



New 'Evidence-Policy-Action' Center of Excellence

A platform supporting decision-makers and practitioners to create and implement evidence-based policies across Francophone Africa

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About the EPA Center of Excellence

Relevance

Francophone Africa faces several escalating and evolving challenges, including climate change, the spread of terrorism, political instability, social fragility, food insecurity, and health crises. Consequently, the region is marked by deep social divides and inequalities, requiring development policies and practitioners to constantly adapt and innovate to meet the aspirations of their people. In light of such challenges, it is crucial to rely on evidence when planning interventions (policies, programs, and projects) to ensure they are equitable, inclusive, gender-sensitive and sustainable, and that resources are optimized and enable significant development progress.

While there is a growing desire among policymakers and practitioners in Francophone Africa for knowledge translation and evidence-informed policymaking, the use of evidence to inform decision-making remains slow. To foster a culture where evidence is routinely used in decision-making processes, the EPA Center of Excellence for Knowledge and Evidence-based Policymaking was created in 2023 to provide a platform to consolidate, catalyze, and institutionalize the utilization of evidence. The Center of excellence was launched in October 2023 as part of a joint global initiative between IDRC, Bosch Foundation, and Hewlett Foundation, called «Learning together to advance



Evidence and Equity in Policymaking to achieve the SDGs» (LEEPS), which aims to support the realisation of the continent's sustainable development goals through the promotion of evidence-based and equitable policymaking in Africa.

The EPA Center of Excellence is run by the African Center for Equitable Development (ACED) and Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR).



Vision and objectives

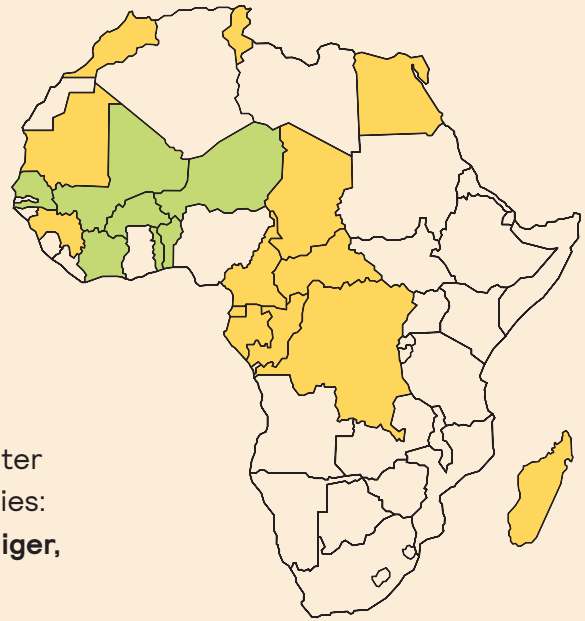
The EPA Center of Excellence aspires to see accelerated, robust, and sustainable development across Francophone Africa that is grounded in local realities and needs, and guided by the principles of equity, gender equality, justice, and inclusion. In pursuit of this vision, the Center positions itself as a hub of expertise dedicated to help policymakers and development practitioners create informed, fair, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable interventions.

In practical terms, the EPA Center of Excellence aims to:



Geographical coverage

-  The EPA Center of Excellence covers all **Francophone countries in Africa**.
-  In its initial two-year pilot phase, the Center is operating in seven West African countries: **Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo**.



Thematic targeting

The EPA Center of Excellence addresses priority development issues in Francophone Africa, which are structured around the following themes:



- Food systems
- Human capital development
- Fragility and social cohesion
- Environment, climate change and transition to low-carbon economies
- Digital transformation
- Integration of equity, diversity, and inclusion into all matters

Active programs and overall aims

1



Capacity-building program for individuals and institutions active in the evidence and policy ecosystem in Francophone Africa.

This includes a series of activities aimed at developing and deploying training courses – focused on knowledge translation and evidence-informed policymaking – for various qualification levels (basic, professional, continuing), training modes (online, face-to-face, hybrid), and actors (researchers, policymakers, practitioners, etc.).

2



Program to provide direct technical assistance to stakeholders in

synthesizing evidence and making it more available and accessible, and facilitating dialogue between evidence producers and users so they can share and obtain information as required. The program aims to coordinate stronger links between all key stakeholders in the evidence ecosystem – researchers, policymakers, and practitioners – and provide them with relevant data when requested.

3



Program to facilitate co-learning and knowledge sharing on knowledge mobilization and evidence-based policy in Francophone Africa.

This program includes the creation of a community of practice to share experiences and good practices in favour of evidence-based, inclusive, equitable, and impactful policies.

4



Program to support the institutionalization of the systematic use of evidence in interventions in Francophone Africa.

This program supports the embedding and adoption of innovative mechanisms and practices into public administration to facilitate the access and utilization of evidence in policymaking processes.



10-year outlook

To achieve its 10-year-long vision and objectives, the EPA Center of Excellence has divided its activities into three phases: :

- **Seed or pilot phase (years 0-2).** This phase is aimed at mobilizing stakeholders and partners who are receptive to the vision of the Centre, testing methods and tools for knowledge translation and evidence-informed policymaking, and laying the institutional and organizational foundations of the Center. It will primarily focus on seven Francophone West African countries.
- **Acceleration phase (years 3-5).** This phase is intended to expedite the implementation of programs and their expansion to other Francophone Africa countries.
- **Consolidation phase (years 5-10).** This phase is designed to refine approaches and programs and consolidate achievements and practices in the mobilization and valorization of knowledge and evidence-based policies.



About ACED & IPAR



ACED is a *think-and-do tank* that promotes equitable development in Africa, particularly in Francophone Africa. Its mission is to advance policy and practice transformation by supporting policymakers and development practitioners in making decisions that are equitable, fair, inclusive, informed, and sustainable. ACED's intervention approach, known as EPA (Evidence-Policy-Action), encompasses: (i) the production and mobilization of evidence, (ii) policy engagement for co-creating and valorizing evidence, and (iii) facilitating the scaling-up of transformative actions. ACED applies this approach across four areas of intervention: food systems, nature economy, digital economy, and human development.

For more information on ACED : www.acedafrica.org



IPAR is a think tank based in Dakar, Senegal, dedicated to contributing to the economic and social development process in the sub-region by providing a platform for exchange and debate grounded in rigorous strategic and prospective research, aligned with the concerns of decision-makers and grassroots populations. As per its strategic plan, IPAR is developing several initiatives focusing on: (1) the structural transformation of agriculture, (2) climate change, (3) migration and youth employment, (4) land governance and natural resource management, and (5) sustainable development objectives, through research, capacity building, and policy dialogue.

For more information on IPAR : www.ipar.sn



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