

Empowering Africa Through Capacity Building & Skills

D2 Capacity Building Framework | Smart Africa Digital Academy (SADA)

Aligned with the Africa AI Council Vision on Research, Innovation & Talent

World Bank Western Africa Regional Digital Integration Programme | 2025 – 2030

KEY FIGURES

30,000

Policymakers to train

40%

Women participation target

4

Structured learning tracks

5

Capacity strategies

2030

Single Digital Market goal

Africa's Digital Transformation Imperative

The case for bold, continent-wide action on capacity building and AI talent

1.4B
People

Africa's youthful, mobile-connected population

2030
Deadline

Single Digital Market target set by the AU DTS

400M+
Youth

Ages 15–35 — the continent's innovation engine

54
Countries

Committed to digital integration under Smart Africa

The SDM Opportunity

Digital technologies are Africa's greatest lever for economic growth. The AU Digital Transformation Strategy 2020–2030 targets a Single Digital Market — but success depends on skilled, agile policymakers.

The AI Talent Gap

The Africa AI Council identifies three critical gaps: Capacity (not enough trained people), Capability (low research visibility), and Inclusion (geographic and gender disparities).

SADA's Response

The Smart Africa Digital Academy D2 framework is built precisely to address these gaps — training 30,000 policymakers across 4 tracks, with AI embedded as a core competence.

The SADA D2 Capacity Building Framework

A systematic approach to formulate, deliver, and sustain capacity building for Africa's digital future

Goal: Train 30,000 policymakers & regulators — including 40% women — in Agile Regulation & Digital Transformation by 2030

1

WHAT to Build

Two Capacity
Domains

Thematic areas + enabling
competences

→ Slide 4

2

HOW to Build

Five Capacity
Strategies

Processes to scale, sustain & embed
skills

→ Slide 5

3

Learning Outcomes

Six Transformative
Outcomes

From awareness to behavioural
change

→ Slide 6

4

Learning Tracks

Four Structured
Pathways

Sequenced, audience-specific
progressions

→ Slide 6

Two Capacity Domains: The WHAT of SADA

SDM-anchored thematic areas paired with cross-cutting enabling competences

DOMAIN 1

SDM-Anchored Thematic Areas

Data Governance & Cybersecurity

Broadband & Telecommunications

Green Digital

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

DOMAIN 2

Enabling Competence Areas

Agile Regulation

Adaptive regulatory skills for the fast-paced digital economy

Soft Skills for Digital Transformation

Communication, leadership, stakeholder engagement

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI literacy, ethics, policy & governance for decision-makers

Five Capacity Processes & Strategies: The HOW

Building, sustaining and scaling digital capacity across Africa's policy landscape

1

Strategic Awareness & Alignment

SDM training beneficiaries understand national, regional & continental alignment — making every hour of learning purposeful.

2

Optimising Resources & Open Education

Leverage OERs and blended learning to cut costs by up to 40% while maximising reach and flexibility across 54 countries.

3

Delivery Infrastructure Ecosystem

Regional Training Hubs and academic partnerships across all five AU-recognised regions bring learning close to the learner.

4

Peer Learning & Communities of Practice

CoPs where policymakers exchange experiences, co-develop solutions and embed Digital Champions in ministries.

5

Building Capacity for Sustainability

Target Africa's 400M+ youth and mid-career public servants to build lasting digital talent pipelines for the continent.

Four Learning Tracks: Structured Pathways to Mastery

Sequenced, audience-specific journeys from awareness to advanced technical competence

P1 SDM-Awareness for All

Awareness

All beneficiaries

Builds understanding of SDM alignment at national, regional, and continental levels — the foundation for all other tracks.

P2 Legal, Regulatory & Ethical Frameworks

Foundation → Advanced

High-Level Policymakers & Regulators

Skills in legal, regulatory & ethical frameworks across data governance, cybersecurity, broadband, and green digital.

P3 Cross-Thematic Awareness

Awareness

Decision Makers (Ministers / Cabinet)

Executive-level exposure across all SDM thematic areas — enabling informed strategic leadership and cross-sector decisions.

P4 Thematic Technical Competences

Awareness → Advanced

Mid–Senior Level Policymakers

Flexible blended tracks allowing depth in one theme or breadth across themes — building the next generation of digital leaders.

AI as the Engine of Research & Innovation

How SADA + the Africa AI Council together build a future-ready continent

Africa AI Council Vision

- Promote African research and innovation in AI
- Guide governments in developing national & regional AI strategies
- Foster partnerships, mobilise investment & build AI infrastructure
- Demand-driven talent: Scout → Educate → Empower → Deploy
- Dual-track strategy: Bottom-up (breadth) + Top-down (excellence)

SADA AI Integration in D2

AI as Thematic Area

Core Domain 1 subject alongside Data Governance and Broadband

AI in Enabling Competences

AI literacy, ethics & governance embedded in ALL four tracks

Research Communities

CoPs and Academic Hubs as launchpads for AI research collaboration

Digital Champions

AI-savvy agents embedded in ministries to cascade skills & reform

Closing Africa's AI Talent Gap: Three Dimensions

From the Africa AI Council — a framework that SADA's D2 is directly built to address

CAPACITY

Key Issue

Not enough trained individuals, few AI programs, lack of infrastructure, poor funding.

SADA Action

Expand AI-focused education; invest in regional AI labs; fund train-the-trainer programs to rapidly scale faculty.

CAPABILITY

Key Issue

Low volume & visibility of African AI research; skills-application mismatch; faculty and curriculum weaknesses.

SADA Action

Create elite AI research centres of excellence; sponsor global research exchanges; incentivise publication & open-source.

INCLUSION

Key Issue

Geographic disparities (especially Francophone Africa); underrepresentation of women; English-centric, urban-biased training.

SADA Action

Localise content in multiple languages; support community hubs; offer stipends & childcare for women in AI programs.

Smart Africa's Implementation Blueprint

Key recommendations across thematic areas, learning tracks, communities of practice, and cross-cutting priorities

Thematic Programmes

- Deliver training across 3 priority areas: Broadband & Telecoms, Data Governance & Cybersecurity, Green Digital
- Tailor content to strategic, tactical, and delivery governance layers

Learning Tracks & Pedagogy

- Develop SDM-awareness content for P1; structured skills progression for P2 and P4
- Leverage blended learning and OERs to reduce training cost by up to 40%

Communities of Practice

- Formulate thematic and regional CoPs for each SDM-anchored thematic area
- Identify and empower Digital Champions to cascade skills within ministries

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Use quantitative (certificates, participation) and qualitative (beneficiary interviews) data
- Apply Kirkpatrick's 4-level evaluation model: Reaction → Learning → Behaviour → Results

Building Africa's Digital Future — Together

Capacity building is not an end in itself — it is the foundation for innovation, research, and inclusive growth across Africa.

- 1** Scale SADA to reach 30,000 trained policymakers by 2030, with 40% women
- 2** Embed AI literacy in all four Learning Tracks and position Africa as a global AI voice
- 3** Activate the Africa AI Council's Thematic Working Groups to champion Research & Innovation

KEY TARGETS

30K

policy makers trained

40%

women participants

4

learning tracks

5

capacity strategies

3

thematic areas

2030

SDM target