

Moving from Statistical Silos to Statistical Blocs: Repackaging Development Indicators for Policy Uptake in Africa

Organization: Multilateral

Data Type: Official statistics, Survey data, Geospatial data, Administrative data, Artificial Intelligence, Census, Monitoring and evaluation, Data for SDG monitoring, Cross cutting

Region: Regional

Timeline: The commitment will be implemented over 24 months. In months 1-3, partners will establish governance arrangements, confirm participating institutions and select priority statistical blocs. In months 4-7, they will map indicator availability, sources, metadata, production frequency, dissemination practices, and policy-use gaps. In months 8-12, the common statistical-bloc framework and data-story templates will be developed. In months 13-18, pilot statistical blocs will be produced and reviewed with policy users and data producers. In months 19-21, findings will be refined, emerging data-source options assessed and dissemination products prepared. In months 22-24, partners will evaluate results, document lessons and prepare a scale-up plan for additional blocs, countries and regional use.

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Sponsoring Organization:

African Centre for Statistics (ACS) at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)

Supporting Organization(s):

STATAFRIC, AUC, AfDB

Objective:

The objective is to institutionalise an Africa Beyond the Numbers approach that repackages development indicators into policy-ready statistical blocs and country-led data stories. Each bloc will bring together related indicators, sources, metadata, quality gaps, production arrangements, dissemination practices and policy-use guidance. The commitment will support participating institutions to identify priority blocs, assess availability and comparability, integrate traditional and emerging data sources where appropriate, and produce narratives that explain why the numbers matter for policy sequencing, design, monitoring and evaluation. It will strengthen coordination between statisticians, data producers and policy users; improve trust and reuse of official statistics; and provide a scalable model for translating data into decisions across African development priorities.

Description:

Development indicators across Africa are often produced and disseminated as isolated numbers, even when the policy issues they describe are interdependent. This limits their usefulness for policy design, monitoring,

and evaluation. Countries and partners face persistent gaps in availability, regularity, comparability, metadata, source ownership, and dissemination across administrative, survey, census, geospatial, and emerging data sources. As a result, users see scattered indicators without a clear explanation of relationships, causes and effects, alternative measures, or macro-micro linkages. The problem is therefore not only fragmented data systems; it is weak policy uptake because statistics are not packaged as coherent, country-led data stories. This commitment addresses that gap by moving from siloed production and reporting of indicators to statistical blocs that make related indicators visible, comparable, interpretable and actionable.

The commitment will establish a multi-institutional working group, select priority statistical blocs, and map current production, dissemination and use of the related indicators. It will develop a common statistical-bloc framework covering indicator definitions, source mapping, metadata, comparability checks, emerging data-source options, quality considerations, and policy-use narratives. Pilot blocs will be produced for selected national or regional development priorities, showing how indicators relate to policy sequencing, complementarities, macro-micro linkages and SDG monitoring. The strategy will combine technical review, user engagement, data-story development, capacity-building and dissemination through policy-ready products. Intended outcomes include more coherent indicator packages, stronger national ownership of data stories, better communication between data producers and policy users, improved reuse of existing data, and clearer evidence for policy design, monitoring and evaluation.

Progress will be monitored using a quarterly implementation matrix and partner review sessions. Measures will include the number of statistical blocs selected, indicators mapped, source and metadata profiles completed, comparability issues identified, emerging data-source options assessed, institutions engaged, staff trained, data stories produced and dissemination products released. Evaluation will assess whether the blocs improve policy relevance, coherence, usability and uptake, including feedback from ministries, NSOs, researchers, civil society and development partners. Success will be judged by whether users can better understand indicator relationships, select appropriate measures, identify data gaps, and apply the outputs to policy design, monitoring or evaluation. Lessons will be shared through ECA and partner platforms and used to refine subsequent Africa Beyond the Numbers products.