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AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

CAPITALIZATION OF THE TEN YEARS OF ACTIVITIES OF THE ANNUAL FORUM OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK - CIVIL SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

The African Development Bank (AfDB) is convinced that the structural transformation of the socio-economic dynamics of African countries towards greater sustainability and inclusion will result from a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach.
This necessarily requires a strategic and fruitful partnership with States, the private sector and civil society organizations.

This position was reaffirmed by Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank Group, during his inaugural speech on [1] September 2015 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, where he stressed that "*our action will be structured around five priorities in the implementation of the Bank's strategy for the next ten years: : Light up and Power Africa, Feed Africa, Industrialize Africa, Integrate Africa, Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa... We will forge closer partnerships with the private sector, civil society, academic institutions and multilateral and bilateral development institutions*".

The need to actively involve civil society in AfDB policies, programs and operations to create the conditions for inclusive and sustainable development has resulted in the building of the AfDB's institutional capacity to intervene. The creation of a Civil Society and Community Engagement Division, responsible for coordinating the partnership with civil society in order to improve the socio-economic impact of its action in favor of African populations on the ground, is proof of that. To this end, it has set up an AfDB-Civil Society Committee to promote engagement with civil society and the renewal of an annual Civil Society Forum.

These measures give new impetus to the AfDB's collaborative initiatives with civil society through the organization of consultations and dialogues with civil society organizations initiated since 1990 on the margins of the AfDB Annual Meetings.
From 2009 to 2019, the African Development Bank regularly organized forums for dialogue with civil society organizations for reflection and identification of collaborative approaches for structural transformation of Africa. Held on the margins of the AfDB's annual meetings, those forums underwent a change of format in 2018. Indeed, for the first time in the history of those traditional meetings, the African Development Bank - Civil Society Forum was held independently of the AfDB Annual Meetings. The 2018 forum was held from May 7 to 9 prior to those Annual Assemblies and so was the 2019 forum for the tenth edition of the forum.

One of the recommendations of the Tenth Forum is to engage civil society in accelerating regional integration for the economic prosperity of Africa and to conduct a study to capitalize on the ten-year experience of the Civil Society Forum.

The aim is to draw lessons from experience to improve the quality and scope of policy dialogue practices for scaling up good practices and the influence of AfDB's civil society engagement policies.

The objectives of this experience capitalization are to draw up the historical profile of the civil society forum, map the actors in the implementation chain of the forum, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Forum and draw lessons for a better inclusion of civil society in AfDB operations.

To achieve this capitalization, the staff of the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division and the associated external experts adopted an inclusive approach and a methodology based on stakeholder involvement: Experienced CSOs, members of the AfDB-Civil Society Committee, staff of the Division in charge of implementing the activities of the forum, technical departments of the Bank in charge of priority themes and services in charge of the administration of the Bank and governance.

This capitalization was based on a documentary review focusing on the context and processes of the annual forum, a survey of CSO perceptions of the Forum, interviews with AfDB experts in charge of organizing the AfDB-SC Annual Forum and the results of reflection and production workshops.

This report, in the form of a brochure, presents the main achievements of this capitalization and is organized in four parts.

- It tells the story of cooperation between the AfDB and CSOs.
- It then presents the AfDB-Civil Society cooperation process, focusing on the process of organizing the forum, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and the views and analyses of the actors involved in the Forum.
- Then, the brochure identifies the lessons of cooperation by highlighting the appropriate lessons, best practices and main challenges of this journey. It takes a forward-looking look at AfDB-Civil Society collaboration and outlines avenues for the development of a strategic partnership focused on greater inclusion of CSOs in AfDB policies and practices, their involvement in public policy monitoring and capacity building.
- In the recommendations, the brochure suggests improvements in strengthening the role of the CSO-AfDB committee and the strategic steering of the Annual Forum, taking into account its resolutions in the AfDB agenda/strategy, their mainstreaming into the General Assembly and AfDB policies, as well as their inclusion in the budget. It makes suggestions for the development of an interactive digital platform, the development of a Youth and Women's Agenda and better strategic management of the Forum.

With the 2020-2021 Roadmap, guidelines for a CSO Forum innovation will be set and initiatives to strengthen the AfDB strategy for the inclusion of African civil society will be proposed.

1. HISTORY OF A COOPERATION

The history of the partnership between the African Development Bank and civil society organizations is characterised by three main periods.

1999 - 2010: The premises of the partnership

It was in 1990 that the AfDB demonstrated its willingness to involve civil society in the implementation of its programs. For about ten years, ad hoc collaborations have been set up by the AfDB without this really translating into a comprehensive inclusion strategy.
The first guidelines for cooperation with civil society organizations were formulated in 1999.

AfDB's cooperation with civil society was officially launched at the first consultation meeting with NGOs in Abidjan in 1990. Following this meeting, the Bank developed mechanisms and guidelines to guide its cooperation with NGOs. The Bank revised the strategy in 2000 to reflect its sustained commitment to this cooperation with civil society as a whole, rather than only with NGOs.

The challenge for the AfDB is to open up to dynamics outside the sphere of Member States in order to take into account "*the free expression of the interests and aspirations of citizens organized and united around interests, objectives, values or traditions, and to mobilize for collective action as beneficiaries or stakeholders in the development process*".

From the outset, the AfDB approach is to take into consideration the diversity of the forms of organizations that constitute what is known as civil society: NGOs, trade unions, cooperatives, consumer associations, youth clubs, the independent press, women's and human rights associations, professional organizations, religious groups, etc.
This vision of citizen participation has enabled it to have an open and diversified approach, which is reflected in the large number of civil society actors who, from 2009, will participate in the AfDB-Civil Society Annual Forum initiative.

It is during this period that the AfDB launches the AfDB-Civil Society Committee (2000), a period that will be marked by the organization of the first Civil Society Forum.

2010 – 2016: The implementation of a partnership strategy

Following a phase marked by regional consultations with different components of civil society, the AfDB prepared its first **consolidated engagement framework with civil society organizations**. This framework promotes new mechanisms and strategies to better understand and integrate the aspirations of African citizens, informed by the vision set out in its Long-Term Strategy 2013-2022: "*Supporting the Transformation of Africa*".
It proposes four areas of collaboration with African civil society: (i) environmental and social safeguard measures, (ii) the independent inspection mechanism, (iii) action in fragile Member States and (iv) outreach and communication.

Initially, the partnership was conceived as part of a global approach that aims to bring together the initiatives and innovation potential of civil society organizations around AfDB projects, policies and strategies. Currently, despite the progress made, civil society is calling for a broader partnership that not only contributes to a better understanding of the work of the AfDB, but also to strengthening its impact and capacity to intervene on the ground with citizens and communities.

In 2015, the arrival of a new President in the institution is a strong milestone of the partnership between the AfDB and civil society organizations. In order to make its 5 priorities for the development of Africa more effective, Dr. A. Adesina wants a stronger partnership. With that in mind, in 2016, the AfDB recruited a special advisor on the issue and set up the "Civil Society and Community Engagement Division".
The partnership between the AfDB and civil society is no longer based on ad hoc collaborations, but is now part of a clear and proactive approach with a clearly identified momentum and coordination center for action (the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division).
The regular and annual AfDB-Civil Society Forum is the strongest and most successful expression of this. Year after year, this initiative is getting stronger and more and more important.
Across the continent, the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division has registered in its database more than 4,000 CSOs with whom it shares information about this forum, which is attended annually by hundreds of organizations. This database is being updated to aggregate more CSOs and take into account their technical specificities.

2017 – 2019: The development phase

Major stages characterize this development phase, namely the formation and consolidation of a team and institutional standardization through the provision of tools and mechanisms that will materialize in some way the orientations of partnership with civil society defined at the highest level by the institution.

Strengthening the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division team

Initially composed of two people, the Division has been strengthened as new skills joined the team (seven people today and one consultant). The Division had to use consultants, which has enabled it to have a database of organizations in the five regions of Africa (more than 4,000 organizations to date).
This has strengthened the work of the Division, better prepared the organization and holding of the Annual Forum and ensured a stronger presence with civil society organizations and a high visibility of the work of the Division.
This visibility has been reflected in the publication of the proceedings of the Annual Forum and the work of the AfDB Civil Society Committee, the organization of Open Days, the production of a quarterly newsletter "Voices of Citizens in Africa", and the publication of articles and information messages through traditional media and social networks.

Institutional standardization:
The development phase also included equipping the Division with institutional instruments, namely guidelines, tools and mechanisms to systematically integrate the vision of civil society engagement into the policies of the Bank and facilitate the operationalization of this vision.

Consultation and awareness raising workshops (2018)

These meetings are doubly oriented towards the AfDB internal services and civil society organizations.
Internally, the challenge is to raise awareness among AfDB staff at headquarters, regional and country levels on the engagement of the institution with civil society. Indeed, this commitment can only be effective if the various levels and hierarchies of the AfDB understand the meaning of collaboration with civil society organizations and integrate it into their approaches. (internal ownership and consideration of civil society in the processes of policy development, implementation of operations and monitoring and evaluation of AfDB projects).

It is now vital that, at the country level, AfDB representations develop stronger links with citizens through their organizations and structures. It is with this in mind that it will be possible to consolidate the right of citizens to exercise their warning function and to refer environmental and social damage related to the implementation of projects financed by AfDB mechanisms to the Compliance Verification Unit (CMRU).
Following those various consultations, a work plan was developed by the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division.

Open House Days

In collaboration with the Lesotho Council of NGOs, the Southern African Regional Office for Business Development and Service Delivery coordinated and hosted CSO consultation workshop on the ongoing PSD for the Kingdom of Lesotho on April 4, 2019. About sixty participants from various CSOs operating in the country and actively involved in development issues attended the event. The same event took place in Namibia on May 29 2019. These two events provided an opportunity for participants to discuss the major orientations of the CSP in their country. Themes related to climate change and the low capacity of CSOs were mentioned (Lesotho), youth unemployment and the low capacity of the private sector (Namibia).

The new format of the AfDB Annual Forum - Civil Society

On the theme "Industrializing Africa", the 2018 Forum was held for the first time at the Bank premises and separately from the Annual Meetings, at the request of Civil Society Organizations. This edition also included sessions on various themes: Digital equality for the industrialization of Africa and the role of CSOs, the blue economy and blue energy, illicit financial flows in the extractive industries, etc.
This evolution of the format reveals the flexibility of the Division and shows that the mode of consultation and exchange with civil society is not set in stone and is likely to take the most relevant forms to meet the need to build on the partnership between the two parties.
Civil society organizations are more at home in this format, which allows them to have their own platform and share their diverse and rich experiences, and the Bank can provide a wide range of information on these strategies and actions: the mission, strategy and procedures of the Bank strategic engagement at country level, coordination between stakeholders in AfDB-financed actions, etc.

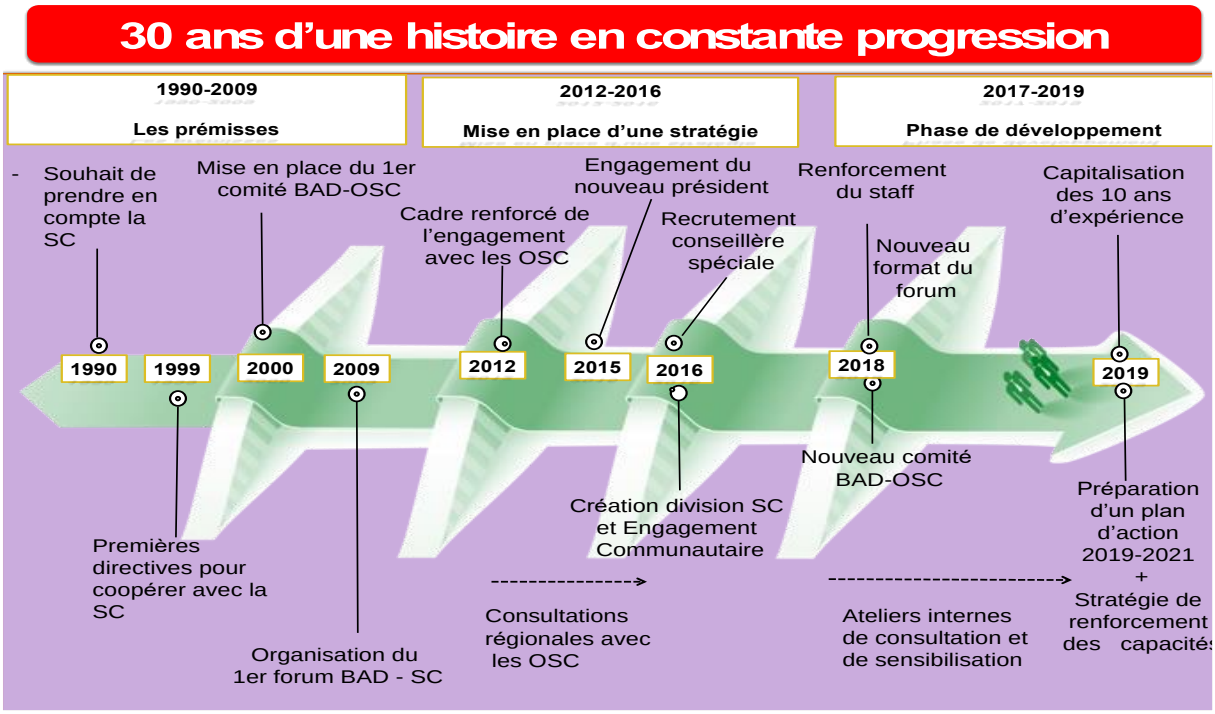
Setting up the new AfDB - Civil Society Committee

It was held on the margins of the Annual Forum with a Committee composed of 21 members, half of whom were from civil society and the other half from the AfDB. It is an advisory body with a mandate to strengthen engagement between the Bank and African communities in order to find solutions adapted to their challenges in achieving inclusive and sustainable development.
The mandate of this Committee is important as it is responsible for the implementation of the updated Civil Society Engagement Framework and the resulting Action Plan.
The main challenge is to translate its mandate into a functional and effective structure that contributes to the development of the AfDB-Civil Society partnership.

The capacity building strategy and the capitalization of the 10-year experience

The Bank has begun to capitalize on its 10 years of cooperation with civil society in order to help the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division to identify the best lessons learned from that partnership and to clarify its framework for engagement. This capitalization corresponds globally to the scheduled end of the cycle of the 5 priorities. It should make it possible to explore new partnership opportunities between the AfDB and civil society.
The Bank is characterized by a strong spirit of openness and is ready to inject new dynamics into this partnership.
Along with exercise, the Division is currently formulating a capacity-building strategy for its services (information, awareness-raising) but also for civil society organizations (training, participation in continental and international initiatives, capacity building for action, etc.).

The recent history of partnership between civil society organizations and the African Development Bank is marked by achievements that strengthen common understanding and collaboration between the parties. It has also been a breeding ground for multifaceted resistance within the institution itself, the initial mission of which did not predispose it to work "naturally" with entities from civil society. The mistrust of these entities towards an international development institution has been transcended thanks to the trust that has been established through exchanges in a dynamic space of discussion and debate.
The challenge of a fruitful partnership for both parties was addressed through the leadership and foresight of the institution's highest authorities and the commitment of the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division.
The Annual Forum was the main instrument of this cooperation. This episode opens up new opportunities for consolidating the partnership, to which the capitalization exercise should help to clarify the meaning, contours and ways of doing things.


30 ans d'une histoire en constante progression
1990-2009
Les prémisses
2012-2016
Mise en place d'une stratégie
2017-2019
Phase de développement
- Souhait de prendre en compte la SC
Mise en place du 1er comité BAD-OSC
Cadre renforcé de l'engagement avec les OSC
Engagement du nouveau président
Recrutement conseillère spéciale
Renforcement du staff
Nouveau format du forum
Capitalisation des 10 ans d'expérience
1990
1999
2000
2009
2012
2015
2016
2018
2019
Premières directives pour coopérer avec la SC
Organisation du 1er forum BAD - SC
Consultations régionales avec les OSC
Création division SC et Engagement Communautaire
Nouveau comité BAD-OSC
Ateliers internes de consultation et de sensibilisation
Préparation d'un plan d'action 2019-2021 + Stratégie de renforcement des capacités

2. THE AFDB - CIVIL SOCIETY COOPERATION PROCESS

2.1. The central axis of cooperation: The Annual Forum

The African Development Bank 10-year strategy 2013-2022 focuses on inclusive growth and the transition to green growth. One of the main orientations of this strategy is to improve responsibility, accountability, and transparency, for greater ownership and social impact of the operations of the Bank.
That is the reason why one of the challenges for the AfDB is to ensure greater involvement of civil society in the definition of national policies, strategies and operations.
One of the instruments that facilitates AfDB/Civil Society cooperation is the Annual Civil Society Forum.

Since the 1990s, the AfDB organized a series of consultations with NGOs extended to the entire Civil Society, in the form of sessions at the Annual General Assembly. From 2018 onwards, it organizes the Civil Society Forum in the Bank premises and separately from the Annual Meetings.

The purpose of the Annual Forum is to create a space for structured political dialogue and strategic partnership between the African Development Bank and civil society organizations. Specifically, the Forum has the following objectives:

- Ensure that citizens' priorities are taken into account in the activities of the African Development Bank,
- Discuss the role of civil society in the implementation of the AfDB strategy,
- Develop recommendations to improve the inclusion and sustainability of AfDB policies and strategies.
- Build capacity and better inform Civil Society on Bank policies, operations and projects

The 2018 and 2019 editions of the Civil Society Forum were well attended given the number and diversity of participating CSOs (NGOs, social entrepreneurs, private sector actors) - approximately 200 to 350 people -, the high representativeness of the Bank senior management, the quality of the contributions of civil society panelists, the recommendations resulting from the work and the reaffirmation of the engagement of the African Development Bank with African civil society.

The tenth year of the Forum, the theme of which was "Engaging Civil Society in Accelerating Regional Integration for Economic Prosperity of Africa", was characterised by the launch of the advocacy and social mobilization campaign for the replenishment of the African Development Fund. This theme of convergence between the Bank institutions and civil society organizations constitutes a foundation that should give a stronger impetus to the partnership. Social mobilization around the ADF is undoubtedly a new space to experience the collaboration that involves not only the AfDB-Civil Society Committee, but also civil society organizations at the national level. The common challenge for both sides is to engage in member countries for an action that, beyond grants and loans from abroad, aims to mobilize endogenous resources in the continent.

Concessionally financing operations in the 37 least developed African countries, replenishing the resources of this tool is a central issue that can give a new dimension to the AfDB partnership with civil society. As CSOs and the AfDB-Civil Society Committee are committed to working towards the reconstitution of the ADF, this experience should be monitored and evaluated at the end of the process to capitalize on the modes and effectiveness of collaboration on an issue of major interest.

A major innovation in the new format of the Annual Forum is the introduction of sessions designed and conducted by Civil Society members themselves. They thus have the freedom to propose a theme, to propose its facilitators, panelists, participants and modus operandi.

The conclusions of this Forum resulted in three sets of recommendations:

- the creation of a quadripartite platform (public decision-makers, private sector, AfDB, CSOs) for mutual involvement in all phases of the development of industrialization projects.
- support for capacity building programs and integration into policies and strategies for entrepreneurs.
- the promotion of equality and access to digital technology for networking, capacity building, skills enhancement and data production for development.

The main factors for the success of the Forum are the **personal commitment and leadership of the AfDB President**, the participation of the authorities of the institution (President, Vice-Presidents, Directors, Heads of Division, staff and consultants in the preparation, organization and facilitation of the Forum) and the strong interest of CSOs to collaborate both in the dialogue and in the organization and monitoring of the implementation of the Forum.

2.2. The forum organization process

2.2.1. The planning process

- *Setting up an internal Task Force*

After an analysis of the theme of the General Assembly, the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division sets up a task force. This is an informal framework bringing together the managers of the department in charge of the annual report (Director of the department, Manager in charge of organizing the Forum, communication consultant, colleagues from the Division). The Task Force specifies the issues on which the AfDB and civil society are expected to work during the Forum. This Task Force meets weekly over a period of four to six weeks. The main output resulting from this reflection is the **definition of the orientations of the concept note and the outline of the Forum's program** and the **identification contacts who could** be civil society contributors, taking into account the criteria of reputation and geographical coverage.

- *National consultations*

Since 2018, national consultations have been organized in the form of open days in member countries to identify and determine ways of working with CSOs.
The Open Days with CSOs aim to raise awareness of AfDB operations and interventions in the country, collect feedback on AfDB-funded projects and discuss ways to strengthen engagement between the AfDB and CSOs as key stakeholders in achieving the development priorities of the country. Government officials also participate in these events.
In Burkina Faso, the AfDB and Burkinabe CSOs laid the groundwork for a new partnership at the second Open Day held in March 2019 at the Bank offices in Ouagadougou, on the theme:
"The contribution of AFDB to the development of Burkina Faso: What strategic partnership in the design, implementation and monitoring of operations and projects? »
The event was preceded by meetings between the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division and various representatives of the Ministry, which allowed fruitful exchanges on how to strengthen the partnership between the Bank and Burkinabe Civil Society.

This mechanism facilitates the feedback of information on the experiences of countries in engaging civil society in AfDB policies and operations/programs. At this stage, it seems appropriate to strengthen consultation efforts so that the exchanges conducted can contribute to the co-elaboration of the themes discussed at the Annual Forum.

- *The call for expressions of interest and the call for proposals for participation or contribution*

To mobilize civil society organizations around the challenges, of the forum the AfDB is launching calls for expressions of interest and participation in the Forum for NGOs and NGO networks working in Africa.

All papers to be presented at the Forum are shared with CSOs registered in the AfDB CSO database. The targeted organizations are those with at least three proven years of operation, representativeness and capacity for action. This procedure results in the selection of about ten proposals. Particular attention is paid to the theme of the forum, observance of gender balance, geographical representation and diversity. On average, about a thousand CSOs express an interest in participating. Out of these, between 200 and 350 participate effectively in the Annual Forum.

This approach is interesting because, if dealt with in advance, the themes presented before the Forum allow us to have an idea of the content and richness of the contributions that will guide the exchanges.

This qualification proposal reinforces the coherence of the interventions and ensures that they are in line with the central theme of the Forum.
This is undoubtedly selective but necessary, and can lead to frustration within some civil society organizations and some believe, because of lack of information, that contributors are chosen on the basis of their " benevolence " by the Bank.
Greater involvement of country offices in dialogue with CSOs and the preparation of the Annual Forum could reduce possible reluctance and resistance.

2.2.2. Implementation of the AfDB-Civil Society Annual Forum

Beyond the opening session, the overall organization of the Forum consists of information-sharing sessions between the Bank and CSOs, advocacy by CSOs towards the Bank or other CSO development and capacity building actors.

- *The Bank information sharing sessions with CSOs*

Beyond the inaugural session, the Forum is structured into 5 - 6 plenary sessions and panels that last approximately 1h30 and working lunches. In the animation of the sessions, some moderators use SLIDO[1] technology allowing a greater interaction and visibility of all the participants' questions.

During those sessions, CSOs learn about the AfDB (missions, strategy, approaches, procedures and instruments including social and environmental protection policy, resource centers). Similarly, AfDB officials have a better understanding of the role that CSOs can play in achieving its objectives, including intermediation and facilitating the consideration of community needs and feedback on their concerns.

- *Parallel sessions conducted by CSOs*

CSO advocacy sessions provide spaces for social mobilization, direct dialogue between CSO leaders and the Bank's authorities. These sessions are organized and led by CSOs to promote their ideas and reflections stemming from field practices. These sessions are proposed by CSOs who are fully responsible for the themes, audience format and sequencing of these events.

It is in this context that civil society support for the African Development Fund replenishment initiative must be seen, with emphasis on the need to accelerate the pace of development of the most vulnerable countries. These advocacy sessions allowed the AfDB to better listen to the voice of African civil society on issues, challenges and solutions related to priority strategies.

[1] **SLIDO** is a dematerialized event management application. SLIDO allows participants in a meeting, conference or panel to ask questions online in real time via a web connection. The Moderator selects the questions as they are asked to be addressed to the assigned communicator. A comparative advantage is that this process offers the possibility to broadcast the exchanges by powerpoint or any other medium but also the opportunity to answer them later. See

https://www.sli.do

Civil society advocacy campaign in support of the Bank's strategic objectives

The objectives of the social mobilization and advocacy campaign are as follows:

- sensitize African citizens to the replenishment of ADF-15
- obtain the commitment of members of the AfDB Civil Society Committee and some key civil society actors to support the ADF-15 process.
- Engage community leaders, influencers and donors to support the replenishment of ADF-15
- inform and sensitize international and African civil society organizations on the impact of the African Development Fund on development.
- Advocate for the participation of civil society organizations in the main phases of the ADF-15 process.

In this regard, the following activities were undertaken after the launch of the forum:

- Identification of five community leaders and African dignitaries engaged as "voices" of the ADF-15
- Official launch of the social mobilization campaign at the Civil Society Forum (May 8, 2019):
- Official statement by civil society organizations in support of ADF-15 at the Civil Society Forum - (May 9, 2019):
- Social Media Campaign on Civil Society Support for ADF-15:
- Contribution to the second cycle of the replenishment of ADF-15, held in Antananarivo (July 1 to July 3, 2019).

Indeed, the involvement of civil society in the replenishment of the ADF is of great interest in ensuring that it receives the financial benefits of such a fund. Such an issue deserves to be dealt with sympathetically by the highest authorities of the institution.

- *CSO capacity building sessions*

Beyond information moments on AfDB procedures and strategies, information sessions are organized with a view to strengthening the capacity of CSOs. In 2019, a session was organized on partnership approaches between Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and civil society.
These sessions provide an opportunity to discover innovations, good practices in community engagement, and to create a space for developing relationships between NGOs and between NGOs and other partners.
Exchanges with MDBs are an important opportunity for their constituents to present an overview of the framework for collaboration between their institutions and civil society organizations. Beyond these informative presentations, this type of initiative is interesting for the AfDB itself because it allows it to enhance its partnership modes and test them in relation to the partnership practices of other MDBs.
In view of this interest and the positive impact it has on the civil society organizations participating in these sessions, it seems appropriate to renew this type of session and to allow it more time in future forums. The Bank policy and operations departments will be invited to present the Bank' policy development process and the preparation and implementation of programs and projects.

In order to better build civil society capacity on the work of the bank sessions will be scheduled on sharing experiences in involving civil society in the process of developing country strategy documents; country dialogues; project preparation, implementation and monitoring, etc...

2.2.3. Monitoring of implementation, evaluation and lessons learnt

In 2018, the AfDB developed an approach to review the conclusions of the forum and develop an action plan to implement them. Unfortunately, this new approach has not yet been implemented.
There is no information memorandum from the AfDB Civil Society Committee to the Bank authorities and there is no return of the conclusions of the forum and resolutions to the General Assembly. In 2018, at the end of the work, civil society organizations proposed three recommendations to the AfDB for presentation to the Annual General Assembly in Busan. It is impossible today for the Committee to know the resonance that these initiatives have had and to ensure their traceability.

Nor is there any evidence that conclusions and resolutions have been taken into account in AfDB policies and programs. In addition, the terms of reference of the members of the AfDB-Civil Society Joint Committee do not include specific provisions for the processing and follow-up of the Forum's recommendations. The ongoing capitalization is one of the first systematizations of the problem and a step forward in collective learning.
The major challenge of the Annual Forum is its ability to provide input into the AfDB' reflection and to give dignity to the conclusions and proposals of civil society organizations that must be reflected in the institution's practices. This is a complex mechanism given the dominant concerns of the various AfDB departments. Some departments are more sensitive to the fears and concerns of civil society (CRMU). Others are more distant from its concerns. But the culture of collaboration with civil society must gradually spread within the institution and find spaces for taking into account in particular in the AfDB national representations in the consultation / participation in the preparation of CSPs, the implementation and evaluation of programs and projects carried out there.
Some Member States show resistance to involving civil society organizations in these actions. The Bank departments and national representations must be instructed to build the broadest alliances for the success of country programs, which include civil society organizations with certain strengths in relation to the subjects/themes addressed, expertise and capacity to participate in the implementation of public policies.

2.3. Engaging civil society organizations: roles and responsibilities

Collaboration between the various AfDB departments and civil society organizations goes beyond the organization of the Annual Forum[2]. The purpose of this capitalization is only interested in the process of organizing the Annual Forum.

At the initiative of the AFDB, the Annual Forum is and remains an instrument of dialogue and consultation of the Bank. With a mandate to reduce poverty through financing with a high social impact in an environment of transparency, the Forum is a tool for this purpose.
Thus, the Bank provides strategic leadership in community engagement and, as such, leads and plans the Forum activities. It provides financial coverage, communication, visibility and event management for the Forum. It is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Forum and involves the AfDB-Civil Society Committee.
Its technical departments collaborate with the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division to prepare and hold the Forum under the best conditions.

Despite the production of reports, the process of organizing the Annual Forum is insufficiently documented, in particular through the existence of a reference support allowing its use and ensuring the sustainability and reproducibility of the methodological options and know-how acquired in its organization[3].

These margins for progress are also possible in the tools (mechanisms, tools) for monitoring the implementation of the Forum conclusions and the cross-cutting mobilization within the Bank in the implementation of the Forum's achievements.

These improvements will only be effective if the commitment of the institution's highest authorities is confirmed and relayed within the Bank.

The ongoing discussions within the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division should eventually contribute to the strengthening and intensification of partnership relations with civil society: Accelerate the process of developing the Division strategy and capacity building policy for CSOs, including the establishment of a fund dedicated to the promotion of AfDB CSO partners; development of a procedures manual for the organization of the AfDB Annual CSO Forum; and awareness-raising activities for top management and Bank executives (including regional and country office officials) on the value of working with CSOs.

Civil society organizations

Civil society organizations are dedicated to defending the interests of citizens and communities, promoting the inclusion of people's interests in policy documents,

[2] In several cases, collaborations between the AfDB and civil society organizations have been carried out in the implementation of specific programmes/projects. However, information on the overview of these partnerships was not available for this capitalization exercise. This is the subject of an internal review, in progress by a "Young Professional" of the Bank (Young Professionnal).
[3] Funding will partially address this shortfall.

projects and operations. Their interests in the relationship with the AfDB include monitoring AfDB interventions to better secure people's interests.

CSOs participate in consultation and dialogue, including through broad-based consultations. They contribute to the process of preparing and facilitating the forum and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.
In this context, CSOs must bring the concerns of communities and populations to the table in discussions on policy development and in programs and operations. They must also share with the AfDB field experiences (good or bad practices in interventions affecting populations). They must ensure that the AfDB takes into account the conclusions and recommendations of the Annual Forum, including through advocacy actions.

Discussions with Civil Society actors during the Annual Forums showed that the AfDB-Civil Society strategic dialogue is under construction and should create the conditions for the availability of tools and mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the conclusions of the Forum.

After 10 years of organizing the Annual Forum, the AfDB has a very broad potential base of partnership with civil society organizations. Is it reasonable to work with hundreds of civil society structures? Is it realistic to be able to involve so many organizations in the process of preparing and organizing the Annual Forum?
This makes it obvious that it is essential to differentiate organizations according to a number of criteria (segmentation): historical relationship with the AfDB, capacities and skills, thematic interests, maturity level, etc. This segmentation will be useful to improve the active participation of CSOs in the Annual Forum (contributors to the introductory debates, facilitation of NGO sessions, etc.), ensure the follow-up of the conclusions of the work, contribute to the dialogue with both headquarters and national and regional representations. The ultimate aim is to support the dynamics of the most experienced and competent "champions" in order to associate them with the major initiatives of the AfDB: introductory contribution to the Forum debates, political dialogue, capacity building, etc. This will be essential in the strategy to prepare for capacity building of civil society organizations.

While promoting "champions", the AfDB should not lose sight of the process in which it has always been involved: establishing a broad relationship and dialogue with all civil society entities; this should lead it to consider differentiated partnership circles and take into account the specificities of civil society organizations: gender, youth, geographical and thematic diversity.

The Joint AfDB - Civil Society Monitoring Committee

The AfDB Civil Society Monitoring Committee, relaunched in May 2018 in conjunction with the Annual Civil Society Forum, aims to facilitate AfDB collaboration with civil society organizations and serve as an advisory body to guide the AfDB in its community engagement and partnership development with CSOs. It is composed of 11 representatives of civil society organizations with expertise in the AfDB priority areas and representing the 5 sub-regions and 11 AfDB managers and executives representing departments and complexes.

The Monitoring Committee is building its relationship with CSOs through focal points (West Africa) and WhatsApp discussion groups. It has adopted an action plan based on four objectives:

1. set up and ensure the functioning of the AfDB-civil society committee
2. exercise the supervisory function of the Committee
3. Improve the integration of civil society engagement into AfDB operations
4. Ensure communication and awareness on Bank operations and opportunities and mechanisms for CSO collaboration with the AfDB

We can observe that the mandate of this Committee goes beyond the process that has been organized around the Annual Forum and that it is essential that its mandate also include this dimension. Indeed, it seems difficult that the desired co-management of the Annual Forum (consultations, identification of themes and contributors, information to civil society entities, planning, follow-up of recommendations, repercussions within the Bank bodies) as well as its role as an intermediary between AfDB organizations, should not be included in its political portfolio.
2 years after its implementation and 8 months before the end of its mandate, it seems essential to evaluate its effectiveness and operationality: mandate, effectiveness of the implementation of its action plan and operating methods.

2.4. The point of view of civil society actors on the forum [4]



On participation in the Annual Forum

Most of the civil society organizations that participated in the last 3 editions of the Annual Forum are from West Africa (72%). The other organizations come from East and Southern Africa 9% respectively, Central Africa (6%) and North Africa (4%).

The countries that are most represented are Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, Guinea and Liberia.

Human rights, gender empowerment and empowerment of women, education, poverty alleviation and climate are the five main areas of intervention for CSOs. Next come sustainable agriculture and food security, ecosystems and biodiversity, water and sanitation, and health, respectively.

Nearly 94% of those participants find the forum relevant and consider that taking part in the forum constitutes a lever for collaboration with the AfDB (87%), a forum for exchange and capacity building (87%).

The Annual Forum is highly appreciated by civil society organizations as a means of access to knowledge, innovations and good development practices (91%).

On the format of the Annual Forum

The very format of the Forum has evolved over time. Currently, it is separate from the AfDB Annual Meetings. Is this scheme the most appropriate?
While organizations appreciated this approach with concurrent sessions on

Mamadou Goïta, Executive Director of the Institute for Research and Promotion of Alternatives in Development (IRPAD) has been involved in the development of the Forum format from the very

[4] These results are the result of an online survey of 110 civil society organizations that participated in at least one Annual Forum. Respondents are primarily directors, executive secretaries, presidents of organizations or coordinators or project/program managers.

various themes, 47% of them believed that the ideal format should be regional meetings. Thus, we would move towards a pyramid scheme with regional meetings and a system of representation / delegation to a central forum.
However, a large minority (34%) would like the Forum to be held on the margins of the AfDB Annual Meetings. Decoupling the Forum from the Assembly brings together 15% of the votes of the participating organizations.
Looking more closely at these data, it can be estimated that 48% of the organizations are in favor of a formula taking place annually at the Bank's headquarters.
Between a "regional decentralization" and an Annual Forum that would keep its current form overall (on the margins or decoupled from the Annual Meetings), opinions remain divided and thus offer an open space for reflection to the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division, which has a range of possibilities.

beginning, and has participated in each Forum since the very first edition.
"*I am very happy today to see the profound content of the themes but also the quality of the participation of Civil Society itself. In ten years, we have contributed to changing the format to have an autonomous space for debate: first it was a participation of Civil Society, but without a dedicated space; then an event on the sidelines of the Annual Assemblies, and finally a totally separate event. We see that there is a significant evolution, the content and quality of participation has improved and I think this format is the most appropriate because it allows us to formulate messages that will be transmitted to the AfDB Annual Meetings. This allows us to move towards positions and decisions in favor of the development of this continent*.

In this reflection, the different formulas could be combined by alternating the regional organization of the Forum with its holding in the margins or during the sessions of the AfDB Annual Assemblies.
This scheme would lead to a central Annual Forum every two years. Between two Annual Forums, a rotating meeting between the regions would be organized.

While the format can be evolving, the themes addressed are relevant to 95.5% of civil society organizations, highlighting the interest and importance of the AfDB five priorities that are in line with the development challenges of the continent. Those themes offer an opportunity to share experiences with other actors. Beyond the aspects related to the role that civil society should play in its collaboration with the institution, the themes help to raise awareness of the current actions, innovations and objectives of the AFDB.
The fact that the choice of themes is aligned with the priorities of the bank should not be an obstacle to a broader approach that better takes into account the views of civil society organizations. Indeed, while being within the AfDB priorities, it is possible to better take into account how civil society can contribute to the development challenges of Africa. Thus, 65% of the participating organizations regret not being involved in the formulation of the themes.

This request to participate in the definition of the themes of the Annual Forum refers to the mandate of the AfDB-Civil Society Committee and in particular to the role of the members of civil society organizations present in this Committee. How do those representatives participate in the formulation and implementation of the themes? How

do they communicate with civil society organizations in their respective countries and regions.
Here is a space for reflection that can make it possible to respond, at least partially, to the request for civil society participation in the formulation of the themes, provided that the role of these representatives is clarified and that the mechanisms and means of consultation and opinion taking are clarified (interactive digital platform for exchange, accountability, etc.).

Beyond the formulation of the themes, the major gap observed among civil society organizations is the lack of preparation of their participation and the valorization of the conclusions of the Annual Forum at their own level (organization, network of their organization, partners) and in their countries of intervention.

2.5. The scope for improvement of the partnership

2.5.1 Some definite advantages...

Strong leadership

From the personal commitment of the President of the institution during his inauguration speech in 2015 to the strengthening of the team responsible for materializing the partnership with civil society, we can see a constant and positive progress in the relations between the AfDB and civil society organizations. It is remarkable, in a context of mistrust between public opinion and national, regional and international institutions, that the AfDB enjoys a positive image. This appreciation of the work of the AfDB is evidenced by the consultation we conducted with civil society organizations.
This positive image is largely due to the vision of the Bank officials who have understood that the mission of the institution cannot be achieved unless the various components of African societies are involved in the development of the continent (public authorities, the private sector, international investors and partners, civil society).

Having understood the importance of the Annual Forum in building partnerships with civil society, AfDB officials participate strongly in the Annual Forum. Its work always begins with welcoming and introductory speeches and presentations by the AfDB President or his representative (Vice-President) and the Director of the Gender, Women and Civil Society Department.

The Annual Forum, a central initiative to promote the partnership

To fuel its partnership with civil society, the Bank had the good intuition to build it around a central and attractive initiative. A broad platform for exchange and sharing, the Annual Forum is the symbol of a partnership that has lasted for more than 10 years. The importance of participation, its resonance and high internal and external visibility make it a flagship action of the African Development Bank.
In the words of one participant, "*the AfDB CSO Forum is a good platform for sharing experiences and good practices. It must continue to exist and explore options for regionalization with civil society organizations.*
"*It allows civil society organizations to discuss the challenges they face in order to make the AfDB actions on the ground more effective*. The thematic alignment of the

Forum with the General Assembly promotes the internal dissemination of the benefits of partnership with civil society.
In addition, the Forum is a space for mobilization and advocacy, as underlined by the words of a leader of a civil society organization consulted: *This Forum, which brings together more than a hundred development actors from several countries, provides an appropriate framework to raise awareness and draw the attention of decision-makers to the development challenges of Africa.*

2.5.2 ... But also, areas to improve

Internal dissemination of the partnership culture

Despite the involvement of the highest authorities of the institution in promoting dynamic collaboration with civil society, the partnership culture is facing internal resistance. Admittedly, in 10 years, there has been progress (internal Task Force to prepare the Forum, participation of departments in the various sessions, etc.) but the partnership must go beyond that and allow systematic collaboration to be implemented at all levels: at headquarters and in the departments, at country and regional level.
The participation of civil society representatives in major AfDB meetings, particularly the General Assembly, should be systematized to hear the results of the action plans defined and the level of achievements and collaboration with the nternal services of the institution
Significant progress made by other agencies, which are also members of the African Development Bank (Agence Française de Développement), should inspire AfDB officials.

On the other hand, the suggestions made by the AfDB-Civil Society Committee to have recognized civil society personalities as AfDB ambassadors in countries and regions is a serious avenue for reflection. They could contribute to two-way thinking and to improving the partnership, in two ways, by working with civil society organizations and the Bank bodies. In this case, it would also be necessary to imagine a formal space where ambassadors could interact with Bank officials and report on their mandate.

The need for a stronger involvement of civil society in decisions concerning the Forum

To strengthen the collaboration of the Bank with civil society, a number of levers need to be addressed.

- Better involve civil society organizations in the preparation, determination and implementation of the Forum themes. The instruments for this participation are lacking and setting up an interactive digital platform could make a significant contribution.

- Some civil society structures are only involved with the AfDB during the Forums. What happens between two editions? The AfDB-Civil Society Committee's reflections should address these issues and make it possible to take action between two forums: Open Days, initiatives and meetings with the national representations of the bank, joint advocacy to participate in national reviews and the formulation of CSPs, joint participation by the Civil Society and Community

Engagement Division and civil society representatives in major events in or outside the continent. Enhanced communication with CSOs (e.g. through monthly information messages) is therefore necessary.

- Youth participation is a weak point in the various editions of the Annual Forum. While young people across the continent are dynamic actors of change and innovation, they remain under-represented in partnership relations with the AfDB. Through a proactive policy of involving and mobilizing young people, the Bank should give them a more prominent place in the organization and presence at the Annual Forum
  In this respect, it seems important that there be youth representation in the next AfDB - Civil Society Committee.

- A recurrent request is reflected in all discussions with leaders of civil society organizations: the paucity of their resources and the difficulty of financing their participation in the various editions of the Forum.
  What answer can be given to this recurring request? Further efforts should be made by the AfDB in this regard, while keeping in mind that it cannot finance the participation of all candidates to participate in the Forum.

The absence of a clear mechanism for ensuring that the Forum conclusions are reflected in the Bank's proceedings

The gateway that links the Forum to the various AfDB bodies is not established so that the conclusions and recommendations can be reflected and, possibly, taken into account by the Bank. Over time, if this issue is not resolved, the organizers and participants of the Forum will be frustrated and, each year, they will face this gap. This can lead to demotivation. The Civil Society and Community Engagement Division cannot solve this issue on its own. In reality, it consists in giving concrete expression to the commitments of the highest authorities to include civil society in the AfDB actions. It is indeed an integral question that concerns all sectors and departments of the institution.
More specifically, with regard to the initiators of the Forum, the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations is not sufficiently monitored to ensure their implementation under the best possible conditions. In the current state of its configuration, it seems difficult for this to be done solely by the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division. This is a mechanism that must be co-designed and co-piloted. For the time being, the only body that can do so is the AfDB-Civil Society Committee, which does not have the tools and resources to do so. This point must be taken into account in the reflection on the revision of the mandate of this committee.

3. SOME LESSONS FROM AFDB - CIVIL SOCIETY COOPERATION

The strengthening of the partnership relationship between civil society and the African Development Bank is based on a mechanism consisting essentially of three levers:

It is now it consists in going further by building a real partnership dynamic, in which the

A starting point

The commitment and leadership of the Bank's highest authorities act as an accelerator and support for the emergence and consolidation of a partnership culture within the Bank.
On the eve of the end of the term of office of the current President of the institution, this issue is very topical.

An anchor

It is made up of the Annual Forum, a vast platform that brings together energies, a place for dialogue and exchange. It brings together the willingness of different parties to engage in political dialogue. Whatever the evolution of partnership relations between the AfDB and civil society, this initiative must remain central and retain its purpose of being a learning space.

An extension point

It is an opportunity for civil society actors to take action in the formulation of Bank strategies in countries and to contribute to the development, monitoring and evaluation of public policies.
In this way, the conditions for political dialogue are strengthened and the recognition of the role of civil society is increased.

Annual Forum will continue to be the AfDB trademark. To achieve this, the initiators of this dynamic must build on the best lessons learned over the past 10 years.

3.1. Inclusion and empowerment of civil society actors

In the past decade or so, civil society participation in AfDB initiatives has evolved and expanded significantly. From simple participants in the Annual Forum at the beginning, it now actively contributes to its smooth running, it acts within the framework of actions financed by the Bank, it maintains good relations with AfDB representations in some countries, it is a member of the AfDB-CSO Committee.

Civil society organizations have proven their worth in all these initiatives and can be considered as key actors for the Bank in the implementation of public policies.
According to the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division, the social mobilization sessions were one of the most attractive moments of the last edition of the Annual Forum.

All these achievements indicate areas of progress in the partnership relationship.
In 2019, the opportunity provided by the replenishment of the ADF can be a good lever to strengthen the partnership. At the last AfDB-CSO Committee meeting, the vision of the advocacy and social mobilization strategy provides a potential window of opportunity for civil society organizations: "*All stakeholders (governments, donors, civil society, communities, private sector) are informed and sensitized to the importance of*

citizen engagement during the ADF 15 replenishment process to create an enabling environment for inclusive growth and develop resilience".

In order to strengthen the inclusion of civil society, the main actors concerned (Civil Society and Community Engagement Division, AfDB Civil Society Committee) must ensure the effective implementation of the planned actions and activities:

- A better mapping of networks and umbrella organizations by region, using civil society actors to ensure that the base is as broad as possible.
- The creation of a platform that ensures real-time communication with civil society organizations, specifically on the contents of the annual Forum (preparation of themes, follow-up of recommendations).
- The presentation of the members of the AfDB Civil Society Committee to the Heads of Country Offices to stimulate the participation of civil society organizations and facilitate their inclusion in the CSP development process.
- The participation of members of the AfDB Civil Society Committee in the organization of CSO Open Days.

3.2. Public policy monitoring

By strengthening horizontal cross-functionality within the AfDB and relations with country offices, the culture of partnership with civil society can be developed more broadly to monitor public policies that carry risks. This dimension of the partnership is important especially in fragile Member States (conflicts, post-conflict, epidemics, natural disasters, etc.) and in countries with significant mineral resources.
Monitoring the implementation of budgets in Member States is also part of this political watch.
Through these dynamics, the conditions for internal strengthening with country offices and certain departments (Compliance Review and Mediation Unit - BCRM-, Governance and Public Financial Management - ECGF-, Natural Resources Governance - ECNR-, Agriculture, Human and Social Development - AHVP-) could be strengthened and contribute to making the partnership with civil society more effective.

Ultimately, this dimension of the work of civil society organizations and the partnership with the AfDB requires a selection of its most experienced and competent entities.
Through this type of initiative, the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division will strengthen its partnership network with social organizations and create new opportunities to increase the content of the Annual Forum and the quality of exchanges with the various stakeholders involved.

3.3. The development of technological innovation

Interesting initiatives have been implemented during some editions of the Annual Forum. In this case, we can mention the use of technologies such as Slido which allows an interactive dialogue during the sessions. Through this tool, all participants who wish to participate in the exchanges can ask their questions and make their contributions during the discussions in real time. During the Forum, the use of Facebook Live is also a means of remote monitoring of sessions and work.

In this context, the preparation and publication of an Information Bulletin is also a great innovation that provides civil society organizations and other stakeholders with a wide range of information, not only on the content and conduct of the Annual Forum, but also on the other dimensions of the partnership between civil society and the AfDB (awareness-raising activities, activities of the AfDB - CSO Committee, social mobilization in support of ADF 15, etc.).

The interactive digital platform under preparation should make it possible not only to revitalize the database of civil society organizations listed in it, but also to foster a permanent dialogue between all stakeholders (before, during and after the Annual Forum).
In order to continue the momentum of technological innovation, mobilizing young people in the different regions to propose innovative solutions in the AfDB - Civil Society dialogue could be considered It is indeed an interesting entry point for young people and youth organizations to engage more strongly in this dynamic of partnership between the AfDB and civil society actors. Specifically, it involves mobilizing a contact group, associated with the organization of the forum, composed of bloggers and influencers representing the Bank's regions.

3.4. Formulation of a comprehensive capacity building strategy

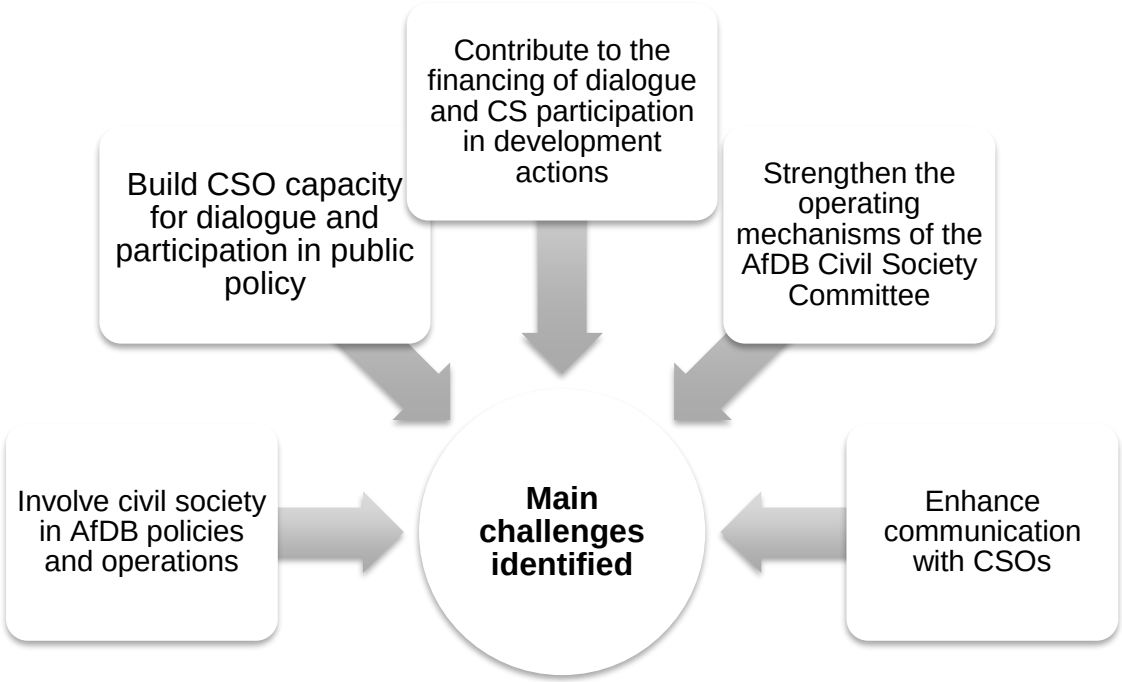
This strategy is being developed within the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division and is a way to operationalize the Consolidated Framework for Engagement with Civil Society Organizations (2012).
While this strategy provides for the establishment of consultation and awareness spaces within the Bank, it should also pave the way for the strengthening of civil society organizations.
This dimension includes at least two components:

- It must take into account the improvement of the quality of the participation of civil society organizations in the Annual Forum. This means that it must enable these actors to sharpen their skills and expertise on the major issues and themes addressed by the AfDB. This enrichment will make civil society actors more aware of the issues addressed and more demanding in the analysis and implementation of public policies. Thus, the strategy should focus on "capacity building and improving the quality of dialogue at the Annual CSO Forum".

- If the ambition of the bank is to better include civil society in African public policies, it must be able to participate in policy dialogue based on proven experiences, positions and arguments. The capacity building strategy under preparation must be attentive to this and focus on "civil society and participation in public policies".

- Finally, the capacity building strategy must create opportunities to strengthen the resources of civil society organizations that have few "windows" for the implementation of their actions. These resources should also allow more organizations to participate in the exchanges and debates at the Annual Forums.

These lessons learned from the cooperation the AfDB with civil society reflect the main challenges identified during the exchanges with the staff of the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division.



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

While the capitalization exercise has at times embraced the entire partnership dimension between the AfDB and civil society, the recommendations mainly concern the central part of this partnership: The Annual Forum of Civil Society Organizations.

4.1. Improve the forum management

The management of the AfDB annual CSO Forum should be improved. To do so, two measures are necessary. First, it involves the development of an annual planning framework for the Forum (national consultation, information and registration, facilitation of the forum and post forum, follow-up and evaluation of recommendations).
It is then important to consolidate the management and animation of the forum through greater participation of civil society organizations in the determination and monitoring of performance indicators and the dissemination of activity reports.
In the future, the Joint AfDB-Civil Society Committee will be responsible for co-managing the Forum process, formally presenting the conclusions to the General Assembly and monitoring how the AfDB bodies take them into account (General Assembly, work programs). In addition, it will facilitate the mobilization of civil society organizations and develop a mechanism for implementing the resolutions of the Annual Forum in the 5 AfDB regions.

4.2. Restore innovative CSO practices in the activities of the bank

In order to improve the quality of policies, projects and programs, it is important to reflect the innovative practices of civil society organizations in order to take them into account in the Bank's activities. Experiences of monitoring, alerting and advocating on environmental and social safeguard measures and inspection measures should be central to this process.

Documentation of participatory practices in the preparation of country strategy papers and program monitoring and evaluation are key resources in this regard, especially if they are accompanied by recommendations to improve the AfDB's partnership with civil society.

The Civil Society and Community Engagement Division should organize and facilitate the process of knowledge capture and sharing and particular attention should be paid to identifying innovative practices.

4.3. Develop a capacity to integrate civil society proposals into the strategy and operations of the bank

To strengthen the AfDB-Civil Society partnership, capacity should be developed to integrate civil society proposals into the strategy and operations of the bank several measures are necessary for this recommendation to be effective. This includes information on AfDB operations, actions and procedures and raising awareness among departments and Regional and Country Offices on the role of civil society in AfDB activities. It then involves setting up a mechanism and instruments to report the Forum conclusions to the AfDB Annual Meetings and to implement its resolutions and advocate for their implementation.

The framework for AfDB-Civil Society dialogue should be strengthened by strengthening consultation mechanisms on policy documents, projects and programs, and the organization of the forum. An advocacy framework must be created to enable civil society organizations to interact directly with the Bank's authorities. Finally, it is necessary to include in the procedures manual the development of tools for monitoring the Forum's conclusions by civil society organizations.

The implementation of such a recommendation requires the use of credible civil society resource persons (ambassadors) and a mandate for dialogue and influence with AfDB officials.

4.4. Integrate women and youth into the dynamics of cooperation

The implementation of the AfDB strategy requires a greater involvement of women and young people in the dynamics of cooperation, in the management and animation of the forum. It also requires the inclusion of women and youth in the Forum agenda (content, concerns, experiences). The implementation of this recommendation requires a

greater segmentation of the AfDB database of civil society organizations to include a youth and women component.

4.5. Move from a database to an active digital platform

For a greater involvement of civil society in the development of the AfDB-CSO partnership, the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division, in collaboration with the Information Systems Department, should build a truly active digital platform based upon the existing database.

This platform should include a showcase of AfDB civil society partner organizations (visualization of strategic partnerships), a database, a space for reporting on the activities of the AfDB - CSO Committee. Other dimensions to be taken into account are the spaces for exchange and consultation in the preparation of the Forum, the feedback on the implementation of the conclusions of the forum by national and regional civil society organizations and a table for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

In designing the platform, attention should be paid to the management and evaluation of the Forum (registration, session selection, room planning, alerts, postponements, cancellations, etc.) as well as the creation of a resource center (documentation, training modules, referral to the capacity building institute).

The Civil Society and Community Engagement Division would benefit from learning from the lessons of the Africa Investment Forum of the AfDB, taking into account security constraints and internal capacity to take charge of food and running the platform