

AFRICAN UNION CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

(2022-2032)



The Strategy

Africa's Agenda 2063 is the blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. The blueprint is a strategic framework produced by the African Union that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and seeks to prioritise, among other things, inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance, and peace and security in Africa.

The AU CC Strategy was developed as a 10-year strategic planning document aimed at addressing the impacts and encumbrances of climate change which hamper Africa's integration and development and as part of a proactive, collective effort to realise Agenda 2063.

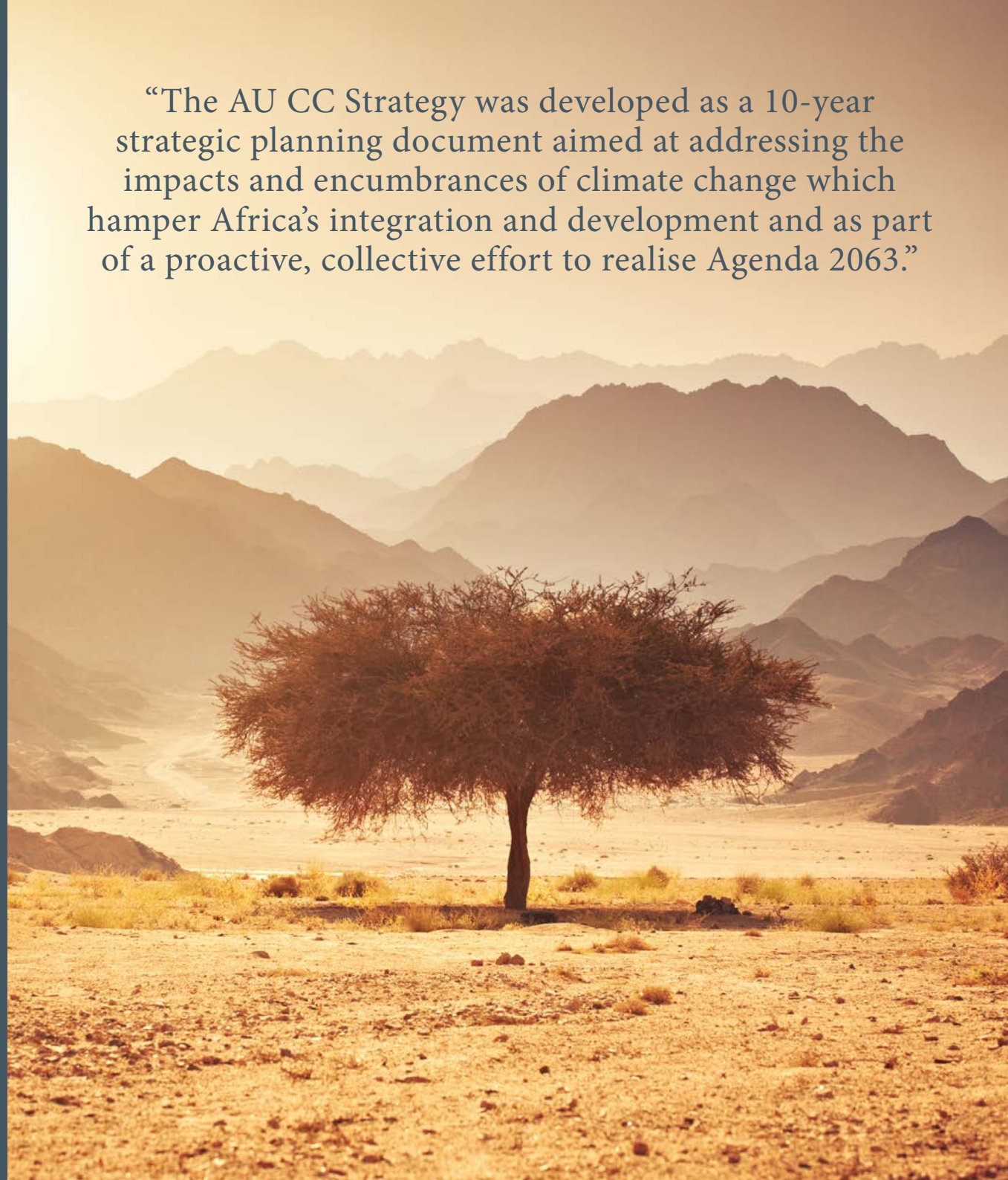
DESPITE AFRICA HAVING CONTRIBUTED LESS THAN 4% OF GLOBAL GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS, IT IS ONE OF THE REGIONS THAT ARE MOST VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE VARIABILITY AND CHANGE.

The AU CC Strategy aims to assist Africa to take advantage of opportunities related to the transition to a low-emission green economy and green recovery efforts, acknowledging that Africa should embrace opportunities to catalyse socio-economic transformation towards a resource-efficient, environmentally sustainable, climate-resilient, and more equitable society. This can improve human well-being and economic growth over the long term, while mitigating the exposure to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities for future generations.

The AU CC Strategy defines the main priorities, interventions and actions required to build resilient capacities for adaptation, reduce the vulnerability of affected communities and manage the risks related to climate change and climate-induced extreme events, as well as to unlock the benefits of the mitigation potential of the continent.

It is designed as a living document to keep pace with the latest science, technological advancements and other global, continental, sub-regional and national developments.

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The Strategy

BROADER FRAMEWORK

The AU CC Strategy operates within the broader framework of various international and continental strategies and initiatives (appendix 2 to the AU CC Strategy contains a more comprehensive list of influential initiatives, strategies, and protocols). These include:

▶ UNFCCC's Paris Agreement	▶ AU's Agenda 2063	▶ UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the Sustainable Development Goals	▶ UN's Convention for Biological Diversity
▶ Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction	▶ Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme	▶ Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa	▶ Africa Adaptation Initiative
▶ Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa	▶ African Continental Free Trade Area	▶ Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa initiative	▶ AU's Green Recovery Action Plan

“The AU CC Strategy is a key instrument in supporting regional collaboration on climate change and more effective international partnerships.”

The AU CC Strategy is a key instrument in supporting regional collaboration on climate change and more effective international partnerships. It builds on the continent's commitment to ensuring an effective multilateral approach to addressing climate change through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement adopted thereunder, while emphasising equitable access to sustainable development, and the eradication of poverty, as well as recognising the specific needs and special circumstances of African countries.

While informed and guided by the existing national climate efforts and aspirations of African Member States, the AU CC Strategy provides an outline for a harmonised and coordinated approach to respond to climate change. It sets out common challenges, principles, priorities, and action areas for enhanced climate cooperation; strengthened adaptation capacity; and long term, equitable and transformative low-emission, climate-resilient development pathways for the continent.

Vision and objectives

The AU CC Strategy’s vision is a sustainable, prosperous, equitable and climate-resilient Africa.

Its goal is to provide a continental framework for collective action and enhanced cooperation to address climate change issues and improve livelihoods and well-being, promote adaptation capacity, and achieve low-emission, sustainable economic growth.

ITS OBJECTIVES ARE:

- Build the resilience of African communities, ecosystems, and economies, and supporting regional adaptation.
- Strengthen the adaptive capacity of affected communities and manage the risks related to climate change.
- Pursue equitable and transformative low emission, climate-resilient development pathways.
- Enhance Africa’s capacity to mobilise resources and improve access to and the development of technology for ambitious climate action.
- Enhance inclusion, alignment, cooperation, and ownership of climate strategies, policies, programmes and plans across all spheres of government and stakeholder groupings.

THE CORE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ARE:

<p>A people centred approach - people must benefit from the transition to a low-emission and resilient future</p>	<p>Conserving and restoring ecosystems / natural capital - healthy ecosystems are critical to addressing climate change in Africa</p>	<p>Aligning plans and priorities - the alignment of existing development plans and existing national development priorities within fiscal budgetary planning processes is recommended</p>
<p>Evidence and practice - the AU CC Strategy must continue to draw on the best available science, knowledge, and practice within the international, regional, and national context</p>	<p>African-led and African-owned - built on the foundations of Agenda 2063, the continent must generate its own dynamic scientific, technological, and entrepreneurial capability; and innovate new, predictable, and sustainable sources of funding for its response to climate change that includes Africa’s social and cultural values and natural capital endowments</p>	<p>Whole of economy approach - an integrated, cross-sectoral, and holistic approach throughout national and regional economic planning is required</p>
<p>Common but differentiated responsibilities - the AU CC Strategy reflects the need for ambitious climate action in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances</p>	<p>Intersectionality - the AU CC Strategy recognises that vulnerabilities overlap in multiple ways (climate, gender, poverty, age groups, etc.) and supports comprehensive, integrated responses to resilience-building</p>	<p>Leave no one behind / a just transition - the AU CC Strategy must address issues related to equity and justice, given that climate change has the potential to exacerbate current inequality throughout the continent</p>

Vision and objectives

The AU CC Strategy's objectives will be achieved by concentrating on four main strategic intervention axes, namely:



“The success of the AU CC Strategy is highly dependent on the active commitment and involvement of the main beneficiaries and stakeholders in its development and implementation. These players involve government institutions, individuals, social international organisations, funding agencies, etc. The AU CC Strategy helps to clarify the mandate, role, and responsibility of each group.”

The African context

AFRICA'S CLIMATIC CHANGE CONDITIONS AND VULNERABILITY

Africa is the driest of the world's continents. It is forecasted that climate change-induced water stress could affect up to 700 million people in arid and semi-arid areas. The impacts of climate change add to the already difficult water management challenges in arid and semi-arid regions.

A substantial increase in the magnitude of heat waves is projected for most of Africa, with potential effects for health and agriculture.

Africa is likely to experience an increase in drought in several regions, while most African regions are expected to experience an increase in heavy precipitation events that could lead to pluvial flooding. Relative sea level rise will also contribute to increased coastal flooding in low lying areas and shoreline retreat will occur along most sandy coasts.

AFRICA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The IPCC defines climate vulnerability as the degree to which a system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, adverse impacts.

Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents because of its high exposure and low adaptive capacity. This is due to the continent's biophysical makeup, as well as numerous socio-economic vulnerabilities – including a high dependence on rain-fed agriculture (and natural resource-based sectors broadly), a lack of alternative livelihood support, widespread poverty and inequality, weak adaptive capacity, low levels of education, and inequitable access to financial resources, credit, markets, and climate information services (CIS).

The AU's 55 Member States collectively have an estimated population of over 1.2 billion people, making it the eleventh largest economy in the world, with a nominal GDP of about USD 2.263 trillion. The African population is the youngest in the world and the continent is set to be the most populous by 2023.

Since climatic and ecological regions cut across national political boundaries, a continental, transboundary response is important in the formulation and implementation of climate change responses. The African Development Bank (AfDB) estimates that Africa will need investment of over USD 3 trillion in mitigation and adaptation by

2030 to effectively implement its Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. While the Africa region has been consistent in its call for developed countries to support developing regions in addressing the financing, technology transfer and capacity building needs related to ambitious climate action, there is also a need for enhanced domestic resource mobilisation and capacity development in support of African-led and African-owned climate responses.

Africa's development context is thus defined by many factors in addition to a warming climate. These are serious challenges, but at the same time, opportunities, particularly in the realms of innovation and localisation:

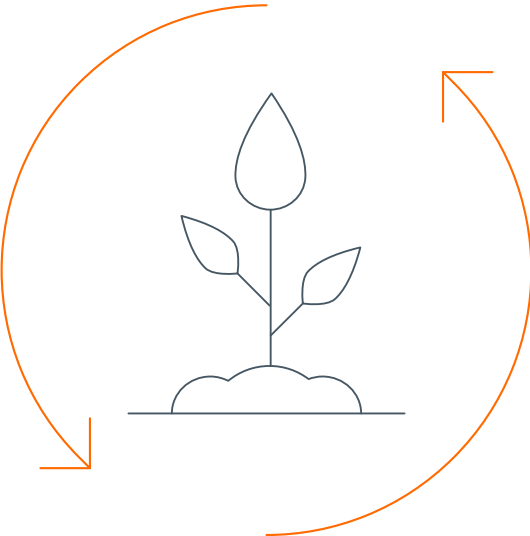
Growing population	Low levels of economic growth	Increased urbanisation	Lack of services
Gender inequality	Food- and land insecurity	Low levels of energy access	Violence
Lack of education	Youth unemployment	Governance challenges	Financial, human, and technological resource constraints
Extreme poverty	Land degradation	Double burden of health risks	Inadequate skills development

Key sectoral challenges and opportunities related to climate change

While adaptation and resilience-building remain Africa's top priority, mitigation actions will also be required as part of the region's climate response.

It is recognised that the continent has an immense mitigation potential due to its vast land mass, forests, agricultural systems, and oceans.

Africa also has unrivalled potential for renewable energy – especially solar – for its own development and export.

SECTOR	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
<p>Food systems, health, and nutrition in a changing climate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major cereal crops grown across Africa will be adversely impacted as they are at the edge of physical thresholds at which yields decline. • Challenges to the livestock sector include the decline in quality and quantity of animal feeds and forage; a reduction in water availability; heat stress; biodiversity change; changes in the distribution and occurrence of livestock pests and diseases; and increased livelihood and income vulnerability affecting food security, purchasing power and resilience. • Africa is projected to be most exposed to an increased risk of hunger due to climate change. • The increasing frequency of very hot days is already having effects on the capacity of people to work in the fields, with major implications for livelihoods based on human labour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital technology offers significant opportunities to provide information, education, awareness and other climate risk management services at scale, speed and in a targeted and differentiated manner. • There is room for policy innovation to effect change at scale and at a low cost. • The development of a new generation of data driven and ICT-enabled climate sensitive farmers, which is both environmentally and financially rewarding, is going to be a critical lever for the region's climate response. • Priorities for research and innovation need to focus on addressing the fundamental challenges faced by farmers, which relate to policies, institutions, and society in general. 

Key sectoral challenges and opportunities related to climate change

SECTOR	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Land-based ecosystems and carbon sinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa had the highest net annual loss of forests from 2010-2020, due to unsustainable agriculture, fuelwood harvesting and logging. • Desertification affects approximately 45% of Africa's total land area, with 55% of this area at high or very high risk of further degradation. • 18 of the world's 20 most food insecure countries are in Africa. • Two of the world's areas most vulnerable to ecosystem collapse within the next decade (due to resource scarcity and natural disasters) are in African rangelands. • International interest in utilising African lands for Ecosystem-based carbon dioxide removal activities may present unique governance challenges regarding development trade-offs, land-use rights, safeguarding of biodiversity and food security, and water resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa could reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 22% by implementing a multipronged approach to natural climate solutions that entails protecting key carbon ecosystems, avoiding further loss of nature, and restoring important ecosystems. • This presents an opportunity for investment in protecting and restoring natural ecosystems to achieve not only climate benefits, but also biodiversity and social and economic development, thereby ensuring a green development pathway for Africa. • Protecting and restoring Africa's ecosystems also has implications for the health of the population as land use change is increasingly linked to the occurrence and risk of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases.
Energy and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current actions to eradicate energy poverty and promote energy justice are falling short both in terms of scale and pace. • As African economies expand hydroelectric production, they risk becoming more sensitive to climate variability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are opportunities related to off-grid and smart-grid solutions, designed around renewable energy technologies, to support rapid expansion of energy access. • Investment opportunities can also arise from appropriate policy frameworks and programmes, such as South Africa's Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme.
Climate change, transport, and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security in many African countries is exacerbated by a lack of resilient transport infrastructure. • As critical trade routes face significant risk to disruption by climate impacts, it is expected that food insecurity will worsen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By implementing adaptation measures, climate related road maintenance could be reduced by 61% in Mozambique, 47% in Zambia and 43% in South Africa by 2050. • There is a shortage of literature on observed and projected climate impacts on the African transport sector. This presents an opportunity for research and innovation in the sector, to come up with timely solutions. • There are significant opportunities for Africa in transitioning to low-emission transport modalities (eg, electric vehicles) for both public and private transport.

Key sectoral challenges and opportunities related to climate change

SECTOR	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Water systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa accounts for two-thirds of the extreme poor. This, combined with the fact that Africa's population is projected to double by 2050 and the significant water stress that already exists across the continent (to be compounded further by climate change). Water access and governance present the most significant challenge for this decade. • The increased drying of the continent will result in food shortages, conflicts over increasingly scarce resources and increasing dependence on natural resources. • Investment in water in Africa is low, contributing to inadequate capacity to minimise climate risks and enhance climate-resilient water systems. • There is a risk of higher frequency and intensity of floods and consequently more extensive impacts and greater need for action on flood mitigation. • Africa's size and diversity of climate conditions, often with high spatial and temporal variability, make it difficult to generalise about the current and future status of water resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adoption of water efficient technologies, such as drip-irrigation or small-scale water harvesting, can both help to adapt to the impending impacts of climate change but also create significant private sector business opportunities across the continent. • There is an opportunity for the development of bankable/investable solutions for adaptation, particularly through ecosystem-based approaches and ecosystem-based adaptation, that benefit the most vulnerable populations and ecosystems across Africa. • Climate finance mechanisms and development funds provide an avenue for mobilising financial resources for practical climate-resilient water investments.
Climate-resilient urban areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An estimated USD 20-25 billion per year needs to be invested in basic urban infrastructure, and an additional USD 20 billion per year in housing, to respond to urban population growth. • The surge in urban population (particularly in Africa's secondary cities) is paired with rapid urbanisation and increased transportation. • Consequently, harmful emissions from transportation and land-use change are growing significantly across Africa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature-based solutions in the form of ecological (or green) infrastructure have emerged as spatial planning tools. • Maintaining or restoring green infrastructure is considered to complement or substitute for more expensive infrastructure investments that are not available to meet local needs. • Green infrastructure can lengthen the life of existing built infrastructure and make areas more attractive for investment, promoting multifunctionality, connectivity, and accessibility.

“While adaptation and resilience-building remain Africa’s top priority, mitigation actions will also be required as part of the region’s climate response.”

Key sectoral challenges and opportunities related to climate change

SECTOR	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
<p>Climate change and Africa's blue economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change is already impacting coastal and island communities in Africa through more frequent and intense extreme weather events, coastal erosion, sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, coral bleaching, and other impacts. • These climate induced changes impact on entire economic sectors – for example, the change in productivity and dynamics of upwelling currents affects fishery stock; and the collapse of coral reefs impacts on small scale fishers and tourism industries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oceans and coastal zones can be an integral part of climate responses, for example through ecosystem-based adaptation approaches. • Efforts to increase the resilience of coastal economies and communities to sea level rise, and efforts to further enhance the ability of oceans to drawdown carbon dioxide, via expansion of mangroves, ocean alkalisation, and other approaches, can create livelihoods as well as financial flows for mitigation efforts. • Mapping and analysis of ecosystems services, including economic production, carbon sinks and carbon dioxide removal potentials, can generate policy space for these activities.
<p>Emerging issues for climate: Researching, developing, and deploying new and novel approaches to fighting climate change</p>	<p>Emerging technologies for responding to climate change can present several challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to and control over technologies; • access to finance; • questions of liability and accountability; • development of insurance mechanisms; • questions of private versus public control or use; • access to and control over data; and • significant risk in use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in early-stage research, development, and regulation can ensure that African interests help to shape new technologies and their use. • Opportunities inherent in early engagement with emerging topics include conducting, shaping, and directing research to ensure consideration of African contexts and needs; shaping of technology transfer standards; and engaging and encouraging innovation in African research institutions.

Strategic alignment

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a stark reminder of the interconnectedness of the international system, revealing the vulnerabilities that emerge from that interconnectedness, but also the potential for collaboration and shared solutions.

In July 2021, the African Union launched its continental Green Recovery Action Plan, which focuses on five priority areas:

- Climate finance, including increasing flows, efficiency, and impact of funding.
- Supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and national Just Transition programmes.
- Nature-based solutions and focus on biodiversity through work on sustainable land management, forestry, oceans, and ecotourism.
- Resilient agriculture, by focusing on inclusive economic development and green jobs.
- Green and resilient cities, including a focus on water (flooding and water resources) and enhancing information, communication, and technology.

The alignment between the Green Recovery Action Plan and the AU CC Strategy is clear: In responding to the daunting challenges we face, we have an opportunity to reassess and redesign our systems and put ourselves on a path towards sustainability.

Strategic intervention axes



STRATEGIC INTERVENTION AXIS 1

The AU CC Strategy focuses on 'Strengthening Policy and Governance' by highlighting five key policy and governance intervention areas and associated actions that are needed to pursue climate resilient development:

- Enhanced climate policy; inclusive, multi-scalar governance; and institutional co-ordination
- Co-ordinated regional climate action
- Anticipatory governance and long-term planning
- Increased uptake of climate information services (CIS)
- Governance solutions to address the climate-conflict nexus
- Improved climate literacy and awareness



STRATEGIC INTERVENTION AXIS 2

The AU CC Strategy focuses on 'Adopting Pathways towards Transformative Climate-Resilient Development' by identifying key systems transitions that must be achieved to address climate change, move towards a resilient and low-emission future, and support ecosystems and biodiversity. Drawing on the UNFCCC Climate Action Pathways, the AU CC Strategy identifies nine cross-sectoral opportunities that are essential for achieving climate-resilient development pathways and accomplishing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The AU CC Strategy provides recommended interventions and actions for each of the following priority areas:

- Transforming food systems
- Protecting land-based ecosystems
- Transforming energy systems (by enhancing climate-resilient and low-emission energy and infrastructural systems)
- Enhancing inclusive, low-emission and resource-efficient industrialisation
- Transforming mobility and transport (by promoting low-emission, resilient mobility, and transport systems)
- Transforming water systems (by enhancing resilient water systems)
- Building low-emission, resilient urban centres/areas
- Building a climate-resilient African blue economy
- Digital transformation

Strategic intervention axes



STRATEGIC INTERVENTION AXIS 3

The AU CC Strategy also requires key areas for intervention support, and this is dealt with under Strategic Intervention Axis 3: 'Enhancing the Means of Implementation towards Climate-Resilient, Low-Emission Development, Including through Climate Finance'. There is an understanding that the effective implementation of climate-resilient development plans and policies will require support in terms of climate finance and resource mobilisation; technology transfer and enhanced capacity building; and awareness creation and outreach.

This axis is centred on the following key priorities:

- Enhanced finance flows and resource mobilisation (climate finance)
- Promoting safety mechanisms to reduce loss and damage
- Equitable technology transfer and development
- Inclusive participation of marginalised and vulnerable groups, especially women and youth
- Capacity development



STRATEGIC INTERVENTION AXIS 4

The AU CC Strategy looks at 'Leveraging Regional Flagship Initiatives'. It highlights African programmes and flagship initiatives that work towards climate resilience through generating political buy-in for collective action, serving as the foundation for partnerships, facilitating information exchange, and mobilising domestic and international resources.

The African programmes and flagship initiatives that operate at a continent-wide level and contribute to accelerating climate action across the continent include:

- Infrastructure: the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) is aimed at strengthening the consensus and ownership of large cross-border infrastructure projects that integrate energy, transportation, and water development on a continental scale.
- Trade: the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is regarded as having the potential to enable Africa's response to climate change through targeted trade-related measures.
- Climate information services for adaptation and resilience: programmes such as ClimDev-Africa, the Hydromet Africa Programme, Weather and Climate Information Services for Africa (WISER) and the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology offer innovative and practical solutions.
- Climate-resilient agriculture: the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)

seeks to boost investment to stimulate growth in the agricultural sector; the African Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative (AFR100) aims to bring 100 million hectares of degraded land under restoration by 2030; and the African Resilient Landscapes Initiative (ARLI) drives forest and ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, climate smart agriculture, and rangeland management.

- Enhancing access to renewable energy: the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) aims to accelerate and scale up the harnessing of the continent's renewable energy potential.
- Climate change risk management: the African Risk Capacity (ARC) has been established to build the capacities of African governments to identify their climate risk, plan for climate disasters, access capital at critical times, and implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
- Climate-resilient African blue economy: there is the Africa Blue Economy Strategy addressing concepts such as blue carbon, blue energy, climate-resilient coastal infrastructure, and responses to improve the climate resilience of Africa's fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
- Building on climate change capacity building programmes: it is recognised that much capacity building work on climate action is taking place under the UNFCCC's Action for Climate Empowerment agenda and several youth development policies and programmes developed by the AU at the continental level.
- Capacity needs and gaps for climate research: the Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESA), Climate Research for Development (CR4D) and Future Climate for Africa (FCFA) initiatives support climate science research.

Implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and learning

An implementation plan/matrix is included with the AU CC Strategy to indicate the main areas of intervention and the associated actions needed to achieve the desired objectives (as aligned with the four strategic intervention axes). A more detailed plan will be developed in due course, with areas of responsibility, costs, and timeframes.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning has been incorporated to allow for tracking and measuring the successful implementation of the AU CC Strategy, as well as specifying actors, roles, responsibilities, budgetary frameworks, and review functions for various activities. The AU CC Strategy will be subjected to a five-yearly evaluation and review process to ensure that it is up to date, relevant and making progress.

A detailed Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be used to track schedules, timelines, key performance indicators, data collection/management, data analysis, verification and quality assurance, feedback mechanisms and stakeholder contributions.

The successful implementation of the AU CC Strategy will depend on the ability of the Monitoring and Evaluation process to provide accurate and useful responses for the following key areas:

- An enabling environment for effective mitigation, resilience and adaptation.
- Information acquisition, data analysis and use/dissemination.
- Supporting capacity building initiatives to improve capacities.

Data will be key in implementing and evaluating the AU CC Strategy. These monitoring and evaluation activities will be carried out by the AU Commission's competent experts that understand how to detect gaps in knowledge and in data, analytical tools, and information, and that have experience with working across multiple disciplines to interact with content experts in developing appropriate methodologies for collecting and analysing data. Data-quality control will enjoy a very high priority, where data must be valid, reliable, accurate, timely/current, and objective/independent.

To aid the monitoring and evaluation process, a results framework will be developed to link the results of the activities and each of the specific objectives to the proposed interventions and a logical framework will be developed to help the AU determine which indicators to follow to determine success.

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MEET OUR AUTHORS

For more information on the African Union's climate change, resilient development strategy and action plan, please contact our authors.



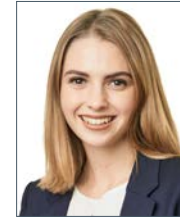
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