

FEBRUARY 2021



**THINK AFRICA
PARTNERSHIP**
ANNUAL REPORT



Donor Partners



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Think Africa Partnership (TAP) is a multi-donor trust fund that supports economic transformation and growth across Africa by promoting better uptake of policy-relevant knowledge and data.

TAP bridges the supply side and the demand side of knowledge for policy making. It does this through peer-learning platforms and works across three constituents: African young professionals, scholars and universities; domestic and regional think tanks; and a network of over 40 chief economic advisors to African heads of the executive. The Think Africa Partnership is an African-centered initiative to better equip African scholars, institutions, and chief economic advisors with the tools, knowledge, and networks to better address local development challenges with home grown solutions. By nurturing exceptional African talent, strengthening debate and deliberation inside and outside of government, TAP builds a pipeline of reformers among African development professionals and economists, and supports today's and tomorrow's economic policy makers in Africa.

The annual report summarizes key outputs, activities and achievements under the Think Africa Partnership from the past twelve months (February 22, 2020 – February 17, 2021).

Previous annual reports can be accessed here:

[Annual Report 2019](#)

[Annual Report 2020](#)

2. TAP AT A GLANCE

The Think Africa Partnership Multi Partner Fund is active as of April 2018. The Program received its first contributions in 2018 from the government of Germany (via GIZ), complemented by contributions from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) in 2019 and additional contributions from Germany in 2018 and 2019. Since its inception the Think Africa Partnership has received a total of USD 15.17 million development partner support from Germany and Norway. This complements existing WBG resources to support activities under the three windows, for example staff time, support to the WBG Africa Fellowship, and complementary support to relevant research and regional studies.

In the face of COVID-19 induced challenges, the Think Africa Partnership and its partners have adapted programming to be delivered in a most virtual format, or with distanced support provided to compensate for travel limitations. Given the new global conditions and the prioritization among governments in Africa on the economic recovery, the Think Africa Partnership secretariat has proposed a three-year scaled up vision for the MDTF focusing on support to governments in their response to and economic recovery from COVID-19.

Pillar 1: Amplify the Knowledge Base

Key outputs: continued support to World Bank (WB) - African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) Visiting Scholars Program; scaling up the Africa Fellows Program through Private Sector Development Fellows; scaling the Economists for Transformation (E4T) network and launching TAP's gender strategy.

- 3 AERC visiting scholars completed the program at the World Bank during 2020, having contributed to 4 working papers, to two regional studies and participated in two seminars and one training.
- 24 Fellows from 11 countries have completed their program at the World Bank and the IFC in 2020, 15 of which were funded by TAP and nine of which were working specifically on Private Sector Development. In January 2021, 31 Africa fellows of which 14 are female, have started their program. The Think Africa Partnership funds 10 Fellows in 2021.
- The Economists for Transformation (E4T) network, first convened by TAP in November 2019, has grown from 68 members in February 2020 to 265 members in February 2021 on LinkedIn and from 0 members in February 2020 to 334 members in February 2021 on Facebook. The E4T network provides a space for early-career professionals to discuss and debate African economic policy issues and new research.

Pillar 2: Supporting Regional and Domestic Knowledge Platforms

Key outputs: Support to the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) and engagement with African policy institutes

- The Transformation Leadership Panel (TLP), which is partially funded by the Think Africa Partnership, held four meetings in 2020 and endorsed [ACET's ten point plan in response to COVID-19](#), which has an emphasis on investment climate.
- ACET completed three case studies on blended finance addressing good practices focused on three development finance institutions in three countries – AFD in Senegal, KfW in Tunisia and AfDB in Ethiopia.
- ACET published two Governance and COVID-19 reports as part of the CwA Advisory Panel and Reform Partnership Framework
- ACET's policy brief for the 2020 T20 was presented to G20 Ministers of Finance at the G20 summit in November 2020 in Saudi Arabia.

- TAP initiated collaboration with an additional African policy institute, *Afrobarometer*.

Pillar 3: Building the Bridge to Policy Impact – the Chief Economists of Government Initiative (CEoG)

Key outputs: Supported growing peer-network of chief economic advisors and carried out virtual skills and knowledge building activities, including support to chief economist units

- Since February 2020, the number of active CEoG network members has increased from 39 to 42 active network members.
- In March 2020 the CEoG Secretariat established regular COVID-19 webinars to allow peer-learning and exchange around responses to the pandemic and strategies for the economic recovery, and has invited experts to speak to the network.
- In October 2020 seven chief economic advisors met for the second time the German chief economic advisor to Chancellor Merkel, Lars-Hendrik Röller, to discuss perception and implementation of the Compact with initiative.
- While the launch of the in-person CEoG Fellowship was delayed due to COVID-19, a pilot of virtual Fellows was sponsored by TAP to support the advisor in Nigeria to work on their COVID-19 response.

Partnerships and contributions

To date, the Partnership has received USD 12.53 million development partner support from Germany and has secured USD 2.64 million from Norway with an additional commitment of USD 1.16 million in 2021.

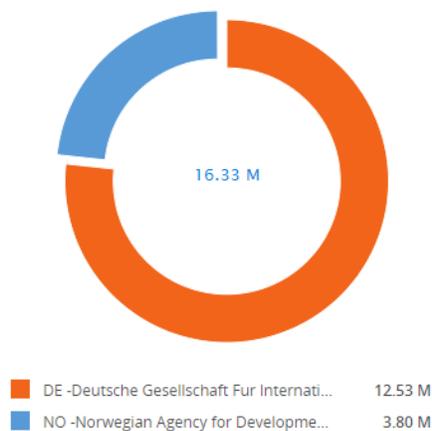


Figure 1: Development Partner Center, February 2021

3. THINK AFRICA PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

The Think Africa Partnership is structured around three pillars of activity. This annual report summarizes activities, outputs and achievements under each pillar:

a. Pillar One: Amplify the Knowledge Base

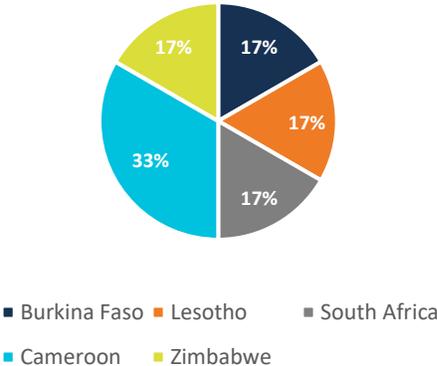
The Partnership supports policy-relevant and collaborative economics research, with greater engagement and participation of African scholars and experts. Key outputs under Pillar 1 include the WBG/AERC Visiting Scholars Program, scaling up the Africa Fellows Program, launching Private Sector Development Fellows and establishing a network of Economists for Transformation to amplify data and evidence on African economic growth and transformation and increase visibility and outreach by African female economists.

The WB/AERC Visiting Scholars Program:

The African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) World Bank Visiting Scholars Program offers an opportunity for research placements of up to four months at the World Bank for early-career academics from Africa. The program aims to enhance the capacity of African scholars to boost economic policy research in sub-Saharan Africa; help strengthen members of AERC’s global linkages in economic policy, academic research, and graduate training; deepen and broaden the policy impact of both AERC and the Africa Chief Economist Office; and enhance the skills and output of individual African researchers by providing them direct access to wider and better information and data accessible via the World Bank. Each year, up to three scholars are selected to join the World Bank in the Africa Chief Economist’s office (AFECE) to support ongoing research relevant to the Africa region. These visiting scholars, drawn from the AERC network, use the visit to improve their own research and teaching. Visiting Scholars also have the chance to present their research and interact and network with other researchers.

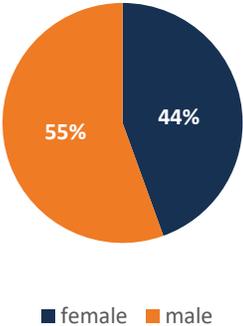
Demography of AERC Scholars: A total of six scholars have been hosted by the World Bank since inception in 2018 from Cameroon, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Burkina Faso. 55% of the scholars are male and 44% are female.

Nationalities of AERC Visiting Scholars (2018-2020)



Picture 2 Nationalities of AERC scholars

Gender ratio of AERC Visiting Scholars (average 2018-2020)



Picture 1 average gender ratio of AERC scholars

Three scholars have completed their program in 2020. Due to COVID-19, two of the contracts were extended by 4 weeks, as return flights to certain home countries have been cancelled. During that time, the scholars were able to finalize the new tech and mining jobs background paper for a regional study, and publish their respective working papers in the WB working paper series.

Pouirkèta Rita Nikiema



Pouirkèta joined the AERC-WB Visiting Scholars program in January 2020 from her position as a lecturer-researcher at the Economics and Management Department of “Université Norbert Zongo” in Burkina Faso. She holds a Ph.D in Applied Economics from University Cheick Anta Diop in Senegal with the Inter University Graduate program (PTCI), and a Master’s degree in Human Resources Economics from “Université Ouaga II” in Burkina Faso. Her doctoral research examined the impact of school feeding programs on enrollment and attendance for girls and analyzed the determinants of child nutritional status, particularly, the role of mother’s education and environmental factors in Burkina Faso. Her research interests are broadly in the economics of education, nutrition, health, labor, human capital, gender, and youth employment.

As a Visiting Scholar, Rita published her paper “[Women Empowerment in Agriculture and Children Nutritional Status in Rural Burkina Faso](#)” as part of an AERC working paper series, and has finalized her research paper titled “Impact of Agricultural and Food Policies on Nutrition Outcomes in Africa” to be published as part of World Bank Working Papers, and which Rita has presented at the AERC-WB Visiting Scholars seminar in May 2020. Furthermore, Rita worked on the regional study “Improving Africa’s Land Governance for Economic Transformation” at the Africa Chief Economist’s Office and provided background literature for the regional study on the topic of “Land, Governance and Property Tax in Southern Africa “. Rita was also able to receive guidance from her supervisor at the World Bank, Aparajita Goyal, to refine and improve her university syllabus, updating her course content and tweaking her pedagogy skills.

Ramaele Moshosho



Ramaele joined the AERC-WB Visiting Scholars program in January 2020 from his position as a lecturer in the Department of Economics at the National University of Lesotho. He received his PhD in Economics in 2015 from the University of Cape Town. Previously, he was a Visiting Research Fellow at the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, under the Transfer Project, where he began working on impact evaluation of cash transfer programs on human capital development. His research work has been published in international journals such as the Journal of African Economies, and the Education Economics journal.

During his time at the World Bank, Ramaele published a paper as part of the World Bank Working Paper Series titled “[Long Term Effects of Free Primary Education on Educational Achievement; Evidence from Lesotho](#)”, which he also presented at the AERC-WB Visiting Scholars seminar in May 2020. He also worked on the WBG Concept Note for the “Positioning Africa to Claim the 21st Century” Project, and contributed to the “New Technology and Mining Jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa” paper as background for the Natural Resources regional study.

Tsambou André Dumas

Tsambou is a researcher in Applied Microeconomics affiliated to the Centre for Studies and Research in Economics and Management (CEREG), the Research Centre in Applied Microeconomics (REMA) and monitor at the University of

Yaoundé II-Soa in Cameroon. His doctoral research examines the effect of innovative behavior on firm performance in French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa. His research focuses on microeconomics of development where he is interested in issues of innovation, financing, efficiency, productivity, competitiveness and firm performance. He is the author of several publications in international peer-reviewed scientific journals including African Development and the Review of International Comparative Management.

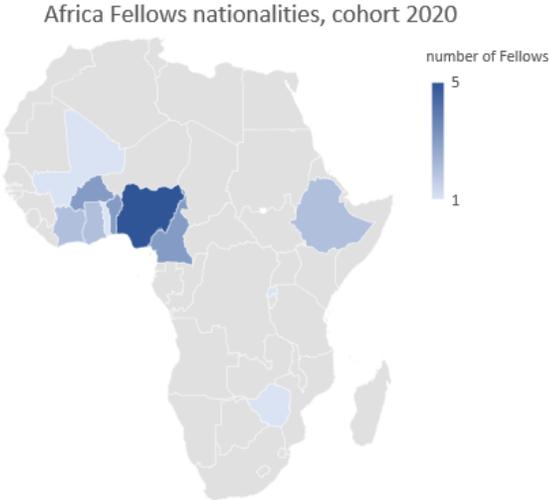
As a Visiting Scholar, Tsambou finalized and reviewed the research paper "Adoption of Innovation and Productivity of Enterprises in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa" to be published in the World Bank Working Paper series. Further, he worked on AERC thematic research entitled "Innovation adoption and productivity of enterprises in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal". Finally, Tsambou contributed to the collaborative research study "Continent-Wide Digital Economy for Africa" at the Africa Chief Economist's Office.

WBG Africa Fellows Program:

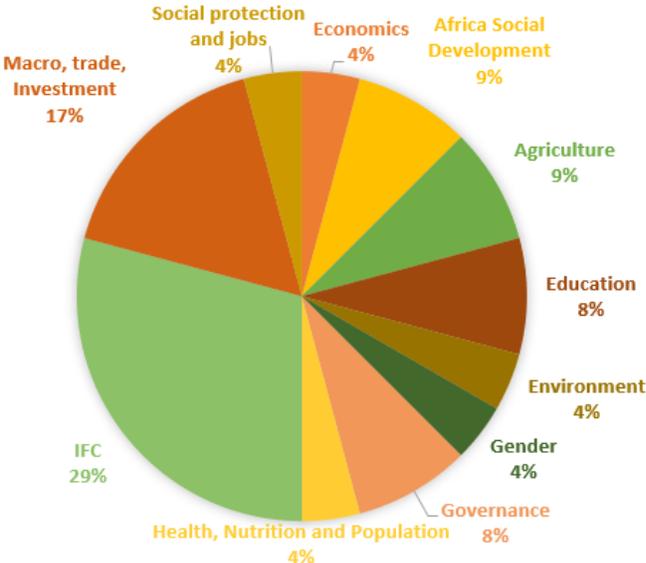
The WBG Africa Fellowship Program targets young talented African nationals who are completing or recently completed a PhD in an area relevant to the World Bank's work. The fellowship program has been very successful since its inception in 2015, building a strong pipeline of young African talent interested in a career working on development economics in international institutions, African governments, think tanks, and academia. The Program offers chosen fellows a six-month assignment at WBG offices in Washington D.C. or in country offices. Fellows gain hands-on experience in the operations of the WBG and are prepared for a recruitment path in the competitive WB Young Professionals (YP) Program.

Africa Fellows 2020 and Private Sector Development Fellows

Between January 2020 and December 2020, 24 Africa Fellows from 11 countries have completed their program at the World Bank and the IFC, 15 of which were funded by the Think Africa Partnership, compared to five in 2019 (overview of Fellows in Annex 4). Out of the 24 Fellows, six were female. Of the 15 TAP funded Fellows three were female. The Fellows have supported different projects and Global Practices across the World Bank and the IFC. Nine of the 15 TAP supported fellows have worked specifically on Private Sector Development at the IFC and the World Bank's Macro, Trade and Investment Global Practice. The other Fellows work across the following WBG Global Practices (picture 4):



Picture 3 Africa Fellows 2020 cohort nationalities



Picture 4: Composition of 2020 Africa Fellows

By the end of their term, fellows presented the research- or operational project they have been working on during their fellowship. Topics ranged from “Intergenerational Transmission of Human Capital: Effect of Maternal Education on Child Education” to “Creating Sustainable Power Markets: Integrating Renewables through Feed-in-Tariffs and Auctions” and “Trade tax reforms and poverty in developing countries: why do some countries benefit and others lose?”. All contributions can be found in Annex 5.

In order to support Fellows in their onward career paths, the Think Africa Partnership Secretariat hosted a webinar in January 2021, attended by seven TAP funded Africa Fellows, to discuss careers in economic development across international institutions, African governments or think tanks with Jim Cust, TAP program manager and economist. This career-talk was well received by Fellows, most of whose contracts got extended at the World Bank or the IFC.

At the end of their term, Fellows were asked to share three things that made their experience at the World Bank Group great or beneficial to them. Some of the answers include:

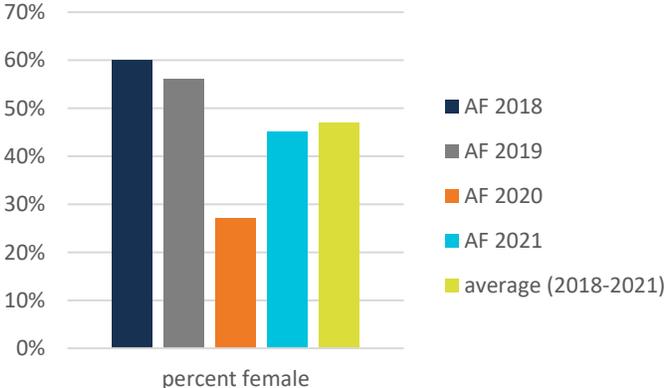
“Being in a good position to create solutions - The opportunity to communicate and work with people from a variety of backgrounds - Access to a large database of information on development issues.” - Habmo Birwe (Social Dev AFR 1)

“One really important experience I had at the Bank is that people were always looking out for me and wanted to see me progress. There were connections and contacts to different people who could be beneficial to my professional development. I was really overwhelmed by that and it has prompted me to pay it forward. I have had people reach out to me about the Fellowship program to seek information and guidance and I am happy to help them succeed as well.” - Mofi Odunowo (Education)

“Came to a realization of the research themes that matter. Links to the science-policy interphase. Skills build in project management and dealing with many partners and clients” - Martin Paul Tabe-Ojong (Social Protection and Jobs)

The percentage of female Africa Fellowship graduates was lower in 2020 than in earlier years, but has increased to 45% again in 2021.

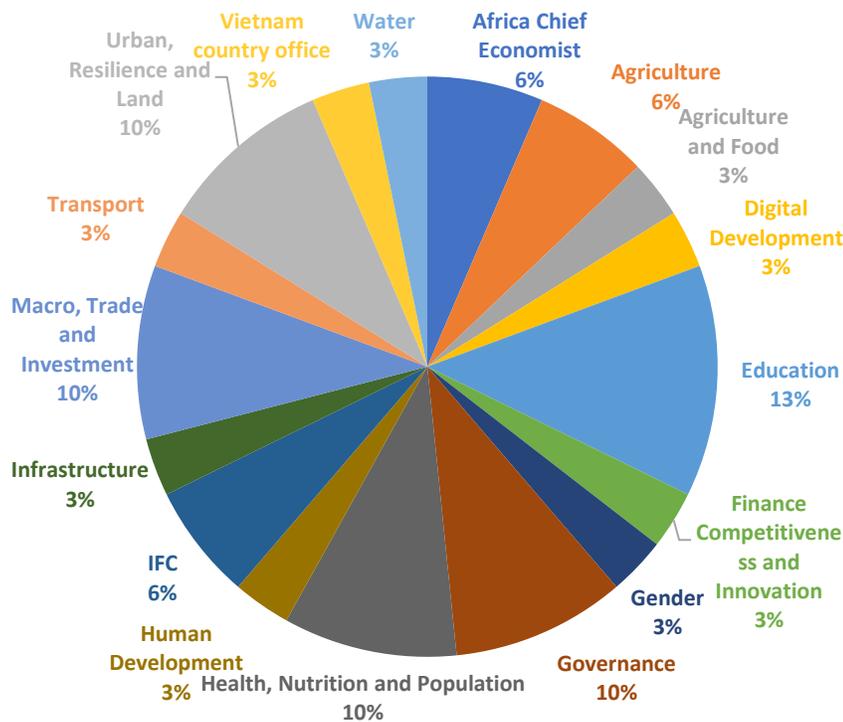
Africa Fellowship gender statistics by year



Picture 5 Africa Fellowship gender statistics by year

Africa Fellows 2021 (outlook)

The 2021 cohort attracted 3,100 candidates of which 123 were shortlisted as potential Fellows ready for hire, which represents candidates from 23 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. 31 finalists were selected, 10 of which will be funded by the Think Africa Partnership. 14 of the Fellows are women, representing 45 percent of the 2021 cohort. The 2021 WBG Africa Fellows come from Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia. The Fellows are placed in a range of global practices and units across the World Bank and the IFC:



Picture 6 Composition of 2021 Africa Fellows

Economists for Transformation

Economists for Transformation (E4T) is a new network for early-career African economists and those interested in African economic policy issues. The network was officially launched around the 2019 Annual Meetings where a number of economists met to brainstorm ways to assemble and support early-career African economists (picture 7).



Economists
For
Transformation

Since then, the network has grown in its virtual-only format, and meets on Facebook and LinkedIn discussion groups called “Economists for Transformation”. Participants in the LinkedIn group have grown from 68 members in February 2020 to 265 members in February 2021, with 79 female members, and network members in the Facebook group have increased from 0 members in February 2020 to 334 members in February 2021.



Picture 7 Launch and brainstorming E4T meeting, October 2019

Why E4T?

The E4T network, supported by TAP, has been a response to the need for a place for the growing number of early career African PhD economists and others working on these topics to meet and discuss research and policy issues. The network is responding to a significant increase in recent years in the quality and quantity of research being done on Africa's economic development. However, policy debates remain dominated by established voices and do not always take advantage of new research insights.

One major goal for this networked community is therefore to help members find opportunities and amplify their voice and discuss new research findings for policy applications. The network can also provide a space to early-career professionals chart their career path and find interesting job opportunities, whether it is in think tanks, government or academia. The network should help outstanding African economists and development professionals to connect to one another, stay informed around the latest research, opportunities and application deadlines, and connect to African think tanks, policy research institutes, and governments.

Since March 2020, sharing of data and analysis of the effects of COVID-19 in sub-Saharan Africa have been the major discussion theme. E4T network members including members from the TAP Secretariat have written five blogposts on reported cases of COVID-19 in Africa, fiscal stimulus measures across 10 selected African countries, COVID-19 testing data across Africa, and more. These are all accessible here: <https://www.econfortransformation.org/blog/>

E4T network members from Cameroon, South Africa, Togo, and Nigeria have undertaken to write blogposts on the COVID-19 situation in their respective countries, and one female network member from South Africa has been put in touch with a more senior World Bank female economist to write on the topic of:

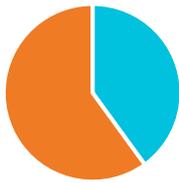
“Exploring how government restrictions and COVID-19 prevention measures affected men and women in relation with occupational segregation, and/or boys and girls with respect to education outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa.”

Gender-related topics have become of increased interest.

Gender focus and strategy

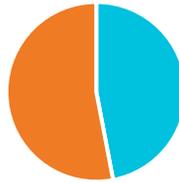
Globally women are strongly underrepresented in economics research and policy careers. The underrepresentation of women in TAP supported programs, especially the early-career Economists for Transformation network, shows that the issue is reflected in Africa and African economic policy interest. TAP alone can't increase African women's representation in economic policy, but TAP can help increase their visibility and connect female African economists to one another to facilitate sharing of experiences and success stories.

AERC Visiting Scholars
(average 2018-2020)



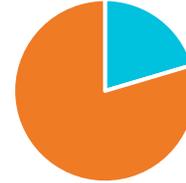
■ %female ■ %male

Africa Fellows
(average 2018-2020)



■ %female ■ %male

Economists for Transformation
(as of February 2021)



■ %female ■ %male

Picture 8 female representation in TAP supported programs

In 2020, TAP has launched its [gender strategy](#) and laid out a concept to support voices of African female economists and in the long term strengthen the role of women in African economic policy. Last year, the TAP Secretariat initiated a partnership with the [Association for the Advancement of African Women Economists \(AAWE\)](#), the first organization to focus on networking and building the capacity and skills of African women economists. Together, TAP and AAWE will emphasize efforts to support African female researchers and economists across TAP's three constituencies. Working with early-career economists (Africa Fellows), researchers and university lecturers (AERC-WB Visiting Scholars) and policymakers (CEoG and Transformation Leadership Panel), TAP can facilitate exchange between female economists from these groups and share their success stories with early-career economists and PhD students (Economists for Transformation), who are not yet established professionals.

AAWE, who re experienced in hosting panel discussions and networking events for female economists, will be our partner in organizing and hosting a series of virtual roundtables between female African economists and development professionals on the topic of *"African women in economic policy: perspectives from researchers, development leaders and chief economic advisors"*. The envisaged panel speakers would consist of current and former Africa Fellows, current and former AERC Visiting scholars and female chief economic advisors.

b. Pillar Two: Supporting Regional and Domestic Knowledge Platforms

Support to the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET)

Pillar two of the Think Africa Partnership strengthens platforms that link knowledge to policy across Africa. The *Support to Regional Knowledge Capacity Project*, implemented by the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET), is financed through a Recipient Executed Trust Fund (RETF). From its implementation to date, 60% of total TAP disbursements have been dedicated to ACET. The project development objective is to strengthen ACET's capacity in the delivery of policy to action, implementation of the G20 Compact with Africa (CwA), and promoting private sector development, in selected countries.

Thanks to additional commitments from Germany and Norway 2018/9, additional financing and restructuring for expanded activities under the grant agreement have been approved by the World Bank's Africa Region Vice President in December 2019 and have been implemented since. As part of this grant restructuring, the project closing date was extended by two years from November 28, 2019 to November 30, 2021. Additional financing was made available, taking the grant total from USD 1.6 million to USD 4.9 million for the extended project. This additional support draws on contributions from both partners. Project activities have been expanded to consist of four (instead of the original two) components:

1. Strengthening ACET's core activities on policy design
 - 1.1. Technical Assistance for an institutional policy engagement case study
 - 1.2. Assistance to ACET's ongoing activities
2. Supporting ACET's role in implementing the CwA
 - 2.1. Strengthening Compact countries' capacity
 - 2.2. Bi-Annual peer review of the CwA self-assessment
 - 2.3. Advocacy for Africa and the CwA
3. Supporting the Strategic Partnership for Private Sector Development and growth
 - 3.1. Promoting Sustainable Export Processing Zones (SEPZ)
 - 3.2. Integrating Local Content SMEs into Global Value Chains
 - 3.3. Linking the LC-SME and SEPZ programs
4. Institutional Capacity Support

Component 1: Strengthening ACET'S core activities on policy design

Subcomponent 1.1.: Technical Assistance for an institutional policy engagement case study

The institutional policy engagement case study was completed in November 2019. It has not been published but ACET plans to upload it on their website, in addition to sharing it with other institutions.

Subcomponent 1.2.: Assistance to ACET's ongoing activities

The African Transformation Report (ATR), the African Transformation Forum (ATF) and the African Transformation Index (ATI) are partially funded by TAP and partially funded by other donors. For more details see Annex 3.2.

African Transformation Report (ATR): The ATR 2020 “Securing Africa’s Future” focuses on four issues of critical importance to African leaders and policy influencers: Population and demographics; climate change; regional integration; and technology and innovation. The ATR will be published as a suite of documents consisting of:

1. The main report, with an overview chapter and four thematic chapters.
2. An infographic summary of the report.
3. Four in-depth study reports on the four thematic areas.

During 2020, ACET produced the individual reports on the four thematic areas, the main ATR draft report, and the infographic summary of the report. While ATR 2020 was scheduled to be launched in 2020, a few challenges have delayed the launch. After the first draft of the report was completed, internal review prompted a revision to reframe the core issues to reflect (i) the impact of COVID-19 on African economies and (ii) the positioning of regional integration as a common thread across thematic areas. This extensive revision was completed in December 2020 and reviewed externally. The comments are being incorporated into various parts of the report and are expected to be completed in Q1 2021. The report will be officially launched as part of the virtual African Transformation Forum (ATF) webinar series (see below).

African Transformation Index (ATI): Following the processes adopted in 2019 to kickstart the ATI, ACET decided, through a series of meetings and external consultations, to improve the original variables with new indicators to enhance the coverage of the index. The notable additions include the Gini coefficient (to represent income inequality) and gender inequality that both have been added to the Human Wellbeing component of the index. Furthermore, policy variables representing the overall environment for growth, skills and technology, domestic resource mobilization, infrastructure and agricultural and industrial transformation will be used to help explain why and how transformation occurs.

In 2020, the previous ATI version was replicated and updated with data reflecting the period from 2000 – 2018. This was a significant step that was necessary to validate the source code and ensure that the datasets were robust. The data was presented to ACET management for validation and approved to be sent for external review. Following this, the team approached external reviewers in the World Bank, UNDP and OECD to discuss the review process for the datasets. The remaining tasks to be completed include external reviews of the codes used in generating the index, the drafting, review and production of the report, and its planned launch at the end of Q2 2021.

African Transformation Forum (ATF 3): The uncertainty around the unfolding COVID-19 crisis compelled ACET to postpone the African Transformation Forum (ATF), initially planned for June 17-18, 2020 in Nairobi. Instead of taking place physically, the third ATF will be launched as a series of webinars beginning February 2021. The first would be launched with the ATR featuring a discussion with African Heads of State following the AU summit on regional integration. Next will be a series of monthly webinars to discuss each chapter of the ATR (population and demographics, climate change, regional integration and technology and innovation) and other gender and transformational leadership related issues.

ACET has developed a database of over 250 potential invitees, panelists, moderators, and other facilitators in preparation for the webinars. They identified six country Presidents (Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Niger, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa), who are representative of each region and thematic area. Pending completion of the report, the team will be developing content for publication (videos, interviews with Heads of State, etc.) and have engaged vendors for video production and web meeting hosting to discuss agreements.

The Transformation Leadership Panel (TLP): The TLP is partially funded by TAP. ACET’s role as the TLP Secretariat has been to facilitate the group’s efforts to influence urgent action for transformative change in Africa by 2030.

Its primary focus has been on policy actions in four broad areas—demographics, innovation, climate, and regional integration—and with the cross-cutting goal of gender parity in leadership across all sectors.

The year 2020 was a particularly productive one for the Transformation Leadership Panel. In February the panel met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, hosted by the UN Economic Commission for Africa. Over two days the panel discussed key challenges and issues related to domestic resource mobilization, jobs and economic transformation, European-African dialogue, and gender. The panel was joined by special guests to include Mr. Kwesi Quartey, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission; Mr. Nick Westcott, Director of the Royal African Society; and Mr. Stefan Oswald, Director General, German Federal Ministry of Development.

The panel also met virtually on May 27 to address the impact of COVID-19 on Africa and to endorse [a ten-point action plan](#) to help ensure a strong recovery after the crisis. The meeting was joined by Albert Zeufack, World Bank Chief Economist for the Africa Region and Mr. Stefan Oswald, Director General, German Federal Ministry of Development. The meeting focused on actions currently being taken across Africa, the impacts and challenges of recovery, and urgent focal points for global leaders and policymakers, as well as the development community at large. Members expressed a common sense of urgency around the need to ensure that African governments and development partners grasp the full extent of the crisis impacts and react accordingly. The panel agreed to develop a call to action for African leaders as one of the outcomes of the COVID-19 response meeting. In July, the TLP met to agree and sign the ten-point action plan, which was subsequently distributed to African Union Member countries through the African Union Commission.

Finally, the fourth TLP meeting was held on November 13, 2020 on the international response to the pandemic in Africa. The meeting, which was chaired by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was attended by 15 members and 2 special guests, including Ibrahim Mayaki, former Prime Minister, Niger; CEO, AUDA-NEPAD, Hafez Ghanem, VP Africa East World Bank, Charles Boamah, former Senior Vice President, AfDB, Bineta Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, African Union, Agnes Kalibata, President, AGRA and Tito Mboweni, Finance Minister of South Africa.

Members discussed the international response to the pandemic in Africa and possible areas to support and collaborate with AfDB following current pressure on their resources. Following TLP meeting, ACET arranged for an appointment with AfDB's president, Akin Adesina.

The Pan-African Coalition for Transformation: The Pan-African Coalition for Transformation (PACT) was launched in March 2016 at the inaugural African Transformation Forum and is a tool for governments and local policymakers to gain information and knowledge as they design and implement policies for economic transformation. The PACT will share resources, tools, and knowledge around eight Chapters, each organized around a separate topic. Chapters will function as small networks of like-minded countries, organizations, and sponsors to coordinate joint action to share valuable knowledge, and promote successful transformation strategies for all of Africa.

In 2020, ACET's activities have centred around the development of two PACT Chapters for agriculture and youth, employment and skills.

1. The Agricultural Chapter:

Back in 2019, ACET initiated work on a global scan for successful and innovative efforts to foster market development and strengthen linkages between policy design and smallholder interests in areas such as employment, skills development and youth leadership, land tenure and agro-processing. The project has four components – a) a global scan; b) a market linkages study in Ghana and Kenya; c) convening national platforms in these countries; and d) setting up the PACT Chapter for agriculture. Over this reporting period, ACET focused on

operationalizing the Global Scan Online Marketplace portal and finalizing the market linkages study on Kenya and Ghana.

The Global Scan portal was launched virtually in July 2020. Work is ongoing for additional content curation for the portal and opportunities to drive intellectual discourses on the portal. The last quarter of 2020 focused on internal discussions with management on how to assimilate the portal into PACT and the advocacy programs in general. As part of the broader ACET Strategy, it was agreed that recruitment would commence for a Knowledge Manager to oversee the portal and engagement with policy makers around the outputs of this and other projects.

The Market linkages study: In 2020 the Market linkages team completed draft country reports for Ghana and Kenya. This was followed with virtual country validation workshops on October 13th and 27th for Ghana and Kenya respectively. The report was reviewed internally and finalized after feedback from the workshop had been incorporated by the country researchers. By close of the year, the team had designed an outline of the synthesis report and production of the draft synthesis report was ongoing.

2. Youth, Education and Skills (YES) Chapter

As part of the YES program, ACET initiated a six-country (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia) study on 'Strengthening Education and Learning Systems to Deliver a 4IR-Ready Workforce.' The key deliverables included an inception meeting; case studies; country validation workshops; a synthesis report; a multi-country policy learning event; and further engagement with policy makers through the YES Chapter.

Over this reporting period, all six countries completed inception meetings, data collection and draft country reports. Country-level inception meetings held before the data-collection exercise brought together key stakeholders as a way of increasing awareness and buy-in. ACET staff supported the in-country research teams by taking part in the data collection, a useful exercise for strengthening ACET's knowledge of the different country contexts. By the end of March 2020, although the bulk of the data collection had been completed, the pandemic caused delays in finalizing some interviews and subsequent analysis.

All draft reports were submitted and reviewed by external reviewers. Comments from the workshops are being incorporated into the reports and preparation of the synthesis report is in progress. All final reports are targeted for completion in Q1 2021.

Component 2: ACET's role in G20 Compact with Africa

ACET was appointed as the CwA secretariat for coordination and peer learning. As the secretariat, ACET engages in a variety of activities including: (i) coordination role in CwA implementation; (ii) supporting peer learning among CwA countries; and (iii) peer-reviewing country self-assessments on progress. ACET is catalyzing CwA implementation via a peer learning platform and independent peer review of progress towards country identified policy goals.

Subcomponent 2.1.: Strengthening Compact countries' capacity

Between April and June 2020, ACET has commissioned three case studies on blended finance (Annex), to complement the study done in 2019. These address good practices focused on three development finance institutions in three countries – AFD in Senegal, KfW in Tunisia and AfDB in Ethiopia. The final drafts were completed in 2020. The case studies will be followed by a peer learning event.

As part of the Reform Partnership Framework, two reports on COVID-19 and Governance (Annex) have been completed in late 2020 to inform a peer learning event which took place in January 2021, attended by a range of African policymakers and practitioners.

Subcomponent 2.2.: Bi-annual Peer Review of CwA Self Assessments

ACET's peer review note was finalized during the first quarter of 2020 and discussed at the G20 Africa Advisory Group meeting in May. It has also been included in the CwA monitoring report. The peer review focused on key policy issues facing CwA countries in the context of the pandemic crisis, including policy and advocacy that can help ensure a strong economic rebound. The 6th peer review note for the October G20 Africa Advisory Group Meeting was finalized in late 2020. ACET participated in the AAG and organized the private sector participants.

Subcomponent 2.3.: Advocacy for Africa and the CwA

ACET supported preparations to the meeting between the chief economic advisor to Chancellor Angela Merkel and the chief economic advisors in the CwA countries. CwA Advisory Panel members engaged with the chief economic advisors ahead of time to brief them on the CwA implementation in their respective countries and to prepare them for the meeting with Dr. Roeller.

Furthermore, ACET is a member of the T20 Infrastructure and Financing Task Force and continues to serve on the T20 Africa Standing Committee and co-chairs the CwA Task Force with the Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, the Policy Center for the Global South and the European Centre for Development Policy and Management. In preparation for the T20 Summit, ACET in partnership with OECD, Brookings, SAIIA, and NEPAD drafted an abstract for the CwA Policy Brief for G20 Finance Ministers.

Component 3: Strategic Partnership for Private Sector Development and Growth

In September 2020, ACET organized a Private Sector Development Strategy retreat in Ghana to review program objectives and initiate preparation towards the development of a strategic and operational plans. Present were internal and external stakeholders from both private and public sectors. ACET initiated a work with the International Senior Lawyers Project (ISLP) to review various legal/regulatory aspects and studies of the PSD work. Other project activities have been on external stakeholder engagements and recruitment of a portfolio coordinator.

Subcomponent 3.1: Promoting Sustainable Export Processing Zones (SEPZ)

This is a program to promote the development of sustainable export processing zones (SEPZ) aligned with the 1 Region, 1 Park (1R1P) policy. This sub-component will focus on two key activities: (1) diagnosis and evaluation of the existing EPZ ecosystems to include benchmarking against good practices. The evaluation will focus on alignment between Ghana's EPZ and sustainable-oriented infrastructure, practices and firms; and (2) support to retrofitting of an existing EPZ into an SEPZ as a test case for development and subsequent replication. Aligned to the activities above, ACET also supports efforts to crowd in additional investment.

Specific project management and resource planning commenced during the first quarter of 2020. An initial stakeholder engagement was also made prior to planning and understanding of the landscape in Ghana.

ACET has contracted the Ghana Free Zones Board as a key partner for the SEPZ – EPZ Landscape Assessment and Benchmarking Study which started in 2020. Interviews with members of the Free Zones have been scheduled and are ongoing. Expert reviewers were also engaged to evaluate our studies and provide insights. Additional stakeholders including the Association of Member Companies in the Free Zones, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ghana Export Promotion Authority have been identified with preparations for engagement in session. As an outcome of the September Strategy session, ACET completed a study on the impact of EPZs on the implementation of the AfCTA and vice versa. The draft report has been reviewed and is undergoing finalization by our consultant. Plans for using the report to engage interested parties around the AfCTA implementation has been designed. The advocacy event is expected in Q1 2021.

Subcomponent 3.2: Integrating Local Content SMEs into Global Value Chains

This is a program to support integration of local content SMEs into the global supply and value-chains of large enterprises aligned with the government's 1 district, 1 factory (1D1F) policy. This involves identifying local content opportunities within value chains and preparing SMEs to build capacity to take advantage of these opportunities. The program will work with technical and management consultants in building governance structures and systems that enable them to access market opportunities and to be investment ready to crowd in both local and external investments.

LC-SME Development – Value Chain and Product Space Analysis: Phase one of the study on Product Space Analysis was completed and submitted by the project consultant to the PSD team during a December workshop. The study through the analysis of the product space of Ghana has identified five value chain/economic activities that have the potential to move local qualified firms more towards backward participation in the global value chain analysis. ACET also began a Value Chain Analysis of production processes across countries. The field work including interviews started in Q4 2020.

LC-SME Development – Coaching/ Mentorship Program: Profiles of proposed mentors and PSD expert advisors were completed in 2020. The review and final acceptance and signing by senior management is planned for Q1 2021. A lead consultant for SME Support and Technical Assistance coordination for the development of the SMEs has also been engaged.

Technical Assistance Partnerships and Research Partnerships: ACET recruited a Technical Delivery Partner for firm diagnosis/due diligence and finalizing the plan for development of capacity, systems and structure for SMEs. Engagement with pilot SMEs started in January 2021. ACET has also signed an MOU with the M10 Society to provide technical assistance and expert support. M10 is currently working with our lead consultant on SME Support and Technical Assistance Coordination to pilot the process with one selected SME. Final discussions are ongoing for a research partnership with Cornell University Law School to provide an in-depth study into regulatory provisions on local content, export/economic processing zones and other relevant regulations and their implications. The study will benchmark best practices and lessons from other jurisdictions to engage government and other stakeholders in discussions on policy improvements. The International Senior Lawyers Project (ISLP) has offered to provide expert review on the studies.

SME Fund (New):

One of the key outputs of ACETs strategy retreat in Q3 of 2020 was the development of an SME Fund to support SMEs and ensure long term sustainability of the fund. ACET is developing a concept note which expands on two main components of the fund - Technical Assistance and Impact Investment. M10 has been engaged to draft the Fund Thesis to be used to set up the Fund. This work is expected to commence in Q1 2021.

Sub-component 3.3: Linking the LC-SME and SEPZ programs

The program will seek to ensure linkages between the promotion of SEPZs and the creation of SMEs. This component is dependent on outcomes of earlier sub-components, therefore activities will be determined following their completion.

Component 4: ACET institutional capacity support

Organizational Strategy:

ACET finalized its new 2021-2025 operational strategy, which builds on lessons from our past and looks forward to a new economic landscape impacted by a global pandemic. The new strategy will focus over the next five years on helping African countries strengthen their transformation agendas for a stronger and more robust post-pandemic recovery. The strategy will be implemented through five program areas:

1. Economic Management & Governance
2. Youth Employment & Skills
3. Private Sector Development
4. Regional integration
5. Gender Equality

Communications and Marketing:

To enhance profile and impact on society, ACET held a number of interviews throughout 2020. These included interviews with [CNBC Africa on policies for Africa's post COVID-19 recovery](#), the [B&FT](#) and the [Institute for New Economic Thinking \(INET\)](#). The Belt and Road Portal, a market intelligence and business facilitation platform also interviewed our Director of Research, on the 7th anniversary of the Initiative. This interview marked ACET's status as the only African Think Tank on the Belt and Road Studies Network (BRSN) initiators council. Recently, ACET Senior Director Ed Brown joined Dr. Folashadé Soulé and Dr. Camilla Toulmin for the [INET's Commission on Global Economic Transformation \(CGET\)'s COVID-19 and Africa Series](#). The series engages African/Africa-based economists and experts about their perspectives on economic transformation and how the COVID situation re-shapes the options and pathways for Africa's development.

The ACET website has been redesigned to ensure that no story goes beyond 30 days on the home page. Analytics from our site suggest that visitors to the site in the third quarter spent on average, one minute and 23 seconds, a 44% increase in time spent from the previous quarter. While improving engagement on our current site, ACET, supported by the Bewsys website development firm is at an initial phase of building a new and improved website with new features that deliver an optimal user experience. During 2020, ACET's communications team published multiple pieces including blogs, discussion papers and press releases on its website and its social media platforms have been gaining an increasing number of followers.

Procurement:

ACET has developed a new procurement policy and associated procedures which were approved by management and shared with staff during the period. The policy was developed to streamline procurement activities and improve operational efficiency and accountability in spending. The policy will be implemented from the first quarter of 2021. Finally, ACET completed a Post Procurement Review from the Bank which resulted in a decrease in risk rating from High Risk to Substantial risk. ACET recognizes the need to do more improve this rating in the next review. They are confident that with the structures being put in place now, the risk rating will continue to improve in the next Post Procurement Review.

TAP: Intensifying collaboration with additional economic policy think tanks

In preparation for the first thematic CEoG workshop taking place in Accra in February 2020, TAP engaged the Nairobi-based Partnership for Economic Policy (PEP) to support the workshop with a background paper on digitization and revenue mobilization. The paper can be accessed [here](#). PEP will provide further background research for future CEoG workshops and the Annual Forum.

In 2020 the TAP Secretariat has started collaborating with [Afrobarometer](#), a pan-African, nonpartisan survey research network that provides reliable data on Africans' evaluations and experiences of democratic governance and quality of life. For the past 20 years, across 38 African countries, Afrobarometer has collected and published reliable and timely data and analysis on citizens' views on democracy, governance, the economy, and society. A leading source of data on issues that affect African citizens, Afrobarometer includes data that can measure progress toward 12 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These data can help inform better policymaking by helping decision makers be more responsive to the needs and challenges faced by citizens.

A selected number of this year's WBG Africa Fellows are undertaking specific research and writing policy relevant papers using Afrobarometer survey data. At the end of the Fellowship, some Fellows will receive a stipend for their research papers and participate in the Afrobarometer Summer School on authorship.

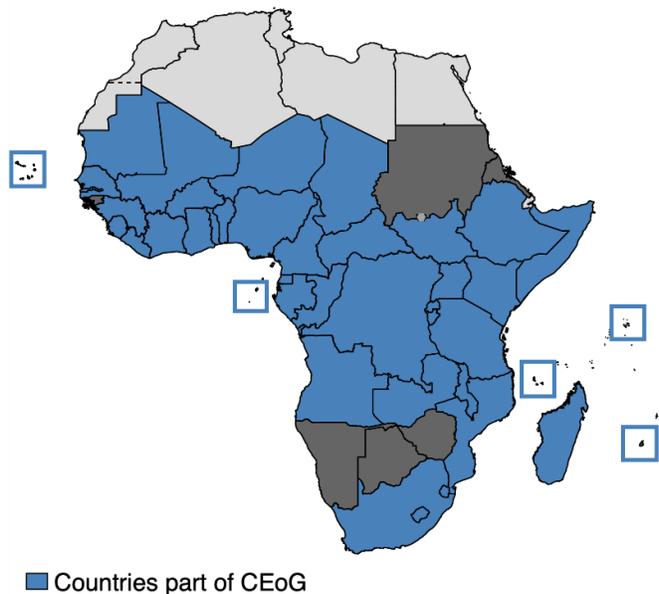
c. Pillar Three: Building the Bridge to Policy Impact

The Chief Economists of Government Initiative (CEoG) represents TAP's bridge to policy impact. CEoG provides a platform for peer support and learning, policy benchmarking, and support to economic policy units at the center of government.



The CEoG initiative convenes and supports chief economic advisors to heads of executive across the African continent. The CEoG network was launched in February 2019, with the Inaugural Forum that took place at the University of Oxford, United Kingdom.

Since then the network has expanded from 19 chief economic advisors who attended the inaugural Forum to 42 active network members, covering an increasing number of advisors from sub-Saharan Africa's 48 countries. Because of presidential and parliamentary elections in a number of African countries throughout 2020 and two sudden deaths among advisors, the number of active advisors in the network is currently 40 but the CEoG Secretariat in close collaboration with the WBG country offices is working to identify successors. Countries where a chief economic advisor has not yet been identified or does not hold post at this time include: Botswana, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Namibia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Eswatini (Overview of CEoG network members in the Annex).



CEoG support functions offered to advisors include (virtual) peer learning visits, targeted support from former advisors and experts, staff support, offering knowledge tools and skills building, which includes Stata licenses for network members, a data-helpdesk and creating CEoG models to define advisors' terms of reference. In 2020, the CEoG Secretariat provided 23 Stata licenses to advisors and their teams.

CEoG impact and feedback from advisors:

While the impact of CEoG is challenging to measure and attribute, the initiative has already seen highly encouraging results since its launch. First, the process of creating the network introduced peers to one another who perform similar duties in their countries. The rapid and enthusiastic uptake by advisors reflected the gap this peer network was fulfilling. The vast majority of the network did not know one another and had no fora to meet each other- unlike, for example, Ministers or Central Bank Governors. The process of meeting has led to many serendipitous opportunities for learning, exchange and even coordination between countries on policy issues.

Between March 2020 and February 2021, the Secretariat has facilitated a number of bilateral meetings between advisors, including former advisors and experts. A CEoG webinar with Dr Arkebe Oqubay, Senior Minister and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, led to two bilateral virtual meetings between Dr Oqubay and two advisors from two West African countries. The topic of exchange was focused around government policy measures to support the private sector during the pandemic, with a focus on the aviation industry.

Furthermore, the Secretariat facilitated an exchange between the advisor from the DRC and the former advisor from Angola, who exchanged experiences and lessons on the topic of de-dollarization. The former advisor from Angola attended a virtual seminar organized by the chief economic advisor from the DRC, in which Angola's lessons proved invaluable for the seminar participants, most of them Congolese. Out of all panelists, the former advisor from Angola was asked most follow-up questions.

Around May 2020, following a CEoG webinar with WBG Vice President Hafez Ghanem, the Secretariat arranged a meeting between one advisor, his Minister of Finance and Hafez Ghanem, to assist with debt restructuring.

Finally, advisors from neighboring countries who met at a CEoG event learnt of common border and trade problems with a shared export partner and were able to make connections to take back to their Ministers of Trade. Advisors have also used the network to seek inputs from their peers around the optimal composition of their teams; the nature and frequency of producing documents for their principals, and the challenges of providing technical advice in a political setting. Without CEoG many advisors did not know the detail or scope of how their counterparts played their roles in executive offices across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

Quotes from advisors:

"I was excited when I met the CEoG team at the World Bank. (...) My country benefited a lot from being in that network. We get assistance in terms of software, (...) experts (...) and we are getting a chance to share our experience and listen to other African experts and advisors (...). Africa needed a network like CEoG. (...). During the pandemic, sharing differences with different countries is quite unique. I'm looking forward to working more with CEoG and I'm ready to share my experience and that of my country."

"Being part of the Forum and meeting with colleagues has enriched my professional life."

"I wish to thank you for the constructive engagement during my membership of CEoG. I can attest to the fact that the various engagements we had, including the virtual calls, greatly helped in discharging my duties and recommend that you continue with the same. I wish this very important and critical grouping every success."

Activities between March 2020 and February 2021:

With COVID-19 having impacted all planned physical network events such as the Annual Forum or a meeting around the WBG/IMF Annual Meetings 2020, the CEoG Secretariat has quickly adapted its peer-learning activities and has been offering regular peer-learning COVID-19 webinars. So far, advisors from Nigeria, Rwanda, Togo and South Africa have presented their national economic recovery strategies to gather expert inputs and peer feedback. These webinars have been attracting a large number of advisors, despite their busy schedule, and we have been given a mandate to continue these on a regular basis: In a network survey carried out by the CEoG Secretariat in June 2020, 14 out of 15 respondents found the webinars to be "very useful" while 1/15 found them to be "mostly useful". All advisors who responded to the survey would like us to continue to organize webinars. Overwhelmingly, advisors are interested in recovery strategies and topics relating to debt and external financing, both private sector, bilateral and multilateral.

Webinars

Since March 2020, the CEoG Secretariat has hosted 7 webinars on the following topics:

1. World Bank Group operational response to the COVID-19 crisis and economic consequences from COVID-19 in Africa, April 2020
2. Presenting [Africa's Pulse](#) and how governments can respond to the pandemic, with special contributions from Paul Collier, April 2020
3. Debt and debt relief with inputs from Hafez Ghanem, May 2020
4. Government Policy Responses to COVID-19 & the Private Sector in Africa: Lessons from Ethiopia, Arkebe Oqubay, May 2020
5. 10 policy recommendations by the ACET, KY Amoako and Mavis Owusu-Gymfi, July 2020
6. Nigeria and Rwanda's economic recovery plans, Amina Rwakunda and Yemi Dipeolu, September 2020
7. South Africa and Togo's economic recovery plans, Trudi Makhaya and Shegun Bakari, December 2020

On average, the webinars are attended by 12.2 advisors.



CEoG Covid-19 webinar in April 2020 with Albert Zeufack (Chief Economist) and Hafez Ghanem (Vice President) World Bank, Africa Region

CEoG Fellowship

Most advisors believe they would be able to do their jobs more effectively if they were able to recruit and retain high quality, PhD-trained economists in their teams.

Therefore, CEoG has initiated a CEoG Presidential Fellows Program that allows selected young economists to be placed in government (Presidencies, Vice-Presidencies, Prime Minister's Office, Central Banks or Ministries of Finance) and work directly with chief economic advisors to African presidents and prime ministers, supporting them in their daily work of providing economic advice at the highest level. The selected Fellows are African PhD graduates in economics who are expected to have demonstrated experience and interest in applying analytical tools to African policy issues. The CEoG Presidential Fellows gain hands-on experience with policy design and implementation in the offices of central decision-makers in African governments. The Fellows' work programs focus on sectorial and thematic policy issues central to economic transformation such as economic management, private sector development, domestic resource mobilization, and any other pressing economic policy topics individual to each country.

Because of COVID-19, the launch of the CEoG Presidential Fellowship was delayed. However, as African governments are grappling with the task of managing the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic poses to their economies, the engagement of virtual/remote fellows could support advisors in preparing concept papers and policy proposals related to the COVID-19 response and economic recovery. As there is increasing demand from advisors for this support option, the CEoG Secretariat offers to fund selected Fellows to provide analytic support to advisors for up to 6 months.

In 2020, CEoG has piloted two "rapid-response" Fellows in Nigeria, who supported the special advisor to the President of Nigeria on Economic Matters. Their work and expertise was focused on designing targeted social intervention programs in the areas of public sanitation and hygiene, basic food items relief and rehabilitation programs. There have been further requests from the advisors in other countries. The CEoG Secretariat is working with the WBG country office teams to provide Presidential Fellows in several of these countries.

DRC workshop on de-dollarization:

In autumn 2020 Marcellin Bilomba, chief economic advisor to President Tshisekedi and CEoG member from the DRC, reached out to the CEoG Secretariat to ask for support in organizing and hosting a virtual workshop on de-dollarization in the DRC. The Secretariat provided support in the form of suggesting a range of international experts, mobilizing World Bank IT support so that the workshop could be held virtually, providing an STC from the CEoG team to take notes during the workshop, and inviting fellow CEoG advisors who have experienced, successfully or unsuccessfully, the de-dollarization of their economies. Panel speakers included Albert Zeufack, the former chief economic advisor to Angola, former prime ministers of the DRC and economists from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. More information on the workshop and on the subject matter can be found on the CEoG website: <https://www.africaceog.org/post/de-dollarization-in-the-drc-marcellin-bilomba-hosts-virtual-workshop-in-kinshasa>

Compact with Africa

Building on the pre-COVID-19 meeting between the advisors and Dr Lars-Hendrik Röller around the 2019 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the IMF, the CEoG Secretariat, in collaboration with ACET, hosted a webinar in October 2020 on perceptions of the G20 Compact with Africa (CwA) initiative. Chief economic advisors from all sub-Saharan African Compact countries, with the exception of one, met with the chief economic advisors

of Germany and South Africa, the chairs of the G20 CwA advisory group, during a virtual peer-learning event to discuss the implementation of the G20 initiative and brainstorm ideas as inputs for the next CwA conference likely to take place in 2021 and the G20 conference that took place in November 2020.

They discussed challenges to successful implementation of the CwA and ways to improve implementation in the coming months. The meeting represented a lively exchange of views where advisors came together to brainstorm and share experiences.

Virtual writer's workshop

In the second half of 2020, the CEoG Secretariat initiated a program of writing support to African economic policymakers who have played senior advisory roles at the heart of governments in sub-Saharan Africa. The goal is to gather recollections of key economic events during their tenure as economic advisors.



Picture 9 webinar on the CwA with German advisor Lars-Hendrik Röller

These recollections are organized around key economic events and the roles of that the senior economic advisors played in navigating their countries through the events. They document successes and mistakes, elaborating the practical challenges associated with bridging economic evidence to effective policy making.

Some initial outputs of the writer's workshop include a range of interview-blogposts with Sen Narrainen, Prof Benno Ndulu and Prof Njuguna Ndung'u, the former Central Bank Governor of Kenya. These blogposts are available for the public on the CEoG website: <https://www.africaceog.org/blog>

d. Think Africa Program Management

The Think Africa Partnership Trust Fund began in April 2018. To date, the Partnership has received USD 15.17 million in development partner support from Germany and Norway, with additional pending commitments of around USD 1.16 million from Norway by May 2021. This complements existing WBG resources to support activities under the three windows.

In the face of COVID-19 induced challenges, the Think Africa Partnership and its partners adapted programming and worked with advisors to identify new priorities and trial modes of delivery suited to the new global conditions. This approach built on the strong foundation of the peer network-based model, scaling up the already well-established virtual connectivity and support components within the existing workplan. Based on consultations with policymakers, advisors, ACET's Transformation Leadership Panel and development partners to understand the needs and priorities for countries in their COVID-19 response and post-COVID-19 recovery, the TAP Secretariat has worked on a proposal setting forth a three-year, scaled-up vision for the trust fund.

This proposal was shared with the TAP Steering Committee (SC) as well as with the broader development community via a newsletter sent out in April 2020 and got positive feedback from the government of Germany as well as the European Commission. While physical fundraising missions could not take place due to COVID-19, the TAP Secretariat led a number of virtual fundraising activities with existing and potential new development partners such as Japan's JICA. Additional funds will be dedicated towards the new COVID-19 response and recovery activities. Further fundraising activities are planned in 2021.

With new funding and additional COVID-19 activities, the Secretariat has worked on a forward looking workplan, detailing new and existing deliverables in 2021 and beyond. This workplan was shared with the SC in December 2020 and will be discussed in the second TAP Steering Committee meeting.

While the first TAP Steering Committee Meeting was held around the WBG/IMF 2019 Annual Meetings, the second meeting will take place virtually in February 2021, and will focus this year's Annual Report, the strategic direction of the trust fund with regards to changing COVID-19 demands and conditions, the updated results framework and workplan.

Finally, the TAP Secretariat will administer a midterm review of the TAP trust fund, which will lead to slightly increased secretariat costs in 2021. The midterm review will be carried out by a hired expert. The terms of reference will be shared with Steering Committee members and discussed during the SC meeting.