Strengthening the Capacities of the AU Commission

Setting scales for a united, prosperous and peaceful continent

Objectives

The African Union (AU) provides an institutional and organizational framework for its 55 member states to create a mutual vision: a united, prosperous and peaceful Africa, built by its own people and a dynamic force on a global scale. In cooperation with the member states and the various AU bodies, the AU Commission (AUC) plays a central and coordinating role. The integration of the continent requires institutional and process-oriented reforms in order to strengthen the operational and strategic efficiency and transparency of the AU Commission. This results in two important focuses of the current Strategic Plan (Medium Term Plan 2018–2023) of the AU Commission: (1) Institutional reforms; and (2) Further development of the AU Commission’s capacity and improvement of service delivery, partnership and outreach.

The Challenges

The AU emerged in 2002 from the former Organization of African Unity (OAU) with the primary objective of actively promoting and implementing the ambitious African integration agenda. The AU Commission as the secretariat of the AU, takes over important coordination, executive and administrative functions and manages the budget of the AU. In order to manage their diverse tasks and processes in a more transparent and professional manner, the heads of state and government of the member states decided in 2016 to implement extensive institutional and structural reforms. The Bureau of the Deputy Chairperson (BDCP) is responsible for the cross-cutting issue of institutional capacity building within the AU Commission. The development and improvement of internal planning and management capacities is a focal point and has implications for the performance of other departments as well as the functioning of the entire AU.

Our Approach

GIZ’s support is aiming at strengthening the performance of the AU Commission in terms of operational efficiency, effectiveness and transparency. The Bureau of the Deputy Chairperson, but also selected subordinate departments and other internal service providers will be advised. Specifically, GIZ accompanies the following processes:

- **Supporting the professional qualification of the staff:** The project supports the AU Leadership Academy (AULA) and the Learning & Development Unit (L&D) in the development, expansion and implementation of AU internal training courses. Here are leadership and specialist training, among other things in the field of Transformational Leadership. In addition, competences in the area of e-learning are to be developed in order to reach a broader target group across departments with digital continuing education programs, also in the individual AU bodies and member states.

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### Project Details

- **Project name:** Strengthening steering and management capacities of the AU Commission (AUC)
- **Commissioned by:** Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
- **Executive organs:** German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) GmbH
- **Partner organizations:** Commission of the African Union (AUC)
- **Budget:** 3 Million Euro
- **Timeline:** Phase IV: 01/2018 – 12/2020

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• **Strengthening the recruitment process:** Through experts and organizational consulting, the GIZ project plans to specifically promote the further professionalization of the recruitment system of the AU Commission. The recruitment period for new jobs should be reduced.

• **Improvement of the operational financial management:** GIZ advises the AU on the introduction of adapted planning and financing mechanisms for improved cooperation between the AU Commission and international partners, the so-called Joint Programming and Joint Financing Arrangements. In addition, the goal is to further professionalize the budget planning of the AU Commission and the transparent mapping of donor contributions. Moreover, the partner is assisted to provide SAP as financial management software extensively, i.e. also to be used by the AU organs, in order to unify the financial management within the AU.

• **Supporting the internal audit of the AU:** Office of Internal Audit (OIA) staff is trained to do performance reviews and to use specialized auditing software, and the auditors are also certified. Furthermore, cooperation with regional / continental audit courts will be promoted and it will contribute with the further professionalization programs in the area. The project thus supports the AU working in accordance with international accounting standards.

### The Results

• In the past project phase, the Bureau of the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission was successfully supported in conducting a comprehensive gender analysis in order to establish a concrete action plan for gender mainstreaming. As an important preparatory step to raise awareness of this topic, this has, among other things, contributed to the AU decision to introduce a gender quota of 50% and a youth quota of 35% within the AU by 2025. In the meantime, a work plan developed between the AU Commission, other AU bodies and regional offices has been validated for concrete implementation.

• The evaluation of existing joint planning and financing mechanisms between the AU Commission and International Partners resulted in several recommendations for the development of a new mechanism. On this basis, a new Joint Programming and Joint Financing Arrangement (JPA/JFA) are being prepared.