

Strengthening the Capacities of the AU Commission

Setting scales for a united, prosperous and peaceful continent

Context

In the Agenda 2063, the 55 Member States of the African Union formulate a vision of an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens." The AU Commission (AUC), as per its secretariat function, takes on a coordinating and moderating role in this pan-African reform effort: It bundles executive as well as administrative functions, in particular managing the AU budget.

In 2016, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted a comprehensive reform to build effective management and planning capacities, which adapts the roles and mandates of numerous AU institutions, including the AUC. To strengthen the AUC's ownership in this regard, some international partners are pooling their contributions in a Joint Financial Arrangement (JFA). This instrument provides the AUC with increased planning certainty on the one hand and a streamlined, more uniform reporting and auditing framework on the other.

The aim of the project is to support the AUC departments involved in the JFA in rendering planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting more impact-oriented, forward-looking and gender-sensitive.

Approach

Institutional capacity building is considered a fundamental cross-cutting issue within the AUC and, in this respect, has positive effects on the performance of other departments. In line with the AU reform, the project contributes to defining efficient processes and clear responsibilities as well as promoting interdepartmental cooperation. Accompanying training courses enable employees to implement the new processes and procedures. Both contribute to strengthening and sustaining AUC's planning and management competences.

Project name	Strengthening the steering and management capacities of the AU Commission (AUC)
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation Development (BMZ)
Executive organs	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Partner organizations	Commission of the African Union (AUC)
Budget	3 Million Euro
Timeline	2021 – 2023

The project takes a systemic approach and focuses on fostering operational efficiency, effectiveness and transparency in the following two areas of action:

- **Optimized process management:** Using **quality criteria** such as impact orientation, multi-annuality and gender sensitivity, improves process management altogether. Planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting procedures are coordinated and effective cooperation between responsible departments is being ensured.
- **Trained employees:** Through broad-based professional training and individual support services, employees are capacitated to adopt the afore-mentioned quality criteria. To this, the project supports development of virtual courses, setting up help desks and training of multipliers.

Based on AU gender strategy, gender equality shall be established as a standard criterion in the above-mentioned process management of the AUC. This shall enable the partly different needs of the genders to be taken into account at an early stage in all processes. In view of the underrepresentation of women in the AUC, proportionately more women shall benefit from the training measures.



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Sucess Factors

Effective processes can only be implemented in line with uniform quality criteria and adequate capacity development strategies. The project promotes the internalization of process flows and improved cooperation along central interfaces through interdepartmental exchange of experience and joint learning.

Two Practical Examples

The current project builds on four previous project phases. In this way, it can be ensured that organizational development, consulting and training measures can be designed sustainably, integrated in a targeted manner and accompanied intensively in order to ensure that they are anchored in the AUC and beyond.

In the previous programme phase, the AU was supported in the development of a manual to standardize the preparation of the AU budget in order to improve transparency and accountability. At the same time, the capacity of employees in the Office of Internal Audit was further developed in areas such as performance auditing, IT auditing, and the use of specialized auditing software. This has optimized the quantity and quality of audits conducted. Financial management, budget planning and financial reporting of the AU was completely in line with international standards for the first time in 2019, which has a positive impact on image, professionalism and efficiency among AU Member States and donors.

With the support of the programme, an online learning platform "AU Learn" was set up, which is being used to organize virtual training measures throughout the AU. In four pilot courses with selected de-partments, 741 participants have so far participated in virtual pro-fessional trainings in various focus areas. Employees from the Lear-ning and Development Unit have been trained on-the-job to develop e-learning courses independently in terms of methodology, didactics and learning content and to evaluate them using a dedicated tool.

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