

UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa Strategic Plan

Our Mission

To support Member States in effectively capturing alternative data sources, applying appropriate data science tools and techniques for their use in providing credible and insightful statistics.

1. Background

The UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa is a collaboration between the National Institute of Rwanda (NISR) and the United Nations Economics for Africa (UNECA). The partnership is established via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). (Please see Annex 1 for details of the MOU).

2. Strategic Direction

Introduction

This plan sets out the vision and ambition for the UNGP Regional Hub for Africa. It sets out the framework for its inception and ongoing role to provide a hub for collaboration, action-oriented knowledge, technology, and innovation. It will enable the application of innovative technology and data science methods in the use of big data/alternative data sources and will provide a much-needed platform to further data science projects in Africa. The plan covers the period 2022/23 in detail, with a view to 2023/24 and beyond.

Objectives

The main objectives of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa, are to:

- Aid the facilitation of cross-border collaboration projects that seek to apply big data, alternative data sources, and data science, to complement official statistics and fill data gaps for SDG indicators,
- Provide knowledge on newly developed methods, algorithms and tools, via webinars, seminars and the UN Global Platform, and
- Provide training in the use of big data and data science for the community of official statisticians in Africa.

Workstreams

To realize the above objectives, the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa will conduct the following activities across four workstreams or pillars:

a. Advocacy/Leadership

Providing the role of champion or advocate for the use of big data and data science techniques across the region. Promoting use cases and applications while sharing the benefits to be gained, thus supporting the data science activities within the wider National Statistics System.

b. Research

Research on the use of big data, alternative data sources, and data science for the development of new statistical methods and techniques. The research will explore new data sources, build prototypes, and provide use cases that will be disseminated for wider use. In the initial stages of establishing the Regional Hub, research activities will focus on delivering smaller projects designed to build coding skills, confidence and impact.

c. Capability building

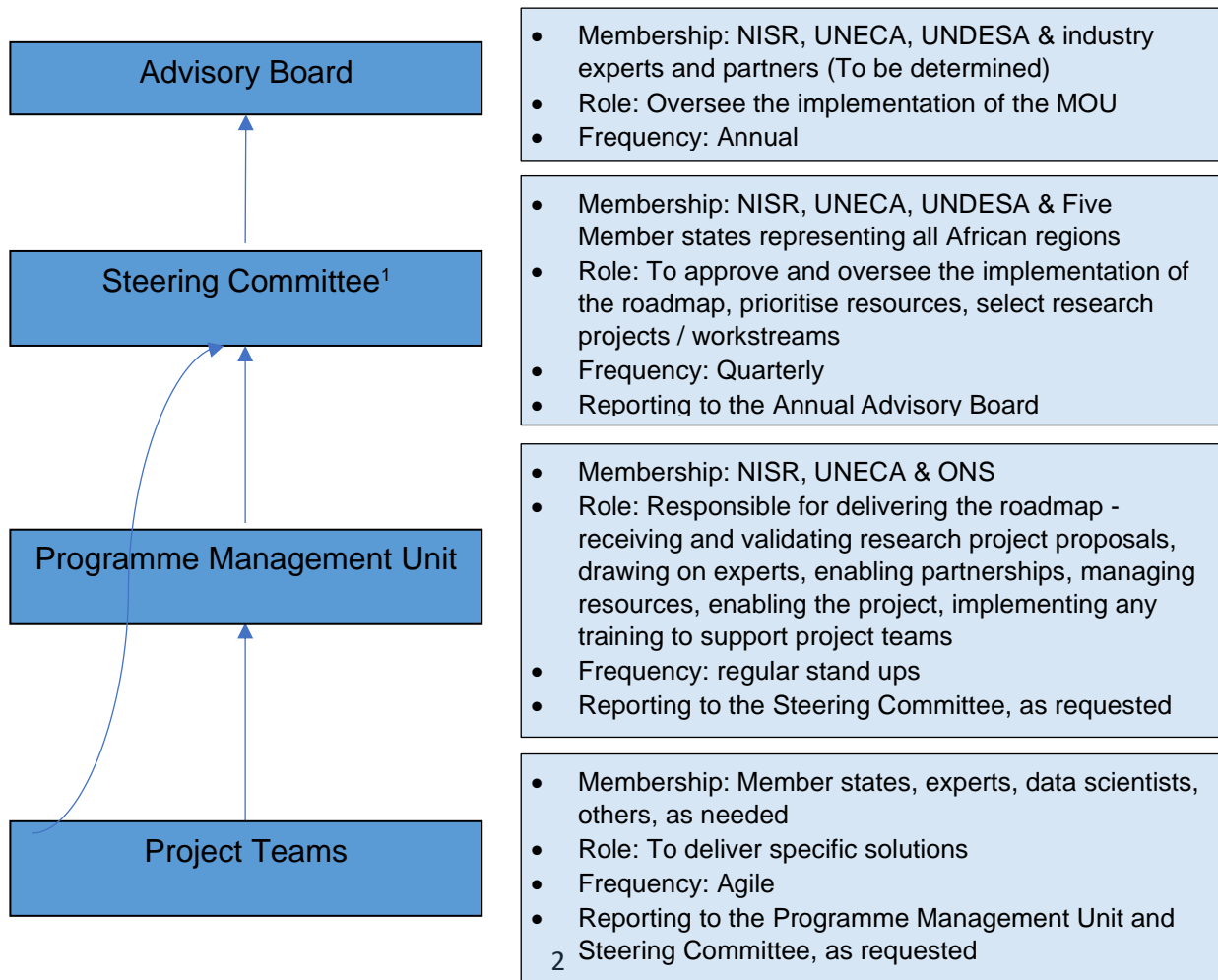
Capability building and training for statisticians and data scientists from national, regional and global statistical offices. Working closely with the UN Task Team on Training, Competencies and Capacity Development, who will provide support via the further development of the UN Big Data Training Catalogue, to meet needs of African member states. The UNGP Regional Hub for Africa may also coordinate and/or provide various training activities in the form of webinars, seminars, face-to-face training, hackathons and workshops on data science for the modernisation of official statistics.

d. United National Global Platform

Further development and maintenance of the United Nations Global Platform to facilitate collaboration projects, enable knowledge exchange on newly developed methods, algorithms and tools, and to facilitate the provision of training - in collaboration with other regional hubs.

3. Governance and Reporting Structure for the UN Regional Hub for Africa

The following governance structure will ensure the implementation of the Strategic Plan and overarching Memorandum of Understanding.



¹ – The Steering Committee Terms of Reference can be found at Annex 2

4. High-Level Work Plan 2022/23

By when	Expected achievement
Leadership (NISR/UNECA - Yusuf/Oliver)	
7 th June 2022	Agree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Governance Structure for the UN GP Regional Hub for Africa The Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee Complete
Mid-Jul	Agree name of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa
Mid-Jul 2022	NISR/UNECA to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite 5 member states into the Steering Committee (Joseph) Draft UN GP Regional Hub for Africa Strategic Plan
End-Jul 2022	Hold first virtual Steering Committee meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve and sign-off the UN GP Regional Hub for Africa Strategic Plan Approve and sign-off the high-level work plan for 2022/23 Review and endorse first collaborative project (1)
Mid-August 2022	Complete paper for STATCOM in October 2022 – ECA to lead, agreed with Regional Hub membership. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Plan Proposals for membership of Steering Committee and Advisory Board A statement that we will share initial findings from NSO survey
End-Sep 2022	Steering Committee Meeting
24-26 Oct 2022	Present to the African Statistical Commission (Papers by 15 th Aug) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include initial findings from the NSO survey
End-Dec 2022	Steering Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include final results from NSO survey
End-Mar 2023	Steering Committee Meeting
End-Apr 2023	Advisory Board Report and Meeting
Research – Managed by the Programme Management Unit (PMU)	
End-June 2022	Establish the UN GP Regional Hub Programme Management Unit (PMU). Complete
Mid-July	Establish function and ways of working. Include statement around how the Regional Hub will invite project proposals from NSOs
End-Sept 2022	PMU to support the development of three collaborative project brief proposals (with project teams): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Web scraping Prices for CPI (end-July 22) Automation for CPI – already started in Namibia (end-Aug 22) Earth observation data for land mapping/land use/agriculture

	To include outcomes, delivery timeline and milestones. (end-Sept 22)
End-Aug 2022	PMU to establish the project team for Project (1), training requirements and expert support. Initiate Project (1), with PMU monitoring practices in place.
End-Aug 2022	Undertake survey across African member states to understand the current big data/data science maturity of NSOs
End-Sep 2022	Provide update report for Steering Committee Meeting
End Sep 2022	PMU to establish the project team for Project (3), with understanding of the training and expert support requirements. Initiate project (3), with PMU monitoring practices in place.
End-Dec 2022	Provide update report for Steering Committee Meeting – Report on NSO survey results
End-Mar 2023	Provide update report for Steering Committee Meeting
Capability Building	
End Aug	Training plans in place to support specific training requirements of the Project Teams
End Dec	Capability Building Plan for approval and sign-off at Steering Committee meeting. To include, where appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar/Webinar Series (monthly) • African Art of the Possible • Face-to-face training • Hackathons • Workshops • Plans to further develop the UNGP Big Data Learning Catalogue
UN Global Platform	
End Aug	Ensure protocols are in place for NSOs to easily gain access to the UNGP
End Sep	Issue guidance/information for the use of the UNGP by NSOs
	Further populate the UNGP with use cases from African NSOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana's automation projects • UNECA Dashboard development for Census • NISR automation projects • etc
Advocacy	

End Sept 2022	Deliver first webinar to promote the Hub and its services
End-Dec 2022	Develop Advocacy Champions to promote the Regional Hub and assist with resource mobilisation

**Annex 1 - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
ON THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL PLATFORM REGIONAL HUB FOR AFRICA
BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA**

WHEREAS the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs is within the United Nations system the global lead for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the global lead for the community of official statistics (hereinafter referred to as “the United Nations/DESA”);

WHEREAS the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa is within the United Nations system the African lead for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the African lead for the community of official statistics (hereinafter referred to as “the United Nations/ECA”);

WHEREAS the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) is a government institution in Rwanda, which is the main producer of the national official statistics and the coordinator of the national statistical system, and represents the Government of the Republic of Rwanda (hereinafter referred to as “the Government of Rwanda”);

WHEREAS the United Nations/DESA, the United Nations/ECA and the Government of Rwanda are committed towards strengthening international cooperation in economic and social affairs, and particularly towards advancing the use of Big Data for official statistics and for monitoring of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

WHEREAS the United Nations/DESA, the United Nations/ECA and the Government of Rwanda have expressed the commitment to detailing the arrangements and modalities for establishing the United Nations Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa at the Data Science

Campus and Training Institute of NISR in Kigali, Rwanda (hereinafter referred to as “UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa”);

NOW THEREFORE, the United Nations/DESA, the United Nations/ECA and the Government of Rwanda (hereinafter together referred to as “Parties” and individually as a “Party”) have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

Purpose, Objectives and Activities

1.1 Purpose and Objective

The purpose of this agreement is to provide a framework of cooperation and understanding and to facilitate collaboration between the Parties regarding their shared objective in innovation for official statistics and SDG indicators. The establishment of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa is to be globally recognized as a collaborative and action-oriented knowledge, technology and innovation hub, which will bring innovative technology and data science methods in the use of Big Data together and will provide a much-needed platform to further the data science projects in Africa.

The UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa has as its main objectives the facilitation of projects in the use of Big Data and data science for official statistics and SDG indicators, the sharing of knowledge on newly developed methods, algorithms and tools, and the provision of training in the use of Big Data and data science for the community of official statisticians in Africa.

1.2 Activities

To realize the above objectives, the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa conducts the following activities:

- research on the use of Big Data and data science for the development of new statistical methods and techniques;
- capacity-building and training to statisticians and data scientists from national, regional and global statistical offices;
- international seminars and workshops on data science and modernization of official statistics;

- further development and maintenance of the United Nations Global Platform - in collaboration with other regional hubs - for the sharing of trusted data, trusted methods and trusted learning among the community of official statistics and its stakeholders;

ARTICLE II

The Organization and Management of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa

2.1 Organization

The UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa will be hosted at the Data Science Campus and Training Institute of NISR in Kigali, Rwanda, within the rules and regulations of the Government of Rwanda and will be managed by NISR in collaboration with the United Nations/ECA.

2.2. Agreed Project Activities

The agreed project activities of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa to be carried out under this Memorandum will be determined for each calendar year in detail within a 2-year Programme of Work. The Programme of Work and its progress will be reported to the United Nations Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics, which represents the United Nations Statistical Commission in accordance with the request of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

2.3 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee is established comprising the USG of the United Nations/DESA, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations/ECA, the Director General of NISR of Rwanda, and any additional members that the Parties should agree upon. The members of the Committee may have their representatives participate on their behalf in the meetings of the Committee, provided that at least one meeting per year shall be held. The Committee shall discuss, review and advise on the formulation and implementation of the annual project activities in a 2-year Programme of Work through amicable consultations. Moreover, the Steering Committee will approve the annual progress report to the United Nations Statistical Commission.

2.4 Preparation of Programme of Work and Reporting to United Nations Statistical Commission

The Steering Committee will appoint a representative from United Nations/ECA and a representative from NISR Rwanda who will jointly prepare a programme of activities of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa to be carried out under this Memorandum for each calendar year in a 2-year Programme of Work. At the request of the Steering Committee, these two appointed representatives will also prepare an annual progress report

on the activities of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa to the United Nations Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics, which represents the United Nations Statistical Commission.

2.5 Coordination

The United Nations Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics advises the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa and the other hubs of the UN Global Platform on programming and operational issues and will put forward suggestions to guide the Hub's programme implementation.

The UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa coordinates its activities with the other hubs of the UN Global Platform through separate agreements.

ARTICLE III

Support and Inputs by the Government of Rwanda

The support and inputs to be provided by the Government of Rwanda will include:

- office space and administrative facilities;
- technical and administrative staff;
- training venues;
- lecturers and trainees;
- managing the affairs of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa;
- technical, logistical and administrative support; and
- support to the implementation of the agreed activities in close cooperation with the United Nations/ECA and the United Nations/DESA.

ARTICLE IV

Support and Inputs by the United Nations/ECA

The support and inputs to be provided by the United Nations/ECA will include:

- technical advisory services and support;
- consultancies and guidance to the activities of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa
- mobilization of international support including experts and resources;

- dissemination of the results of the joint activities developed under this Memorandum, through publications, information and Internet networking in the context of the global statistical system; and
- support to the implementation of the agreed activities in close cooperation with the United Nations/DESA and the Government of Rwanda.

ARTICLE V

Support and Inputs by the United Nations/DESA

The support and inputs to be provided by the United Nations/DESA will include:

- technical advisory services and support;
- consultancies and guidance to the activities of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa
- reporting to the United Nations Statistical Commission through the United Nations Global Working Group on Big Data for Official Statistics;
- mobilization of international support including experts and resources; and
- support to the implementation of the agreed activities in close cooperation with the United Nations/ECA and the Government of Rwanda

ARTICLE VI

Other Financial Arrangements

Without prejudice to the possible contributions of funds by the Parties to other joint activities, which will be governed by separate agreements, each of the Parties will finance directly its inputs for implementation of its activities to the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa in accordance with the Parties' respective financial regulations, rules and procedures.

ARTICLE VII

Settlement of Disputes

Any dispute concerning the interpretation or application of this Memorandum will be settled by the Parties through friendly consultations.

ARTICLE VIII

Cooperation between the Parties

There will be close cooperation between the Parties to facilitate the implementation of this Memorandum. To that end, they will consult with each other as and when appropriate and will make available to each other all such information and assistance as may be reasonably requested.

ARTICLE IX

Entry into force and termination

This Memorandum shall enter into force on the date of its signature. This Memorandum shall remain in force until any Party considers that the objectives of the UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa have been accomplished or that its activities can no longer appropriately and effectively be carried out, at which time this Memorandum may be terminated by mutual consent or by any Party serving sixty (60) days written notice reaching the other Parties.

The Memorandum is signed in New York on 3 March 2020. It is in duplicate in both English and French, and the two versions have the same legal effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the United Nations/DESA, the United Nations/ECA and the Government of Republic of Rwanda acting through their duly authorized representatives, have caused this Memorandum to be signed.

The African Regional Hub will be coordinated by a Steering Committee composed of:

- Director ACS of UNECA, NISR and UNDESA
- Five national statistical office representatives from Africa, who will rotate every 2 years. The five representatives of the rotation will be the bureau membership of the UN Statistical commission for Africa (STATCOM) and membership will rotate in line with the STATCOM Bureau rotation which is every two years

Objectives

The Steering Committee will ensure the successful delivery of activities to support the functioning of the African Regional Hub, through utilisation of expertise and resource from the Committee and other partners. This includes:

- i. Provide the strategic direction and leadership and coordination to the African Regional Hub.
- ii. Promote and foster collaboration with other stakeholders – includes approving the objectives of the regional hub.
- iii. Provide strategic guidance to create synergy with other stakeholders and other Regional Hubs
- iv. Provide guidance on Regional Hub activities and issues and the delivery of its strategic objectives
- v. Approve work plan and communication plan prepared by the Regional Hub Programme Management Unit
- vi. Sign off relevant projects based on benefits they provide to members states/they bring to data science development
- vii. Conducting regular meetings to review the progress, resources and providing direction and recommendations to ensure that the agreed deliverables are delivered to a satisfactory standard
- viii. Mobilize resources for the implementation of the project
- ix. Review how the Regional Hub is working across Member States
- x. Keep the principles, policies, and procedures of the Regional Hub up to date
- xi. Resolve any high-level issues that inhibit the Regional Hub achieving its goals
- xii. Identify strategic risks to meeting Regional Hub objectives and provide guidance for their mitigation
- xiii. Oversee and guide public engagement and communication strategies
- xiv. Provide guidance on the opportunities for the development of the Regional Hub

- xv. Co-opt experts and organisations into the Steering Committee on a case-by-case basis and according to need

Method of working

The Steering Committee will:

- prioritise online activities along with periodic face-to-face meetings
- meet once every quarter
- operate using the official languages of English and French
- invite others, as needed, to meetings, without making them formal members, e.g. Academia, Civil Society, NGOs, global partners, private sector, invited experts, reports from the Project Teams
- Identify Champions/Ambassadors to represent the Regional Hub in other forums: UN Global Platform, Training, Communications, African Union

Responsibilities and Conduct of Steering Committee Members

The members of the Hub Steering Committee are required to be up to date with the trends in climate finance. They are also expected to study all documents and thoroughly prepare for the meetings of the Steering Committee. They should demonstrate commitment to the success of the Hub in enabling countries to access and effectively utilise available resources. They are to serve as ambassadors for the Hub's work to facilitate data science and big data adoption in Africa's national statistics institutes. Finally, they should respect confidentiality and privacy related information deliberated by the Hub.

Chairpersonship

The Steering Committee of the Africa Regional Hub for Big Data will be co-chaired by the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the Director General of the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda.

Responsibilities of the Chairperson

The overall responsibility of the chairpersons will be to represent the Steering Committee, oversee and guide the deliberations of the Steering Committee and to ensure that decisions taken are actionable and are in line with the objectives of the Africa Regional Hub for Big Data.

Secretariat Services

The Programme Management Unit (PMU) for the Regional Hub shall render secretariat services to the Steering Committee. Secretariat services will include preparation of documents for the meetings of the Africa Regional Hub Steering Committee including invitations, agenda, minutes and other relevant documents. The PMU will also follow up on assignments related to the work of the Steering Committee.

Revision of terms of reference

The Steering Committee may revise its terms of references as and when necessary

Service to be provided

The UN Global Platform Regional Hub for Africa will provide:

- A physical space in Africa to access UNGP services
- Advice and signposting to trusted resources for data science and Big Data for official statistics
- Capacity-building for data science and Big Data for official statistics
- Research and development for data science and Big Data for official statistics
- Administration of UNGP to create space for member states.