In 2014, the African Union adopted its *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa to 2024* (STISA-2024), which calls on member states to 'accelerate Africa's transition to an innovation-led [and] knowledge-based economy'. This is one of the long-term goals of the African Union's *Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want*, adopted in 2013. However, there is currently no official implementation plan for *STISA-2024*, nor any official set of indicators.

In February 2020, the first continental report on the implementation of *Agenda 2063* was released, based on reports received from 31 member states. Assessed against the seven aspirations of *Agenda 2063*,[15] Southern Africa is one of the worst-performing regions, along with Central Africa, as it has achieved only 25% of the relevant targets. East Africa, by contrast, has achieved 39% of its own targets.

The report also highlights the notable progress made by the continent in implementing its African Union Flagship Projects (see Table 19.3). For instance, the Single African Air Transport Market was launched in January 2018 and formally established by the *Solemn Commitment*, signed by 29 member states accounting for almost 80% of intra-African air traffic. By 2020, 32 member states had signed the 2018 *Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community on the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment*, which falls under the African Union's Free Movement of People and the African Passport project (see Table 19.3).

Limited progress in education, health and cybersecurity

There has been limited progress in areas relating to education, health and cybersecurity. For instance, a flagship project focused on imparting quality education and medical tele-expertise to African Union member states, in collaboration with top Indian academic and medical institutions, was discontinued in 2017. By this point, it had seen 22 000 students graduate in various undergraduate and graduate disciplines, conducted 770 annual telemedicine consultations and held 6 700 medical education sessions for nurses and doctors.

In cybersecurity, only four of the required 15 member states have ratified the *Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection* (2014, see also Chapter 18). Although data protection guidelines were developed and launched in 2018, many African countries are still in the early stages of developing domestic cyberstrategies.

Plans for an African Medicines Agency

The African Union has established several institutions which should help to realize the objectives of STISA-2024 (Table 20.2). Other continental strategies complement these institutions, such as the *Continental Education Strategy for Africa* (2016) to 2025, the *African Space Strategy* (2017) and the revised *African Health Strategy 2016–2030* (2016).

One focus of the *African Health Strategy* is to mobilize research and innovation to address Africa's health challenges. WHO's *Research for Health Strategy for the African Region 2016–2025* supplements this strategy (WHO-AFRO, 2015). The adoption of a treaty by ministers of health in May 2018 for the establishment of the African Medicines Agency represents a giant step towards harmonizing the continent's regulatory framework for drugs.

Support for evidence-based policy-making

The year 2016 saw the launch of the Science Granting Councils Initiative, a continental, multi-funder initiative to strengthen the capacities of science granting councils in sub-Saharan Africa.* It focuses on strengthening councils' capacities to support evidence-based policy-making. A cross-cutting theme is to promote women's participation in science, technology and innovation (STI).

Through this initiative, the science granting councils engage in capacity building activities; designing and monitoring research programmes, utilizing robust STI indicators; supporting knowledge exchange with the private sector; and establishing partnerships between the councils and other actors (Chataway *et al.*, 2019).

Table 20.2: **Institutions established to support the *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa to 2024***

Institutions linked directly to *STISA-2024*	
African Scientific, Research and Innovation Council (est. 2016)	has a mandate to implement *STISA-2024*
African Observatory of Science, Technology and Innovation (est. 2016)	a continental repository for statistics and a source of analysis for evidence-based policy-making; produces the *African Innovation Outlook*
Pan-African Intellectual Property Organization (est. 2016)	yet to be ratified by any country (at least 15 required, see Box 19.3)
Institutions linked indirectly to *STISA-2024*	
Pan-African Private Sector Trade and Investment Committee (est. 2015)	expected to be the precursor to an African Business Council, envisaged under the African Continental Free Trade Area architecture
Africa Virtual and E-learning University (est. 2015)	advancing slowly due to inadequate staffing and equipment for the delivery of online courses
Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (est. 2015)	expected to play a key role in developing public health institutes (see Box 19.2)
Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government championing Education, Science and Technology (est. 2015)	directly supporting implementation of *STISA-2024* in each of Africa's geographical regions; first meeting held in Malawi in 2018
Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (est. 2014)	developed in partnership with the Association of African Universities

Source: AU (2019); Table 20.2: Anneline Morgan, SADC Secretariat