

# Enhancing Collaboration in African Transportation Research, Policy, and Practice

7<sup>th</sup> January 2025

African Infrastructure and Cities Discussion Group

*presented by* Margaret-Avis Akofio-Sowah, PhD



# Introduction

## Background:

- PhD in Civil Engineering, specializing in infrastructure management.
- 15 years of experience in transportation research and strategy consulting.

## Passion:

- Committed to advancing sustainable and inclusive transportation solutions across Africa.
- Advocate for empowering students and young professionals in STEM fields.

## Connect with Me:



**Margaret-Avis Akofio-Sowah, PhD**  
**ATRA Co-Founder**



# Our Intentions for Today

- Explore opportunities to enhance collaboration in transportation research, policy, and practice.
- Share ATRA's vision and current activities.
- Discuss synergies and pathways for engagement.



# Interactive Poll 1

**From your experience, what do you see as the biggest opportunity or challenge for African transportation research?**

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Or use QR code



# Key Challenges in Research Collaboration

## In conducting research

- Limited funding and resources to support relevant research topics
- Inconsistent support and prioritization of research in the national agenda
- Reliable data availability and quality (including standardization)
- Technological and institutional barriers

## In collaborating with others

- Underrepresentation of African researchers in global forums
- Lack of platforms to facilitate collaboration
- Limited awareness of synergistic opportunities and stakeholder engagement



# The Case for Collaboration

*“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”*  
– African Proverb

Collaboration offers researchers opportunities for:

- **Multidisciplinary insights** – diverse expertise and holistic solutions
- **Resource sharing** – pooling financial, technical, and human resources, data, and infrastructure
- **Enhanced innovation and creativity** – cross-pollination of ideas and global best practices
- **Knowledge transfer** – shared solutions to similar challenges and policy harmonization across borders
- **Increased impact and visibility** – enhanced credibility and amplified results with a critical mass
- **Enhanced funding opportunities** – access to more diverse funding sources

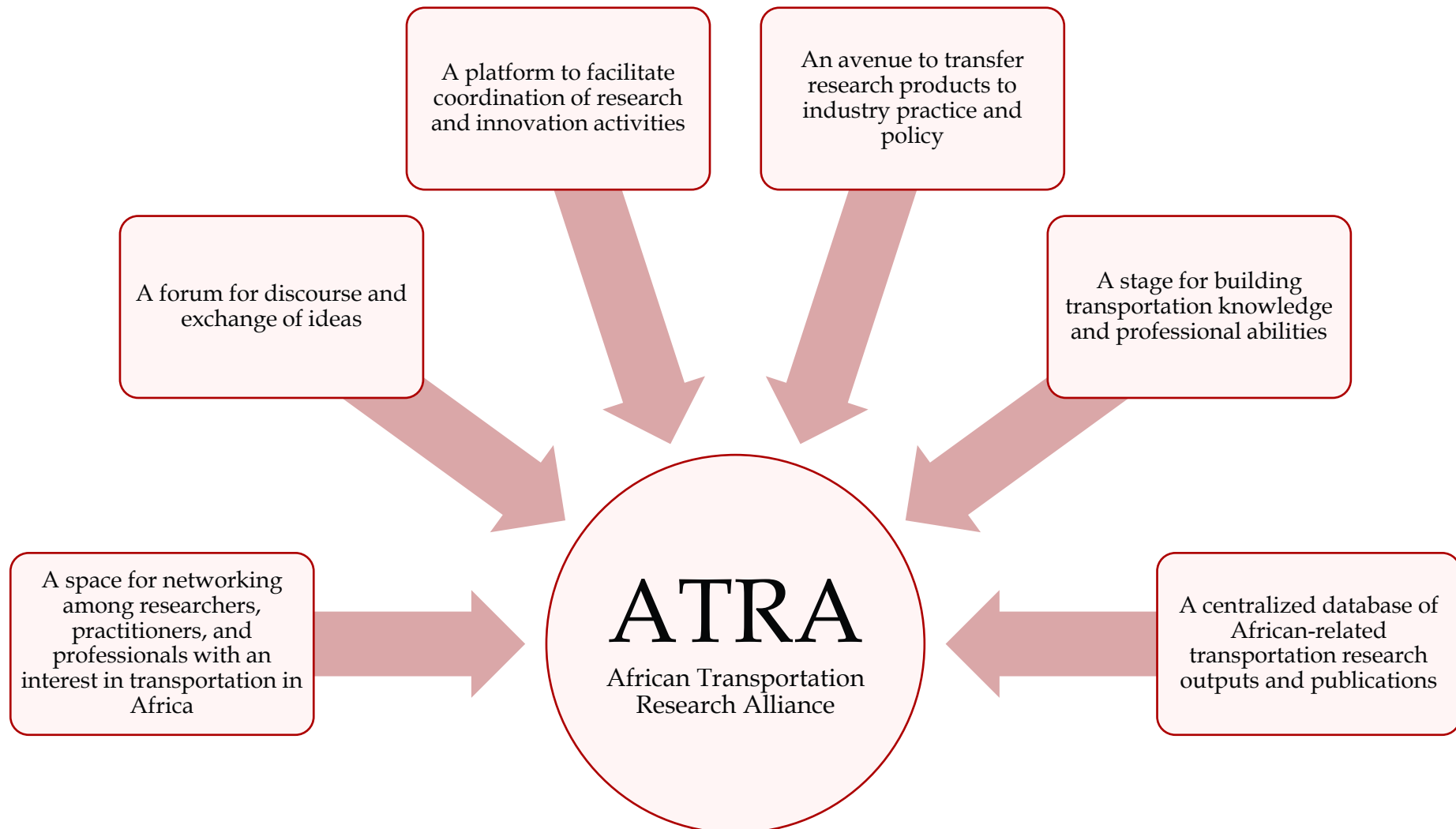


# Opportunities to Advance Collaboration

- Joint educational programs and capacity building workshops
- Funding and grant opportunities that require collaborative solutions
- Digital collaboration platforms and tools, including data sharing platforms
- Community-informed research and stakeholder engagement forums
- Innovative research models like living labs and pilot projects
- Research partnerships with government agencies or private sector companies
- Regional and international research networks and initiatives



# Introducing ATRA







# Key Activities



## Networking, coordination and collaboration

Global conferences and events  
Facilitating collaboration opportunities



## Education, knowledge-sharing, professional development

Peer exchanges  
Mentoring, course development & delivery  
Public webinars and seminars



## Research and innovation implementation

Research focus groups  
Practitioner and policymaker workshops  
Training and capacity building



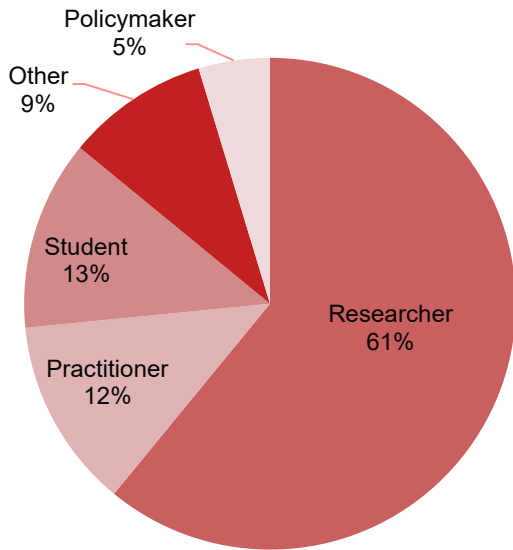
## Communication

Research database  
Journals and publications  
Electronic communications (e.g. newsletters, blogs, social media)

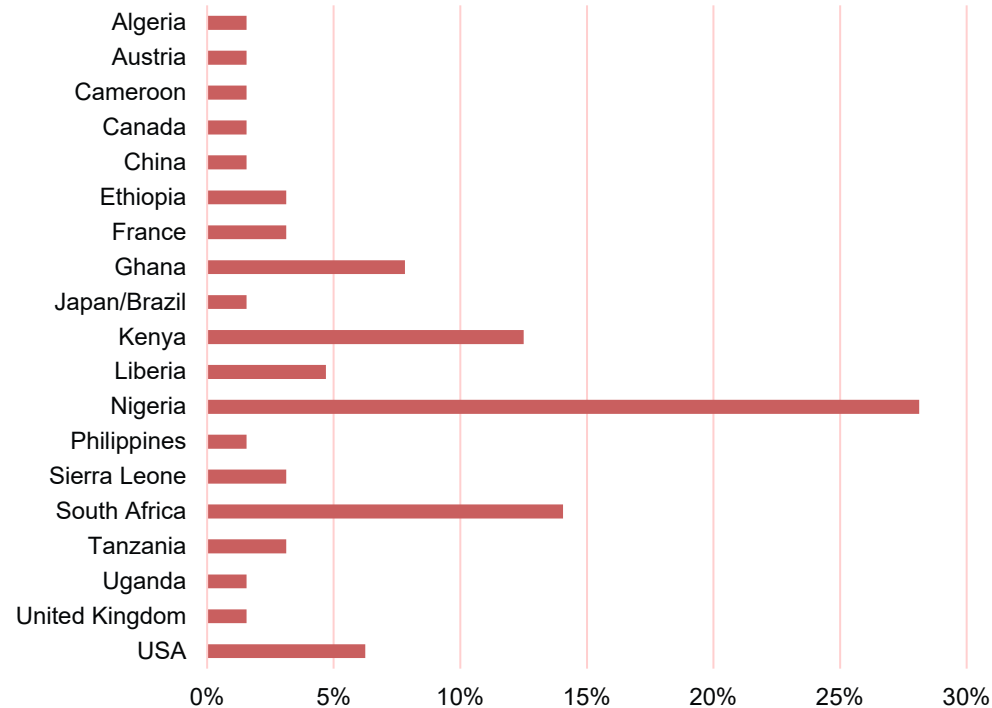


# Network Outreach & Engagement

ATRA Network Occupation



ATRA Network Country Represented



## ATRA Network Digest

Issue 1 | June 2024

*The African Transportation Research Alliance is an organization dedicated to the advancement of African transportation research, policy, and practice by bringing transportation professionals together to coordinate research, exchange knowledge, share good practice, and facilitate implementation of innovative ideas. ATRA provides a forum for collaboration, education, and professional development for transportation students, researchers, practitioners and policymakers in Africa and the African Diaspora.*

**Welcome to our first ever newsletter where we will be highlighting African transportation events, research and activities.**

Olandiridwa  
Kaabo bienvenido  
welkom  
Siyakwamkela Akwaaba  
welcome



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# 2024 Event Highlights

Plenary panel discussion on the future of African transport research at the **2024 African Transport Research Conference (ATRC)**, Cape Town, South Africa (March 2024)



*Partners are welcome to reach out to us at [info@atranetwork.org](mailto:info@atranetwork.org) to discuss opportunities for collaboration in 2025 and beyond.*

ATRA Update - TRB 2025

Panel discussion on “Critical Issues in Transportation Across the African Continent” featuring key panelists, including **P.S. Madalo Nyambose**, Permanent Secretary of Transportation in Malawi; **Prof. Gift Dumedah** from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana; and **Dr. Charles Kunaka**, Lead Transport Specialist at the World Bank.

## Critical Issues in Transportation Across the African Continent

Friday, March 22, 2024 @ 1-3pm

World Bank HQ,  
1818 H St NW,  
Washington, DC  
20433

### WHO ARE WE?

An organization dedicated to the advancement of African transportation research, policy, and practice by bringing transportation professionals together to coordinate research, exchange knowledge, share good practice, and facilitate implementation of innovative ideas. ATRA provides a forum for collaboration, education, and professional development for transportation students, researchers, practitioners, advocates and policymakers in Africa and the African Diaspora.

### WHY JOIN ATRA?

- Learn about the latest developments in transportation research in Africa
- Collaborate on research problem statements and funding opportunities
- Discuss critical and emerging issues in transportation across Africa
- Increase global visibility and promotion of African transportation research
- Access industry experts and thought leaders globally
- Develop your expertise and participate in capacity building opportunities
- Recruit rising and seasoned African transportation talent

### OUR VISION

Enhance the visibility and realized impacts of transport research by Africans, in Africa, and about Africa

### OUR VALUES

**Collaboration**  
Connecting people and resources  
**Networking**  
Developing meaningful relationships  
**Amplifying Knowledge**  
Sharing expertise and promoting mentorship  
**Meaningful Impact**  
Implementing innovative research insights

### CONTACT US

IG/Threads/TikTok: @ATRAnetwork  
FB/Meta: @ATRAnetworkOfficial  
[atra.communications@gmail.com](mailto:atra.communications@gmail.com)

Virtual keynote address in a special session titled “**Unlocking a Pathway to Low Carbon, Resilient Transport in Low-Income Countries Whilst Still Enabling Economic Growth**” in partnership with the High Volume Transport Applied Research Program at the **IRF 2024 World Congress**, Istanbul, Turkey (October 2024)





# Short- to Mid-Term Planned Activities

- **Critical Issues in Transportation Across Africa:** a collaborative research effort to identify priority areas of importance for the transportation industry
- **Research Implementation & Knowledge Transfer Workshops:** facilitating conversations between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to drive adoption of research outputs
- **Mentoring and Capacity Building for Students:** supporting participation in global educational opportunities and providing training and development



# Engage with ATRA

- **Join the Network:** Participate as a member, volunteer, or contributor.
- **Share Expertise:** Collaborate on research projects, events, or mentorship programs.
- **Partner with Us:** Collaborate on funding initiatives, sponsorships, or joint projects.



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to connect directly



# Share Your Thoughts

- How could collaboration help you achieve your goals? What do you need for better collaboration?
- What areas of transportation research do you believe need the most focus in Africa?
- How can your expertise or organization contribute to ATRA's mission?

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*The bold vision of ATRA: where the power of collaboration and innovation drives effective programs and research to impact policy decisions and infrastructure development.*

**THANK YOU.**



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