

CONCEPT NOTE FOR EVIDENCE TO ACTION CONFERENCE 2026

Reimagining the Evidence-Informed Policy and Decision-Making Ecosystem in Africa

1.0 Introduction

Across Africa, the demand for evidence-informed policies and decisions is growing rapidly. Yet the journey from knowledge to action remains fragmented, often driven by external agendas that overlook African priorities, innovations, and lived experiences. While African governments, institutions, and communities have developed rich practices for embedding evidence into decision-making, these successes remain insufficiently documented, shared, and scaled. This conference will provide a continental platform to reflect, learn, demonstrate, and co-create a uniquely African evidence-informed decision-making ecosystem, based on relevant and contextual factors. It will seek to create a platform for reflection on what has taken place over the years and collective action that has been taken by all players in the ecosystem.

Recent initiatives such as E2A 2025, in Accra, Ghana; the Pan-African Conference on Environment, Climate Change and Health, in Nairobi Kenya; and African Evidence Network's (AEN) Evidence 2025 conference, in Cotonou, Benin; and collaborative platforms like Southern Voice and others, have demonstrated the growing momentum toward Africa-led knowledge generation and use. The E2A 2026 Conference seeks to complement and build upon these efforts by fostering deeper connections among these ecosystems linking evidence producers, data communities, policymakers, and practitioners to consolidate lessons, amplify African leadership, and sustain collective impact across the continent.

With Africa currently navigating urgent and complex challenges such as the post-COVID recovery, climate change adaptation, food security, and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), it is crucial to rethink and strengthen the evidence ecosystem. It is important to learn and understand **what has worked, where it has worked, for whom it has worked, how it has worked, why it worked, what processes sustained it, and what has not worked in our context and culture**, while also exploring what needs to change to reimagine a more inclusive and dynamic evidence-to-action ecosystem in Africa. It will reimagine an inclusive and transformative system for the future where Africa shifts from being a recipient of externally defined evidence paradigms to a global producer and shaper of evidence-informed policymaking. It is time to document African experiences, foster cross-learning, and build coalitions and networks that advance the use of evidence for equitable and transformative outcomes across the continent.

Goal: To drive an Africa-led transformation of the evidence-to-action ecosystem by strengthening the continent's capacity to generate and apply contextually grounded knowledge, positioning Africa as a global leader in evidence-informed policymaking and equitable, sustainable development.



Objectives

- **Reimagine the Evidence-to-Action Ecosystem:** Shape a system grounded in African contexts, priorities, and legitimacy.
- **Document and Learn from Practice:** Capture enablers, processes, and innovations including indigenous knowledge that sustained or constrained evidence use.
- **Clarify Ownership and Audience:** Address the needs of primary users such as policymakers, practitioners, funders, civil societies, and communities while ensuring African institutions drive the agenda.
- **Strengthen Collaboration:** Deepen partnerships among institutions, policymakers, funders, civil society, and communities.
- **Advance Systems-Level Transformation:** Inspire renewed confidence and commitment to Africa-led approaches that influence global evidence debates.

Thematic Priorities

- **Legitimacy & Ownership:** Whose knowledge counts? How do we validate and institutionalize African-generated evidence?
- **Evidence Uptake & Translation:** Innovations and pathways for turning evidence into policy, practice, and investments.
- **Systems Transformation:** Re-imagining the governance structures and incentives that shape evidence production and use.
- **Inclusivity & Equity:** Elevating the voices of youth, women, indigenous groups, and marginalized communities.
- **Collaboration & Partnerships:** Lessons from successful multi-actor initiatives that achieved policy change.
- **Learning from Failures:** What has not worked in evidence-to-action, and why? How can Africa learn from missteps to avoid replication

Expected Outcomes

- **A Shared Roadmap:** A clear strategy for embedding Africa-led evidence ecosystems in policymaking processes.
- **Compendium of Practices:** A living resource documenting African successes and failures, including indigenous approaches.
- **Institutionalized Networks:** Establishment of durable platforms for South-South collaboration among African institutions.
- **Joint Declaration:** A commitment by governments, funders, and institutions to inclusive and Africa-owned evidence-to-action best practices at continental level, regional and national levels.
- **Policy Influence:** Specific commitments by national governments or regional bodies to adopt/adapt best practices and innovative and culture relevant and appropriate approaches.
- **Global Positioning:** Integration of African knowledge into global debates, amplifying Africa's role as a thought leader and practitioners.

Format and Participation

The three-day convening will bring together policymakers, research and academic institutions, civil society and grassroots actors, youth, women, and indigenous innovators, as well as regional and international partners and funders.

Program Snapshot:

Day 1: Opening plenary, keynote addresses, Africa's evidence landscape.

Day 2: Thematic panels, evidence fairs, co-creation labs, honest 'failures & lessons learned' sessions.

Day 3: High-level policy dialogues, adoption of Joint Declaration, roadmap launch, and closing.

Positioning & Sustainability

A Conference Steering Committee will provide strategic oversight ensuring continuity from preparation to post-conference implementation and accountability for agreed actions.

Outputs will be embedded into existing African networks, platforms, and knowledge systems to guarantee continued relevance, access, and use beyond the event.

A dedicated post-conference mechanism will be established to monitor adoption of recommendations, track policy influence, and maintain active collaboration among stakeholders.

Strategic partnerships with funders and regional institutions will be established to support long-term institutionalization of Africa's evidence-to-action ecosystem.

Value Proposition for Funders

- Demonstrated measurable shifts in practice and policy adoption.
- Strengthened African institutions as durable platforms for evidence generation, exchange, and use.
- Elevation of African innovations in global forums.
- Advancing equity and inclusiveness by centering marginalized voices.
- Contributing to systemic change by redefining what counts as legitimate evidence globally.

Collaboration & Next Steps

1. Establishing a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee.
2. Mobilizing resources and partners.
3. Launching pre-conference consultations and evidence-gathering activities.
4. Designing mechanisms for post-conference monitoring and sustainability.

Conference Organizing Committee

The E2A 2026 Conference is organized by the International Centre for Evaluation and Development (ICED), the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), and Partnership for Africa Social and Governance Research (PASGR), in collaboration with other partner organizations and institutions. The organizing committee is committed to delivering a high-impact event that advances governance effectiveness in Africa.

For further information, including details on abstract submissions, participation, registration fees, or hosting a pre-conference session/side event, please visit our website, <https://www.iced-eval.org>, or email us at: e2a@iced-eval.org and info@iced-eval.org