



Africa Centre for Open Governance

Strategic Plan

2009-2013

Professionalism Independence Integrity People-centeredness Courage Proactive approach



Africa Centre for Open Governance

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Who we are, what we're about

Africa Centre for Open Governance, AfriCOG is a non-profit organisation that addresses the structural causes of corruption and poor governance in Kenya. It was registered in Kenya in January 2007.

AfriCOG envisions a country in which citizens and civic institutions are vigilant over public life and actively watch over the politics and economy of Kenya.

AfriCOG's mission is to build and entrench an anti-corruption culture through informed and determined action in the public and private sector in Kenya and Africa. We do this by providing cutting-edge research on governance; monitoring performance on political and economic governance in the public and private sectors; building a constituency of anti-corruption champions; and being an authoritative resource centre on governance and anti-corruption issues in Kenya and the region.

Six core values are at the centre of AfriCOG's work:

- 1) **Professionalism**
- 2) **Independence**
- 3) **Integrity**
- 4) **People-centeredness**
- 5) **Courage, and a**
- 6) **Proactive approach**

Our organisation:

A five-member Board of Directors governs AfriCOG; members of the Board are Stellah Chege, Maina Kiai, Duncan Okello, John Githongo, Funmi Olonisakin and Gladwell Otieno (ex-officio). The Board sets policy and strategic direction for the Organisation and appoints an Executive Director who manages the affairs of AfriCOG and provides leadership in implementing directives of the Board and activities of the organisation.

AfriCOG's secretariat is organised around two main functions:

- 1) Programmes – this includes research, advocacy and partnerships, and dissemination and linkages
- 2) Institutional strengthening – this is built around governance, administration, finance, training and information and communication technology.

AfriCOG's approach is to use research and knowledge products to inform and strengthen policy partnerships as the foundation of an effective and sustained anti-corruption and good governance coalition.



INTEGRITY

What matters to us - AfriCOG's strategic priorities

AfriCOG's strategic priorities are:

- 1) To conduct research to highlight the structural causes of corruption and its effects on the Kenyan and African people: successive governments have mis-diagnosed Kenya's governance crisis, prescribing superficial solutions to structural problems. Long-term governance reform will not succeed unless structural realities are sustainably addressed;
- 2) To influence legislation, regulation, public policy and practice through strategic, pre-emptive, governance and anti-corruption interventions and activities including dissemination of information;
- 3) To reach out to like-minded groups and mobilise new constituencies for reform to counter corruption in Kenya and establish a deeply-rooted culture that rejects corruption and bad governance at all levels.

The environment we work in

Kenya is a country in transition. Political and institutional reforms implemented over the past 15 years have largely reduced incidents of extreme human rights and economic abuse that were common in the 1980s and the early 1990s. However, public institutions remain weak.

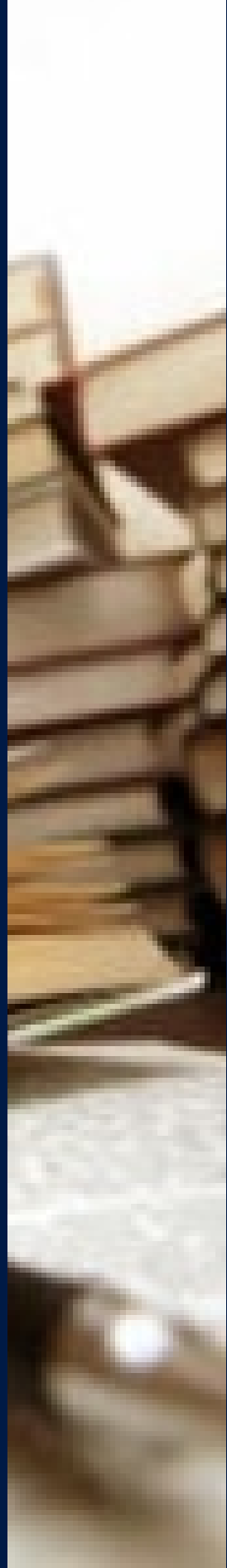
From AfriCOG's perspective, the problem is structural. Kenya's mixed presidential/parliamentary system of government characterised by excessive concentration of power in the Presidency, a weak judiciary and an intermittently independent but frequently delinquent Parliament has resulted in centralised management of public life and unilateral decision-making that is prone to abuse and manipulation.

Progress has been made in opening up government. The promulgation of the new constitution and ongoing efforts to implement it are among important reforms. However, the constitution must be properly implemented; institutions must now rethink their mandates, strategies and approaches, and bringing about a culture of respect for constitutionalism remains a huge challenge.

The key challenge has been to turn public institutions away from a prevailing culture of secrecy, endemic corruption and suspicion of non-governmental actors. Public institutions must be encouraged to embrace new values of open government, accountability, trustworthiness and public participation.

Three cross-cutting challenges emerge as central to the necessary reforms:

1. Consolidating democracy and restoring trustworthiness in public institutions
2. Fostering sustained attention and political will to fight corruption and secure the growth of an open, rule-based economy
3. Repairing and strengthening the relationship between government and civil society



AfriCOG's Programmes for 2009-2013

AfriCOG will continue to work to influence reforms in economic and political governance on two levels:

1. Long-term activities dealing with structural aspects of the crisis in governance in Kenya;
2. Responsive work including activities of a topical and transient nature to address episodic governance and anti-corruption events for which rapid response is necessary.

AfriCOG's programme objectives are to:

1. Conduct quality, cutting-edge research on anti-corruption and governance matters.
2. Mobilise citizens, civil society organisations and oversight institutions to monitor key governance processes and be permanently vigilant.
3. Carry out capacity building towards combating corruption and promoting good governance.
4. Provide information and knowledge on anti-corruption matters and governance for Kenyan citizens and institutions.
5. Build an effective, efficient and authoritative regional centre on governance and anti-corruption issues.

Research

Research is the backbone of our organisation and comprises a significant part of AfriCOG's work. For the period covered by this Strategic Plan, AfriCOG will undertake research on subjects determined by:

1. Relevance to strategic priorities
2. Potential synergy with other anti-corruption programmes and activities undertaken by state and non-state actors
3. Usability of results in ongoing reform efforts
4. Ability to provide insight into structural causes of corruption and bad governance
5. Relationship with neglected but critical anti-corruption priorities
6. Ability to address equity, for example, with regard to gender, ethnicity, age, regions.

Research will focus on the following themes from a good governance and anti-corruption perspective:

1. **Structural dimensions of political and economic governance in specific institutions and processes including:**
 - i. The Office of the Attorney General, Parliament, anti-corruption institutions, implementation of anti-corruption legislation, procurement and privatisation
 - ii. The Kenya National Audit Office; implementation of recommendations of the Auditor General, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and Public Investments Committee (PIC)
 - iii. Implementation of the Public Officer Ethics Act with special reference to equity and transparency in appointment of senior civil servants (ethnic and gender composition) and access to information, including declaration of wealth
 - iv. Lobbying for protection of whistle-blowers as part of freedom of information
 - v. Campaigning on corporate governance and its link to corruption
 - vi. Investigating the links between money laundering, drugs, banditry, terrorism and governance and corruption.
2. **Public financial management reform:** In response to endemic grand corruption and impunity, AfriCOG will work with relevant partners to create pressure for reform.
3. **Transparency and accountability in the management and use of devolved funds:** The introduction of devolved funds has created new sites for governance and anti-corruption programming at the local level.

4. **Transitional justice:** AfriCOG will monitor and engage with issues of transitional justice such as the prosecution of perpetrators of post-election violence and the constitutional implementation process.
5. **Security sector reform:** The post-election crisis brought to the fore the need for transformation of the security sector. AfriCOG will conduct research, publish reports and raise awareness on transparency and accountability in institutions in this sector.
6. **Regulatory framework for the protection of the public interest:** AfriCOG will focus on investigating the effectiveness of select regulatory bodies in the protection of the public interest. Candidate organisations include the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK), the Energy Regulatory Board (ERB), the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), and the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS).
7. **Oversight agencies:** AfriCOG will develop tools and templates to monitor the performance of agencies that are critical in enhancing accountability and transparency. Candidate institutions include the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC), the Judiciary, the Attorney General's Chambers and Parliament.
8. **Provision of on-going, real-time analysis of emerging issues for interested publics:** This should result in timely and composite information that can be used for urgent briefing, scenario-building, early warning and guidance on necessary pre-emptive action.

Advocacy and Policy Partnerships

AfriCOG recognises that strong and reliable partnerships are necessary to revitalise and sustain any anti-corruption and good governance campaign. Building and cementing partnerships is therefore critical to the work of AfriCOG. This includes:

1. **Standing partnerships** on enduring thematic issues and processes such as fiscal transparency and accountability, access to information and investigative journalism.
2. **Ad-hoc partnerships** mobilised around transient governance and public ethics issues.
3. **Sessional partnerships and alliances** that track and lobby particular institutions such as the oversight committees of Parliament, the Kenya National Audit Office, and regulatory institutions.

Dissemination and Linkages

The impact of AfriCOG's research work and advocacy and policy partnerships will depend on getting information to stakeholders for follow-up action. AfriCOG will provide relevant, objective, accessible and professionally-packaged information to a variety of stakeholders and audiences to suit different information and activity needs. This may include confidential in-house briefings, policy briefings, media kits, advocacy kits and intelligence briefs and a diversity of audio-visual and multi-media products.

To foster permanent civic vigilance, AfriCOG will continue to invest in expanding its institutional capacity for knowledge-generation, information-brokerage and advocacy over the long term. AfriCOG intends to position itself as the leading regional resource centre for information on governance and anti-corruption reform.

Institutional Strengthening

AfriCOG is committed to maintaining a lean, efficient and effective Secretariat. This requires rationalising resources available to the institution and aligning them with AfriCOG's vision, mission and the requirements of the Strategic Plan. Activities identified for institutional strengthening include institutionalising policies and procedures; strengthening the management of AfriCOG's research function and resource mobilisation, and developing staff capacities.

Our Achievements, Challenges and Lessons

Achievements

Since its formation and formal registration in 2007, AfriCOG has registered noteworthy achievements and growth. AfriCOG's research and evidence-based advocacy on diverse themes has influenced and spotlighted many topical processes including:

1. Study of the NARC government's (2003-2007) anti-corruption performance pointing out areas for urgent action.
2. Studies of the effectiveness of Commissions of Inquiry in improving governance and the viability of implementing the recommendations of various commissions including the Commission of Inquiry into Illegal/Irregular Allocations of Public Land (popularly known as the Ndung'u Commission).
3. A 2007 nationwide survey on corruption and the treatment of past economic crimes.
4. An audit of financial accountability in the now-defunct Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) documenting widespread abuse of public resources.
5. An assessment of the effectiveness of the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC), five years after its establishment.
6. Established an innovative, influential investigative journalism programme as one of our policy partnership initiatives.

Reports of these and other studies are regularly shared with key government officials and all Members of Parliament (MPs).

AfriCOG also raised regulatory issues on the privatisation of Telkom and the Safaricom Initial Public Offer (IPO) in reports published in December 2007 and March 2008 respectively. The work was extensively quoted during parliamentary and public debates.

AfriCOG regularly partners with the media and engages in innovative collaborations such as that with KWANI (A literary journal), which produced a special report on the social-political economy of elections and electoral corruption, based on the 2007 campaigns.

As part of its policy partnerships, AfriCOG hosts the secretariat for the Movement for Political Accountability (MOPA) and is a lead convenor and facilitator of the Kenyans for Peace with Truth and Justice Coalition (KPTJ). KPTJ is a coalition of over 30 Kenyan and East African legal, human rights and governance organisations, together with ordinary Kenyans and friends of Kenya founded to address the post-2007 election crisis and its sequel. AfriCOG achieves its strategic priority to monitor the transparency of devolved funds through its partnership with The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA).

AfriCOG has also recently signed a memorandum with Mzalendo, a parliamentary oversight website, affording access to information on parliamentary proceedings and parliamentarians.

Push for land reform 'threatened'

...in a Land Transformation Unit at the Lands ministry has this mandate. Allocation of public land has also been frozen, except to foreign investors. But several participants of the government's desire to implement the Ndung'u report.

Grabbed land
Mr. Odinga in the allocation of 'insignificant' land in the budget showed a lack

...to illegal allocation of public land yesterday, the minister said there was a huge backlog of cases, with most arising from orders against revocation of titles to grabbed land.

Mr. Odingo's call comes three weeks after Cabinet approval of the National Land Policy. A Bill to amend all statutes relating to land was developed by the Law Reform Commission, and

Orengo in drive for an independent tribunal to settle grabbing disputes

BRIEFLY
Residents protest at plan to erect fence around forest

Two government agencies are embarking on a plan to erect a fence around a portion of forest. The row, pitting the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), has also

Challenges and Lessons

Internal challenges

As AfriCOG works to consolidate its reputation as a centre for authoritative research, management of the research product to ensure timely delivery and quality assurance is emerging as the key internal challenge. It is also clear that AfriCOG's research must be kept up-to-date if it is to remain relevant in an environment of reform-driven change. Given the country's failure to address the structural causes of poor governance and corruption, the themes of studies conducted by AfriCOG are often of an enduring nature.

While dissemination has achieved remarkable success and grown organically in response to external demand, this function now needs to be strengthened and streamlined.

External challenges

These mostly relate to following:

1. Difficulty of access to official information and to public institutions which slows down the development of objective tools and templates. However, an increased effort at mobilising official support for this activity is bearing fruit.
2. The difficulties inherent in managing partnerships. For example, AfriCOG strives to achieve deeper buy-in from media houses to facilitate smoother collaboration on its Investigative Journalism Fellowship. With Parliament, the often unstructured and unpredictable scheduling of sessions and dynamic political alignments of legislators may sometimes lead to partiality in uptake of information. A strict political non-partisan, responsive, professional and evidence-based approach helps to mitigate this challenge.
3. The fluid political environment in which anti-corruption and governance work must be undertaken is a major challenge. AfriCOG confronts this through regular strategic reviews to reassess the operating environment and calibrate appropriate strategies.

Lessons Learnt

Further development of internal capacity for research and dissemination and staff reorientation will enable the small staff complement to undertake a greater diversity of responsibilities without heavy recruitment. This will support the organisation in responding to growing demand. Follow-up studies need to be conducted and reports that are relevant to critical themes of a long term nature should be updated.

Analysing audiences and their information needs will support efforts to reach a wider diversity of audiences and target them more accurately.

Risks and Assumptions

In preparing this Strategic Plan, AfriCOG has identified the following risks and made several assumptions.

Risks

1. The global financial crisis may reduce or redirect funding away from civil society organisations.
2. New donor funding arrangements have reduced bilateral dialogue and relationships emphasising efficiency rather than effective use of resources. The result may be bureaucratisation of mobilisation and management of resources.
3. Corruption is a sensitive issue and could lead AfriCOG into litigious areas.
4. The terrain for anti-corruption and governance work is vast and may tempt AfriCOG to spread itself thin.

Assumptions

1. That the ruling coalition government will hold until the 2012 elections.
2. The constitutional implementation process will proceed as planned.
3. The process instigated by the Commission to Investigate Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) will proceed, albeit with obstacles and conflicts.
4. Political differences in the ruling coalition government will not irredeemably polarise the constitutional review process and any resulting referendum.
5. Parliament will remain available for advocacy and will not be captured by political differences in government.
6. The opening up of parliamentary committees to the public will proceed as scheduled and will improve access to committee members.
7. Media houses will show long-term interest and commitment to the Investigative Journalism Fellowship and support their employees to participate in the fellowship programme. Media houses will show willingness to take on the anti-corruption agenda at the editorial policy level and not simply as a routine issue for coverage.

Planning, Implementation and Evaluation Framework

This Strategic Plan outlines the broad beacons for our work.

AfriCOG will work through a programme cycle built around this five-year Strategic Plan, broken down into annual operational plans. Annual operational plans will present specific activities around the thematic concerns with clear outputs, time frames and responsibility allocation. Each year will begin with an annual operational planning session and conclude with a review for reflection on objectives, activities carried out, achievements registered, challenges faced and lessons learnt.

Given the dynamic environment of reforms that prevails in Kenya, strategic reviews will be periodically convened to align this Plan to prevailing realities in the political and economic environment.

An annual report will highlight the year's activities and results. Results will be tracked continuously by the staff responsible for each function and collectively through various monitoring tools.

The planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation cycle is summarised in the figure below.



How we got here

AfriCOG acknowledges many organisations and individuals who contributed to its formative development. Organisations include the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Society for International Development (SID), Kenya Leadership Institute (KLI), individual members of Transparency International, representatives from the media, the private sector and civil society.

Among the individuals are John Githongo, David Ndii, Maina Kiai, Philip Kichana, Francis Ang'ila, Wambui Kimathi, Zahid Rajan, Kahare Miano, Sunny Bindra, Cege Mwangi, Duncan Okello, Tom Maliti, and David Okwembah. AfriCOG relied on a core group of associates for initial organisational development namely: Wachira Maina, Erastus Wamugo, George Kegoro, Mwalimu Mati, Philip Kichana and Alnoor Amlani. We continue calling on their skills and those of others to contribute to our growth.

The strategic review towards the development of this plan was steered by Wachira Maina. The Plan was structured and documented by Okumba Miruka. AfriCOG is grateful for their guidance and the effective contribution of its staff towards the Plan.

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