

# Partnership Model for the Implementation of Regional Statistical Programs: The Case of the International Comparison Program for Africa (ICP-Africa)

---

Abdoulaye Adam<sup>1</sup>

## **Abstract**

*The nature of the International Comparison Program for Africa (ICP-Africa), the huge variety of goods and services produced and consumed in different parts of Africa, the number and dispersion of participating countries, along with their differences in size, structure and statistical capacity, make the program a complex statistical operation and pose a major challenge in its implementation. The complexity of the program has been further compounded by the need to meet deadlines in compliance with the implementation of the ICP at the global level. The complexity of the program has been largely overcome through collaborative working partnerships between the AfDB and other stakeholders. The goal of that collaboration is to achieve the most efficient means of conducting the program in the region. The collaborative working partnerships used in the implementation of the program constitute the ICP-Africa Implementation Model. This paper presents the model and its characteristics. The model is based on a number of premises and provides some leverage to AfDB and participating countries. Fundamental partnership principles, which are the pillars to creating synergy among the collaborating institutions and ensuring the sustainability of the whole process, are also presented.*

**Key words:** Partnership, Collaboration, ICP-Africa, Model, Leverage effect, Sustainability

## **Résumé**

*L'essence du Programme de Comparaison internationale pour l'Afrique (PCI-Afrique), le grand nombre de biens et services produits et consommés dans les différentes parties de l'Afrique, le nombre et la dispersion des pays participants ainsi que leur différence en taille, structure et capacité statistique, font du programme une opération statistique complexe et représentent un grand défi pour sa mise en œuvre. La complexité du programme est exacerbée par la nécessité de respecter les dates butoirs du calendrier de mise en œuvre du programme au niveau mondial. La complexité du programme a été surmontée par une*

---

<sup>1</sup> Chief Statistician, African Development Bank Group, BP 323-1002 Belvedere, Tunis, Tunisia. Email: a.adam@afdb.org.

*collaboration entre la BAD et les parties prenantes dans la mise en œuvre du PCI-Afrique. Le but de cette collaboration est de parvenir à utiliser les moyens les plus efficaces pour exécuter le programme au niveau régional. Les relations de travail utilisées dans la collaboration de mise en œuvre du programme constituent le Modèle de Mise en œuvre du PCI-Afrique. L'article présente le modèle et ses caractéristiques. Le modèle se fonde sur certaines prémisses et procure un effet de levier aux activités de la BAD et des pays participants dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre du programme. Les principes fondamentaux qui garantissent l'émulation d'une synergie entre les institutions collaboratrices et la durabilité de tout le processus de partenariat sont aussi présentés.*

**Mots Clés :** *Partenariat, Collaboration, PCI-Afrique, Modèle, Effet de Levier, Durabilité*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The International Comparison Program for Africa (ICP-Africa) is the African component of the International Comparison Program (ICP), a worldwide statistical initiative to generate internationally comparable price and expenditure levels to facilitate cross-country comparisons of GDP and its sub-aggregates in real terms and free of price and exchange rate distortions.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) implemented the 2005 ICP-Africa round in close collaboration with 48 African countries, four sub-regional organizations (namely l'Observatoire Économique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne (AFRISTAT), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)), the World Bank, Statistical Training Centers (STCs) in Africa, and other partners. The United Kingdom Office for National Statistics and the French Statistics Office (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, INSEE) provided technical assistance on a need basis and in line with the AfDB's technical requirements. A regional coordination team at the AfDB and a national coordination team within each country had the responsibility for the data collection and the day-to-day management of the program at the regional and national levels respectively.

In addition to the main objective of ICP, AfDB added the following dimensions to the African component of the program: (i) strengthening

national statistical capacity in price and national accounts; (ii) making the ICP an integral part of national statistical systems; and (iii) promoting the use of ICP data for policy decisionmaking processes.

The nature and complexity of the program demand the collaboration of all stakeholders in its implementation. It is also clear that the long-term needs of the program and its sustainability can only be met by greatly strengthened capacity and cooperation among national statistical offices (NSOs), which bear the primary responsibility for the program at the national level. The cooperation should also be extended to other institutions. For that reason, AfDB's approach to implementing ICP-Africa is built on partnership with all stakeholders for statistical development in Africa. The Statistics Department of the AfDB considers partnership to be a core value for statistical capacity building, and the strengthening of the national statistical systems (NSS) as one of its primary objectives.

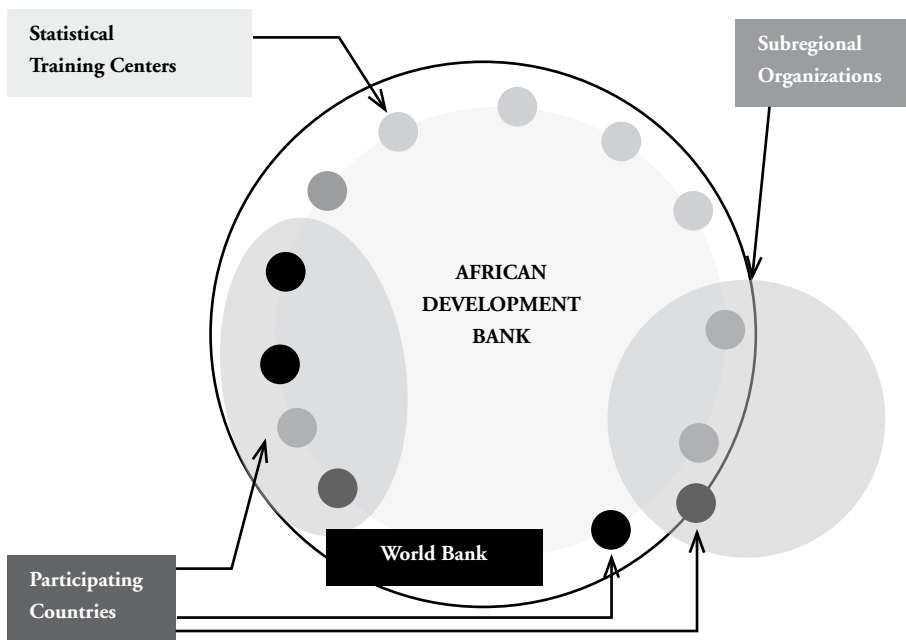
The huge variety of goods and services produced and consumed in different parts of Africa and the dispersion of participating countries, along with their differences in size, structure, and statistical capacity, made the program a complex operation and posed a big challenge in its implementation. The complexity of the program was further compounded by the need to meet deadlines in compliance with the implementation of the ICP at the global level.

The collaborative working relations used in the implementation of the program constitute the ICP-Africa Implementation Model. This paper presents the model and its characteristics in sections two and three respectively. Section four presents a number of elements required to build the trust needed to sustain the partnership; these can be used to increase the efficiency of future partnerships.

## **2. THE ICP-AFRICA IMPLEMENTATION MODEL**

The AfDB used a network approach that brings together AfDB, subregional organizations, and national statisticians working on the same problems to jointly conduct activities for the implementation of ICP-Africa.

Figure 1: ICP-Africa Partnership Model



Closer and more pragmatic collaboration with all statistical development stakeholders is a major component of the AfDB model, which is founded on the establishment of a regional statistical system, as illustrated in Figure 1. The system is based on complementarity among partners, leveraging the comparative advantages of statistical development institutions in Africa. This model is founded on the following premises:

- The entire regional statistical infrastructure in Africa (including NSOs, subregional organizations, statistical training centers, and other partners) should be considered as an integrated and interdependent system, in which each member has a specific and determinant role to play.
- The nature and complexity of the program, as well as the magnitude of the needs for improving statistical systems, are such that no single institution, including AfDB, can address them alone and effectively.
- The collaborative activities should be designed and implemented in such a way that they: (i) facilitate the implementation of the statistical initiative; (ii) strengthen the institutional capacity of partners to

fulfill their respective responsibilities in the long term; (iii) optimize the exchange of experience and spillover benefits of these activities at national and regional levels; and (iv) create among all stakeholders a sense of ownership for the whole process and achievements.

- An effective partnership requires the full participation of all parties in the planning of the collaborative activities. Although AfDB initiated and coordinated the planning process, the full participation of and endorsement by officials of NSOs and subregional organizations proved crucial for success. This was obtained through consultation during workshops and statistical fora.

In addition to the implementation of the program, the model's objective is to contribute to the enhancement of statistical capacity through a system linking statistical development stakeholders in the region. The overall aim is to facilitate the production and dissemination of reliable price and national accounts data to end users.

Within the framework of the implementation of ICP-Africa, activities were conducted at the national, subregional, regional, and global levels:

1. *Activities at the national level:* These were mainly conducted by national statisticians and dealt with national aspects of the program like sampling outlets, conducting pre-surveys, training data collectors, and national data collection and validation. These activities benefited from some inputs from AfDB and/or consultants on demand and/or during supervision missions.
2. *Activities at the subregional level:* The subregional organizations involved in the implementation of ICP-Africa worked closely with the regional coordination team to organize and conduct subregional workshops. They handled administrative matters such as disbursement and procurement, and supervised the fieldwork.
3. *Activities at the regional level:* In addition to the regional coordination role and the interaction with the global office and other partners, members of the regional team dealt mainly with issues such as the development of data validation tools, the regional list of products, regional data validation, and computation of regional estimates of purchasing power parities (PPPs).

4. *Activities at the global level:* Activities at the global level provided support on technical issues, the joint planning of the work program with other ICP regions and the global office, the evaluation of progress made in different ICP tasks, and data validation at the global level. In addition to the highly participatory nature of the planning process, the efficiency of the ICP implementing mechanism hinges on strict adherence to time schedules and the willingness to share information and good practices.

Some tasks (e.g. the development of the regional list of products) require the involvement at all four levels: national, subregional, regional, and global. These activities can be termed *comprehensive layer activities*. Activities at the national and regional levels can be termed *national layer activities* and *regional layer activities* respectively.

Country visits, retreats, and various workshops were organized to bring country price and NA statisticians together to work on some aspects of the comprehensive layer activities. The meetings were highly participatory and promoted interactions between regional partners and AfDB statisticians.

The varying strengths of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) meant that some countries were able to implement the program more quickly than others. The regional coordination team took advantage of this opportunity to develop cooperation among participating countries: (i) statisticians from some advanced NSOs visited less developed NSOs to help them on specific ICP tasks; and (ii) retreats were organized to bring together selected statisticians from NSOs to work with AfDB statisticians on regional issues.

Within the integrated system, regional and national ICP-Africa activities were aligned with national statistical activities like the compilation of the Consumer Price Indices (CPIs) and National Accounts (NA) to maximize the complementary nature of the activities. This generated a robust and dynamic collaborative statistical system, resulting in a joint implementation of statistical activities and dissemination of results. Price and NA data have been improved by harmonizing statistical concepts according to international norms and standards.

### 3. LEVERAGE EFFECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION MODEL

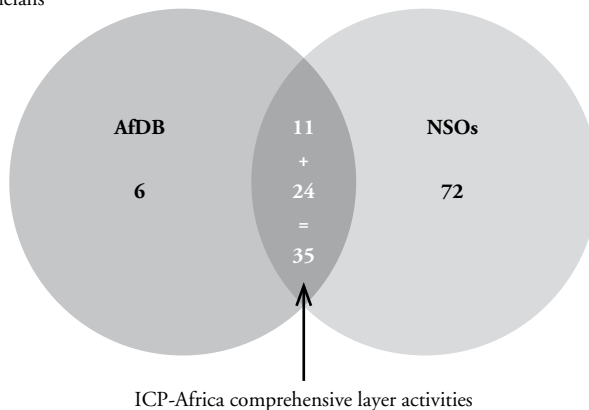
The leverage effect of the ICP-Africa implementation model can be illustrated by considering the comprehensive layer activities and showing how the AfDB and the NSOs as a whole benefited. At the beginning of the program, the Statistics Division comprised 17 staff, including the Division Manager and the ICP-Africa Coordinator. Suppose that each staff spends a proportion of his/her time working on the comprehensive layer activities, so that in total 11 statistician-years were devoted to these activities. The 48 participating countries each have a national coordination team composed of a national accountant, a price statistician, and an administrative assistant. The time allocated to ICP-Africa activities varied by country and by team members within a country. Some members of the national coordination team worked solely for ICP-Africa, while others also worked on other NSO activities. Suppose that on average, the national accountant and the price statistician spent 25% of their time in conducting comprehensive layer activities. This gives a total of 24 statistician-years for the participating countries.

The leverage effect is illustrated in Figure 2, on the basis of the above hypotheses. The contribution of the partnership to the AfDB implementation of the comprehensive layer activities is estimated at 24 statistician-years. The AfDB also benefited from direct access and co-producer status of the data collected by participating countries.

**Figure 2: Leverage of the ICP-Africa Implementation Model on AfDB and NSOs**

AfDB = 17 statisticians  
 NSOs = 96 statisticians  
 Total = 113 statisticians

NSOs:  $96 + 11 = 107$  statistician-years  
 AfDB:  $17 + 24 = 41$  statistician-years



The estimated time devoted by statisticians to comprehensive layer activities constitutes 35 statistician-years. This means that the model's leverage effect enabled the AfDB and any given country to benefit from more human resources collectively than they individually possessed to conduct comprehensive layer activities. The partnership model provided an estimated 11 statistician-years to the participating countries' NSS as a whole. The leverage effect of the AfDB to the NSOs is even greater if, in addition to the comprehensive layer activities, we also consider the regional layer activities.

The relation pictured in Figure 2 can be extended to any statistical initiative where a partnership is used for its implementation, as represented by the following simple equation:

$$Y_{\alpha\beta} = \sum_{i=1}^N \sum_{j=1}^{M_i} \delta_{ij}^{\alpha} A_{ij}^{\alpha} \quad (1)$$

Where

$Y_{\alpha\beta}$  is the estimated number of statistician-years devoted to  $\alpha$ -layer activities in institution  $\beta$  (NSOs or AfDB);

$N$  is the number of institutions in the partnership for the implementation of the statistical initiative;

$M_i$  is the numbers of staff in charge of the implementation of the statistical initiative in institution  $i$ ;

$\delta_{ij}^{\alpha} = 1$  if staff  $j$  in institution  $i$  participate in the implementation of  $\alpha$ -layer activities and zero otherwise;

$A_{ij}^{\alpha}$  is the share of time devoted to  $\alpha$ -layer activities by staff  $j$  in institution  $i$  with  $0 \leq A_{ij}^{\alpha} \leq 1$ .

Equation (1) can also be used for national layer and regional layer activities. For national or regional layer activities in institution  $\beta$  (a given NSO or AfDB respectively), equation (1) reduces to

$$Y_{\beta} = \sum_{j=1}^{M_{\beta}} \delta_{\beta j} A_{\beta j} \quad (2)$$

Where

$Y_{\beta}$  is the estimated number of statistician-years devoted to national/regional layer activities in institution  $\beta$ ;

$M_{\beta}$  is the numbers of staff in charge of the implementation of the statistical initiative in institution  $\beta$ ;

$\delta_{\beta j} = 1$  if staff  $j$  in institution  $\beta$  participate in the implementation of national/regional layer activities and zero otherwise;

$A_{\beta j}$  is the share of time devoted to the national/regional activities by staff  $j$  in institution  $\beta$  with  $0 \leq A_{\beta j} \leq 1$ .

Through the complementary nature of the activities, and the leverage and spillover effect of the implementation model, NSOs were able to save scarce resources by reducing activities in areas where they lacked adequate capacity. Their approach in such cases was to draw instead on knowledge and lessons learnt from other countries and from the AfDB, where the specific capacities might be greater. National resources freed in this way were then available for other activities. Also, national statisticians were not working in isolation but benefited professionally from frequent interactions with colleagues in other NSOs, subregional organizations, and in the AfDB.

#### 4. SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROCESS

The sustainability of the process rests on several factors, including the diffusion of ICP methodology, the dissemination of the results and their access by researchers and development institutions, their use by policymakers and other end-users, and the strengthening of fundamental partnership principles.

##### 4.1 Diffusion of ICP methodology

The NSOs were the AfDB's principal partners in the implementation of ICP-Africa. A partnership requires a similar knowledge base among partners to ensure its sustainability. Also the collection, processing, and dissemination of ICP relevant and reliable data require well-trained statisticians in ICP methodologies. For those reasons, STCs in Africa, which have the primary responsibility for training statisticians, form the cornerstone for the sustainability of the program. A training program on the ICP

methodology must be developed and included in the curriculum of STCs, as well as in faculties of economics in African universities. The training strategy must also extend to NSO staff, to ensure the diffusion of ICP methodology and to build their capacity to conduct ICP activities. To that end, the AfDB should undertake the following activities in collaboration with the STCs and NSOs:

- Design specific curricula on ICP-related theory and methodologies;
- Organize courses on ICP for statistics students;
- Design ICP-related modules for short-term training activities;
- Organize and facilitate training workshops on ICP.

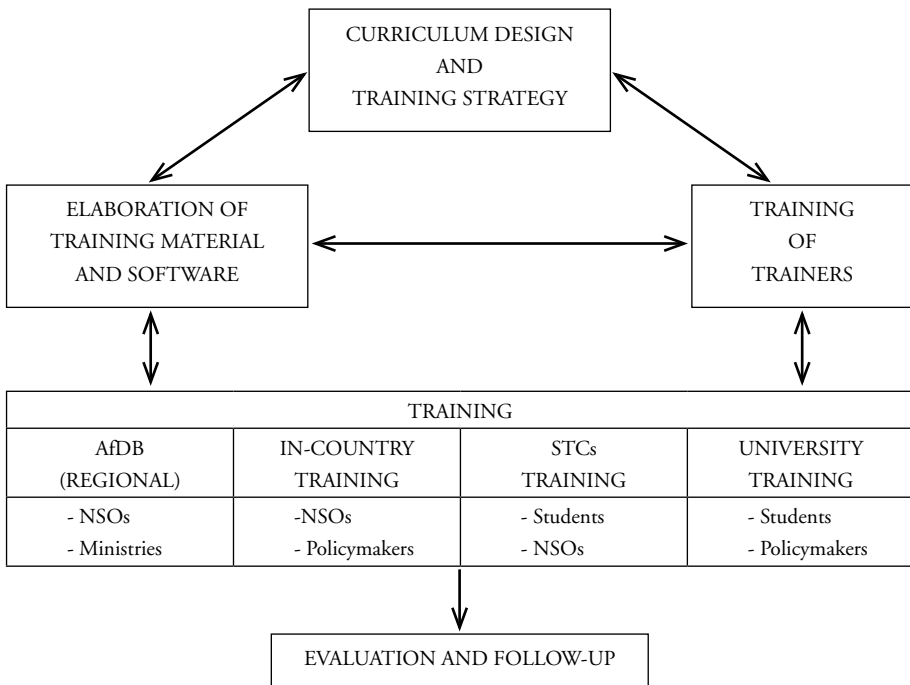
The training will be organized using the standard format, e.g. generic information and skills training, or as workshops where representatives take an active part in presenting material and in discussion. The steps in implementing training courses are described in Figure 3. It is also important for African STCs and universities to participate in research and global discussion on ICP issues.

Once the training needs have been identified, the activities start with a curriculum design and a training strategy. The elaboration of training material and the training of trainers follow the curriculum design and the training strategy. The curriculum design, the elaboration of training materials, and the training of trainers form the training triangle. Each apex of the triangle should help to improve the other two, as in a virtuous circle: (i) following the training of trainers, the training material will be revised and the curriculum design adjusted accordingly; (ii) the revision of the training material will improve the training of trainers and the curriculum and (iii) the improvement of the curriculum has a direct influence on the training material and the training of trainers. The courses are conducted regionally and/or at the national level. The nature of the courses (i.e. generic skills training or workshop) will depend on the objectives and the targeted participants. Evaluation and follow-up activities end the process.

The AfDB has signed agreements to undertake the diffusion of the ICP methodology in collaboration with four STCs, namely the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (ENSEA in Abidjan), The East African Statistical Training Center (EASTC in Dar Es Salaam), the Institut Sous Régional de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (ISSEA in Yaoundé), and the Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE-Makerere University Kampala). Training on PPP computation has already been conducted in ENSEA, EASTC, and ISSEA. The work

will continue with the development of a program covering the entire ICP methodology.

**Figure 3: Outline of the Training Strategy**



## 4.2 Dissemination of the results

NSS activities have mostly centered on data production. While it is important to maintain that focus in order to meet data demand for development needs, it should also be recognized that there has been inadequate dissemination of data to end-users. To ensure the sustainability of ICP-Africa, the dissemination of its results should contribute to broadening the current regional economic and social knowledge and should aim at improving the statistical data supply. The primary objective of the dissemination activities is to increase the level of usage of ICP-Africa results by researchers, planners, and policymakers. Those activities should include publishing the results in different forms (hard copies, CD-Roms, AfDB website, press releases etc.), informing all stakeholders about the availability of the results, conducting press conferences, developing databases, and holding

dissemination workshops. These activities should be conducted in collaboration with all stakeholders who participated in the implementation of the program. Specifically, it is expected that the dissemination activities will:

- Promote better access to use of the results by data users, researchers, and planners;
- Create greater awareness about the importance of ICP data among data users, researchers, planners, and decision and policymakers;
- Give greater emphasis to transforming the data into information, i.e. that data generation should dovetail with data dissemination activities to make results more “user-friendly”;
- Help in defining research questions, especially with respect to interdisciplinary research activities outside statistics and economics.

It is also critical to conduct advocacy activities to create strategic alliances among stakeholders, including decisionmakers, policymakers, and data producers. The aim is to break the vicious circle where too few resources are allocated to statistics, resulting in poor quality and inaccessible data, which in turn undermines the value of statistics and discourages policymakers from allocating further resources to its activities.

### **4.3 Strengthening fundamental principles of partnership**

Effective partnerships can be very difficult to achieve and rely on adherence to some fundamental principles for creating synergy among the collaborative institutions, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the whole partnership process. Those principles have been underlined by Spink and Merrill-Sand (1999) and include:

- *Power equity:* A partnership process may break down if its members feel that they are not given credit for their contribution or are devalued. Power equity can be created through an active and full participation of all partners, information sharing among partners, negotiated and transparent priority setting, and a clear assignment of roles and responsibilities.
- *Interdependency and complementarity:* Because of the nature of the ICP, no single country or institution can implement the program alone; this requires the collaboration of all stakeholders. The complexity of ICP requires a broad knowledge base, innovative tools, and diverse expertise. This need for complementarity and interdependency has to be recognized by all partners early in the formation of the partnership.

Members need to appreciate that collectively, the partnership will create something that they cannot achieve individually (the whole being greater than the sum of its parts).

- *Mutual accountability:* The success of the partnership depends on each member fulfilling their responsibilities and commitments in a timely fashion. This can be achieved through the development of a shared ownership of the program, making the partners aware that their reputation is at stake and vesting the group with authority to exercise agreed sanctions.
- *Communication:* It is essential to have effective communication channels among partners at the managerial and operational levels, as well as a good information flow and capacity to delegate within the institutions forming the partnership. Special emphasis should be placed on ensuring continuity of the activities and personnel, and on setting up regular contacts by means of meetings, video-conferences, phone, fax, and email.
- *Assessment of the process:* The whole process needs to be reviewed midterm in order to identify any shortcomings and take any corrective measures that may necessary. At the end of the program, a self-assessment should be undertaken by all members to provide feedback on the partnership's strengths and weaknesses. The results of the self-assessment will be used to explore ways of improving weak areas. The findings of both the midterm review and the self-assessment should be properly documented as lessons learnt, and used to increase the effectiveness of future partnerships for the implementation of regional statistical initiatives.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The nature of the program, the number and dispersion of participating countries, along with their differences in statistical capacity, and the imperative to meet deadlines set at global and regional levels, make the implementation of ICP-Africa a complex and challenging operation. The complexity of the program has been largely overcome through collaborative working partnerships between the AfDB and the other stakeholders.

The use of the same tools across countries, and the need to conduct statistical operations at the same time in different countries, provided some

leverage and spillover benefits to working together as a single statistical system. Economies of scale were achieved by sharing and jointly producing information, and by pooling limited human and financial resources.

The ICP-Africa Implementation Model served to link up statistical development stakeholders in the region. By adopting participatory approaches and sharing experiences and best practices, the model has contributed to the enhancement of statistical capacity in Africa.

The model can be used to implement any regional statistical initiative aimed at tackling common statistical challenges facing countries and/or at producing common statistical goods. Through its collaborative approach, the ICP-Africa Implementation Model allows countries to reap benefits that they could not achieve individually.

## REFERENCES

Adam, A. (2004), "Survey Guidelines and Price Collection." Paper presented at the Second Regional ICP-Africa Seminar, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 26 April-04 May.

Adam, A. (2007a), "Data Quality Issues in Surveys of the International Comparison Program for Africa (ICP-Africa)," *African Statistical Journal*, vol. 5.

Adam, A. (2007b), "Concept Note on Short-Term Training Program within the Framework of the Statistical Capacity Building Program." Unpublished paper, April.

African Development Bank (2004), *Multinational Program: Proposal for Financing Support for Statistical Capacity Building in Regional Member Countries under the International Comparison Program for Africa*.

Africa Rice Center (WARDA) (1999), *The West and Central Africa Rice Research and Development Network*.

Mouyelo-Katoula, M. (2002), "The International Comparison Program for Africa (ICP-Africa) Objectives and Strategy." Presentation at the Launch Meeting of the International Comparison Program for Africa (ICP-Africa), Addis Ababa, 2-4 December.

Spink, L. and D. Merrill-Sands (1999), *Successful Collaborative Partnerships: Key Elements and a Self-Assessment Inventory*. Boston, MA: Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change.

World Bank (2004), *ICP Handbook*, Ch. 6: “Sampling and Price Collection.”