

Transformation in a Generation

2020 END OF YEAR REPORT





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ABOUT ACET

The **African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET)** is a pan-African institute that produces research, offers policy advice and connects key stakeholders so that African countries are better positioned for smart, inclusive, and sustainable development. ACET was established in 2008 to focus on the "how-to" of policy reform, seeking to engage the right people at the right time to accelerate transformation. Maintaining a core staff in Accra, we tap into an extensive network of African and global experts to further Africa's transformation and we take a unique approach that combines analysis, advice and advocacy, underpinned by a commitment to partnerships that deliver results.

ACET helps African countries strengthen their transformation agendas for a stronger and more robust post-pandemic recovery. We focus on five program areas: economic management and governance; youth employment and skills; private sector development; regional integration; and gender. ACET believes that sustainable economic growth can come only with DEPTH: Diversified production; competitive Exports; increased Productivity; upgraded Technology; and improved Human well-being.



OUR VISION

Our vision is of an economically transformed Africa within a generation.



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to help government and business deliver economic transformation that improves lives.



ACET is an economic policy institute supporting Africa's long-term growth through transformation. ""



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020 ACET continued to promote economic transformation at national, regional, and global levels. We did this through our flagship programs – the African Transformation Report, the African Transformation Index, the African Transformation Forum, the Transformation Leadership Program, and a rich portfolio of research, advisory support, and partnership engagements.

Assessing Impact

ACET contributes to the transformation of African countries by promoting economic growth with DEPTH (Diversification, Export competitiveness, Productivity, Technological upgrades and Human well-being). We use a blended approach which provides critical analysis of policy issues, advisory support to governments and development partners, and advocacy at the international, regional, and country levels.

On the international stage in 2020, ACET worked with the Group of 20 (G20) Compact with Africa (CwA) and provided support to the European Union/ African Union (EU/AU) Partnership for Digitalization. Throughout the year, we engaged with members of the G20 and the Think20 (T20) at high-level forums and workshops on blended finance and investment, infrastructure, fiscal risks of public-private partnerships (PPPs), energy and water. Our briefing notes, reports, and peer-to-peer learning workshops created space for engagement with policy makers of G20 countries and the 12 Compact countries and indirectly impacted the work of international development partners such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the EU.

- Following our study on the local dimension of finance, ACET organized a CwA peer learning event with 10 of the 12 Compact countries, and development finance institutions (DFIs) such as the World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB). At events hosted by the G20, T20, United Nations General Assembly, and OECD, among others, we maintained advocacy for DFIs to consider the local context when providing finance. Subsequently the OECD, which participated in the initial research and the peer-learning event, reflected these recommendations in its guidelines for blended finance (Principle 3).
- We also facilitated a high-level meeting between the Chief Economic Advisor to Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Chief Economists and Economic Advisors to governments in seven CwA countries to discuss the economic situation in their countries and suggest how the initiative

- could best move forward in the face of COVID-19. ACET also signed an open letter calling on finance ministers of the G20 and the IMF to "urgently support" a US\$3 trillion allocation of IMF Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) as a way to aid developing countries in the face of COVID-19.
- Under Germany's presidency of the EU Council and as part of the EU-AU Digitalization Project, ACET facilitated four virtual expert meetings and presented policy recommendations for senior EU, AU, and member state officials on the challenges and opportunities of digitalization. The discussions were structured around four central pillars: strategic investments and finance; education and skills; governance and regulation; and the implementation of EU-AU agreements. Originally intended for policy makers at the EU-AU summit, we saw our contributions indirectly reflected in decision making by EU leadership as European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced, together with the German presidency of the EU Council, the establishment of the Digital4Development (D4D) platform.

At the **regional level**, we conducted advocacy for action on COVID-19 and other key issues faced by African countries with the support of the Transformation Leadership Panel (TLP). TLP meetings in February (in person), May (virtual), and November (virtual) 2020 discussed challenges related to domestic resource mobilization, jobs and economic transformation, Europe-Africa dialogue, gender, and the international response to the pandemic in Africa.

- In July, our 10-point policy paper on post-COVID-19 growth and recovery was endorsed by the TLP and distributed to AU member countries. The World Bank subsequently engaged ACET on discussions around strategies to implement the paper's recommendations.
- Subsequently, ACET held a webinar on COVID-19 and good governance that was attend by policy makers (Chef de cabinet of the Prime Minister of Morocco, and the Director General of Tunisia's

Ministry of Finance), think tanks in Ethiopia and Côte d'Ivoire) as well as health experts, anticorruption agencies, and others.

At the **country level**, ACET's work covered 15 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia. We worked with local partners and researchers on multi-country studies on youth employment and skills, extractives, and gender and investment. In Ghana and Rwanda, ACET analysis was directly requested to support government policies and programs. In Ghana, ACET developed a landscape study on industrial innovation at the request of the Ministry of Finance. In Rwanda, we were approached by the Rwandan Development Board to discuss a national strategy for contextualization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and for the development of investment-ready small and medium enterprises (SMEs) for global value chains.

Delivering in a Global Pandemic

As with many organizations, we achieved 2020 goals despite the challenges of adjusting to a global pandemic. Restrictions to movement, travel, and in-person meetings meant that research teams conducted fewer field visits, workshops were cancelled, and research delayed. Regrettably, we were forced to reschedule the launch of the third edition of our flagship African Transformation Report to 2021. We also had to reconfigure the African Transformation Forum, which was planned to convene in Nairobi, Kenya in 2020, as a virtual event. It will take place in summer 2021.

Despite these challenges, our staff, consultants, local institutional partners, and stakeholders found new ways to collaborate, improvise and deliver on targets. In 2020, ACET was ranked third among the 2020 Top Think Tanks in sub-Saharan Africa by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania.¹

 Through our analysis, we provided thought leadership and explored transformation themes in 22 research products (reports, briefs, case studies). These and other research work were disseminated through the publication of 30 content pieces on ACET's website and other online and traditional media sources.

1: https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=think_tanks

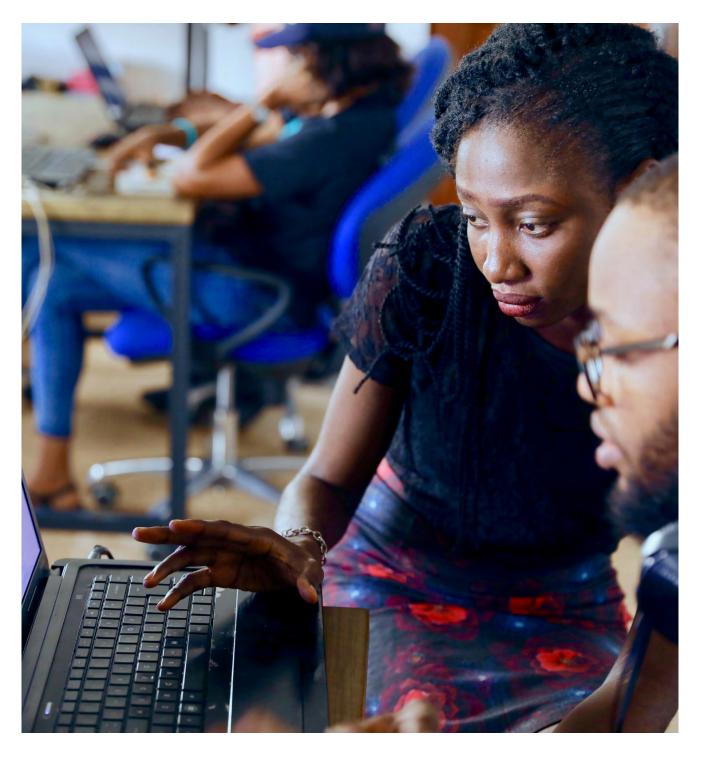
- Flagship projects: We completed individual draft reports on the four thematic areas of the African Transformation Report (population and demographics, climate change, regional integration, and technology and innovation), and revised the African Transformation Index (ATI) with the addition of new indicators to expand the coverage of the Index.
- Thematic work: ACET produced a number of papers spanning thematic topics in agriculture, blended finance, public private partnerships, financial inclusion, infrastructure, trade and exports, and more. These included a global scan for innovative efforts to foster market development and strengthen linkages between policy design and areas such as employment, skills development and youth leadership, land tenure and agro-processing. Another study explored policy options to improve market performance of smallholder farmers, while another addressed the impact of economic processing zones on the implementation of the AfCFTA. In Ghana, we completed a product space analysis of key sectors and benchmarked the small and medium enterprise space in preparation for our launch of a new SME program. We completed a political economy analysis that explored the potential for the use of evidence in three sectors: economic development, public financial management, and health. We also completed four cases studies of infrastructure projects (recent or under construction) in Africa and prepared a final report, Accelerating and Scaling Up Quality Infrastructure in Africa.
- Partnerships: Through partnerships like the CwA and the Reform Partnership Program, we completed studies such as the seven-country study (Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ethiopia, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana) Pathways to Accelerate Investment, as well as a special report on Togo that focused on areas for enhanced investment.
- ACET provided policy advice and advocated for uptake of research recommendations in 18 policy dialogues and workshops—10 of which were ACET-led—and over 45 external events (both in-person and virtual). On average, 86.5% of participants surveyed by ACET expressed satisfaction with the ACET-led policy workshops.

Internally, we have taken steps to improve our capacity, our institutional structures, and our operational structures in significant ways. At the onset of the pandemic, we launched a digital transformation initiative to bolster staff capacity to work from home. We also recruited for 10 key staff positions including an External Vice President, Director of Research, and Head of the Private Sector Development Unit to support our ongoing capacity needs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2020, we developed a new five-year strategy "Securing the Future: Supporting Africa's Recovery & Economic Transformation". The 2021-2025 strategy builds on lessons from our experience and looks forward to a new economic landscape impacted by a global pandemic. The new strategy will focus on helping African countries strengthen their transformation agendas for a more robust post-pandemic recovery. We will implement this strategy through five program areas: Economic Management and Governance, Youth Employment and Skills, Private Sector Development, Regional Integration, and Gender Equality. Following the strategy development, we started the process of revising our Theory of Change to reflect these new objectives.

Securing the Future:
Supporting Africa's
Recovery & Economic
Transformation. 33

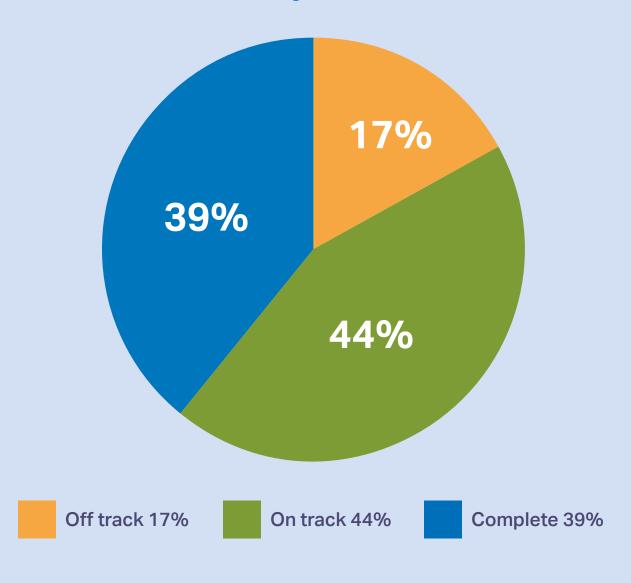


ACET WORK PROGRAM: 2020 PROJECT PORTFOLIO

In 2020, ACET's program team managed a portfolio of **16 programs and projects** and completed several supporting activities across six operational areas. Four of the 16 were flagship projects, eight were partnership projects, and the remaining four were thematic projects.

By year's end, two of the projects and all operational activities had been completed, four projects were off track with a revised plan in place to complete them, and 10 were on track.

ACET Projects Status



List of Projects and Key Activities in 2020

PROJECT	KEY ACTIVITIES						
African Transformation Report (ATR)	 Produced drafts of the individual reports on the four thematic areas, the main ATR report, and the infographic summary of the report. Reframed the core issues in the overview report to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on African economies, the positioning of regional integration as a common thread across thematic areas, and better alignment of these themes with ACET's DEPTH indicators. 	Off track					
African Transformation Index (ATI)	 Upgraded original ATI variables with new indicators to enhance the coverage of the Index. Collected data for previous and new variables and updated the Index to reflect the period 2000-2018. Compared with original Index to test robustness and shared for external review 	Off track					
African Transformation Forum (ATF)	 Revised original agenda to the new format due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Developed a database of potential invitees, panelists, moderators, and other facilitators. Identified six country Presidents as representatives for each region. Engaged various service providers and suppliers to support content development for a virtual launch. 	Off track					
Transformation Leadership Panel (TLP)	 Organized three TLP panel meetings in February, May and November 2020 that addressed challenges related to domestic resource mobilization, employment, Europe-Africa dialogue, gender, the impact of COVID-19 on Africa, and the international response to the pandemic in Africa so far. Endorsed and signed the 10-point plan for post-COVID-19 recovery and growth and assisted with its distribution to the AU. 	On track					
Youth, Employment, and Skills	 Completed all country-level inception meetings and data collection, and produced draft country reports. Draft country reports reviewed by internal and external reviewers. Organized validation workshops for Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia and incorporated feedback into drafts. Began production of the synthesis report. 	Off track					

PROJECT	KEY ACTIVITIES	STATUS
Agriculture	 Global Scan Finalized the technical specifications for the Open Society Foundations Global Scan portal. Engaged with stakeholders to obtain feedback on the portal and its objectives. Launched the Global Scan portal on July 15, 2020. Commenced internal discussions with management on how to assimilate the portal into the Pan-African Coalition for Transformation (PACT) and our advocacy programs in general. Market Linkages Study Finalized field data reports and prepared draft country reports. Completed internal and external reviews of reports. Organized country validation workshops for Ghana and Kenya in October 2020 and incorporated feedback. 	On track
	October 2020 and incorporated feedback. • Began production of draft synthesis report.	
Private Sector Development	 Broad PSD Program Launched a study with the International Senior Lawyers Project (ISLP) to review legal/regulatory aspects and studies of the PSD work. Recruited multiple team positions including portfolio coordinator, business analysts, and subject matter experts. Organized a private sector development strategy retreat. Promoting Sustainable Export Processing Zones (SEPZ) Initiated research for the SEPZ-EPZ Landscape Assessment and Benchmarking Study; completed inception report, literature review and field surveys. Completed consultations with key stakeholders and partners including the Ghana Free Zones Board, the association of companies operating in the free zones, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Ghana Export Promotion Authority. Completed study or research paper on the impact of EPZs on the implementation of the AfCFTA and vice versa. Integrating Local Content SMEs into Global Value Chains Initiated two key activities: an analysis of the sector, and a coaching and mentorship program for local content SMEs. LC-SME Development – Value Chain and Product Space Analysis: Completed the product space analysis and began preparation for the second phase of the project – value chain analysis. 	On track

KEY ACTIVITIES

PROJECT

STATUS

Coaching and mentorship program for Local Content SMEs: Developed and reviewed a coaching and mentorship framework and developed profiles of mentors and PSD expert advisors. Established partnerships with organizations such as the Silicon Valley-based M10 Society and the Community of Local Experts (COLE) Collective Hub in Ghana and the Netherlands. Engaged a lead consultant for SME support, technical assistance and mentorship program and a technical delivery partner for the firm diagnosis/due diligence. Perpond Zero Harm Project **Refined the methodological approach and outlined lessons learnt during the first implementation year. Developed a workflow manual in collaboration with the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) team. Developed research questions. Completed community visits and data collection in Ghana, Guinea and Burkina Faso. **Strengthening Compact countries' capacity** with Africa (CwA) Strengthening Compact countries' capacity completed a workshop in February 2020 to establish communication and coordination between ACET and GIZ-RP to harness support for Reform Partner countries at the intersection between the Compact initiative and the Reform Partnership Framework. Commissioned and completed three case studies on blended finance. Collaborated with the UN Economic Commission for Africa to complete a report on fiscal risks of public-private partnerships. Completed two reports on COVID-19 and governance-related policy actions to inform a peer learning event on January 28, 2021. Developed an outline for the COVID-19 economic response program. Drafted a preliminary report of industrial innovation in reform countries. Initiated and completed a seven-country study (Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ethiopia, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana), titled Pathways to Accelerating Investment Opportunities. Completed a special report on Togo that focused on how areas for investment are aligned with reform commitments.			
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KEY ACTIVITIES

PROJECT

G20 Compact with Africa (CwA) (CONTINUED)	 Bi-Annual Peer Review of CwA Self-Assessment Developed ACET's 5th peer review note on key policy issues facing CwA countries in the context of the pandemic. Prepared a 6th peer review note on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis at the macro, sector, and firm levels. Participated in two African Advisory Group meetings in May and October 2020. Organized private sector participation in the African Advisory Group meeting in October 2020. Advocacy for Africa and the CwA Participated in the first T20 meeting on energy and water under the Saudi presidency of the G20 in Riyadh in January. Presented ACET's CwA policy note at the January T20 meeting in Riyadh. Facilitated a high-level meeting between the Chief Economic Advisor to Chancellor Angela Merkel and the Chief Economists and Economic Advisors to governments in the CwA countries. Served on the T20 Infrastructure and Financing Task Force and the T20 Africa Standing Committee. 	On track
Strengthening the Use of Evidence for Development Impact (SEDI)	 Hosted a validation workshop with SEDI consortium partners and the DFID Ghana team in January 2020. Produced and submitted a political economy analysis report in March 2020. 	On track
Global Delivery Initiative (GDI)	Finalized reports on the three case studies (in Mozambique and Tanzania).	Completed
Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) — Barriers to Women's Employment in the Future of Work	 Produced a project inception report and two draft country-level inception reports for Ghana and Senegal. Data collection completed in October 2020; report drafts in progress. 	On track
Structural Transformation and Economic Growth (STEG)	 Convened a virtual workshop in August 2020. Convened four country-specific virtual workshops for Ghana, Ethiopia, Zambia and Uganda between September and December 2020. 	On track
Digitalization for European Union and African Union Dialogue	 Prepared a policy brief on digitalization in May. Completed four virtual expert meetings on digitalization in May-June 2020 	On track

STATUS

PROJECT	KEY ACTIVITIES	STATUS
Identifying Specific Non- Tariff Measures in Ghana and South Africa and Estimating their Impact and Actionability	 Undertook desk research, stakeholder mapping, and stakeholder consultations. Produced and submitted report following feedback from UK Department for International Trade (DIT) review. 	Completed
Infrastructure Cycles Phase I	 Completed four cases studies of infrastructure projects in Africa. ACET and OECD DEV convened a High-Level Think Group and a Senior Technical Experts Group between February and June 2020. Convened three global policy dialogues. Prepared a final report, Accelerating and Scaling Up Quality Infrastructure in Africa. 	Completed
OPERATIONAL AREA	KEY ACTIVITIES	STATUS
Communications	 Published 30 content pieces in the form of reports, discussion papers, press releases, blogs, and articles. Granted interviews to both regional and local press. Initiated a process of building a new and improved website. 	Completed
Human Resource (HR)	 Recruited 10 staff members to fill the growing resource need. Conducted inductions for new staff. Finalized the organization's recruitment policy. Completed revision of ACET's staff handbook. 	Completed
Program Management	 Began development of a new Theory of Change to align with ACET's new strategy. Integrated a new monitoring tool – Project Implementation Plan (PIP) – into the program management structure. 	Completed
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	 Implemented the new monitoring tool (PIP). Submitted 26 external reports to various donors. Updated ACET's results framework. Met with a World Bank M&E specialist to review the Bank's M&E framework for reporting. 	Completed
Finance/IT/ Administration	 Completed financial audit for 2019. Board approved and signed Financial Statement. Prepared and submitted financial reports to donors. 	Completed
Resource Mobilization	Prepared and submitted proposals and bids.	Completed



African Transformation Flagship Projects

African Transformation Report

The COVID-19 crisis has brought unprecedented challenges to Africa. Amid the pressure of the pandemic, however, African leaders have worked together to save lives and confront the crisis head on. This successful, collective action has made it clearer than ever before that countries accomplish more together—and that Africa's future is increasingly integrated.

The African Transformation Report: Integrating to Transform (ATR3) will be the third edition of ACET's flagship report. Its premise is that even though the African Continental Free Trade Area is an important step towards regional market integration, a truly transformative COVID-19 recovery requires broad collaboration on other shared concerns that are unconfined by borders—in particular job growth, climate change, technology and innovation, and regional public goods. The report will be published as a suite of documents consisting of:

- The main report, with an overview chapter and four thematic chapters;
- An infographic summary of the report; and
- Four in-depth studies on the four thematic areas.

The scheduled launch of ATR3 was delayed by a few challenges. After the first draft of the report was completed in Q3, internal review prompted a revision to reframe the core issues to reflect (i) the impact of COVID-19 on African economies; (ii) the positioning of regional integration as a common thread across thematic areas; and (iii) better alignment of these themes with ACET's DEPTH indicators, a common measure of long-term transformation across ATRs. This extensive revision was completed in December 2020. The report has been through a rigorous external peer review by World Bank experts and officials. The comments are being incorporated into various parts of the report, which will then go into production in Q1/Q2 2021. The report will be officially launched as part of the virtual African Transformation Forum.

African Transformation Index

ACET is producing an update of the African Transformation Index through enhancement of the ATI variables with new indicators to expand the coverage of the Index. The notable additions include the Gini coefficient (to represent income

inequality) and gender inequality; both have been added to the human well-being component of the Index. Furthermore, policy variables representing the overall environment for growth, skills and technology, domestic resource mobilization, infrastructure and agricultural and industrial transformation will be used to help explain why and how transformation occurs.

Data on the original and new ATI variables were gathered for 38 African countries and updated. The team replicated the previous ATI version which covered the period 2000-2010 and updated the data to reflect the period 2000-2018. The replication exercise was a significant step in validating the source code and ensuring that the datasets were robust. The data were presented to ACET management for validation and approved to be sent for external review. Following this, the team approached external reviewers in the World Bank, UNDP and OECD to discuss the review process for the datasets. The remaining tasks are: completion of the draft report, submission of the draft report and codes used in generating the Index for external review, and completion of the final report. The launch of the ATI report is scheduled for 2021.

African Transformation Forum

The African Transformation Forum was scheduled to take place June 17-18, 2020 in Nairobi, Kenya. However, in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, ACET visited Nairobi March 3-6, 2020 for consultations with the Government of Kenya on the need to postpone the Forum and remodel our strategy to host a virtual event instead of a physical launch. The Forum will now take place as a series of webinars which will include the launch of the ATR and deep dives to discuss each chapter of the ATR (population and demographics, climate change, regional integration, and technology and innovation) and other gender and transformational leadershiprelated issues. The launch event will also feature discussions with African Heads of State and the Transformation Leadership Panel and is planned for July 15, 2021.

In the interim, the team has focused on logistical plans and engagement of potential vendors to support the new online format. We have continued preparing for the conference by reworking the agenda and updating the list of panellists, moderators, and other facilitators.

ACET has developed a database of over 2500 potential invitees, panelists, moderators and other

facilitators in preparation for the ATF webinars. The Communications team has engaged various service providers and suppliers for development of video content, messaging, social media, and other content required for the forum.

Transformation Leadership Panel

As the TLP Secretariat, ACET facilitates the group's efforts to influence urgent action for transformative change in Africa by 2030. Its primary focus has been on policy actions in four broad areas—demographics, innovation, climate, and regional integration—and with the goal of gender parity in leadership across all sectors. In 2020, several activities were undertaken by the TLP:

- New members: Two new members were added

 Agnes Kalibata, President of the Alliance for a
 Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), and Stefano
 Manservisi, Director-General for International
 Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) at the European Commission.
- ECA meeting on domestic resource mobilization: In February 2020, the panel met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, hosted by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), to discuss key challenges and issues related to domestic resource mobilization, jobs and economic transformation, Europe-Africa dialogue, and gender. The panel was joined by special guests including Ambassador Kwesi Quartey, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission; Mr. Nick Westcott, Director of the Royal African Society; and Mr. Stefan Oswald, Director-General, German Federal Ministry of Development.
- Ten-Point agenda for COVID-19 recovery: The panel also met virtually on 27 May 2020 to address the impact of COVID-19 on Africa and to endorse ACET's 10-point action plan to help ensure a strong recovery after the crisis. The meeting focused on the impact of the pandemic and challenges of recovery, actions currently being taken across Africa, and action points for global leaders, policy makers and the development community at large. Members agreed on the urgency of ensuring that African governments and development partners grasp the full extent of the crisis and react accordingly. Additionally, members discussed a possible letter to global leaders regarding financing, debt and liquidity.
- The 10-point action plan was agreed and signed by TLP members in July 2020. This was distributed to African Union member countries through the African Union Commission. Panel members supported ACET's engagement with the World Bank on potential implementation strategies.

- Virtual meeting on international response to COVID-19 in Africa: ACET held a virtual TLP meeting on 13 November 2020, chaired by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and attended by 15 members and 2 special guests. Members discussed the international response to the pandemic in Africa and the way forward. The TLP further discussed possible areas to support and collaborate with AfDB in light of current pressures on their resources. Following the TLP meeting, ACET arranged for an appointment with AfDB's president, Akin Adesina, on 27 November 2020 which had to be postponed due to unforeseen developments.
- Opinion and analysis: In December 2020, Ann Cotton, founder of Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) and TLP member, contributed an analysis to ACET's website about the need for building stronger community-led institutions as a bridge between beneficiaries of policies and national and regional institutions.

Thematic Work

Youth, Education and Skills Chapter (YES)

As part of the YES program, ACET initiated a six-country study on Strengthening Education and Learning Systems to Deliver a 4IR-Ready Workforce. The key deliverables included an inception meeting; six country-level case studies (Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Niger, Rwanda, Uganda and Ghana); country validation workshops; a synthesis report; a multi-country policy learning event, which will also double as the launch of the YES chapter of the Pan-African Coalition for Transformation (PACT); and further engagement with policy makers through the YES chapter.

Over the period, all countries completed inception meetings, data collection and draft country reports. Country level inception meetings held before the data collection exercise brought together key stakeholders as a way of increasing awareness and buy-in. ACET staff supported the research teams in country by taking part in the data collection, a useful exercise for strengthening ACET's knowledge of the different country contexts. By the end of March, although the bulk of the data collection had been completed, the pandemic resulted in delays in finalizing some interviews and subsequent analysis.

Draft reports were reviewed by external reviewers, and all study countries except Ghana had organized their virtual validation workshops by December. Comments from the workshop are being incorporated in the reports and drafting of the synthesis report is in progress.

Agriculture: Global Scan and Market Linkages Study

In March 2019, ACET initiated work on a global scan for successful and innovative efforts to foster market development and strengthen linkages between policy design and areas such as employment, skills development and youth leadership, land tenure and agro-processing. The project seeks to promote 'Smallholder Voices in Policy Dialogue' and has four components: (1) a global scan; (2) a market linkages study in Ghana and Kenya; (3) convening national platforms in these countries; and (4) setting up the PACT platform for agriculture. Over this reporting period, we focused on operationalizing the Global Scan Online Marketplace portal and finalizing the market linkages study on Kenya and Ghana.

Global Scan: The technical specifications for the Open Society Foundations (OSF) Global Scan portal have been finalized, with feedback from ACET staff incorporated. Appropriate content has been developed in preparation for the launch of the portal. The team engaged with our network of stakeholders via email or Skype to share details and obtain their views on the portal and its objectives. While we planned to launch the portal in March 2020, uncertainties associated with the pandemic led to a change in strategy. The portal was virtually launched on July 15, 2020. The team has since focused on management of the portal and engagement with stakeholders to develop more content and drive discussions. Internal discussions continue with management on how to assimilate the portal into PACT and into our advocacy programs in general.

Market Linkages: The study aims to produce two country reports (Ghana and Kenya) proposing innovations and policy options to improve market performance of smallholder farmers. During this period, the project team finalized the analysis of the results from the field studies and interviews of smallholder farmers and traders in both Ghana and Kenya. A field data report was prepared for each country which identified key knowledge gaps and informed the design of data collection instruments to bridge these gaps. Based on the field report, the researchers produced two draft country reports, which have gone through two internal reviews and one external review. The draft country reports were completed, following which a virtual validation workshop for Ghana and Kenya was held in October 2020. The researchers updated the country reports with inputs from the validation workshops in November 2020. ACET has since finalized the reports and developed an annotated outline for the synthesis report. Drafting of the synthesis report started in December 2020.

Strategic Partnership for Private Sector Development and Growth

As part of the Think Africa Partnership, ACET is implementing a program to support private sector development (PSD) and growth in G20 Compact with Africa countries, starting with Ghana. The project focuses on the manufacturing sector, given the relevance of manufacturing to economic transformation and the industry's ability to generate sustainable, explosive growth. To support this agenda in 2020, the ACET program focused on three work streams: (1) promoting the development of sustainable export processing zones (SEPZ) in line with Ghana's industrial policy; (2) supporting local content through the integration of SMEs in the global supply chain and value chains of large enterprises; and (3) supporting the integration of local SMEs in the promotion of SEPZ.

In September 2020, ACET organized a Private Sector Development Strategy retreat in Ghana to review program objectives and initiate preparation towards the development of strategic and operational plans. The retreat was attended by internal and external stakeholders from both private and public sectors.

We have also launched a study with the International Senior Lawyers Project (ISLP) to review legal/ regulatory aspects and studies of the PSD work. Other project activities have been on external stakeholder engagements and recruitment of a portfolio coordinator.

Promoting Sustainable Export Processing Zones (SEPZ)

This is a program to promote the development of sustainable export processing zones (SEPZ) in line with the government of Ghana's One Region, One Park (1R1P) policy. This sub-component will focus on two key activities: (1) diagnosis and evaluation of current export processing zone (EPZ) ecosystems and benchmarking against good practices regarding the alignment between Ghana's EPZs and sustainable infrastructure, practices and firms; and (2) support for retrofitting an existing EPZ into an SEPZ as a test case for development and subsequent replication. ACET will also support efforts to crowd in additional investment.

In Q1 2020, ACET began project management, resource planning, and stakeholder engagement and initiated two studies:

- A landscape assessment and benchmarking study. At the beginning of the project, a lead consultant and expert reviewers were engaged, and the Ghana Free Zones Board was brought in as a key partner for the SEPZ-EPZ study. The team completed the inception report and began a literature review and field survey. Consultations with free zones stakeholders including the association of companies in the free zones, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ghana Export Promotion Authority are ongoing.
- Impact of EPZs on AfCFTA. As an outcome
 of the September strategy session, ACET
 initiated a study on the impact of EPZs on the
 implementation of the AfCFTA and vice versa. The
 study is complete, and the draft report is being
 reviewed for finalization by our consultant. Plans
 have been made for using the report to engage
 interested parties on AfCFTA implementation.

Integrating Local Content SMEs into Global Value Chains

This program seeks to support the integration of local content SMEs into the global supply and value chains of large enterprises in the context of the government's One District, One Factory (1D1F) policy. This involves identifying local content opportunities within value chains and preparing SMEs to build capacity to take advantage of these opportunities. The program will work with technical and management consultants in building governance structures and systems that enable SMEs to access market opportunities and to be investment-ready to crowd in both local and external investors. Key activities within this program include:

- LC-SME Development Value Chain and Product Space Analysis. The study aims to identify potential products or services in the manufacturing sector where Ghanaian SMEs can have a comparative advantage. Sectors of interest selected for the study include extractives, manufacturing, agro-processing, light industry, environmental and green industry (including renewable energy and services). Through the analysis of the product space of Ghana, the study has identified five value chain/economic activities that have the potential to increase the backwards participation (share of imported inputs) of qualified local firms in the global value chain. Following the product space analysis, we began a value chain analysis of production processes across countries.
- LC-SME Development Coaching/Mentorship Program. A coaching and mentorship program framework has been developed and was validated during the PSD strategy session in September 2020. A lead consultant for the mentorship

program has been onboarded and has formed partnerships with organizations providing similar services. These include organizations such as the M10 Society, a Silicon Valley-based organization with a platform of successful Silicon Valley business leaders/owners; and the Community of Local Experts (COLE) Collective Hub in Ghana and the Netherlands which brings together successful business leaders and entrepreneurs to mentor and coach start-ups and young SMEs. Finally, profiling of proposed mentors, patrons, and PSD expert advisors was completed.

Extractives: Beyond Zero Harm Project

ACET is working with the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) to recruit, mobilize, and lead a team of researchers to pilot the Beyond Zero Harm (BZH) project, which involves the participatory monitoring of community well-being in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Guinea. As part of the pilot, ACET developed a research framework to contribute to the improvement and scale up of the BZH framework. The framework seek to evaluate (i) the effectiveness of the BZH project in supporting community wide participation; (ii) the effectiveness in achieving inclusive, accountable development outcomes; (iii) the sustainability of the BZH approach; and (iv) opportunities to maximize learning and sharing.

The second year of implementation of the pilot project seeks to connect local and regional practitioners of the BZH approach, support comparative learning across the three countries, and provide recommendations for methodology adjustments and potential scale up of the BZH framework to locations beyond those involved in this pilot. While we scheduled this project cycle to begin in January 2020, implementation was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Work in the first few months of 2020 focused on refining the methodological approach, and considering the lessons learnt during the first implementation year. This has led to the development of a workflow manual in collaboration with the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) team. The manual is expected to guide country researchers in documenting the research processes in a uniform manner across all study countries.

• Ghana Project: The BZH framework is being piloted in the Bondaye Area Council of Prestea-Huni Valley Municipality in the Western Region of Ghana. Two community visits were undertaken during this review period. The first visit, on October 24, 2020, was to organize and facilitate additional focus group discussions and key informant interviews to deepen local understanding of how well-being is defined

and can be measured by the community. On November 9, 2020, the project team embarked on a second community visit focused on building the capacity of the BZH working group to undertake data collection, analysis, and validation, among other activities related to the BZH framework.

- Guinea Project: The project is being piloted in the municipality of Sangarédi. The objective in this research cycle is to introduce the local communities, the members of the Working Group, and the Communal Council to the new methodology of the BZH pilot project and to enable them to define well-being. The first community visit took place on November 18-23, 2020 with the aim to synthesize the BZH consolidation pilot project document, clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the different actors and to undertake focus group discussions.
- Burkina Faso: The BZH Burkina research project is located in Bagassi in the Balé Province in the Boucle du Mouhoun region. ACET made its first community visit in October 2020 with the aim of (i) introducing the new BZH methodology which seeks to build capacity of local community groups to develop definitions of community well-being; and (ii) identifying priority areas and indicators. The second visit, on December 14-20, 2020, was intended to deepen the priority areas. Key achievements during the visit include training of interviewers (not part of the community but who can speak and communicate in the main languages of the Bagassi population); collection of data through focus group discussions, and analysis of the results from the focus group discussions.

Partnership Approaches

Supporting ACET's role in implementing the G20 Compact with Africa (CwA)

In support of the CwA, ACET continues to undertake peer-learning events, conduct independent peer review, and support investment promotion. We also continued our CwA advocacy through the G20 and T20 venues under the Saudi Arabia presidency of the G20, and to deepen our work in Reform Partnership countries, which are countries of focus for Germany.

Strengthening CwA country capacity

The objective of this sub-component is to strengthen the capacity of Compact countries to implement CwA policies through peer-learning, analysis and consultations. GIZ Workshop: On February 17-18, 2020, ACET organized a workshop in Accra in collaboration with the GIZ Support to the Reform Partnership (GIZ-RP) and the GIZ Support to the Think Africa Partnership (GIZ-TAP) projects. The general objective of the workshop was to establish communication and coordination between ACET and GIZ-RP to harness support for the RP countries at the intersection between the Compact initiative and the Reform Partnership Framework. There are currently six Reform Partner countries – namely Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia.

Reform Partnership Framework: As a result of the Accra workshop, a new subset of work was initiated within the CwA under the Reform Partnership Framework. This subset included studies on good governance and COVID-19, industrial innovation, and investment.

- Good Governance. We completed two reports on COVID-19 and governance-related policy actions which informed a peer-learning event held on January 28, 2021. An outline for the COVID-19 Economic Response Program was also developed by ACET, World Bank, and GIZ as a prerequisite for countries seeking to access multi-year funding.
- Industrial Innovation. A new initiative on industrial innovation as a means to accelerate investment also began during the in 2020. ACET has drafted a preliminary paper for review in Q1 2021.
- Investment. We initiated a seven-country study (Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ethiopia, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana), titled "Pathways to Accelerate Investment", which will inform German government decisions on the scope of its work in Reform Partnership countries. The study has been completed and submitted to GIZ for feedback. Key, country-specific recommendations from the study are highlighted below.
 - Ethiopia: The report recommends the tourism and ICT sectors, which offer significant opportunities for further support and investment. The financial and logistics sectors are also identified as two enabling sectors.
 - Côte d'Ivoire: The agriculture, crafts and transport sectors are recommended as priority areas for investment and reform support.
 - Ghana: The report recommends
 manufacturing and agriculture/agribusiness
 as sectors holding high potential for
 accelerated investment, growth, and
 employment.



- Morocco: The study identified the food industry, trade and distribution, and renewable energy as the sectors with the most potential for new investment, and where reforms will have a particularly high chance of improving the business and investment climate.
- Senegal: The report recommends construction and real estate; smallholder agriculture; and agro-food industries as critical sectors for new investment, and where reforms will have a particularly high chance of improving the business environment, creating jobs and boosting economic growth.
- Tunisia: In this report, real estate/business transport and communications, and agriculture are the recommended sectors for new investment, where reforms will have a particularly high chance of improving the business and investment climate.
- Togo: This report recommends four sectors for their high investment potential and reform commitment: (1) manufacturing; (2) agriculture; (3) infrastructure and mobility; and (4) information and communications technology (ICT) and innovation.

Blended Finance Case Studies: During the period April-September 2020, ACET commissioned three case studies on blended finance, to complement a related study on Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and blended finance completed in 2019. The studies address good practices of three development finance institutions in three countries: Agence Française de Développement (AFD) in Senegal, Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) in Tunisia, and African Development Bank (AfDB) in Ethiopia. Based on the final reports, we will organize a follow-up peer learning event and a policy note jointly with OECD.

Fiscal Risks of PPP: In collaboration with ECA, ACET completed a report on Fiscal Risks of Public-Private Partnerships. The report has been submitted to our partner organization for publication.

Bi-annual Peer Review of CwA Self-Assessment

During the first quarter of 2020, ACET developed a fifth peer review note on key policy issues facing CwA countries in the context of the pandemic, including policy and advocacy that can help ensure a strong economic rebound. This was discussed at the G20 Africa Advisory Group (AAG) meeting in May and included in the CwA Monitoring Report. A sixth peer review note on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis at the macro, sector, and firm level was prepared for the

G20 Africa Advisory Group (AAG) meeting on October 27, 2020. ACET was present at the AAG meeting and organized the private sector participation.

Advocacy for Africa and the CwA

In January, ACET participated in the first T20 meeting on energy and water held in Riyadh under the Saudi G20 presidency. ACET's CwA policy note, drawn from our recent work on blended finance, PPP and fiscal risks, was presented and well received at the meeting. The policy note was also submitted and reviewed by key representatives of the Saudi G20 presidency. The policy note focuses on three key areas where the G20 and African governments can take action to boost investment:

- The ability of G20 institutions, particularly development finance institutions, to explicitly support enhanced local approaches to blended finance, which in turn would lead to expanded financing opportunities.
- The ability of G20 governments and associated institutions to rapidly address options for reducing project cycle timelines and complexity by identifying good global practices that speed up project implementation while retaining construction quality and safeguards.
- The need for G20 governments and associated institutions to deepen efforts to mitigate fiscal risk in public-private partnerships to make projects more bankable, particularly by addressing off-budget or opaque contingent liabilities.

In August, ACET held a high-level meeting between the Chief Economic Advisor to Chancellor Angela Merkel and the chief economists or chief economic advisors to governments in the CwA countries. We organized for CwA Advisory Panel members to engage in a dialogue with the chief economists of government in preparation for this meeting. ACET is currently a member of the T20 Infrastructure and Financing Task Force and continues to serve on the T20 Africa Standing Committee and co-chairs the CwA Task Force with the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, the Policy Center for the Global South, and the European Centre for Development Policy Management.

Strengthening the Use of Evidence for Development Impact (SEDI)

This project, funded by the the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO), formerly UK Department for International Development (DfID), and implemented in Ghana, Uganda, and Pakistan, aims to Strengthen the Use of Evidence for Development Impact (SEDI). The first phase (July

2019 through March 2020) involved an initial political economy analysis (PEA) undertaken across three sectors pre-selected by DflD. The selected sectors for Ghana are health, economic development, and public financial management/taxation.

ACET hosted a SEDI validation workshop in Accra with consortium partners and the DFID-Ghana team in late January to identify gaps in the draft sector-level report. The draft analysis report and the final analysis report were successfully submitted to Oxford Policy Management (OPM) and FCDO in January and March respectively. It was published in March.

Following the PEA, ACET began the next phase of work with the objective of engaging government partners to co-design and pilot interventions that the SEDI project could drive to improve evidence use with government partners. Partners engaged in preliminary discussions included:

- Ghana Health Service (COVID-19
 epidemiological modeling support): FCDO,
 OPM and ACET have engaged the Ghana Health
 Service to provide epidemiological modeling
 support to help predict the spread of COVID-19
 for decision making. A technical working group
 was formed to develop an approach for this work,
 and consultants from the University of Ghana
 were recruited to support the modeling process.
- National Development Planning Commission
 (NDPC): As producers of evidence for
 government decision making, NDPC is an
 important stakeholder for the use of evidence
 in the economic development sector. ACET
 engaged the country lead of one of its programs,
 the Ghana Priorities program, a research and
 advocacy project that analyzes and promotes
 investments to establish how to achieve the
 most social, environmental, and economic good
 for Ghana. Initial discussions with stakeholders
 were positive, however additional engagement is
 required to secure buy-in of NDPC leadership.
- Ghana Civil Service Training Center: The
 Ghana Civil Service Capacity Building program
 was identified as an entry-point to equip policy
 makers with the tools required to make evidence
 informed decisions. After positive preliminary
 conversations with partners and representatives
 at the Ghana Civil Service Training Centre, we
 initiated a scoping exercise of potential entry
 points which will be summarized in a learning
 brief.

Global Delivery Initiative (GDI)

The Global Delivery Initiative study was launched in 2017 to bring development practitioners together to share and leverage delivery know-how and operational knowledge. The project is an initiative of the World Bank, GIZ, Korea, Japan, and other development partners. It is being executed by ACET in collaboration with the Global Delivery Initiative (GDI) China-Africa Program. GDI focuses on three different case studies: (1) Road, Bridge Maintenance, and Management in Mozambique; (2) the Southern African Transport and Trade Facilitation project in Tanzania; and (3) Dar es Salaam Bus Rapid Transit in Tanzania.

In 2020, ACET updated reports on the three case studies with feedback from internal and external reviewers. The report has been finalized and the project was officially closed in June 2020.

Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)

This Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) project aims to produce two country reports that identify barriers to the prospects of skills development and employability for young women in the future world of work in Ghana and Senegal and propose policy options to reduce or eliminate these barriers.

For this period, the project team produced a project inception report, recruited two research partners in each country to ensure the reports were grounded in local realities and also recruited two gender experts (one to ensure the technical soundness of the report and the other as a reviewer). Two country-level inception reports (Ghana and Senegal) have been drafted. ACET also convened a virtual inception meeting in August 2020 which brought together all the country research partners, gender experts and the core project team. The team also reviewed literature, developed the methodology and interview guide for data collection and completed data collection in October 2020. Analysis of the data was finalized in December following which drafting of the full Ghana and Senegal reports commenced.

Structural Transformation and Economic Growth (STEG)

In March 2020, ACET commenced a five-year research initiative funded by DfID. The primary goal of the project is to provide a better understanding of structural change, productivity and growth in low- and middle-income countries. The official launch in March was hosted by the UK-based Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). The launch

introduced the researchers and research themes to a cross-section of stakeholders including universities, policy makers, development organisations and think tanks.

In August, ACET hosted an online workshop targeted at policy makers and think tanks from four African focus countries: Ghana, Zambia, Uganda, and Ethiopia. The aim of the workshop was to obtain feedback from the participants on the relevance of the research themes and research questions.

Four individual country-specific virtual workshops were subsequently held in Ghana, Ethiopia, Zambia, and Uganda between September and December 2020. These were small-group engagements aiming to introduce the STEG project to the participants and to seek their insights on the relevance of the STEG research questions for their respective countries, as well as to explore if any additional research questions that should be included. An additional objective was to get involved in the framing of the research questions at the start of the research and to engage country participants in the various stages of the research.

Digitalization for European Union and African Union Dialogue

In May 2020, ACET commenced a project funded by the German Development Institute (DIE) with the aim of supporting Germany's presidency of the EU Council relating to digital policy. The overall goal of the project was to undertake research and analysis, organize experts' meetings, and prepare a policy brief on digitalization that provides evidence-based insights for policy makers ahead of the EU-AU Summit which was originally scheduled for October 2020.

Policy Brief: In May 2020, ACET, in partnership with DIE and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), produced a policy brief on digitalization for policy makers and decision makers in the context of the EU-AU Summit.

Expert Meetings: ACET completed four virtual expert meetings with the goal of presenting policy recommendations for senior EU, AU and member state officials that addressed the challenges and opportunities of digitalization. The webinars were structured around four central pillars: strategic investments and finance; education and skills; governance and regulation; and the implementation of agreements between the EU and the AU.

The first virtual discussion on digitalization and the AU-EU dialogue, held on 28 May 2020, was attended by 11 researchers and thought leaders from Africa, Europe, and the United States of America. The second, held on 3 June 2020, featured 11 national policy makers from Africa and Europe. ACET organized a third virtual discussion on 11 June 2020, bringing together entrepreneurs, investors and young innovators from Africa and Europe. The fourth webinar was on June 23 and was attended by officials from the EU, Africa and international institutions. The original end date of the project has been extended from February 2021 to June 2021.



Identifying Specific Non-Tariff Measures in Ghana and South Africa and Estimating their Impact and Actionability

In order to deepen and focus its understanding of the impediments to UK trade and investment in Ghana and South Africa, the UK Department for International Trade (DIT) commissioned this research project in early 2020. The objectives for each marker were to:

- Build a comprehensive understanding of the overarching non-tariff measures (NTMs, such as burdensome Customs procedures, intrusive or nugatory standards applicable to investing companies, lack of statutory protections) that impede UK trade and investment.
- Disaggregate the NTMs by breaking them down into individual, granular NTMs within the overall NTM category.
- Provide specific details of the individual NTMs and explain the context and rationale for their existence, including the vested economic interests involved.
- Set out in detail how the individual NTMs impact UK businesses that trade and invest in Ghana and South Africa; identify UK businesses that have the potential and appetite to, but have decided against or been put off from exporting and investing in these markets.
- Estimate the indicative monetary value to UK business and, more widely, to Ghana and South Africa (e.g., through loss of investment, tax revenue, or burdens caused to domestic companies as well as foreign companies) of the individual NTMs were they to be removed.

ACET conducted a desk review on the status of NTMs in Ghana and examined policies, legislation, and administrative measures that govern NTMs. This was followed by stakeholder mapping and stakeholder consultations with practitioners, industry executives and policy makers to gather primary qualitative and quantitative data. The data have been analyzed and a draft preliminary report produced. The report has been reviewed, and a final report has since been submitted to DIT for its comments and approval. The plan to convene a workshop was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Infrastructure Cycles Phase I

At the 18th International Economic Forum on Africa, the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, called on the OECD Development Centre (DEV) and ACET to establish a technical platform on infrastructure and skills development. ACET and DEV, working with African and global partners, implemented the first phase of an initiative to identify areas for speeding up processes for preparing, funding and implementing infrastructure projects in Africa, while meeting the quality challenge at the same time.

The key outputs from Phase I were:

- Four cases studies of recent or active infrastructure projects in Africa were completed.
- ACET and DEV convened two groups, a High-Level Think Group, and a Senior Technical Experts Group. Between February and June 2020, they convened three global policy dialogues with these groups to advance the initiative.
- The final report, "Quality Infrastructure in 21st Century Africa – Prioritizing, Accelerating and Scaling Up in the Context of PIDA (2021-2030)", was launched on July 9, 2020 by DEV and ACET, with high-level participation of global and African institutions.

The report had two recommendations for a planned Phase II of the project:

- Promote the use of the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) quality label for all infrastructure projects across Africa, thus ensuring a consistent quality level;
- Create an African Community of Practice (COP) among African infrastructure practitioners and a platform for knowledge sharing and peer learning.

Operational Strategies

Communications

Publications: Over this reporting period, ACET's Communications Team published 30 content pieces, including discussion papers, digital articles, press releases, and more. They covered a wide range of topics including financial inclusion of women and youth, Africa's preparedness for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and Africa's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also mined original research and analysis from our background study for the Mastercard Foundation's Secondary Education in Africa Report to publish an original four-part,

in-depth series on Schools, Skills and Jobs. The series of articles, published between August 31 and September 28, 2020, covered four topics: (1) Africa's evolving labor landscape; (2) High-potential pathways for productive jobs; (3) getting schools and skills right; and (4) policy actions for the future of work.

Interviews: To enhance our profile and impact, ACET granted a number of interviews to both regional and local media. This included interviews with CNBC Africa on policies for Africa's post-COIVD-19 recovery, and with the Business & Financial Times and the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET) in their COVID-19 series. The Belt and Road Portal, a market intelligence and business facilitation platform, also interviewed our Director of Research on the seventh anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. This interview marked ACET's status as the only African think tank on the Belt and Road Studies Network (BRSN) Initiators' Council. Both the INET and Belt and Road interviews are yet to be published.

Website: Over the second half of 2020, ACET began a concerted effort to produce more digital content for thought leadership on economic transformation. Concurrently, ACET engaged the services of a local firm to design and build a more modern website to deliver an improved user experience and to expand back-end functionality for better content management. The project was temporarily put on hold to seek a new vendor that would bring deeper experience and act as a stronger thought partner. The project will begin anew in mid-2021 with the pan-African agency Djembe Consulting.

Human Resources

During the period, ACET's Human Resource Office focused on improving the organizational structure through strategic recruitments as well as updates to key policies and to the Staff Handbook.

Recruitment: In 2020, ACET welcomed a number of key personnel, including Mavis Owusu-Gyamfi as the Executive Vice-President. Additional positions added included a Director of Research, a Procurement Officer, a Portfolio Coordinator and a Business Development Analyst for the Private Sector Program, a Senior Analyst for the President's Office, and a Transformation Fellow.

Resignations: Resignations included those of a Transformation Fellow who accepted a position at the World Bank in Abidjan, and an Executive Assistant to the President, who resigned in March to take up a new position elsewhere.

ACET Policies: HR began working in May, under the guidance of a World Bank-approved HR consultant, to update the recruitment policy. The policy has since been finalized and is in operation.

Staff Handbook: Work on updating the Staff Handbook advanced well in 2020, with a targeted completion in early 2021. Revisions were approved by management. ACET's Communications team will oversee the final editing and design.

Finally, the annual Performance Appraisal and Performance Management process began in December and is awaiting management's approval.

Program Management and Monitoring & Evaluation

Due to the pandemic, staff members have worked from home, prompting the need to strengthen our monitoring. ACET's portfolio manager and M&E function established an additional planning and progress monitoring tool, namely Project Implementation Plans (PIP). The PIPs are an extension of the Project Management Plans that are developed by project leaders at the project initiation stage. The PIP provides information regarding:

- Milestones, risks and risk mitigation
- Human resource allocation
- Detailed workplan for the next three months

Following the submission of the PIP, ACET's portfolio manager organizes a team meeting for all project staff, HR, M&E and finance personnel. The objectives are to facilitate peer learning and sharing of experiences across the different teams and projects, to identify areas for cross-fertilization and promote synergies across themes and programs.

We have also strengthened the weekly reporting system by updating the procedures and the templates used. We currently have a structure in which each project lead meets with the Director of Research and Engagement on a weekly basis and a record is kept of progress, challenges and action plans. These project records are then shared monthly with the M&E officer who ensures that the information is both properly archived and feeds into the upcoming progress reports.

ACET began revision of the organization's Theory of Change (TOC) this year. The objective of this exercise is to develop a programmatic TOC that better aligns with the new ACET strategy. Project teams are being engaged as well as an external consultant to offer expert advice and assess ACET's capacity for M&E in the long term. This exercise is ongoing.

Reporting

The Program Management Office (PMO) submitted 26 external reports, which were sent to donors quarterly, semi-annually, and annually according to specific reporting requirements and templates. The Mastercard Foundation, Government of the Netherlands, World Bank, Open Society Foundations, OSIWA, University of Geneva, and GIZ were among key donor reports completed.

Resource Mobilization

During 2020 we achieved an even balance between core and restricted funding for 2021. This is a result of an increase in the core funding elements of the World Bank Think Africa Partnerships program due to additional funding from Germany, core funding secured as part of the Mastercard Foundation, and McGovern Foundation funding for the ATF carriedforward from 2020. In addition to the Netherlands, for 2020 ACET received funding from the Open Society Foundation, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Mastercard Foundation, McGovern Foundation, University of Geneva, University of Canada, DflD, OECD, Michigan State University, and the Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR).

Resource mobilization efforts focused on expanding the diversity of funding partners and developing new approaches. For example, we joined a framework agreement bid with LINPICO for European Union funding; and on October 14, 2020 the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development confirmed an Euro 3 million contribution to ACET and the World Bank for implementation of the COVID-19 response program. On December 16, 2020 we also signed an extension of grant agreement with Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) through October 2021 for work on EU/AU dialogue.

Finance, IT, and Administration

The 2019 financial statement was prepared and audited in February-April 2020. The statement has since been approved and signed by ACET's Board of Directors. We also had a successful review of ACET's first-quarter financial report to the World Bank. Additionally, we prepared and submitted financial reports to the Government of the Netherlands, MasterCard Foundation, the BMZ-funded Africa-Europe dialogue, OSIWA and the University of Geneva. General operational activities such as salary and statutory payments are on course.





OUTCOMES AND INDICATORS

In 2020, we began revising our Theory of Change to align with the new strategy which was developed in Q4 2020. The outcomes below will therefore be revised in 2021 to reflect new indicators.

OUTCOME 1: Increased understanding of African economic transformation issues.

ACET reports were cited 60 times in 2020, exceeding our target. While we received 83 invitations to speak at non-ACET events, we were able to honour only 54% (45) of them due to COVID restrictions. Invitations accepted included among others the online expert workshop on the African Continental Free Trade Agreement held by DIE; the OECD web consultation on Blended Finance Principle 1; and the workshop on Africa's Employment Perspectives towards 2040 organized by GIZ.

Outcome 1: Increased understanding of African economic transformation issues

Indicator	Baseline 2014	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	Target 2020
References/citations of ACET reports and analysis in national policy documents and international debate on African transformation (per year)	8	20	20	19	19	66	60	50
Invitations honored to share content more widely at non-ACET sponsored events/fora (per year)	6	37	30	19	19	57	83	35

OUTCOME 2: Strengthened economic transformation strategies, plans, and investments.

While the demand for ACET's work to provide evidence for policy making remains high, funding for such direct government support has been low and untenable. Over the years, ACET pivoted to provide this support through partnership programs such as the Compact with Africa and has continued to support governments through commissioned research, knowledge generation, and peer-learning events.

In 2020, ACET provided support directly to two countries (Ghana and Rwanda) and indirectly to the 12 CwA countries through thought leadership pieces. In Ghana, we developed the Ghana Industrial Innovation study at the direct request of the Ministry of Finance and engaged the leadership of the Free Zones Board through interviews as part of the SEPZ study.

We also engaged Ghana's Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Free Zones Board, the Director of the Free Zones Enclave and firms located in Free Zones and as part of the SEPZ-EPZ Landscape Assessment and Benchmarking Study.

At the request of the Rwandan government, ACET will be assisting the Rwandan Development Board to conduct an assessment of the costs and benefits of liberalization in light of the African Continental Free Trade Area. The engagement will also explore opportunities to build the capacity of local industry, especially SMEs, to make them investment ready and help them integrate into regional and global value chains.

Outcome 2: Strengthened economic transformation strategies, plans, and investments

Indicator	Baseline 2014	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	Target 2020
Number of countries with strategies and plans with transformation drivers and pathways as defined in the ATR (cumulative)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
Governments that engage ACET to help them incorporate transformation principles into strategies and action plans (cumulative) ²	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	6
Countries ACET supported (above) where the private sector was an integral part of the planning process	100%	100%	100%	Not measured d	Not measured d	Not measured d	Not measured d	100%
Number of private sector-government relationships brokered by ACET (cumulative) ³	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

OUTCOME 3: Strengthened policies and institutional capacities of governments.

In recent years, ACET has not engaged governments directly in the development of their institutional capacity, therefore indicators (a) and (b) are not measured. The annual survey to countries has therefore been replaced with a general services satisfaction survey for ACET services measure by Indicator (c). Results for 2020 indicated the 92.7% of participants in two policy dialogues (TLP meeting in February 2020 and STEG workshop in August 2020) were highly satisfied with our services.

Outcome 3: Strengthened policies and institutional capacities of governments

Indicator	Baseline 2014	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	Target 2020
Number of governments supported that express greater confidence that their institutional capacities are improving or have improved in an annual Satisfaction Survey (cumulative)	34	3	3	3	3	4	4	8
Proportion of countries that ranked ACET services as "good" or "excellent" in the Satisfaction Survey (annual)	n/a	n/a	n/a	75% ⁵	n/a	n/a	n/a	80%

Indicator (c): Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey (Revised Indicator)

Indicator	Baseline 2014	2015 Actual	2016 Actual	2017 Actual	2018 Actual
Satisfaction rate of beneficiaries of ACET's policy dialogue activities (%)	96.6	-	88.9	-	92.75

^{2:} As opposed to Indicator A where countries may adopt transformation strategies without ACET's direct influence; this indicator is a result of ACET's direct assistance through country engagements.

Liberia, China FDI.

^{4:} Baseline was done using an external evaluation - Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Ghana.

^{5:} This value is not statistically representative, as it was based on a pilot survey with a small sample.



LESSONS LEARNED

ACET, like many other organizations, was forced by COVID-19 to re-evaluate and adapt its operations and programs to minimize the spread of the virus not only among local staff, but also within our extended family of consultants, advisors, and project stakeholders.

While we were already operating virtually on some projects, COVID-19 has reminded us that digitalization has now, more than ever, become crucial for ACET's survival. We quickly adjusted to virtual operations for much of our work (research, learning, and advocacy) and have had to postpone some in-person activities (meetings and field work).

ACET has also pivoted programs to account for the impact of COVID-19, for example, including questions on the pandemic in our YES surveys and studies. ACET developed a 10-point policy and action plan to help ensure a strong economic recovery in Africa after the pandemic. That position paper has been endorsed by the World Bank, IMF, United Nations, and other organizations. It also led to two seminars, one at the World Bank and one at the IMF. Additionally, ACET and the World Bank have jointly prepared a comprehensive program to help African governments design and implement smart policies in response to the pandemic's impact.

The impact of reduced contact on peer learning and collaboration among staff has been evident during the pandemic. ACET has bridged this gap through the introduction of the Project Implementation Plans, the monthly staff meetings and the weekly departmental meetings. The meetings also offer an opportunity to identify synergies at project level.



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The African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) is a pan-African economic policy institute supporting Africa's long-term growth through transformation.