



**Report on Enhancing monitoring
and evaluation in the Regional
Coordination Mechanism
for Africa**



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



**African Union
Commission**

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I. Introduction

1. The objective of the present report is to assist all partners, working in the context of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) and the Subregional Coordination Mechanisms (SRCMs), in preparing credible reports on their activities and achievements. It is meant to strengthen the present monitoring and evaluation tools that are being used in RCM-Africa and SRCMs by providing simple information and guidelines for articulating realistic objectives and expected accomplishments; and for using performance indicators in monitoring the extent to which set objectives and expected accomplishments have been met.

2. RCM-Africa and SRCMs have encountered continued difficulties to effectively track activities undertaken, tangible results and real impact of its interventions in support of the priorities of the African Union and its organs, the regional economic communities and other regional and subregional organizations. These are among the challenges that have been observed at the various annual sessions of RCM-Africa and SRCMs, which urged members of the Mechanisms to focus on a limited number of activities and place more attention on results.

3. The minimum requirement to report on coordination mechanism activities in a credible manner, is the existence of a well articulated results framework comprised of clearly defined:

- Objectives
- Expected accomplishments
- Performance indicators
- Activities supported by credible data.

4. These are, in essence, the key elements of results-based management and provide the linkages between activities and results. The results framework is vital for accountability, monitoring and evaluation, and in demonstrating the value added made by coordinating the activities undertaken by organizations of the United Nations to its beneficiaries.

5. The level, to which results-based management has been embraced by RCM-Africa and SRCMs members, has depended on the extent to which they are held accountable for results by their governing bodies and the availability of results-based management skills, among other factors. Moreover, while different members of the Mechanisms may have organizational units or skilled staff members responsible for driving this process internally, such expertise may not be readily available for use by all actors in RCM-Africa and SRCMs, be it at the level of the Joint Secretariat, clusters and subclusters. The present report aims to tackle these challenges by providing useful information and guidelines for all those working in the context of RCM-Africa and SRCMs, including a description of what is considered to be a RCM or SRCM activity.

6. Section 2 of the report focuses on the importance of setting objectives and provides guiding principles for RCM-Africa and SRCMs based on the current priorities of the African Union; section 3 proposes a definition, an approach and indicators for a monitoring and evaluation framework that could be used by the different clusters and subclusters of RCM-Africa and SRCMs. This section examines the selection of appropriate activities, and the setting of expected accomplishments and performance indicators for tracking progress. It presents the key elements of a performance monitoring and evaluation plan, including the

importance of data collection, analysis and reporting, and makes a case for results-based reporting. Section 4 concludes the report with a suggested template.

II. Setting objectives

A. Guiding principles

7. The activities of RCM-Africa and SRCMs should be linked to the rationale for their establishment. Both Mechanisms serve as a framework for the United Nations family to work together in supporting the priorities of the African Union and its organs, the regional economic communities and other regional and subregional organizations. RCM-Africa exists to promote and enhance United Nations system-wide policy coherence, coordination and cooperation at the regional level to “deliver as one” in response to identified regional priorities and initiatives of the African Union.

8. SRCMs are also, for a similar purpose, serving as vehicles for the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system operating at the subregional level to work with the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations. This is with a view to reducing fragmentation in their operations and increasing coherence, coordination and cooperation in their support for the programmes and priorities of the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations operating at the subregional level. There are four SRCMs operating in Africa covering North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa.¹ Accordingly, the *raison d’être* of both Mechanisms is to support the achievement of this objective by fulfilling the following functions:

(a) Coordinating the United Nations system’s interaction with African Union organs and organizations, including the regional economic communities;

(b) Providing a high-level policy forum for exchanging views on major strategic developments and challenges faced by the region and its subregions, and providing a platform for the region to interact with the global level;

(c) Devising coherent regional policy responses to selected global priorities and initiatives, and providing regional perspectives to the global level on such issues as the Millennium Development Goals, the post-2015 development agenda, sustainable development goals; climate change challenges and green growth, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, response to the financial and economic crisis);

(d) Promoting policy coherence and joint programming in support of regional and subregional integration efforts and initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism, and the African Union’s Agenda 2063;

(e) Promoting inter-agency and inter-organization coordination and collaboration in terms of response to policy recommendations and analytical findings emanating from

¹ Eastern and Southern Africa is served by one SRCM covering three regional economic communities –the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, and the Southern African Development Community – considering the tripartite arrangement between the three where coordination is already institutionally operational. The Economic Commission for Africa’s Subregional Office for Eastern Africa and Subregional Office for Southern Africa facilitate the work of this SRCM.

regional and subregional strategic priorities and plans, including through joint programming and joint activities in areas of common interest and focus;

(f) Providing the forum for exchange of best practices and lessons learned, and for analysis and elaboration of inter-agency and inter-organization normative and analytical frameworks in response to the identified focus and priority issues mentioned above.

9. As mentioned above, the African Union and the regional economic communities have identified their areas of priority, and this should guide the support they receive from the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. These priorities have been articulated in the strategic plans of the organizations. Capacity development and progress towards achievement of these priorities should be a key objective of coordinating the United Nations system's support to African Union organizations.

10. To sustain the development gains achieved through the adoption of NEPAD, the Assembly of the African Union adopted in January 2015 the Agenda 2063 as a new framework for Africa's development, a "radical transformation at all levels and in all spheres". Also, the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, adopted in July 2015, will guide the transformation efforts in the short-to-medium term along with the sustainable development goals that are being finalized to replace the Millennium Development Goals, which includes the common African position, adopted as Africa's contribution to the post-2015 development agenda. The framework for a renewed United Nations and African Union Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda will guide cooperation efforts on the determined priorities.

11. RCM-Africa and SRCMs are the platforms for achieving the above objective. They allow organizations and agencies of the United Nations system to act as effective partners in supporting African organizations to meet their priorities and aspirations. Both Mechanisms should therefore aim at meeting the expressed needs of their beneficiaries. A well-articulated monitoring and evaluation framework is needed to increase coherence of the coordination efforts and to assist in measuring the extent to which the mechanisms achieve their mandates through the activities and programmes.

B. Aim and objectives of a monitoring and evaluation framework

12. The aim of a monitoring and evaluation framework is to provide common sets of indicators for tracking progress made and results achieved in implementing activities in agreed priority areas. Key objectives of a monitoring and evaluation framework are to:

(a) Set benchmarks, evaluate progress, identify obstacles, share good practices and generate inputs to further enhance implementation and achieve the goals set in any framework, be it Agenda 2063, sustainable development goals, the Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda, etc.;

(b) Serve as a guideline to enhance monitoring and evaluation efforts, and expedite coordination and implementation;

(c) Facilitate reporting to relevant organs such as the RCM-Africa annual sessions, SRCM sessions, the General Assembly and African Union platforms.

III. Monitoring and evaluation framework: definition, approach and indicators

13. Monitoring refers to the regular collection of information to assess progress in the implementation of a given programme, project or activity – for example, in the context of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063. Evaluation involves periodic collection of information and analysis in terms of achievement of the objective, outcomes and impact measured against, for instance, the priority components of the First Ten-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063.

14. Monitoring and evaluation both capture the life of the various interventions and programmes as resources are transformed into outcomes and impacts reflected on tangible situations. In the context of RCM-Africa for example, the generic flow in terms of monitoring and evaluation would be that the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system would mobilize resources as inputs (human and financial resources, equipment, etc.) which are allocated to implement and realize the provisions and key areas of various components of the African Union priorities to generate outputs. These outputs in turn will translate into outcomes at the beneficiary level and spread out to specific groups as an effective and tangible result. Accordingly, a monitoring and evaluation framework reflects this sequence closely using verifiable indicators.

15. In other words, a monitoring and evaluation framework is anchored on the main components of the objective to be achieved and the indicators are derived from its provisions or aspirations. It is encouraged to identify a sufficient number of indicators in each of the components in order to be able to monitor progress made in each of the areas, and identify aspects that need improvement. The items listed below make up a monitoring and evaluation framework.

A. Select activities with clearly stated and measurable objectives

16. In line with the functions mentioned above, possible deliverables by RCM-Africa and SRCMs include:

- (a) Regional policy inputs and guidelines on priority issues;
- (b) Regional inputs to global conferences;
- (c) Joint inter-agency and inter-organization support to regional and subregional initiatives and integration efforts;
- (d) Monitoring trends and joint analysis relating to major regional and subregional issues and challenges;
- (e) Policy frameworks or regional action plans on cross-sectoral and other strategic issues to be dealt with at the regional level;
- (f) Joint regional publications on a selected number of issues of high relevance to the post-2015 development agenda, based on the analytical and policy work made by participating organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, individually and collectively;

- (g) Regional mapping of expertise and programmes.

17. It is critical to select and carry out activities that have clearly stated objectives for which measurable indicators and expected accomplishments can be defined. A few examples are listed below, drawn from previous activities by clusters of RCM-Africa with the objective of strengthening the capacity of the African Union in the areas of peace and security, democracy and governance. The following activities were focused on:

- (a) Creating and managing a data base system for the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit of the African Union;
- (b) Developing a roster of African electoral observers and experts;
- (c) Conducting courses at both the African Union and regional levels for carefully selected mission leaders (civilian, military and police) who could be deployed in the African Union-mandated peace support operation;
- (d) Translating training materials into the working languages of the African Union;
- (e) Conducting courses at training centres of excellence accredited by the African Union;
- (f) Sharing of United Nations experience and knowledge related to operations at logistics and support bases;
- (g) Supporting the creation of a roster of African mediators and experts;
- (h) Developing African Union and United Nations mediation partnership guidelines on the basis of lessons learned from joint mediation efforts in Darfur, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, and Somalia;
- (i) Building capacity for disaster response by training emergency response teams, which have been deployed in response to disasters in African countries;
- (j) Providing awareness training on humanitarian principles, as part of the training for the African Standby Force;
- (k) Providing a database of experts to help in undertaking the African Peer Review Mechanism reviews;
- (l) Providing technical assistance personnel, material and financial support;
- (m) Developing and strengthening information and communication systems.

B. Setting expected accomplishments

18. The expected accomplishments, also referred to as outcomes and outputs by some organizations (see box 1), must lead to the achievement of objectives. They should articulate what should happen in order to meet the objectives. Expected accomplishments are changes that occur because of interventions. They are the direct consequence or effect of the generation of outputs and delivery of services in a specific period. They should reflect an incremental positive change for end-users and beneficiaries.

19. The expected accomplishments should therefore determine the type of activities to be undertaken. Based on past experience, activities delivered by RCM-Africa and SRCMs could be grouped into the following broad categories:

- (a) Coordination meetings;
- (b) Capacity-building of the African Union organs and organizations, including the regional economic communities;
- (c) Direct support for the implementation of the African Union and regional economic community priority activities.

20. The reconfiguration of RCM-Africa that is being requested and being proposed might come up with a different approach, but it is likely that these categories could continue with an increasing call for more collaboration through jointly implemented activities focused on capacity-building. In line with the above categories, expected accomplishments could be formulated to reflect:

- (a) Improved coordination of activities at the level of RCM-Africa and SRCMs;
- (b) Improved capacity of African Union organs and organizations, including the regional economic communities, to deliver on their priorities;
- (c) Increased contribution of the organization and agencies of the United Nations system, and through RCM-Africa and SRCMs to the formulation and implementation of the African Union and regional economic community strategic programmes and plans.

Box 1.

Hierarchy of results: expectations from the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa

Concerns about inadequate reporting of tangible results by RCM-Africa and SRCMs are often due to the lack of linkages between activities undertaken in the framework of the Mechanisms and changes in African countries, such as improvements in physical infrastructure, in poverty reduction, and creation of employment. While these changes are the ultimate goal, it is important to point out that there is a chain of events and a time lag, involving several actors and beneficiaries, between an intervention at the level of RCM-Africa and SRCMs and the desired impact at the level of an African country.

Some organizations categorize accomplishments into outputs and outcomes to facilitate the attribution of responsibility for results achieved. In this regard, outputs are immediate changes observed in beneficiaries as a result of specific interventions. This may be an appropriate target for RCM-Africa and SRCMs, especially as yearly progress reports are presented to annual sessions of the Mechanisms. Outcomes happen sometime after an intervention and are attributed, in most cases only partially, to the changes caused by the intervention.

For instance, while building the capacity to develop regional programmes (such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa) may be an output, mainstreaming such programmes into national plans require additional interventions (sometimes by other actors) would take more time, and would be considered an outcome. It would be difficult for RCM-Africa and SRCMs to report on outcomes a year or less after an intervention. It would even be more difficult to report on impacts such as welfare gains in local populations at country level.

A recommended approach to deal with this hierarchy of results (outputs, outcomes, and impacts), especially if reporting is done on an annual basis, would be to focus on outputs where there are direct linkages between interventions and changes in beneficiaries, and report on outcomes and impacts as they occur – on a rolling basis. In this context, clusters and subclusters of RCM-Africa and SRCMs could have a mixture of outputs and outcomes under their expected accomplishments, with the understanding that they would be expected to report on the progress in achieving outputs in the short-to-medium term, and outcomes and impacts in the long term or as they occur.

Furthermore, strengthening the interaction and complementarities between RCM-Africa, SRCMs and the Regional Directors Teams² or the United Nations Development Group, will be helpful in measuring the subsequent impact at country level. In this regard, both Mechanisms can support and strengthen each other's work through:

² The functions of the Regional Directors Team include: provision of coherent technical support to resident coordinators and the United Nations Country Teams; quality assurance of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the United Nations country programme; performance management; and “trouble shooting” in difficult country situations, dispute resolution, etc.

(a) Regional and subregional issues, addressed at the level of RCM-Africa and SRCMs respectively, should feed discussions at the level of Regional Directors Teams. RCM-Africa and SRCMs need to convey the outcome of their work on policy coherence to the Teams for their input on country policies. They can also work with the Teams to facilitate the integration of regional and subregional priorities and strategic plans into a national United Nations Development Assistance Framework in support of the country's development agenda.

(b) On the other hand, Regional Directors Teams can bring national policy experiences (in terms of best practices and challenges faced) to RCM-Africa and the SRCMs, in order to draw lessons from these experiences at regional and subregional levels. Such lessons can thus be shared more broadly, feed new analytical and normative work, and eventually lead to strengthening policy convergence at the regional and subregional levels. Such interaction would be facilitated by measures such as:

- (i) Holding, as far as possible, Regional Directors Team, RCM-Africa and SRCM meetings back-to-back (at least once or twice a year as suggested by RCM-Africa);
- (ii) Appropriate planning and exchange of work plans with a view to identifying potential areas of synergies and maximizing complementarities;
- (iii) Active participation in one another's meetings;
- (iv) Strengthening mutual communication between the three Mechanisms.

C. Setting performance indicators

21. A set of indicators, covering outcomes and outputs resulting from the implementation of programmes or projects and interventions, RCM-Africa and SRCMs targeting at achieving the set goals (see annex 3: monitoring and evaluation matrix).

22. Performance indicators, also referred to as indicators of achievement, measure whether – and the extent to which – expected accomplishments have been achieved as a result of specific interventions (e.g. of clusters or subclusters). Good indicators are measurable, telling the kind of data that need to be collected. The data so identified, will then set the stage for determining baselines and targets (the performance measures). It is good practice to have more than one indicator for each expected accomplishment.

23. Once the data to be collected is decided and agreed on by all stakeholders, particularly the beneficiaries, then the performance measures (baselines and targets) can be determined. If we are focusing, for example, on the number of political analysts recruited and trained by the African Union Commission, we would need to collect data on the number of recruited and trained staff. For our performance measure, we would then need to know how many trained staff members were there, for example in 2014, what our estimate is for 2015 and what our target would be for 2016, as a result of RCM-Africa and SRCMs.

24. Essentially, performance indicators show us that the expected accomplishments have indeed occurred. They measure the result of our efforts. For the clusters and subclusters, this could be in terms of:

(a) Increased number of joint programmes implemented (to measure the level of coherence and coordination);

(b) Increased delivery and implementation of African Union and regional economic community programmes by themselves (a measure of enhanced capacity);

(c) Availability of better systems or processes (a measure of enhanced capacity).

D. Performance monitoring plan: key for monitoring and evaluation of activities in a time bound manner

25. Performance monitoring plans are critical monitoring and evaluation tools and are indispensable for effective results-based reporting. A typical performance monitoring plan is presented in the form of a matrix and contains the key elements of a logical framework, including the impact statement, expected accomplishments, and performance indicators. In addition, information on data sources, collection methods and frequency, and assignment of responsibilities for data collection and analysis are important elements of the performance monitoring plan.

26. In the context of RCM-Africa and SRCMs, responsibility for collecting data relevant to performance measures should ideally be shared between the clusters or subclusters on the one hand, and the African Union organs and organizations, including the regional economic communities, on the other. This is because the beneficiaries of the United Nations system support are best placed to provide information related to positive changes resulting from such support.

27. In principle, implementing a performance monitoring plan appears to be simple and straight forward. However, experience shows that this is rarely done in a satisfactory manner. The poor or non-implementation of performance monitoring plans could be explained by a number of factors. First, there is generally a lack of ownership of current monitoring plans because of the non-participatory way in which they were developed. Second, the vagueness of some performance indicators renders them difficult to measure. Third, many organizations do not allocate sufficient resources for data collection in relation to performance monitoring.

28. It is therefore important for RCM-Africa and SRCMs to encourage and involve all members in developing their performance monitoring plans; develop simple and unambiguous performance indicators; and allocate adequate resources for data collection. A template for preparing a performance monitoring plan is provided in annex 1.

E. Data collection and analysing

29. Institutional arrangements for gathering and analysing data and information regularly need to be put in place. Methodologies for data collection could include questionnaires.

30. *Types of data and information:* both qualitative and quantitative indicators should be part of the framework. Regional or subregional data might not be readily available for some

of the indicators. However, in view of their importance in measuring progress, they should be included in this framework upfront, both to emphasize the need for the key statistics and alert all stakeholders that data should be made available on these specific indicators (see annex 3).
[[or should this be annex 4?]]

31. *Frequency of data collection:* Frequency of data collection depends on several factors, including the nature of the indicator, method of data collection and availability of funds to cover the costs. In this framework, it is proposed that data collection be carried out on a biennial basis. Based on the volume of data and information proposed for collection and compilation, due attention should be given to the undertaking and invest the required human and financial resources to coordinate the collection of and compilation of data (see annex 5: key monitoring and evaluation activities and timeline).

32. *Organizational body responsible for data collection, compilation and reporting:* RCM-Africa and SRCMs involve several stakeholders. All of them should make their contribution to the collection and compilation of data and information, and data analysis and reporting. Cluster and subcluster coordinators particularly should take the lead in this exercise for the clusters and subclusters under their leadership. As is the practice, RCM-Africa Joint Secretariat will consolidate the report for consideration and review by RCM-Africa and SRCM annual sessions and guidance for the way forward.

F. Results-based reporting

33. The findings of the monitoring and evaluation exercise are used to review policies and programmes and advocate for extra efforts or resources to expedite implementation. Preparing the progress report on RCM-Africa and SRCMs and presenting it at the annual sessions of the Mechanism is one of the functions of the Joint Secretariat. The report usually contains activities, achievements and challenges of the Joint Secretariat, clusters, and subclusters. Inputs from the clusters, through cluster reports, feed into the progress report. The Joint Secretariat has proposed a standard format for presenting cluster reports with the view to facilitating the analysis and synthesis of their contents for inclusion in the consolidated progress report.

34. The clusters have generally followed the proposed structure in preparing their reports, hence most of these reports contain the following sections: accountability; coordination and collaboration; resources and capacity-building support provided by the cluster; monitoring and evaluation of activities; communication, outreach or advocacy; results and impacts; challenges and constraints; lessons learned and way forward.

35. However, the appropriateness and quality of the content under each of these sections have varied across cluster reports. In particular, concerns have been raised at RCM-Africa and SRCMs sessions about the inadequacy of reporting on results. There are two main issues in that context. First, most of the activities reported by clusters were implemented by members on an individual basis – through a bilateral arrangement with beneficiaries – rather than collectively. Second, there is little attempt to link activities undertaken with results achieved, thus making it difficult to demonstrate the difference made by these activities to the beneficiaries.

36. Challenges related to reporting on results could be attributed, in part, to the absence of clearly articulated results frameworks (logical frameworks) for many of the clusters. To tackle

this challenge, some clusters have taken the positive step of developing business plans. These plans, essentially, include the following elements:

- Objectives
- Expected outcomes
- Expected outputs
- Indicators of achievement
- Key joint programmes or projects
- Relevant African Union–NEPAD and United Nations instruments, strategies and policy documents
- Lead and collaborating agencies
- Time frames
- Resource requirements.

37. These business plans provide a solid basis for effective reporting on results, provided they are properly monitored using tools such as performance monitoring plans discussed above.

IV. Conclusion and recommendations

38. RCM-Africa and SRCMs have to develop logical frameworks that link their activities to expected results. Where such frameworks already exist (e.g. for clusters that have business plans), efforts should be made to strengthen the linkages between activities and results, and as such, clusters could strengthen the value of their reports by including the template provided in annex 2, which is designed to show linkages between activities undertaken and results achieved.. Efforts also have to be made to develop performance monitoring plans, which are indispensable for credible results-based reporting.

39. It is recommended that RCM-Africa, SRCMs and their respective structures should focus on reporting the achievement of outputs where there are direct linkages between interventions and changes in beneficiaries, and report on outcomes and impacts (longer term results that also depend on interventions of other actors) as they occur – on a rolling basis. In this context, clusters and subclusters of RCM-Africa and SRCMs should have a mixture of outputs and outcomes under their expected accomplishments.

Annex 1
Template for performance monitoring plan

	<i>Results</i>	<i>Performance Indicator</i>	<i>Data Sources</i>	<i>Collection Methods</i>	<i>Collection Frequency</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
Impact	Improved RCM-Africa or SRCM resources. Improved performance of African Union priorities and strategic plans.	Increased funds used for RCM-Africa or SRCM activities. Increased per cent delivery of programmed activities of the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency or the regional economic communities.	RCM-Africa or SRCM progress report. Cluster coordinators.	Document review. Interviews with Secretariat and cluster coordinators.	Yearly	RCM-Africa and SRCM Joint Secretariat.
Outcomes	Improved performance of RCM-Africa or SRCM.	Increased number of tangible results reported that are linked to RCM-Africa or SRCM activities.	RCM-Africa or SRCM progress report. Cluster reports	Review of cluster reports Review of progress report	Baseline data Continuous	RCM-Africa and SRCM Joint Secretariat.
Outputs	Enhanced skills in results-based management of RCM-Africa or SRCM clusters.	Number of clusters that have developed logical frameworks.	Cluster reports	Review of cluster reports	Baseline data Continuous	RCM-Africa and SRCM coordinators

Annex 2

Template for results-based reporting

<i>Expected results</i>	<i>Activities planned and performed</i>	<i>Achieved results</i>	<i>Variance</i>
<i>Outputs</i>			
1. Increased African Union and regional economic communities' capacity for disaster and emergency response for humanitarian and post conflict recovery activities.	Training the African Union and the regional economic communities' emergency response teams.	Emergency response team deployed in response to disasters in West Africa.	
2.			
3.			

Annex 3
Monitoring and evaluation matrix

<i>Sr. no.</i>		<i>Key component outcomes and outputs</i>	<i>Indicators of performance</i>	<i>Sources</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>
1		Outcome 1: Output 1.1: Output 1.2:		- African Union decisions, treaties, legislations, regulations, etc.		

Annex 4.

Template for preparation of monitoring and evaluation framework for each major output of cluster or subcluster

<i>Name of output</i>	<i>Development objective sought by the output and outcome expected from the output; who are the beneficiaries? (in terms of official work programme)</i>	<i>Indicator of performance</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Data requirement and data collection methodology</i>

