



**ECOSOCC**  
Economic Social & Cultural Council

**The Voice of the  
African Citizenry**

# **ECOSOCC STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2023 - 2027**

***Rejuvenating The Voice  
of the African Citizenry***



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
Agenda 2063	Africa Union Agenda 2063
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
CSE	Civil Society Engagement
CIDO	Citizen Diaspora Organization
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSE	civil society engagement
ECOSOCC	Economic Social and Cultural Council
FTYIP	First Ten-Year Implementation Plan
GA	General Assembly
MELR	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Reporting
MEARL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning and Reporting
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ICT	Information and Communications Technologies
INGOs	Intergovernmental Organizations
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
RBB	Results Based Budget
RECS	Regional Economic Communities
SCC	Sectoral Cluster Committees
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TOC	Theory of Change
TORs	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNSDC	United Nations Development Cooperation

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS .....	2
FOREWORD: The Presiding Officer .....	4
FOREWORD: The Head of Secretariat .....	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	7
<b>1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	9
1.2 Participatory Strategic Planning Process .....	11
1.3 Milestones .....	11
1.4 Lessons Learnt from the Transitional Strategic Plan 2017-2021 .....	12
1.5 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis .....	12
<b>2. STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023-2027 .....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Mandate .....	14
2.2 Vision, Mission and Values .....	14
2.3 Pillars .....	15
2.4 Cross-Cutting Issues .....	15
<b>3. THEORY OF CHANGE .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4. INTERRELATED STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1. Specific Strategic Objectives .....	21
4.2. Proposed Strategic Interventions Per Strategic Objective .....	22
<b>5. MONITORING, EVALUATION, LEARNING AND REPORTING (MERL) FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>24</b>
5.1 The ECOSOCC Evaluation Function .....	24
5.2 Strategic Plan Reviews .....	24
5.3 Annual Strategy Review Performance Reports .....	24
5.4 Results Framework .....	26
<b>6. RESOURCE MOBILISATION .....</b>	<b>31</b>
6.1 Financial Sustainability Framework .....	31
<b>7. ECOSOCC RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>8. TARGETED AND TAILORED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>9. BUDGET PROJECTIONS .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ANNEXES: ACCOMPANYING INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Annex 1:</b> Strategic Planning Process and Issues Identification .....	35
<b>Annex 2</b> Annualised Advisory and Policy Recommendations and Utilization Dashboard and AU Entities Policy Matrix Response .....	36
<b>Annex 3:</b> National Chapters, Clusters and Technical Structures Performance Dashboard.....	37
<b>Annex 4:</b> Research, Advisory and Policy Dashboard and AU Entities Policy Matrix Response .....	38
<b>Annex 5:</b> Implementation Plan .....	39



## FORWORD

### The Preciding Officer

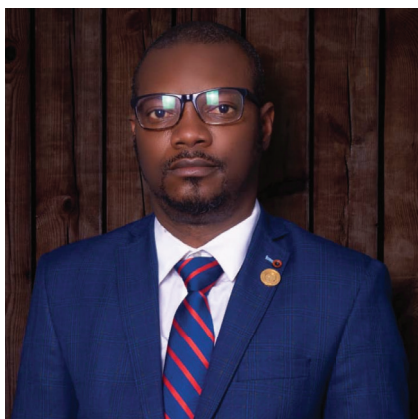
The African Union (AU) appreciates the contribution that civil society brings in pursuit of a desired 'Africa We Want'. In its Preamble, the Constitutive Act establishing the AU posits that the institution will be 'guided by the common vision of a united and strong Africa and the need to build partnership between governments and all segments of civil society... in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among African people.'

In Articles 5 and 22 of the Constitutive Act, the AU went further on this commitment on civil society by setting up ECOSOCC as its advisory organ with a mission to establish 'An African citizenry platform for engagement on cultural and socio-economic issues, that serves a consultative and advisory role to the African Union for Africa's inclusive development.' As such, ECOSOCC as an advisory organ serves as an interlocutor between the Member States of the Union and African civil society organizations.

AU ECOSOCC is critical in Africa's transition to being an inclusive, egalitarian, and flourishing continent. the organ provides an effective platform for the citizenry and diaspora to be involved in the implementation of Agenda 2063. Having an unambiguous mandate as encapsulated in the Constitutive Act of the AU gives the organ legitimacy and premise in providing advisory opinions on emerging issues to the AU and its organs. The current strategy has come at an opportune time to provide much needed complementarity to the AU by galvanizing the voices of people of the continent and diaspora in making their contribution to the envisaged future.

One exciting prospect encapsulated within this strategy is its inclusion of the establishment of a fully-fledged secretariat in ECOSOCC's new home, Zambia. As leadership, our ambition is to see ECOSOCC being at the centre of fostering collaboration amongst CSOs in all the 55 Member States and providing a platform for the CSOs to engage with AU programs. This can only be a reality when there is a deliberate focus on the institutional configuration of ECOSOCC, making sure that its structures are functional and accessible to all. These elements are well captured in this strategy through the desire to operationalize national chapters. When national chapters are operational and inclusive of all the different categories of the African people, then ECOSOCC will be on a trajectory to be an effective organ in contributing to the Africa we want.





## FORWORD

### The Head of Secretariat

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The African blueprint for development, Agenda 2063, recognizes the role that civil societies play in the implementation of the aspirations encapsulated therein. It notes that 'Africa will be a continent where the institutions are at the service of its people. Citizens will actively participate in the social, economic, and political development and management.'

Amongst the drivers and enablers need to have a capable development state, empowered citizens and responsible civil society are fulcrum. The role of civil society facilitates in bringing about effective, accountable, and participatory institutions and governance based on transparent laws and rules, effective public policy and services, strengthening the role of the state in development, enhancing the legitimacy of institutions and building public trust.

Our new strategy seeks to bring to life the ambition of Agenda 2063 by facilitating effective engagement with the people of Africa. The strategy development process was inclusive as it employed participatory and consultative approaches through engagements with the organ's structures, secretariat, partners, and other relevant constituencies. A significant representation of the population of the CSOs and cluster committees were engaged in detailed consultative meetings and their objective and independent views captured and incorporated into the strategic plan. The collective inputs and views of stakeholders are well considered, reflected and carried along to create value, ownership, commitment and sustainability.

One key aspect which we think can conjure this effective engagement is the process of accrediting CSOs that ECOSOCC has commenced through the development of an accreditation framework. We think that this element will bring coherence and complementarity amongst the CSOs in Africa. The process of accrediting CSOs working with the AU will assist in programming quality assurance and efficacy. It will also help in succinctly demonstrating the complementary role of CSOs to the work of the AU and Member States.

Further, the Strategic Plan considers the evolving and increasingly complex environment for CSOs, policy frameworks, capacity, and several bottlenecks. It also responds to lessons learned from decades of civil society engagement and delivery experience. Due to complexities associated with the operational environment characterised by shrinking civic space, the Strategic Plan articulates a risk framework. The framework identifies risks and allocating mechanisms to increase our readiness and capacity to deploy appropriate mitigation strategies. A clear results focus, innovation and value creation and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework are crucial aspects. Key performance indicators are set and identified for each strategic objective. The strategy thus stimulates appetite for civil society engagement with all actors and leave no one behind. We have no doubt that the full implementation of this strategy will enable ECOSOCC to make its contribution to the Africa We Want, as the mantra of Agenda 2063 goes!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The AU ECOSOCC 2023-2027 Strategic Plan development was made possible through valuable contributions by the in-depth participation of the representatives of Civil Society Organizations; key informants, individuals, various constituencies, staff of the AU Secretariat, and the AU Office of Strategic Planning and Delivery , to whom the Organ is highly indebted.

We would like to thank the experts who took the lead in developing this new strategic plan. The Organ expresses its gratitude to the team members, particularly the assignment lead, Mr. Ringostar Mordecai, and a team of contributing experts, including Dr. Musavengana Chibwana, Mr. Leonard Zondetsa, and Mr. Erick Ngala. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the AU ECOSOCC leadership, led by of the former Presiding Officer Mr. Denise Kodhe, who tirelessly provided guidance throughout the strategic plan development process.

AU ECOSOCC is grateful to all stakeholders and everyone who attended the validation workshops, which were held in various locations, for their time and valuable input which has informed this Strategic Plan. In this regard, we owe a lot of gratitude to all the stakeholders and various constituencies who participated and contributed towards the development of this Strategic Plan. It goes without saying that the Organ's success is determined by its staff. In particular, we thank the staff of the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat for their exceptional dedication to the organ's work and tenacity in achieving the organ's vision and mission.

We appreciate everyone's efforts in developing and implementing this strategy. Mr. William Carew, ECOSOCC's Head of the Secretariat, deserves special recognition for his strategic leadership of the organ and the technical support team, as do Mr. Kyeretwie Osei (Head of Programmes), Dr. Raj Chintaram (Desk Officer), and Mr. Bright Sefah ( Desk Officer).

We are confident that this Strategic Plan will continue to position ECOSOCC as the advisory organ with the mandate to contribute to the effective translation of the African Union's objectives, principles, and policies into concrete programs, as well as programme evaluation.

Finally we would like to thank all stakeholders, our partners and constituencies in the ecosystem of the Organ and beyond for their dedication to the prominence and centrality of the Civil Society as the Voice of the African Citizenry in contributing to The Africa We Want, our Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the outset, the African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council (AU ECOSOCC) Strategic Plan 2023- 2027 is ambitious, bespoke and business unusual. As the trust and unique voice of the African Citizenry, the AU ECOSOCC amassed requisite capacities and recorded incremental milestones in transitioning into a fully functional pacesetter and unique institution of the African Union in line with AU Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.4(XXVI)). Leveraging its statutory mandate as an advisory organ of the AU and strategic positioning, the AU ECOSOCC is poised for stronger results delivery, performance, engagement, collaboration, responsiveness, governance and improved contribution to the African Union Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals. Duly established during the third Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, between 4 and 5 July 2004, under the provisions of articles 5 (i) and 22 of the AU Constitutive Act, the ECOSOCC has gained traceable footprints as a trusted AU organ. The Organ is comprised of various social, private sector and professional groups of member states of the AU and the African diaspora. The organ actively engages, promotes and strengthens the institutional, human and operational capacities of civil society organizations, the Executive Council Decisions EX/CL/Dec. 869 (XXVI) of 23–27 January 2015 and the Dec. EX/CL 924 (XXVI) and June 2015.

The AU ECOSOCC attained significant milestones during the implementation of the transitional strategy 2017-2021. This included the establishment of an autonomous Secretariat with a dedicated staff; development of Operational Frameworks such as Accreditation framework, Diaspora legal framework and National Chapter framework for enhanced civil society participation in AU processes. In addition, the Organ demonstrated the improved relevance of the organ's work in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030; delivered online COVID-19 continental awareness raising campaigns on the continent and developed operational database of multidisciplinary experts in line with ECOSOCC mandate. The Organ developed policy advisory to inform the decision-making organs of the African Union.

This Strategic Plan is designed to reinforce the AU ECOSOCC's contribution to an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. Specifically, the Strategy translates the mission of AU ECOSOCC to provide an effective and efficient African citizenry platform for engagement on cultural and socio-economic issues, that serves a consultative and advisory role to the AU for improved inclusive growth and development. It is people-centred and driven.

The Strategic Plan embeds crystalizes catalytic elements for the period 2023-2027. The ECOSOCC Theory of Change articulates key expected spheres of control (outputs) to which anticipated spheres of influence (outcomes) are attributed as a result of the interventions and functions of the Organ derived from the AU Constitutive Act, Statutes and Operational frameworks to accelerate desired development impacts. The realization of key outcomes is triggered by leveraging ECOSOCC's advisory and technical functions, defined pathways and imminent casualties given pertinent policy and operating environment assumptions. Ultimately, the anticipated outcomes contribute to higher level sphere of concern (development impacts) mainly enhanced inclusive and sustainable development and thus the Africa We Want. The Strategy fosters a robust trajectory and features innovative and good practices to create and configure value to ECOSOCC's mandate in delivering Africa's aspirations. These include though not limited, the risk identification, treatment framework and matrix, pillars, comparative advantages, upscaled, congruent and challenging interwoven strategic objectives. Cognisant of ECOSOCC's bold contribution to the realization of the current First Ten Year Implementation Plan 2014-2023 (FTYIP), this Strategic Plan will be aligned with the forthcoming AU Second Ten Year Implementation Plan 2023-2032 (STYIP).

The Strategic Plan articulates a monitoring and evaluation culture at the AU ECOSOCC. It features a highly influential Monitoring and Evaluation Framework intended to reflect a continental engagement strategy consistent with AU Agenda 2063 expected of a flagship Organ. It links elements of institutional growth, renewal, visibility, strengthened governance, corporate reputation and sustainability in a dynamic civic space, the digitalization revolution and pandemic challenges.

A shared vision, values, collective ownership, capacity and implementation commitment is key in reinforcing Agenda 2063, culminating in tangible results for the continent of Africa and its people. Strongly aligned with the AU Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030, the Organ is ramping up visibility and socio- economic transformation, cultural and development outcomes to unmatched scale and impact on the continent. The Strategic Plan features a Strategic Results Framework and Implementation Plan. Anchored on 4 pillars, the Strategic Plan articulates and aims to deliver five (5) interrelated strategic objectives specifically;

<b>OVERALL STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023-2027</b> <b>Pillars, Strategic Objectives, Expected Outcomes and Outputs</b> 			
PILLAR	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
<b>PILLAR 1</b> Research and Advisory	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1</b> To deliver effective, efficient, research and development; and evidence based advisory opinions to the African Union	Strengthened evidence-based decisions by AU policy organs	1.1 Evidence-based advisory services 1.2 Knowledge Products 1.3 Thematic and sectoral research agenda
<b>PILLAR 2</b> Civic Engagement, Accreditation Advocacy and National Chapters	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2</b> To strengthen civic engagement of the Pan African people's movement on the continent and the diaspora to ensure effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and stronger African voice	Strengthened engagement, institutional structures of CSOs	1.1 Popularization of AU policies and programmes 1.2 Accreditation of CSOs for effective engagement 1.3 Establishment and operationalization of national chapters 1.4 Framework on African Diaspora participation in the work of ECOSOCC
<b>PILLAR 3</b> Capacity Building	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3</b> To enhance the diversity, inclusivity, and agility in order to create an adaptive and visible organization  <b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4</b> To enhance institutional capacity and governance processes within the organ	Improved operational excellence and effective implementation of the Organ's mandate	1.1 Build institutional and programmatic capacity of CSOs 1.2 Develop policy-related tools to support CSOs 1.3 Corporate, systems, structures, resources and processes of the Organ in place
<b>PILLAR 4</b> Strategic Partnerships, Collaboration and Networking	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5</b> To initiate, maintain and strengthen strategic partnerships, networks and collaboration	Strengthened resource capacities, networks, and brand	1.1 Develop resource mobilization and partnerships strategy 1.2 Develop branding and communication strategy 1.3 Brand visibility and engagement of CSOs and partners
<b>Cross Cutting Issues</b>	<b>Gender, youth, women and men, boys and girls</b> <b>Digitalization, data, statistics</b> <b>Green growth and sustainability reporting</b>		



# 1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## 1.1 Introduction

The African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council (AU ECOSOCC) Strategic Plan 2023-2027 is produced in accordance with statutory requirements and obligations and its growing mandate. Currently based in Lusaka, Zambia, the AU ECOSOCC is an advisory organ of the AU established under Article 5, 1. (h) of The Constitutive Act of the AU duly signed by the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The AU ECOSOCC seeks to continuously execute its mandate of promoting and strengthening the institutional, human and operational capacities of the African civil society and the Executive Council Decisions EX/CL/Dec. 869 (XXVI) of 23-27 January 2015 and the Dec. EX/CL 924 (XXVI) and June 2015.

The Strategic Plan charts the AU ECOSOCC trajectory for the period 2023-2027.

Crafted in a pandemic era, evolving global and continental trends and the expanding role of the AU ECOSOCC and its structures, the Strategic Plan adapts to new challenges and operating environment. The Strategic Plan addresses teething regional, continental and global threats based on the ECOSOCC statutory mandate and *raison detre*. Statutorily, the Strategic Plan reinforces and dovetails with the broad perspectives and directives of the Africa Union Agenda 2063<sup>1</sup> the First Ten Year Strategy and Medium-Term Implementation Plan.

It derives its basis and coherence from the AU Agenda 2063. The AU Agenda 2063 is a bold policy direction and commitment adopted by AU Heads of States to fast-track inclusive and sustainable development and achieve the Africa We Want, a prosperous Africa. The seven aspirations of the African Union to which the Organ's Strategic Plan is aligned are depicted below as articulated in the AU Agenda 2063.

Fig 1: African Union Agenda 2063



<sup>1</sup> AU Agenda 2063

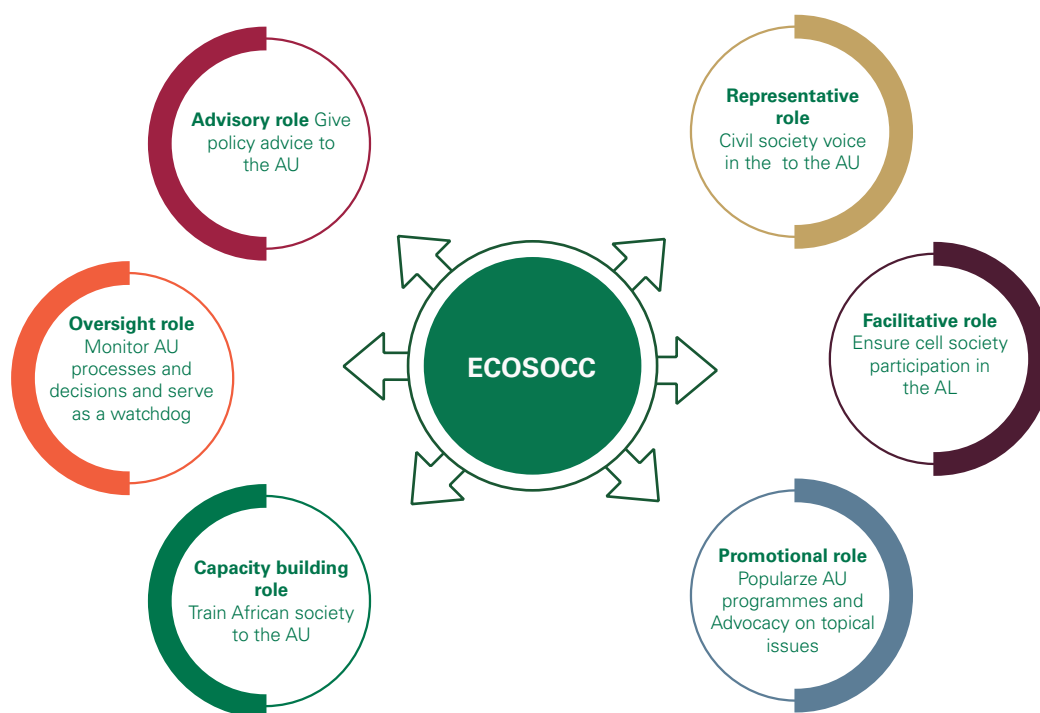
Moreso, the Strategic Plan is aligned with the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals<sup>2</sup> (SDGs) as illustrated in Fig 2 below.

Fig 2: United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals



The centrality of the Organ on the continent and globe converges with its key roles and functions. A recent study conducted on the Impact Analysis of ECOSOCC in the Governance Structure<sup>3</sup> of the AU summarizes the functions and roles of ECOSOCC as depicted below

Fig 3: Key roles and functions of ECOSOCC



<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Development Goals | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

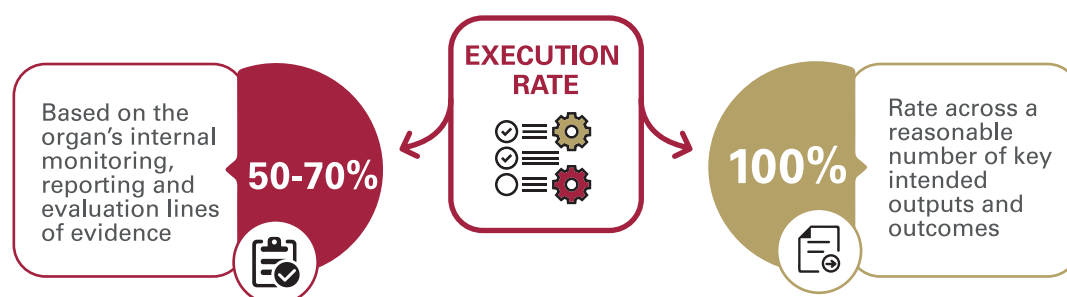
<sup>3</sup> Impact Analysis of ECOSOCC in the Governance structure of the African Union- The Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, 2022.

## 1.2 Participatory Strategic Planning Process

The strategy planning process was participatory and informed by in-depth consultative meetings and engagements held with the entire AU ECOSOCC Secretariat, Civil Society Organizations, AU Office of the Strategic Planning and Delivery; umbrella CSOs, members of the Sectoral Cluster Committees and relevant constituencies. These constituencies provided useful insights and feedback the strategy development process from inception to validation. A significant representation of the population of the CSOs and cluster committees were engaged in detailed consultative meetings. Their objective views were captured and incorporated into the strategic plan. The views were also triangulated across partners and cluster representatives and found converging. Business units participated in the consultative sessions to leading to the formulation of strategic objectives and initiatives. Key performance indicators are set and identified for each objective. Consequently, the collective inputs and views of stakeholders are equally considered, reflected, and carried along to create value, ownership, commitment, impact and sustainability.

## 1.3 Key Milestones

The AU ECOSOCC has recorded progressive milestones during the implementation of its transitional strategy for the period 2017-2022. The Organ undertook robust initiatives and mechanisms in discharging its mandate and contribution to the realization of the First Ten Year Implementation Plan of 2014-2023 which demonstrates the relevance of the Organ and the civil society in an era marked by evolving mega trends, macro level and COVID-19 challenges. The organ adapted requisite capacities and posted milestones in transitioning to a fully functional institution of the African Union. The execution rate based on the organ's internal monitoring, reporting and evaluation lines of evidence indicate a high rate of execution capacity ranging between 50 percent and 75 percent. Evidence also shows that the organ attained a record 100 percent execution rate across a reasonable number of key intended outputs and outcomes.



***A bird's eye view of the results of the ECOSOCC reveals the following milestones under the transitional strategy:***

- Establishment of an autonomous Secretariat with a dedicated staff in in Lusaka
- Development of Operational Frameworks such as Accreditation framework, Diaspora legal framework and National Chapter framework for enhanced civil society participation in AU processes.
- Demonstrated relevance of the organ's work in the implementation of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030
- Spearheaded online COVID-19 continental awareness raising campaigns in collaboration with Africa CDC and the AfDB
- Developed operational database of multidisciplinary experts in line with ECOSOCC mandate
- Developed policy advisory to inform the decision-making organs of the African Union;
- Developed policy related tools to support in building institutional capacities of African civil society

- Increased diaspora participation, investment, remittances and investments of the diaspora in activities of the Union with their involvement in our programmes and activities;
- Leadership of eminent policy dialogue fora and planning meetings for the People to People Forum and;
- Established a platform for continued popularization of AU agenda such as Free Movement Protocol, Revised Migration Policy Framework and Trade;
- Supported the promotion of peace and security on the continent through civil society participation as provided by Aspiration of the AU Agenda 2063 in line with the Peace and Security architecture

#### 1.4 Lessons Learnt from the Transitional Strategic Plan 2017-2021

The main lessons learned during the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2017-2022, and which inform the development of this new Strategic Plan include the following:

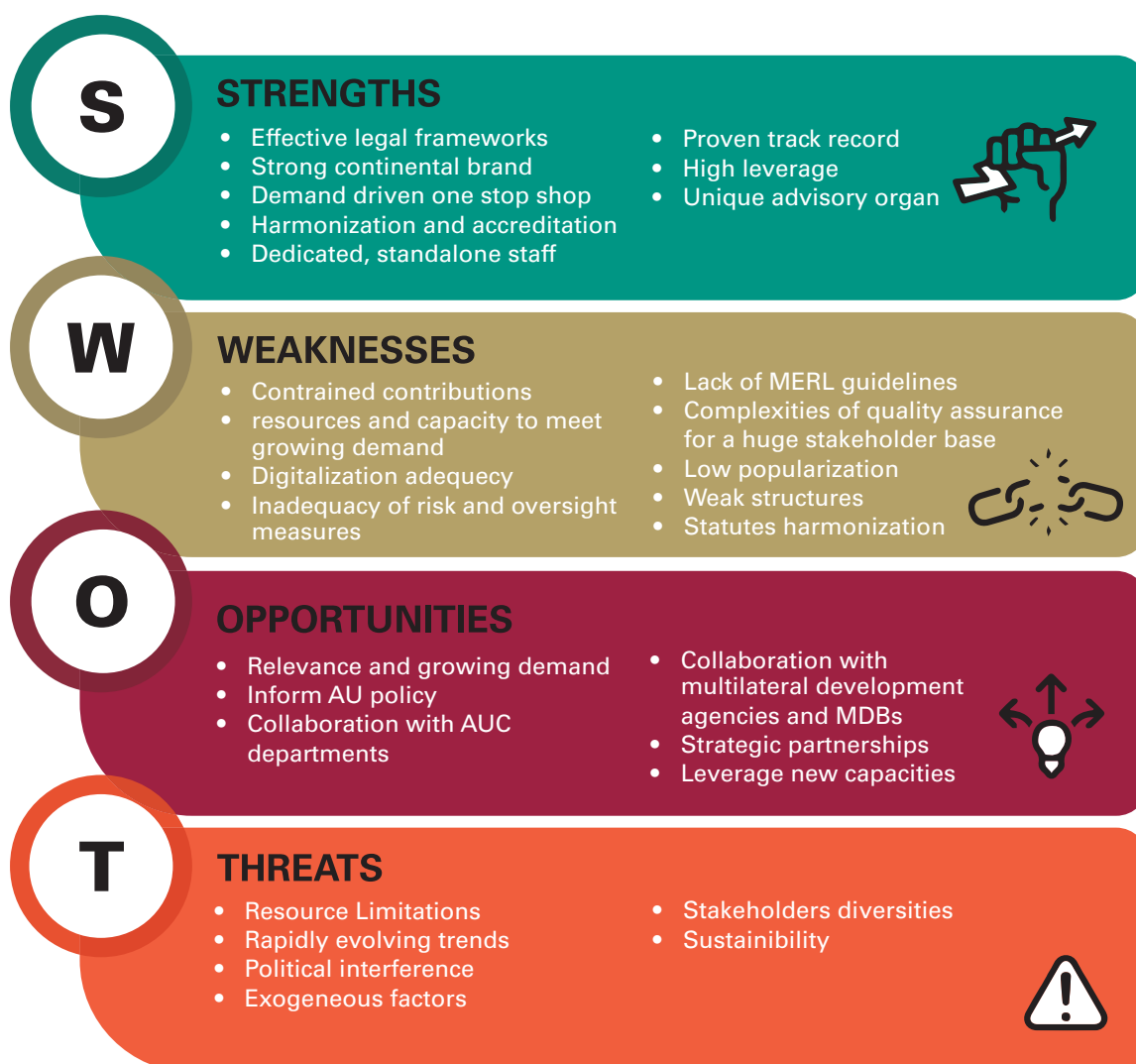


To be up to the capacity challenges resulting from the emerging continental development priorities, and to achieve success in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2023-2027, the Organ will need to develop innovative programs and delivery modalities, keep CSOs fully engaged, and strengthen its staffing structures.

#### 1.5 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

The strategic plan 2023-2027 is informed by a detailed situational analysis. The illustration below presents a synthesis of the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the AU ECOSOC.

Fig 4-SWOT Analysis



## 2. STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023-2027

The AU ECOSOCC Strategic Plan 2023-2027 features catalytic elements. Overall, this strategy is ambitious, bespoke and business unusual.

The Strategic Plan reflects a continental development outlook in tandem with AU Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals. It demonstrates a strong vision for Africa and crystal-clear contribution to Africa's economic growth, pooling of resources to provide reliable and value added advisory services. This is the guiding principle behind the creation of the Organ and it remains valid today as an AU flagship.

Ardently, the Strategy underpins the role of statutes and the consequential reinforcement of the AU Agenda 2063. Quite often, a strategy silent on its founding statutes in its development, naturally tends to result in a drift from the statutes and the statutory mandate in its execution. The genius of a strategy not lays in its implementation but its holistic design. Thus, this strategy is emphatic on the statutes and statutory mandate, values and principles of the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat.



## 2.1 Mandate

The provisions of Articles 5 (i) and 22 of the AU Constitutive Act spells out the statutory advisory mandate of the ECOSOCC. The AU ECOSOCC was established to provide statutory functions to AU Member States for advancing Agenda 2063. Specifically, the ECOSOCC was established to achieve the following mandate in line with its statutory provisions.

*Thus, the mandate of the ECOSOCC, as outlined, is to:*

- Promote dialogue between all segments of African people on issues concerning the Continent and its future;
- Forge strong partnerships between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular, women, the youth, children the Diaspora, organized labour, the private sector, and professional group;
- Promote the participation of African Civil Society in the implementation of the policies and programmes of the Union;
- Support policies and programmes that promote peace, security and stability and foster Continental development and integration;
- Promote and defend a culture of good governance, democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, human rights and social justice;
- Promote, advocate and defend a culture of gender equality; and
- Promote and strengthen the institutional, human and operational capacities of the African civil society.

## 2.2 Vision, Mission and Values

*The vision, mission and values guiding the Organ are articulated as follows:*



### VISION

An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.



### MISSION

**To provide an effective and efficient African citizenry platform for engagement on cultural and socio-economic issues,** that serves a consultative and advisory role to the African Union for Africa's inclusive development.



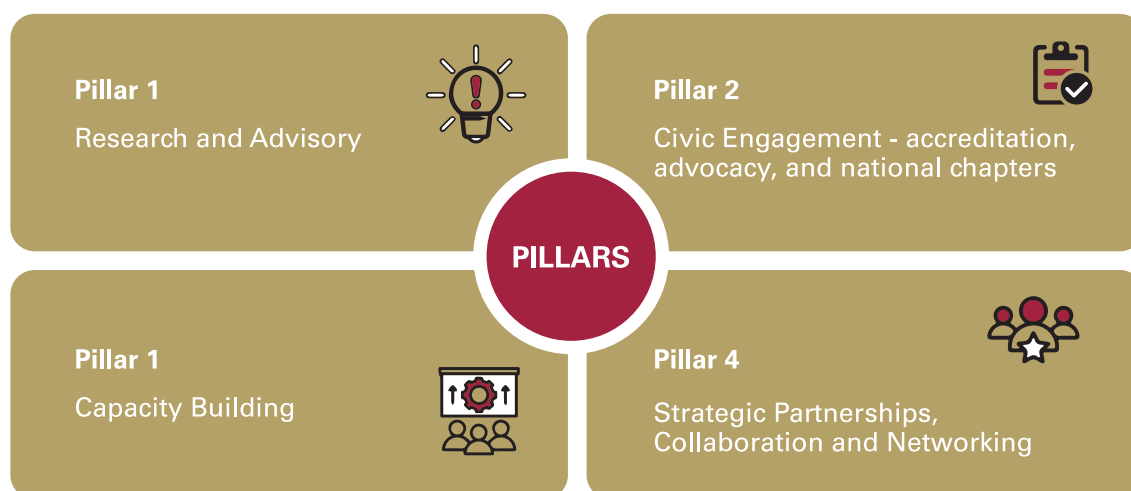
### VALUS

- Diversity and inclusivity
- Think Africa above all
- Transparency and Accountability
- Excellence and professionalism
- Networking, collaboration and knowledge sharing

## 2.3 Pillars

The Strategic Plan 2023-2027 is built on key broad pillars illustrated in the fig below;

Fig 5: Pillars of the AU ECOSOCC Strategic Plan 2023-2027



## 2.4 Cross-Cutting Issues

Designed with a special emphasis on contributing to enhanced engagement of CSOs in inclusive growth, the ECOSOCC Strategy deliberately embeds pertinent cross cutting issues namely gender, youth employment, digitalization, research, data and statistical talent in its main areas of work and leaves no one behind. The ECOSOCC, by taking account the cross-cutting issues will be a key enabler to ensure CSO inclusion, participation and contribution to the development agenda through innovative advisory solutions for Africa's transformation.



**Gender:** A myriad of development challenges on gender issues need to be addressed in order to realize inclusion, participation, ownership of development results and equality in line with SDGs<sup>4</sup>, Agenda 2063<sup>5</sup> and UN gender based principles, conventions, protocols and declarations. Notably, significant gender capacity gaps in member states, public, private and social sectors and the need to increase the capabilities, opportunities of women and man; girls and boys and mainstream gender equality in policies, programs and institutions are prevalent. This is compounded by challenges in producing timely, reliable and accessible sex- disaggregated data, gender statistics and gender markers crucial for informing the design and implementation of inclusive and transformative policies.

Specifically, the capacity for women to boost productivity and participation in the socio-economic system is low, hence limited access to resources, business opportunities and income generation. Increasingly pressing also, is the dire need for expanded CSO engagement to promote gender-responsive budgeting; accountability and transparency in addition to gender diagnostics and tailored to women, men and youth. A focus on knowledge, skills development, participation and decision making based on evidence is important to empowering women, men and youth in Africa to enable their immense potential and involvement in the economy.

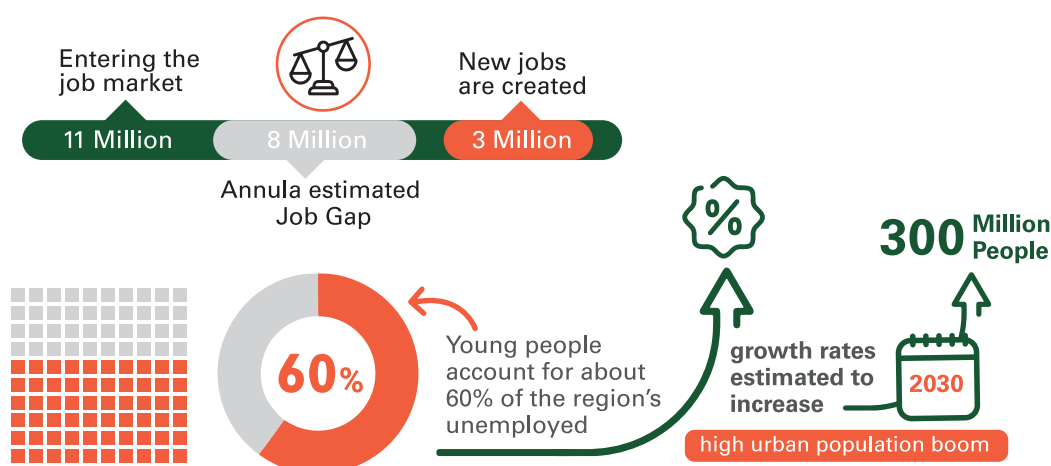
<sup>4</sup> Gender equality;

<sup>5</sup> An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of the African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children;

The ECOSOCC will thus, support development for knowledge management and utilization for gender and support member states, private and social sectors to promote and mainstream gender equality and gender responsive budgeting in policies and programs. It will also collaborate with development partners, umbrella civil society organizations, UNDP and AU Agencies; pan-African institutions, selected universities, research institutes and policy thinks tanks to deliver gender awareness, technical assistance, lobbying and advocacy; enabling policies and instruments to mainstream gender.



**Youth employment:** Africa's youth are its biggest asset and the drivers of sustainable economic growth. As the youngest continent, Africa is undergoing a demographic transition and faced with rapid population growth. Youth unemployment and underemployment are fundamental development challenges. With an average of about eleven million entering the job market in Africa while at the same time only about three million new jobs are created on the continent creating an annual estimated jobs gap of about eight million<sup>6</sup>, the growing demand for youth employment and participation in the economy is vast. Despite the youth boom being an opportunity, appropriate knowledge, skills and access to resources constrain youth employment as recognized in the Jobs for Youth Strategy in Africa, 2016-2025. Young people account for about 60% of the region's unemployed with even higher urban population boom and growth rates estimated to increase by an additional 300 million people by 2030.



There is demand for CSO engagement on the continent to incentivize, grow and expand Small and Medium Enterprises as engines of employment and implement job creation opportunities, entrepreneurship and skills development to meet industry demand. ECOSOCC will step up to support CSOs to enable women and youth to acquire the necessary skills required for employment opportunities in trade, industry and labor markets and collaborate with public, private and civil society actors to address the skills gap as well as offer tailored products for youth MSMEs, formal and informal sectors, including the skills to create wealth, sustain MSMEs and meet the needs of Africa's young and growing population and a rapidly expanding number of young job-seekers.



**Digitalization:** The rapid spread of digital technologies is generating both opportunities and challenges for sustainable development that can be derived from digitalization. Despite the general lag in digitalization on the continent, African countries have shown strong resilience and fast catch up in the global race to build ICT infrastructure and establish feet in the digital space. Post pandemic, public and private sectors have accelerated the pace of digitization and technological requirements to adapt and deliver better services across all sectors of the economy.

The ECOSOCC seeks to support the rapid escalation and utilization of digital platforms and virtual spaces for CSO engagement to enhance the capacities of relevant policy actors and to improve access to the citizenry through digitization. A crucial intervention is strengthening e-government innovation; improve effective and efficient public services delivery, accountability and connect to the digital economy in the era of big data, research and advisory.



**Data and statistical talent:** With the evolution of big data, statistical tools and modelling to inform evidence based policies, Africa countries have a huge need to embrace data and statistical capacities and building sustainable capacity to collect, analyze and disseminate official data and statistics that are harmonized, sufficient, representative, accurate, valid and reliable for users including public, private and social sectors.

The Organ will collaborate with statistical institutions to improve the quality and coverage of official data and statistics produced by national, subregional, and regional statistical systems for evidence based decision making. This will contribute to more effective economic management, better Agenda 2063 and SDGs delivery; inclusive growth, monitoring, reporting and informed evidence-based policy making, as well as contributing to improvements in the design of programs and projects of good quality. This will help development actors and policy makers to meet the data requirements for effective policy and decision making and to facilitate efficient results measurement, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination, particularly in respect of the Agenda 2063 and SDGs for CSOs various economic and development agencies and actors. The Organ will also strengthen both sub-regional and national capacities to manage statistics and achieve institutional effectiveness by working with national statistical agencies; national policy makers, private sector including investors, researchers and analysts in line with subregional and national strategies for development of statistics to inform national planning, decision making to aid the transition to inclusive growth and to a knowledge economy for Africa's transformation and for harmonized of data across Africa.

## 3. THEORY OF CHANGE

### 3.1 Rationale

The AU ECOSOCC's Theory of Change (TOC) clearly articulates the expected high-influential results or desired changes of the Organ's planned research and advisory, civic engagement interventions and its contribution to inclusive and sustainable development. The desired changes are driven by delivering the functions and advisory roles of the Organ across programming and thematic areas in partnership with CSOs, member states, regional institutions, international development agencies among other relevant actors. The TOC is the foundation for high influential monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and a good practice basis of the accountability of the ECOSOCC global strategy, results reporting, drawing lessons learnt to inform future strategies and interventions that enhance the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence and sustainability of ECOSOCC's portfolios. It maps out the logical sequence of the planned interventions, resource commitments, activities and shows pathways that lead to anticipated developmental changes.

The TOC provides good fit with the ECOSOCC's strategic positioning; SDGs, and Africa Union Agenda 2063. In its design, focus is placed on driving CSO engagement, programming and interventions with national economic development plans, policies, projects, priorities and cooperation frameworks and transformative inclusive growth of Member States. Based on this, the ECOSOCC is more relevant and better placed to contribute to longer term development impacts and align with continental and global expectations. Effective and stronger partnerships, results based funding and resource envelope will create value and a high leverage factor. The TOC articulates the link between pillars, outputs, outcomes and overall goal and how change is expected to occur driven by utilizing research and advisory services, civic engagement and capacity building.

### 3.2 Hypothesis of Change

The ECOSOCC Theory of Change is constructed on the fundamental logic and postulation that research and advisory, civic engagement, accreditation, national chapters and advocacy; capacity building and partnerships, collaboration and networking spearheaded by ECOSOCC will inform policy design and implementation by AU organs, enhance effective CSO engagements, create a dynamic African citizenry platform that catalyses transformation and inclusive development. This is expected to produce evidenced based advisory services, knowledge products further leading to accreditation of CSOs for effective engagement and establishment and operationalization of national chapters and ultimately popularization of AU policies and programmes and building of institutional and programmatic capacity of CSOs and development of policy-related tools to support CSOs based on resources available. This is likely to result in evidence based decisions by AU policy organs, strengthened engagement of CSOs, improved operational excellence and effective implementation of the Organ's mandate, collaboration and networking. In the long term, the work of Organ is likely to result in and contribute to inclusive growth and sustainable development. Consequently, ECOSOCC will be central in catalyzing an Inclusive African citizenry platform and vibrant voice for transformative engagement on cultural, political, good governance and socio-economic issues. The TOC holds that by executing the mandate of the Organ and utilizing its research and advisory services, CSOs and member states are better informed to design evidence based policies that deliver inclusive benefits.

### 3.3 Key Assumptions

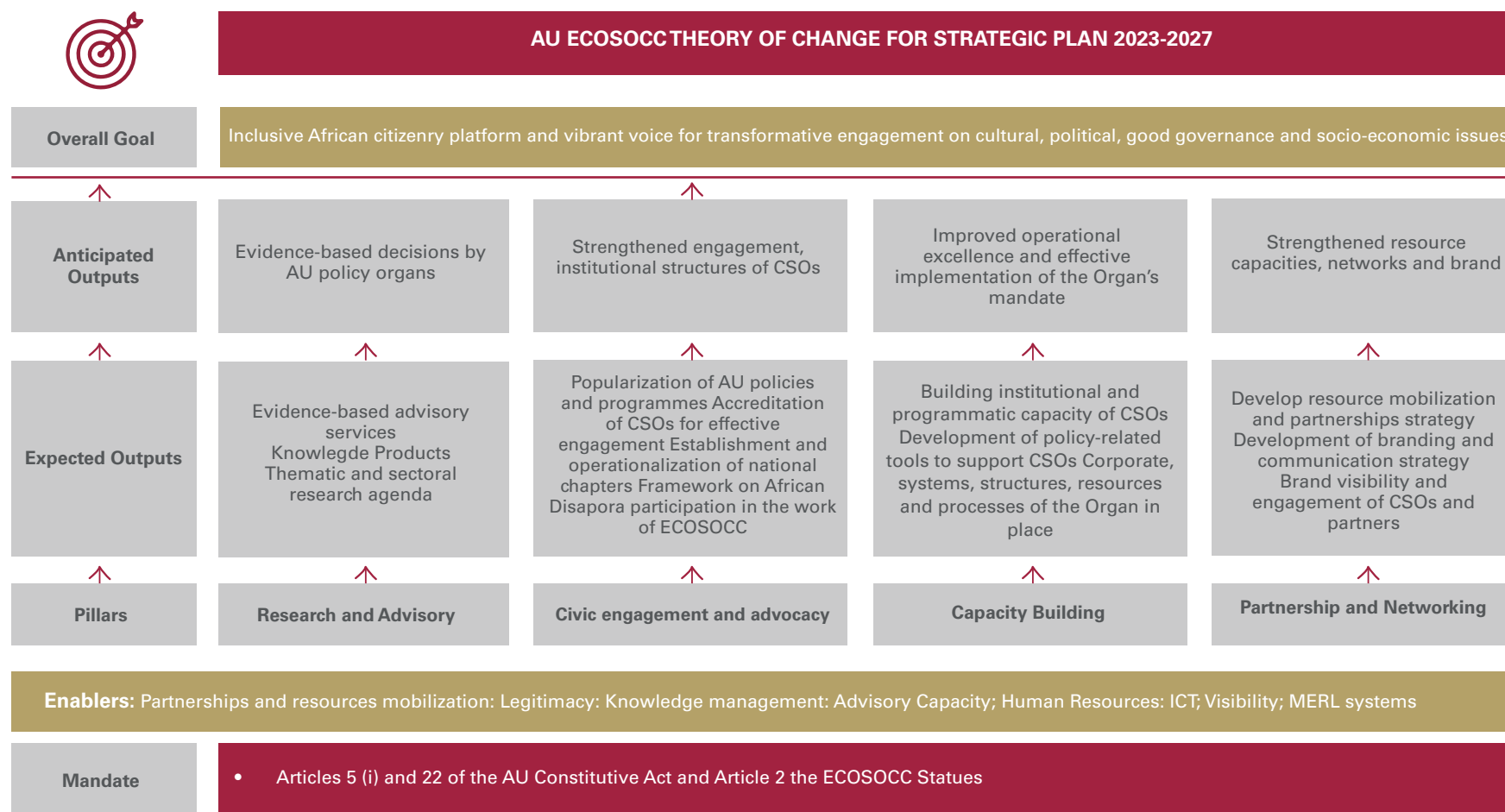
The TOC considers key assumptions in delivering the mandate of ECOSOCC and contributing to Agenda 2063. Effective engagement of CSOs and advisory services to the AU will strengthen regional integration, inclusive growth and sustainable development.

***Key assumptions include though not limited to;***

- That a shared vision of AU ECOSOCC, will lead to increased CSO engagement and uptake of research and advisory services to generate and scale up its intended transformative outcomes and impacts;
- That the legal and operational frameworks and statutes of the AU ECOSOCC are understood and adhered to by relevant stakeholders and CSOs in reinforcing AU Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030;
- That the mandate and objectives of ECOSOCC is mainstreamed in CSOs strategies and policies; relevant sector ministries, national development plans, development agencies and non-state actors;
- That adequate resources, partnerships, networks and expertise are in place to implement the strategy;



### 3.4 Theory of Change of the AU ECOSOCC



## 4. INTERRELATED STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The AU ECOSOCC has translated its vision and mission into five (5) key strategic, interrelated and performance-oriented objectives to be met on a rolling basis by 2027. The objectives were drawn on the basis of consultations and meetings convened with CSOs, partners, stakeholders and management. The views significantly converged and were triangulated across stakeholders. To achieve these congruent and equally significant development-oriented goals and objectives premised on CSO engagement, inclusive growth and sustainable development. This requires renewed, focused and results-oriented approaches incorporating clearly defined strategic and high pay off approaches that carry all stakeholders along in delivering development outcomes.

The Strategic Plan 2022–2026 leverages on achievements recorded, lessons learnt, experiences and challenges identified by the AU ECOSOCC in the subsequent periods. It takes a deep dive into a renewed comparative advantage framework that enables the organization to respond to the growing demands of its stakeholders and the global economy. This positions the AU ECOSOCC to deliver on its mandate and offer the needed advisory products and services, contribute to accelerating Africa's socio-economic transformation aligned with Agenda 2063.

## 4.1. Specific Strategic Objectives

Building on the above, the following interrelated strategic goal, objectives, outputs, outcomes will guide the organization in creating systemic value and delivering demand driven advisory portfolio for the period 2023 to 2027:

Fig 7: Strategic Objectives

OVERALL STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2023-2027 Pillars, Strategic Objectives, Expected Outcomes and Outputs			
PILLAR	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
<b>PILLAR 1</b> Research and Advisory	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1</b> To deliver effective, efficient, research and development; and evidence based advisory opinions to the African Union	Strengthened evidence-based decisions by AU policy organs	1.1 Evidence-based advisory services 1.2 Knowledge Products 1.3 Thematic and sectoral research agenda
<b>PILLAR 2</b> Civic Engagement, Accreditation Advocacy and National Chapters	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2</b> To strengthen civic engagement of the Pan African people's movement on the continent and the diaspora to ensure effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and stronger African voice	Strengthened engagement, institutional structures of CSOs	1.1 Popularization of AU policies and programmes 1.2 Accreditation of CSOs for effective engagement 1.3 Establishment and operationalization of national chapters 1.4 Framework on African Diaspora participation in the work of ECOSOC
<b>PILLAR 3</b> Capacity Building	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3</b> To enhance the diversity, inclusivity, and agility in order to create an adaptive and visible organization  <b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4</b> To enhance institutional capacity and governance processes within the organ	Improved operational excellence and effective implementation of the Organ's mandate	1.1 Build institutional and programmatic capacity of CSOs 1.2 Develop policy-related tools to support CSOs 1.3 Corporate, systems, structures, resources and processes of the Organ in place
<b>PILLAR 4</b> Strategic Partnerships, Collaboration and Networking	<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5</b> To initiate, maintain and strengthen strategic partnerships, networks and collaboration	Strengthened resource capacities, networks, and brand	1.1 Develop resource mobilization and partnerships strategy 1.2 Develop branding and communication strategy 1.3 Brand visibility and engagement of CSOs and partners
<b>Cross Cutting Issues</b>	<b>Gender, youth, women and men, boys and girls</b> <b>Digitalization, data, statistics</b> <b>Green growth and sustainability reporting</b>		

## 4.2. Proposed Strategic Interventions Per Strategic Objective

This section highlights proposed high level strategic initiatives to achieve each strategic objective.

### Strategic Objective 1:



To deliver effective, efficient, research and development; and evidence based advisory opinions to the African Union

To deliver its core mandate to the AU and its Member States, the AU ECOSOCC carefully designs strategic interventions for enhancing the provision of premier advisory services.

***This is intended to ensure effective and efficient delivery of quality advisory functions and execute the substantive work of the ECOSOCC Secretariat by focussing on:***

- Implementing the statutory and advisory functions of the Organ;
- Enhancing quality and effective engagement with CSOs and stakeholders;
- Improving conformance to its legal frameworks;
- Regular review, modifications, read in, amendments and or overhaul of ECOSOCC Statutes and Rules of Procedure and related instruments and operational structures;
- Aligning with AU systems, processes, procedures and international standard and best practices;
- Fast-tracking accreditation and registration efficiency of CSOs and;
- Strengthening capacity of CSOs and national chapters to deliver their visions and contribute to inclusive development.

### Strategic Objective 2:



To strengthen civic engagement of the Pan African people's movement on the continent and the diaspora to ensure effective implementation of Agenda 2063

***To promote the AU ECOSOCC's active engagement and collaboration with stakeholders, the following strategic interventions are designed to contribute to the successful establishment and strengthening of stakeholder engagement, partnerships, regional and international cooperation:***

- Increasing understanding of the evolving needs and challenges of stakeholders
- Strengthening engagement and cooperation with CSOs, strategic partners, RECs, AU Agencies, UN Agencies, International Development Agencies and Multilateral Development Banks/IFIs
- Enhancing policy dialogue and participation of stakeholders in the civil society affairs
- Creating and optimizing synergies and economies of existing and potential partnerships

### Strategic Objective 3:



To enhance the diversity, inclusivity and agility in order to create an adaptive and visible organization

The AU ECOSOCC's position as AU's advisory organ is crucial in promoting socio-economic development. This is largely a function of the collaborative efforts of all the staff at the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat. This objective seeks to create a work environment that is stimulating and attractive to both current and prospective employees. Successfully executed, this objective will ensure long term successes and a healthy human capital balance sheet.

***The quest to build a diverse, inclusive, agile and high-performing Organ will be attained the achievement of the following strategic interventions:***

- Foster gender, diversity and inclusivity
- Promote employee engagement
- Foster and reward a high-performance culture
- Promote employee wellness

#### Strategic Objective 4:



To enhance institutional governance processes within the organ Stronger risk appetite, adequate and sound risk management systems within the AU ECOSOCC will ensure that risk is minimized in an evolving environment with growing inherent risk exposure.

This strategic objective is intended to improve the manner in which the AU ECOSOSCC is directed, controlled and held to account to its constituencies in fulfilling its statutory mandate. It also provides a basis for identifying, mitigating and allocating risks at all levels of the AU ECOSOCC.

***Therefore, the strategic objective seeks to ensure effective governance, risk and control by undertaking the following:***

- Enhance AU ECOSOSCC direction setting, control and governance framework
- Strengthen accountability for results
- Effective AU ECOSOSCC risk management
- Effective internal control systems of the AU ECOSOSCC
- Strategic plan performance management of the AU ECOSOSCC

#### Strategic Objective 5:



To initiate, maintain and strengthen strategic partnerships, networks and collaboration The Resource Mobilization Strategy, Partnership and Networking initiatives are crafted around the urgent strategic need to build a healthy and sufficient resource envelope and attractive balance sheet and cushion the Organ from long term dependency on single sources of income.

***The Organ will;***

- Accelerate engagement and dissemination of results of the Organ to its constituencies
- Focus on improving the effective participation of Member States and partners in its core offering
- Consolidate, Grow, Innovate and Diversify the Revenue Streams of the Organ
- Retain and increase current revenue streams and inflows while prudently exercising cost containment and cost recovery strategies
- Direct Grants, In-Kind Contributions and Co-Financing from Partners
- Broadening and deepening Funding Intelligence, Business and Proposal Development Pipelines
- A deliberate approach to glean, respond to and tap into potential funding opportunities from Requests for Proposals and Calls for Proposals will be a key focus of the Organ
- Build dedicated capacity in the Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Department
- Fees for Services for Customized and Demand Driven Solutions and Products
- Global Flagship Programs
- Proposed Alternative Financing Options (Investment in financial markets, Legitimate Philanthropy financing, Project based financing and Innovative Public Private Partnerships including Research and Advisory in partnership with think tanks)



## 5. MONITORING, EVALUATION, LEARNING AND REPORTING (MERL) FRAMEWORK

An inclusive and easy to coordinate strategy implementation monitoring, evaluation, learning and reporting (MERL) framework assures the successful implementation and tracking of results of the ECOSOCC Strategic Plan 2023-2027. The strategy requires and seamless coordination throughout the Organ and coordination with relevant internal and external cooperating partners of the AU.

In this regard, the existing institutional structures and oversight bodies as per Statutes and procedures shall be instrumental towards this cause. The Secretariat shall implement approved programme of activities of the Organ in accordance with the Strategic Plan and the responsibility within the governance structure of the Organ. The Secretariat shall work in close collaboration with the CSOs as mandated Member States, Cooperating Partners and all other relevant stakeholders to ensure support, coherence and mutual accountability for the achievement of strategic objectives, expected outputs and outcomes.

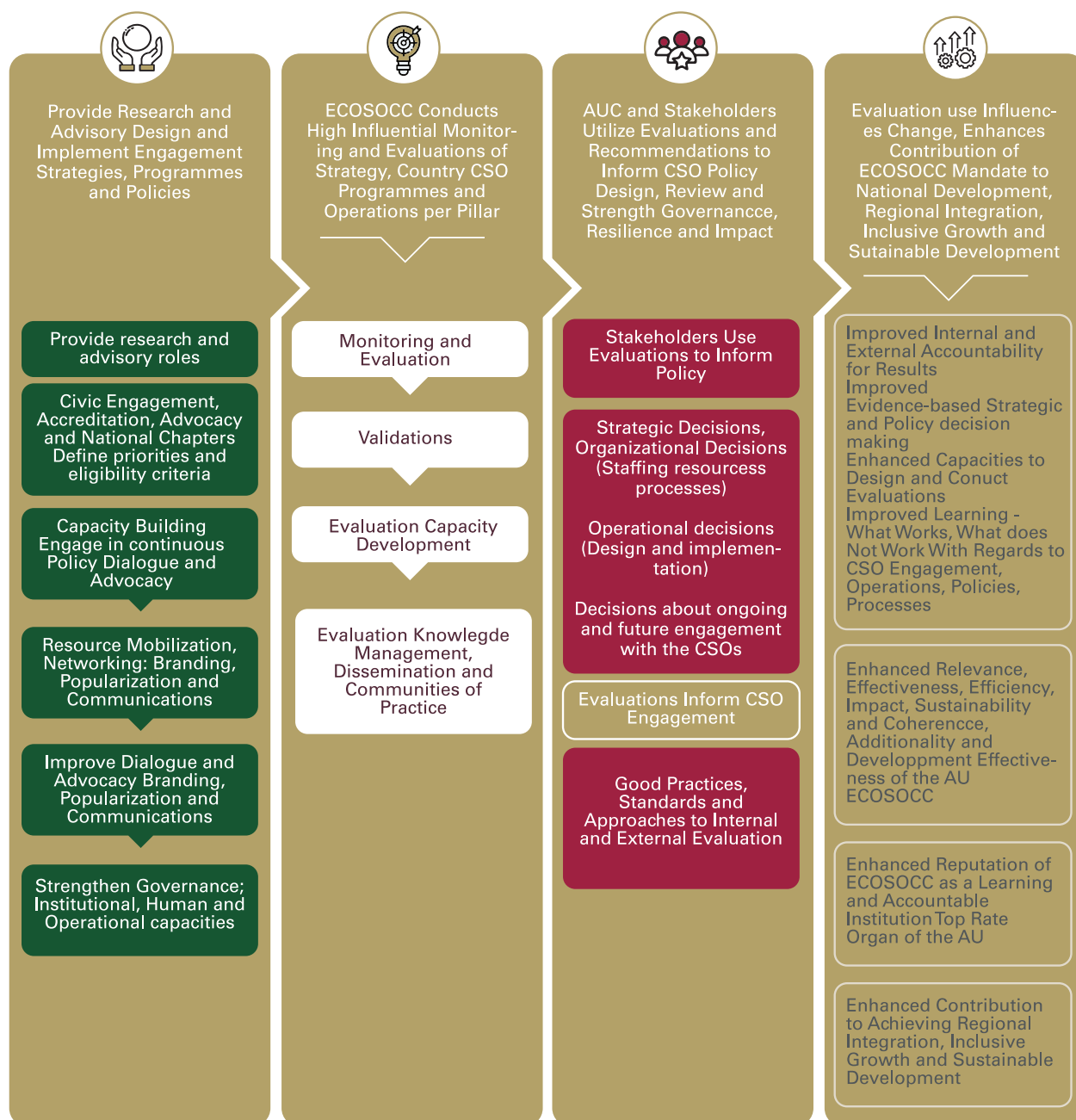
### 5.1 The ECOSOCC Evaluation Function

As per ECOSOCC Theory of Change, the Organ seeks to clarify how its interventions and evaluation contributes to the development effectiveness of engagement strategies by fostering performance, learning, accountability for results, and evidence-based decision making. This framework will work in tandem with the AMERT framework.

The TOC has its basis in the mandate and maps the causal linkages between its major functions, its primary activities, and corresponding key outputs to the potential direct and indirect outcomes and the causal linkages with its strategic objectives.

For example, the ECOSOCC delivers advisory services which seek to inform CSO operations. In turn, CSOs deliver responsive humanitarian, empowerment, protection and assistance to vulnerable communities to alleviate exclusion, poverty and improve welfare and dignity. This translates into increased access to services for a number of beneficiaries (intended output), further improving the social welfare, well being and dignity of regular migrants (intended outcomes), and finally, the causal linkages with the ECOSOCC's overall objective to contribute to achieving a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

Fig 8: The new Evaluation Function at ECOSOCC



Based on the above framework, the Strategic Plan will conform to best practices review processes for purposes of enhanced results accountability, outputs-outcomes tracking and ongoing development impacts as outlined below.

## 5.2 Strategic Plan Reviews

The Strategic Plan will be subjected to two evaluations namely the Mid-term Review and Final Review. The Mid-Term review will assess progress against set targets, mitigate challenges, and exploit new opportunities that may during the implementation of the strategy. The final review will building on progress, draw key lessons learnt and provide accountability for development impacts to stakeholders and form a basis for the development of the next strategic plan.

## 5.3 Annual Strategy Review Performance Reports

The Annual Report will provide the progress on the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The reports shall outline the projected targets and achievements made and guide adjustments and recalibrations to the strategic direction as deemed necessary and measuring performance.

## 5.4 Results Framework

The Organ will account for results delivery projected in the following results framework;



### Strategic Objective 1:

To deliver effective, efficient, research and development; and evidence based advisory opinions to the African Union

Output	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
1. Provide opinions on every thematic area of the year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of opinions produced to the AU African Union policy organs</li> <li>Evidence of consideration of the advisory opinions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reports</li> <li>Decisions/declarations taken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited financial and human resources at the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat to implement its mandate</li> </ul>
2. Capacity building of ECOSOCC cluster members to deliver advisory opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of trainings delivered</li> <li>Increased knowledge of ECOSOCC cluster members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited financial and human resources at the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat to implement its mandate</li> </ul>
3. Provide advisory opinions on key thematic areas of the AU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of opinions produced by the cluster committees to the African Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reports</li> <li>Decisions/declarations taken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited financial and human resources at the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat to implement its mandate</li> </ul>
4. Review of selected policies and programs of the AU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of policies reviewed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited financial and human resources at the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat to implement its mandate</li> </ul>



## Strategic Objective 2:

To strengthen civic engagement of the Pan African people's movement on the continent and the diaspora to ensure effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and stronger African voice

Output	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks	Mitigation Measures
1. Popularize AU instruments, push for ratification and domestication <sup>7</sup>	# of instruments # of countries ratifying		Political will is available	People oriented pressure for implementation and sanctioning of defaulting Member States
2. Monitor implementation				
3. Strengthen national chapters and regional platforms to have presence in all African countries	Platforms established		National CSOs are knowledgeable and interested in ECOSOCC's mandate	To embark on a timely campaign to raise awareness on the ECOSOCC mandate and value addition to CSOs' work
4. Develop a partnership and engagement strategy	Partnership instrument		Time sensitive issues that need to be guided by the strategy -CSOs keen on contributing to the strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an implementation plan with human and financial resources</li> <li>Raise awareness and ensure, inclusivity and ownership</li> </ul>
5. Launch collaboration frameworks with issue based/ thematic coalitions	Frameworks		There will be interested to partner compromising their autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate the value for broad based advocacy that will shield individual organisations in the context of shrinking civic space</li> </ul>
6. Build continental consensus for effective engagement at global socioeconomic, cultural and political platforms.			There will be consensus and common voice	Lobby other civil society players to buy into ECOSOCC positions premised on the AU normative guidance

<sup>7</sup> Prioritize a few instruments of the many which the AU has promulgated



### Strategic Objective 3:

To enhance the diversity, inclusivity and agility in order to create an adaptive and visible organization

Output	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
1. Development of Partnerships to assist resource mobilization, human capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of type of and value added partnerships</li> <li>Percentage of Extra budget mobilized outside the AU</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual reports</li> <li>Financial reports</li> <li>Audit reports</li> <li>Website/social media platforms, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff limitation at the AU ECOSOCC secretariat</li> </ul>
2. Establishment of AU ECOSOCC National chapters ( <b>*National chapters need to be capacitated</b> )			
3. Migrate and Link to the AMERT framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migration of the AMERT framework</li> <li>Integration of the AMERT framework into operational processes</li> <li>Project Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AMERT reports</li> <li>AMERT Financial reports, Annual reports</li> </ul>	
4. Create an enabling environment for digitalization of ECOSOCC and its constituents as per the mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure an efficient ICT system</li> <li>Ensure the responsiveness of the ICT system through skilled human capital</li> <li>Comprehensive and robust online presence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content development for the knowledge hub and efficiency of the knowledge portal</li> <li>Agile product Management software</li> <li>Accessibility by constituency/ stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investment in an ICT system(s)</li> <li>Investment in human capital</li> <li>Digital Divide across Africa</li> <li>Compatibility across ICT systems( Integration)</li> </ul>





#### Strategic Objective 4:

To enhance the diversity, inclusivity and agility in order to create an adaptive and visible organization

Output	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks	Mitigation Measures
Establishing and strengthen national chapters to have greater reach from grassroots up the continental ECOSOCC creates a bridge to engage with the grassroots.	# of initiatives undertaken to strengthen national chapters	Progress reports	The grassroots is eager and fully engaged National chapters are at the core of ECOSOCC efforts	
Develop an inclusivity strategy on gender, indigenous groups and people with disabilities, young people and diaspora. • demographic inclusion • disciplinary inclusion	# of beneficiaries reached disaggregated by gender	Progress reports		
Establish and strengthen relationships with regional CSOs	# of interventions and CSOs strengthened	Annual Review Reports	Increase ECOSOCC membership and visibility as well as broaden scope of thematic issues of focus	Joint planning for implementation with ECOSOCC
Develop a human resources manual	HR Tools developed	HR Reports	There is high resource capability as it stands	Consult throughout drafting
Develop an ECOSOCC gender equity policy	Gender mainstreaming policy	Policy Reports and Reviews	Women have the merit and willingness to participate	Establish gender parity at all levels and processes
Conduct regular reviews of the ECOSOCC's working documents, amend the statute and the rule of procedures to include the national chapters more prominently Accountability and responsibility	# of reviews conducted	Review Reports	National chapters are ready and willing to enhance their contribution  Current and existing rules of procedures already include the national chapters	Plan for continuous review meetings for documents



### Strategic Objective 5:

To enhance capacity building and institutional governance processes within the organ

Output	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions and Risks
1. Robust accreditation framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robust accreditation framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of robust accreditation framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political will to implement the proposed changes</li> <li>Limited financial resources at the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat</li> </ul>
2. Merit based election system for the governance structures of ECOSOCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of free and fair election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free, fair, and transparent elections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political will to implement the proposed changes</li> </ul>
3. Revised legal instruments of ECOSOCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of revised legal instruments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated legal instruments available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political will to implement the proposed changes</li> </ul>
4. Fully operationalized National chapters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Functional National chapters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Functional National chapters constituted in all member states</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited financial resources at the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat</li> </ul>
5. Fully operationalized secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staffing requirements met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All planned recruitments realized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited financial resources at the AU ECOSOCC Secretariat</li> </ul>
6. Framework on African Diaspora participation in the work of ECOSOCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of a framework on African Diaspora participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framework available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited knowledge on AU processes in regard to Diaspora engagement in the continent</li> </ul>

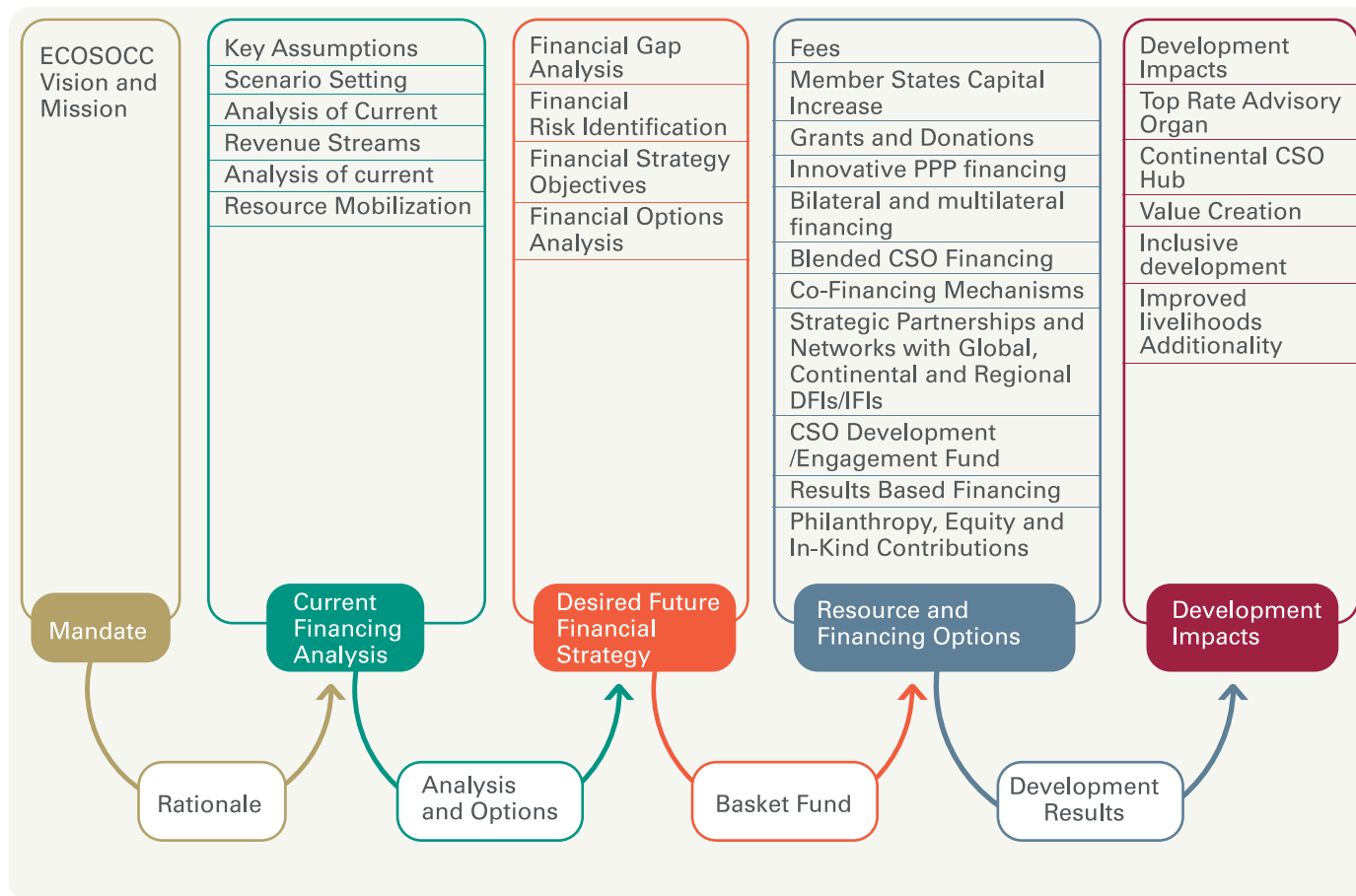
## 6. RESOURCE MOBILISATION, NETWORKING AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

In line with the financial sustainability goal, there is need for robust mobilisation of resources to support a number of engagement activities, providing advisory services; policy dialogue and advocacy; capacity building, promotion and communications, research functions in the Strategic Plan that may not be necessarily covered by the Organ's revenue. Alternative revenue streams under a subset of Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Strategy may thus be necessary to compliment resources of the Organ in manner that does not conflict with the mandate, values and principles of the AU.

### 6.1 Financial Sustainability Framework

In order to implement the Strategic Plan, the Organ can also explore and put in place adequate innovative measures to secure the needed financial resources from different sources of finance ranging from co- financing to innovative partnerships. The framework below layouts and highlights the overall financial sustainability framework, strategies and options to support strategy execution. The financing instruments provided in the framework are advisory based options. The framework only seeks to suggest and ignite turnaround conversations on desirable sustainable funding roadmap based on underlying assumptions and applicability of policy instruments given the vision, mission and values of the Organ. Further, financial sustainability is integrated with core corporate functions including targeted institutional marketing, relationship building, trust, image and promoting the Organ to all relevant stakeholders.

**Fig 9: Proposed Long Term Financial Sustainability Model**



## 7. ECOSOCC RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH AND FRAMEWORK

### Risks and Mitigation

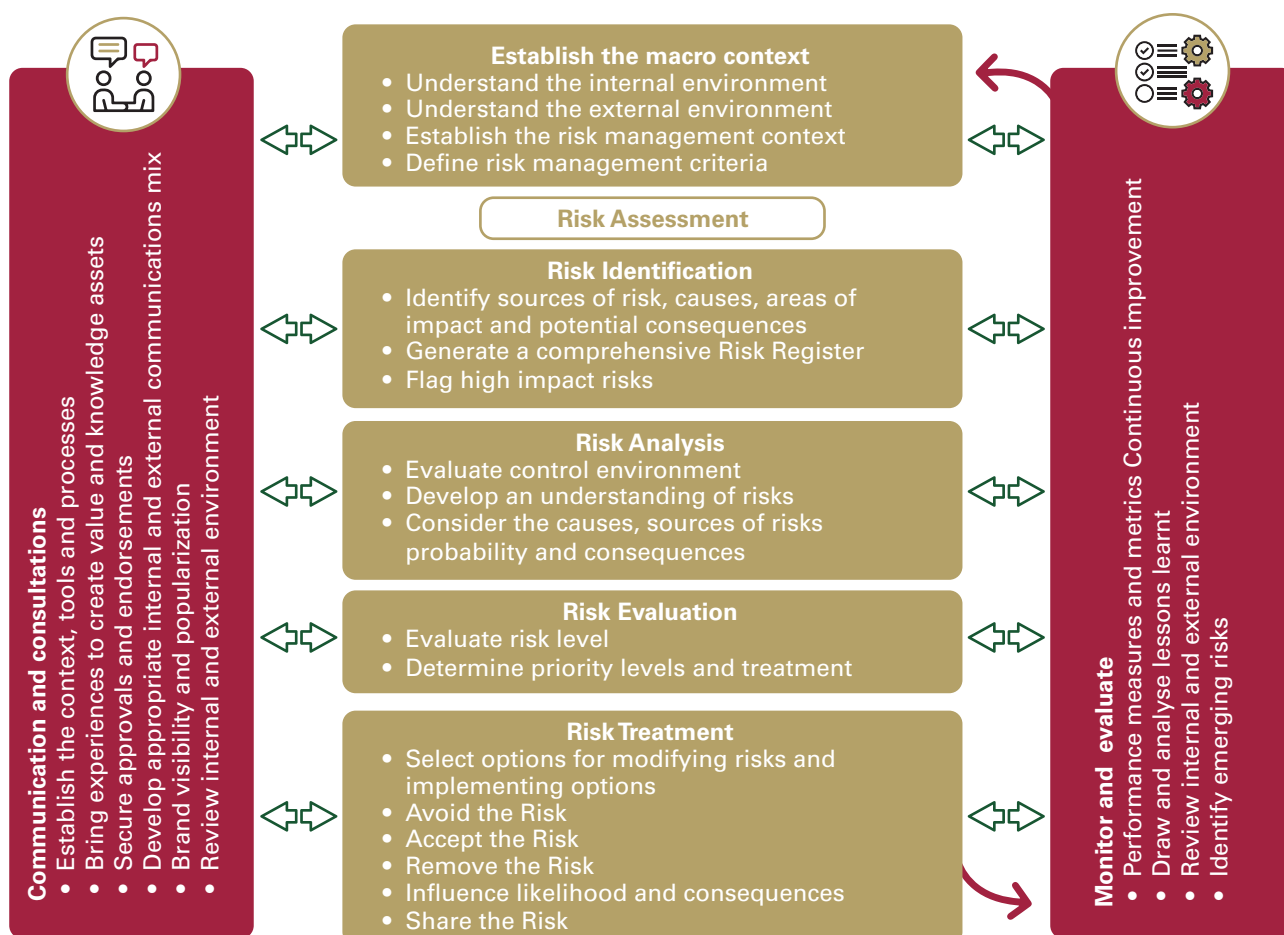
The key risks and the corresponding mitigation and allocation comprise of the following:

- Unprecedented exogenous factors.
- Harmonization and Coordination of Policies and Institutional Frameworks.
- Policy Inclusivity and Commitment.
- Complexity of development challenges.
- Emerging , remerging and potential resource inadequacies due to increasing demand for CSO services.

The proposed mechanisms to mitigate risks include increased stakeholders' engagement, collaboration and partnerships to pool resources needed to execute the strategy. In derisking the strategy execution processes and pathways to optimize outputs and outcomes execution, the Organ seeks to ensure the achievement of strategic objectives and pro-active approaches to risk identification and allocation.

Based on its risk appetite, the Organ through its risk management structures aims to assess and mitigate current and future significant strategic, financial, operational, governance and compliance risk exposures likely to generate constraints in implementing the strategy. The Strategic Plan is reinforced by an integrated risk management framework which promotes risk management process that seeks to enhance sound decision making; effective internal control measures; enhance compliance and safeguards; sound governance and sustainability. The proposed Risk Management Framework is depicted below;

Fig 10. Risk Strategy and Framework



## 8. TARGETED AND TAILORED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The purpose of a robust and resourced communications strategy is to strengthen the visibility, brand and popularization of the AU ECOSOCC across its target groups including internal and external stakeholders, the CSOs and AU Agencies. The AU ECOSOCC documents studied revealed significant plans and deliberate efforts to strengthen the brand and the corporate image of the AU ECOSOCC. This Communication Plan has been developed in response to the need to scale up the visibility and image of the ECOSOCC.

### 8.1 Key Objectives



The objectives of this communication plan intend to:

- Enhance the strategic communications and key messages of the AU ECOSOCC
- Foster effective outreach of the AU ECOSOCC to key stakeholders in user friendly languages
- Support the scale-up of successful outputs, outcomes and flagship initiatives of the Organ
- Identify timely and strategic outreach opportunities for the Organ to make a difference
- General awareness raising communication on the mandate and functions of the Organ
- Technical communication to CSOs, AU agencies and governments.
- Improve internal communication

### 8.2 Targeting



The target groups comprise of:

- Members of the ECOSOCC General Assembly
- National ECOSOCC Chapters
- AU Organs & Agencies, Member States,
- African Diaspora, African Citizens,
- Civil Society, Business Community, Academia, Media

### 8.3 Languages



The communications strategy needs to consider the following basics in design communications tools and key messaging in the languages of the AU;

- Language may be considered a barrier for many audiences and therefore consider AU languages
- Communication should be in simple language and solution oriented
- The Organ should aim to develop multi-language materials to its audiences

### 8.4 Outreach and Communication Tools



The communications tools will include combinations of;

- Continuous improvement of website and developing AU ECOSOCC Video
- Virtual Conferences, workshops, webinars, and specialized briefings
- Press briefings and short documentaries on television channels
- Magazines, brochures, newsletters, radios, websites, social media, videos, and educational outreach

- Educational Curricula
- Policy dialogues and Knowledge dissemination fora

## 8.5 Evaluating Communications Successes



Mainstreaming communication into the evaluation function of ECOSOCC will entail;

- Tracking baseline of current communication performance and identify gaps,
- Awareness, Image and Perceptions survey of AU ECOSOCC target audiences
- Undertake on-going evaluation to track information users of the website for example using Google Analytics. The Google Analytics technology offers the possibility to track activity on a website for free.
- Number of CSOs interfacing with AU digital platforms and activities and projects carried out by CSOs

## 9. BUDGET PROJECTIONS (To be guided by Management)

To implement this strategy, key resources are required as outlined below;

Table 1: Projected Resource Requirements Per Strategic Priority 2023-2027

Strategic Priority/Objective Area	Source of Funds	Type of Funds	Projected Amount in USD Millions					Total Projected
			2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
<b>Total</b>								

Notes and Assumptions



## ANNEXES

### Accompanying Information

#### ANNEX 1:

##### Strategic Planning Process and Issues Identification

A collaborative and consultative process was launched to formulate the Strategic Plan 2022–2023 and to add value to the Organ and its stakeholders. Based on the review, iterative processes, clarifications and consultation engagements and validation with partners and stakeholders, the following issues emerged among others;

- A formulation of interrelated strategic objectives reinforcing Agenda 2063
- Comprehensive situation analysis which assessed the internal and external environment to better position the institution based on its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
- A deep dive into the global, continental and regional environment and development policy issues in the civil society space
- An articulation of a simplified Theory of Change;
- An analysis of the comparative advantages of the Organ, strategic pillars and value system;
- A stronger Logical Framework underpinned by core sector indicators, assumptions and risks and more compelling evaluation good standards;
- Enhanced high influential good practice evaluation criteria. The AU ECOSOC needs high influential global monitoring and evaluation criteria. For instance, the use of generally accepted global criteria for development evaluations does not seem to appear in the strategic documents provided and reviewed so far. These issues are considered relevant for an institution playing a pivotal role in creating and delivering an African citizenry platform for engagement on cultural and socio-economic issues. The Organ is key in delivering effective, efficient, impactful consultative and advisory functions to the African Union for Africa's inclusive and sustainable development.
- Revamping and customizing Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines, Reporting and Lines of Evidences
- Emphasis on scaling visibility, communication, coordination, branding and popularization and regional presence of the Organ;
- Calls for enhanced inclusivity, advocacy and engagement of CSOs at all levels, sectors and themes
- Capacity building and performance of CSOs and related structures,
- Strengthening quality and ethical conduct of CSOs, accreditation and globalization
- Consideration of the evolving nature of regional integration, trade and the youth
- Mixed views on the appreciation of the organ with a majority ranking the organ positively
- Global benchmarking and sister institutions comparator analysis; UN-ECOSOC, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) of the EU and sub-regional organizations
- Strengthening the external analysis for instance the threats would have considered exogenous factors including peace and security;
- Interrelated Strategic Goals and Strategic Options;
- A Risk Matrix including addressing elements of sustainability identified in the SWOT Analysis;
- Institutional Sustainability and leverage model based on the SWOT analysis;
- Capacity building and strengthening the role, ethical conduct and national chapters and committees effectiveness;
- Development Outcomes and Impact. The need to disseminate and strengthen connectedness of the organ's work to Agenda 2063 development outcomes with a view to tracking contribution to enhanced inclusive development effectiveness in civil society space and;
- Strengthened multilateralism and international collaboration based on AU values and principles. The strategy connected to SDGs, multilateral and cross cutting issues including gender markers; Gender, Environmental and Social Management Policy issues and UN international instruments on gender mainstreaming which are also key civil society agenda.

**ANNEX 2 :**

**Annualised Research, Advisory and Policy Recommendations and Utilization Dashboard - AU Entities Policy Matrix Response**

In order to effectively account for the research and advisory functions of the ECOSOCC as per statutory provisions, the framework proposed below presents a pipeline to track the formulation, submission, adoption and implementation of policy and advisory opinions to the relevant AU entities.

AU Agency/Entity	Thematic /Sector Focus	Advisory services and recommendations proffered	Policy Research and Briefs	Responses and Adoption	Tracking of Key Policy Indicators					
					Baseline	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027

**ANNEX 3:**

**National Chapters, Clusters and Technical Structures Performance Dashboard**

In view of the new look performance orientation, the technical structures and committees are proposed to track and report the delivery of their respective and evolving roles and functions. The proposed matrix below will be adapted to the operating structures of the AU ECOSOCC in accordance with the statutory provisions.

Cluster	Specific Focus	Expert engagements and services provided per relevant cluster and aspiration	Cluster recommendations provided to AU agencies	Responses and Adoption	Tracking of Core Cluster Indicators					
					Baseline	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027

**ANNEX 4:**

**Utilization Focused Research, Advisory and Policy Dashboard and AU Entities Policy Matrix Response**

In order to strongly account for the advisory functions of the ECOSOCC as per statutory provisions, the framework proposed below presents a pipeline to track the formulation, submission, adoption and implementation of policy/advisory opinions to the relevant AU entities.

AU Agency/Entity	Thematic /Sector Focus	Advisory services and recommendations proffered per relevant cluster and aspiration	Policy Research and Briefs	Responses and Adoption	Tracking of Key Policy Indicators					
					Baseline	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027

## ANNEX 5: Implementation Plan

**Strategic Objective 1:** To deliver effective, efficient, research and development; and evidence based advisory opinions to the African Union



Planned Activities	Key Performance Indicators																			
	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027			
	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate
Provide advisory functions to AU agencies																				
Facilitate effective engagement with CSOs and stakeholders;																				
Regular review, modifications /amend ments and strengthening of legal frameworks, statutes and rules of procedures																				
Enforce conformance to legal frameworks and statutes;																				
Conduct high level, high influential policy for a and research																				
Monitor and evaluate the policy and advisory																				

## Strategic Objective 2:

To strengthen civic engagement of the Pan African people's movement on the continent and the diaspora to ensure effective implementation of Agenda 2063 and stronger African voice



Planned Activities	Key Performance Indicators																			
	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027			
	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate
Accelerate CSO engagement and participation																				
Build capacity of CSOs																				
Develop, implement and review guidelines on accreditations																				
Accredit CSOs and assure quality																				
Operationalize legal and operational frameworks and protocols and statutes																				
Identify potential development partners/agencies for collaboration (IFIs)																				
MoUs/Technical cooperation agreements																				



### Strategic Objective 3:

To enhance the diversity, inclusivity and agility in order to create an adaptive and visible organization Strategic



Planned Activities	Key Performance Indicators																			
	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027			
	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate
Promoter gender, diversity and inclusivity																				
Review human capital policies reviewed																				
Promote effective employee engagement and staff welfare programmes																				
Reward a high- performance culture, Staff Performance Management Systems																				
Administer effective promotions and rewards and retention policies																				
Review and implement performance based reward and incentive systems reviewed																				
Build cohesive high performance and agile teams																				

Disincentivize silo cultures																				
Review and strengthen performance cultures 360 degrees across partners, CSOs and committees																				
Conduct mid- term and final review of strategies, projects and programmes																				

#### Strategic Objective 4:

To enhance the diversity, inclusivity and agility in order to create an adaptive and visible organization



Planned Activities	Key Performance Indicators																			
	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027			
	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate
Revamp website and digital tools																				
Corporate videos that make a difference																				
Promote identity, visibility and the unique selling proposition of the organ																				
Popularize the brand across the entire target group spectrum and Au agencies																				
Effective communication and social media strategy and engage Social Media Influencers																				
Engagement and policy dialogue																				
Launch CSO Eminent Speakers Knowledge and Policy Dialogue Series																				

Scale up corporate image, perceptions and reputation																				
Media monitoring																				
Brand ambassadors and advocates																				
Massive and targeted E- promotional and marketing campaigns																				
Scale up virtual continental, regional and national policy dialogue sessions targeting high level leadership and decision makers																				
Knowledge dissemination platforms																				

## Strategic Objective 5:

To initiate, maintain and strengthen strategic partnerships, networks and collaboration



Planned Activities	Key Performance Indicators																			
	2023				2024				2025				2026				2027			
	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate	Baseline	Target	Actual	Execution rate
Existing Partnerships																				
New Partnerships																				
MOUs/RFPs/TCAs																				
Revenue mobilized																				
Review and enhance corporate procedures, internal control systems and processes																				
Review policies and manuals in line with evolving trends																				
Asset optimization																				
Review risk management framework																				
Safeguard ethical standards and corporate image																				
Harmonize and coordinate policies, structures and frameworks																				



**ECOSOCC**  
Economic Social & Cultural Council