

Cooperation with Africa

G20 Argentina 

T20 Africa, G20 and Africa: Assessing Our Impact and Influence

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The T20 comprises think tanks that aim at developing research and evidence-based briefs and positions to guide governments in policy development. The T20 Africa Standing Group was established in 2017 to bring together think tanks from the G20 and African countries to work together on G20 policy matters. But as of now there is little information about T20 Africa's influence and impact on G20-Africa related policies. Our recommendations are: a) for T20 Africa to define success criteria for their group; b) establish a communication structure within T20 Africa; c) monitor and share status of every policy recommendation; d) collaborate with B20 and think tanks from the other engagement groups; e) conduct impact assessments during every G20 Presidency with the finance track; and f) develop a post-G20 Summit strategy to monitor and coordinate Africa-related policies and initiatives.

Challenge

As one of the key political and economic forums in the world, the G20 Summit was created to facilitate a stable and peaceful world through promoting several development agendas. Decisions taken by this forum help to support reform at the national and international levels. Since its creation in 2012, the T20 has comprised think tanks that aim at developing research and evidence-based briefs and recommendations to guide governments in policy development. The T20 Africa Standing Group established in 2017 should monitor the extent to which its policy recommendations on Africa-related issues have influenced and impacted policies and plans that emerge out of the G20.

This is particularly important for Africa with South Africa being the only African member in the G20. It is clear that African perspectives and priorities are severely underrepresented in the G20. Though the chairs of the African Union and the Heads of States and Government Coordination Committee of the New Partnership for Africa's Development were accepted as observers at the G20 meetings, this level of engagement is still insufficient. Given the number of relationships and interdependencies between Africa and the G20 countries and the world¹ and how the interests of G20 members are prioritized first and foremost², policies that emerge out of the G20 directly impact development in Africa and the world. As a result, it is critical to assess the impact of T20 Africa on the policy development process and the effects of these policies on social and economic development in Africa.

The T20 was not created to bring about consensus amongst members on specific topics or to participate in the decision-making process. Instead, its objective is to provide concrete, feasible policy recommendations, ideas and visions to inform the policy-making process.³ Nonetheless, it is argued that implementing and utilizing a culture and mechanism of monitoring, evaluation, reporting, accountability and learning (MEARL) would:

1. a) help enable before-and-after comparisons and gauge performance, efficiency and effectiveness;

2. b) ensure that the T20 process positively impacts G20 policies for Africa and the world;
3. c) influence a shift in the culture of the T20 to adapt a results-based mindset and framework;
4. d) help bring about greater transparency in the negotiation and decision-making process; and
5. e) confirm and validate whether policies are aligned with different global agendas.

All successful MEARL systems require buy-in from all levels, especially the top, and shifts in organizational and cultural frameworks and structures. G20 leaders, undoubtedly, are results-minded. They want to see gainful change in their country and ensure greater representation of voices, interests and perspectives, which is why the seven Engagement Groups were created. Unfortunately, this is not enough. Without a MEARL or another similar system, it is difficult to confirm and validate whether the process is truly inclusive, how many recommendations are considered and implemented, and what impact T20 has. Given the size of the T20, it may be best to pilot a MEAL mechanism first in T20 Africa before scaling it to the greater T20 group.

Additionally, the mutual assessment process (MAP) was published by the IMF in January 2010. MAP tracks the progress made on each G20 member country plans and commitments.⁴ While this is a worthy exercise, it does not focus specifically on the G20's commitments to and impact on Africa.

Proposal

Proposal 1: Collectively, as T20 Africa, Define Success

The Engagement Groups were created for a particular purpose but there are no mechanisms currently in place to assess whether the groups' objectives are met. In order for T20 Africa to know whether it has achieved its purpose or objectives during each Presidency, metrics of success should be developed. For instance, the B20 measures success by the frequency in which the G20 explicitly references their work, the number of recommendations that were included in the final declaration or reflected in G20 documents as commitments or mandates.⁵

Indicators are useful for monitoring progress and providing feedback on areas of success and areas in which improvement may be required. They define what success and impact look like and determine whether we are moving toward achieving our desired outcomes – in this case, whether T20 Africa contributed to G20 policies and Africa's economic and social development. These indicators and metrics should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.

For starters, simple output-oriented indicators can be developed to track the number of recommendations that emerged from T20 Africa and how many were considered. This will require a little extra work, but having this information, as the B20 does, would allow T20 Africa to collectively speak about its influence.

Proposal 2: Establish a communication structure within T20 Africa

Establishing a communication structure with regular feedback loops within T20 Africa would a) provide greater strategic focus for the policy briefs based on the objectives of each Presidency and b) allow for internal conversations within the group to reflect on the achievements for the year and how to improve the following year. The T20 Africa governance board is well placed for this. The T20 Africa governance board involves member think tanks from the incoming and outgoing T20 presidency as well as rotation among African think tanks. This allows for feedback loops to facilitate greater learning and knowledge sharing.

Proposal 3: Monitor and Share Status of Every Policy Recommendation

While the G20 is not an implementing agency, the decisions that emerge from G20 countries have significant influence. As it stands, engagement groups do not have an official, standardized and public mechanism or tool to monitor the uptake and implementation of policy recommendations. It would be highly desirable to build capacity in the T20 Africa to effectively monitor policy recommendations that emerge from the group and publicly share their status – whether and when they were considered by the G20 and the implementing agency. This can be done by logging all recommendations and their status into a simple online platform. With this information, researchers can continue to track the aftermath and performance of these recommendations to assess impact to the beneficiaries.⁵

#	Policy Recommendation	Policy Area	Status	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Provide support to African efforts to implement tax information sharing and transparency measures	Inclusive and Sustainable Growth	Considered								
	African countries should be given the opportunity to influence global standards on exchange of tax information, and should seize this opportunity	Inclusive and Sustainable Growth	Declined								
	Funds for scholarships	Political & Social Environment: Education	Declined								
	Support for teacher capacity building programs and more digital-centric education	Political & Social Environment: Education	Considered								
	Enhanced research collaborations	Political & Social Environment: Education	Considered								
	Increased private sector involvement	Political & Social Environment: Education	Considered								
	Increased private sector involvement	Political & Social Environment: Education	Considered								
	Increased private sector involvement	Political & Social Environment: Education	Declined								
	Increased private sector involvement	Political & Social Environment: Education	Declined								
	Increased private sector involvement	Political & Social Environment: Education	Declined								

Proposal 4: Collaborate with the other T20 engagement groups

For T20 Africa policies that are considered, collaboration should be sought with B20 and other engagement groups to fully assess the financial and social implications of the policy. This thorough cost-benefit analysis would shed greater light on the feasibility on the execution, on any previously unknown positive and/or negative externalities, and the associated financial gains and losses.

Proposal 5: Conduct Impact Assessment in Every Presidency

An impact assessment should be conducted during every Presidency focused on the priorities and agenda of that Presidency. For instance, the Argentina Presidency focuses on three key issues: the future of work, infrastructure for development and a sustainable food future. From here, we can examine the policy recommendations from T20 Africa that are considered by the G20 and begin to assess how and whether they are aligned within the current Presidency's framework.

For a more ambitious impact agenda that further examines the implementation of commitments by G20 member states, an evaluation similar to the one conducted by the International Organizations Research Institute of the National Research University Higher School of Economics and the G20 Research Group of the University of Toronto in 2012⁶ could be done for T20 Africa recommendations. It is more feasible to limit the impact analysis to only T20 Africa recommendations that were considered. To take it a step further, additional analysis could be done to look at the potential impact of those recommendations on Africa's social and economic development using, when applicable, indicators from global agendas like Agenda 2030, Agenda 2063, and COP 21, amongst others.

Proposal 6: Develop a post G20 Summit strategy to monitor and coordinate Africa related policies and initiatives

Without sufficient African presence in the G20, it is especially important to understand what impact, if any, G20 declarations and initiatives have on African countries. As a result, a strategy should be developed to assess, monitor, and coordinate actions and initiatives related to African countries and institutions at G20 level. Additionally, this information needs to be publicly available. While the G20 Africa Monitor is one possible platform to monitor Africa related policies and coordination, serious conversation is needed in order to decide whether it is the best platform for this objective.

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Existing Initiatives & Analysis