBF, RECs, Member States
02	STG-ES. External Sector (External Trade and Balance of Payments)	AUC/AACB	ECA, AfDB, ACBF, RECs, AFRITAC, Member States
03	STG-MF (Money and Finance)	AACB/	AUC, ECA, AfDB, ACBF, RECs, AFRITAC, Member States
04	STG-NA&P (AGNA) (National Accounts and Price Statistics)	ECA/AfDB/ AUC	AUC, ECA, RECs, ACBF, AFRISTAT, Member States
05	STG-II&T. (Infrastructure, Industries & Tourism)	AfDB/NEPAD	AUC, ECA, ACBF, RECs, Member States
06	STG-PFPS&I. (Public Finance, Private Sector and Investment)	AfDB	AUC, ECA, ACBF, RECs, AFRISTAT, AFRITAC, Member States
07	STG-STE. (Science, Technology & Education)	AUC/ACBF/NEPAD	AfDB, ECA, RECs, Member States
08	STG-So. Demography, Migration, Health, Human Development, Social Protection & Gender	ECA/AUC	AfDB, ACBF, RECs, Afristat, Member States
09	STG-Env. (Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources, & Climate Change)	AfDB/AUC	ECA, ACBF, AFRISTAT, REC, NEPAD, FAO, UNEP, Member States
10	STG-CB (AGROST). Statistical Training and Capacity Building.	ECA/ACBF/AUC	AfDB, RECs, AFRISTAT, STCs, ACBF, AFRITAC, Member States
11	STG-Labor and Informal Sector Statistics	AUC/AfDB/AFRISTAT	AfDB, ECA, RECs, ILO, Member States
12	STG-Classification	ECA/ AFRISTAT	AUC, AfDB, RECs, Member States
13	STG-Statistics on Civil Registration	ECA/AUC	AfDB, AFRISTAT, RECs, UNDP, Member States
14	STG-Sustainable Development	AUC/AfDB/ECA	AFRISTAT, NEPAD, RECs, UNDP, Member States
15	STG-ICT for Statistical Production	AfDB/AUC	ECA, AFRISTAT, RECs, Member States, STCs, Centers of Excellence
16	STG-Mobilization of Political Will	AUC/AfDB	ECA, AFRISTAT, RECs, Member States
17	STG-Emerging Statistical Issues	AfDB/ECA/ACBF	AUC, AFRISTAT, RECs, UNDP, Centers of Excellence, Member States
18	STG-National Strategies for the Development of Statistics	AUC/AfDB/ECA	ACBF, AFRISTAT, RECs, UNDP, Centers of Excellence, Member States