United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

African Union

REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISM HANDBOOK

Guidelines for enhancing coordination: A compilation of programming tools for better development results

Contents

Figures

Tables

Boxes

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While the substantive contribution is from ECA, the production of these guidelines is an effort by the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) to strengthen coordination linkages at the regional and subregional levels and build capacity to enhance coordination among partners, stakeholders and United Nations agencies, in support of African Union priorities.

Acronyms

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
ARIA	Assessing Regional Integration in Africa
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East Africa Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SRCM	Subregional Coordination Mechanism
TCPR	Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review
TYCBP	Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group

Preface

These "Guidelines for enhancing coordination - a compilation of programming tools for better results" have been designed for United Nations agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Programme, the African Union Commission (AUC), regional economic communities, inter-governmental organizations and other continental and subregional organizations, to strengthen programme coordination, as part of the overall development effectiveness strategy for the continent.

The Guidelines aim to improve coordination skills and competencies among institutions responsible for regional or subregional programme implementation; and to provide knowledge on the tools needed to translate continental and regional development programmes into concrete action at the subregional and national levels. The idea of guidelines for RCM and the Subregional Coordinating Mechanisms (SRCMs) emanated from the desire to ensure that common standards in programming, implementation and reporting were applied among RCM clusters and activities, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of their activities. The first volume of the handbook/guidelines focused on topics such as results-based management and mainstreaming gender, governance, climate change, health, human development, employment and decent livelihoods. This volume focuses on joint programming and joint implementation, the key instruments for harnessing the benefits of coordination and the opportunities derived from sharing a common vision at the continental level, in the context of African Union regional integration programmes.

It is generally accepted that in the context of the African Union-United Nations regional coordination mechanism, joint programming represents a vital tool for achieving the key objectives of coordination, notably, support the formulation, implementation and monitoring of African Union priorities. At the subregional level, this objective covers the priorities of the regional economic communities as well.

The Guidelines also aim to promote the buy-in into the principles of the Regional Coordination Mechanism by pointing to the benefits for organizations and the continent at large. These benefits include avoidance of duplication, utilization of institutional comparative advantages and reduction of transaction costs in development processes. The beneficiaries of the handbook are United Nations organizations and agencies, the African Union Commission (AUC), the regional economic communities, intergovernmental organizations, and member States that are engaged in regional and subregional development initiatives and programmes.

It is hoped that adherence to the principles underlying these Guidelines will enhance the coherence and effectiveness of United Nations support for the development of the continent, by facilitating technical cooperation and other development efforts.

1. Introduction

1.1 Coordination as a means to development effectiveness

Africa's development landscape is replete with multiple actors. At every conceivable level, programmes, partners, interest groups and beneficiaries abound. This situation may cause deviations from optimal development outcomes on the continent as a result of delays in the delivery of programmes and policies. There may also be: a time lag between the identification of and response to policy problems; uneven distribution of efforts; and non-convergence of the outcomes of individual actions. Also, where multiple agents exist, information about development plans and the implementation of the strategies of development agents may be incomplete. Structural interdependencies in the form of shared resources (even the shared attention of common beneficiaries or benefactors) may also deviate outcomes from the optimal development path. In view of these deviations, the actual path of development may fall short of the optimal, implying that at any point in time, the actual level of development achieved may be substantially lower than the expected (see ECA, 2011).

Through effective coordination mechanisms, the continent can develop robust systems, standards, tools and codes that are relevant to the needs of pan-African organizations and member States, and reduce reliance on international models that may not always fit into the needs identified for the region.

Effective coordination at the regional level provides a vital driving force for regional integration by highlighting overlapping cross-border efforts and hence potential areas of collaboration on issues such as infrastructure, migration, energy and trade. There is evidence that the subregions of the continent have come together to collaborate on issues, such as security, policy dialogue and economic and financial challenges. The initiative in the Eastern and Southern Africa regions to align the Southern African Development Community, the East African Community and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (SADC-EAC-COMESA) tripartite partnership with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) bears witness to the benefits of deepening regional cooperation and coordination. With the emergence of continental and development frameworks such as Agenda 2063 and the post-2015 development agenda, however, there is a dire need for better coordination of efforts, especially within the subregions, where the regional economic communities are expected to play a strategic role in implementing African Union programmes, including the priorities of the Continental Free Trade Area and the regional integration agenda.

1.2 Coordination in the global context

Regional coordination mechanisms exist in all regions of the world and are coordinated by the regional commissions of the United Nations. Per resolution 32/197 (paragraph 20) of 20 December 1977, the United Nations General Assembly decided that the regional commissions should take leadership and responsibility for cooperation and the coordination of United Nations activities at the regional level, taking into account the special needs and conditions of their respective regions. This role initially entailed holding regular meetings among United Nations organizations and agencies, with a view to improving the coherence of the Organization's activities in their respective regions. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, in its resolution 1998/46 (annex III), took this further by requesting United Nations agencies and organizations to conduct regular regional consultations among themselves. The first series of regional consultation meetings were held in 1999 in the five

regions, all chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. From 2000, the Executive Secretaries of the five regional commissions of the United Nations started holding regional consultation meetings under the auspices of RCM to review the cooperation and coordination activities of the United Nations in their respective regions. Since then, each region regularly holds an annual session. The meetings have since evolved to be called Annual Sessions of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, for each region.

Each region has its own structure and format. The key components of RCM models are summarized in table 1 below:

(a)   Mandate: generally, regional coordination mechanisms emanated from United Nations resolutions to ensure coherence and effectiveness of United Nations system support to development challenges in their respective regions;

(b)   Membership and participation: RCMs comprise high-level representatives of United Nations agencies, especially those with regional-level programmes;

(c)   Mode of operation: RCMs revolve around clusters of thematic working groups;

(d)   Focus: priority programmes of the relevant region provide the programmatic focus, including United Nations system-wide programmes such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Table 1
RCM models by region

	RCM-Africa	RCM-Asia Pacific	RCM-Latin America and the Caribbean	RCM-Europe	RCM-Western Asia/Arab States
Mandate/terms of reference	Current mandate driven by United Nations declaration on NEPAD. General Assembly resolution 57/2 of 16 September and 57/7 of 4 November 2002)	General Assembly resolution 59/250 on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) and the 2007 TCPR; and the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Evaluation of linkages between Headquarters and field activities (E/AC. 51/2005/2)	Economic and Social Council Resolution 1998/46	*Ditto*	Current mandate driven by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 269 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006,entitled "The role of ESCWA in the light of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document and the subsequent change process".
Membership and participation	52 agencies and organizations today. The African Union and NEPAD are members of all clusters. Participation includes localrepresentatives, regional representatives, programme officers and directors	Three levels of membership: (i)16 regional offices with country programmes in Thailand (ii) 11 Bangkok-based regional offices without dedicated country Programmes in Thailand (iii); eight non-resident RCM members. Participation in meetings is at heads of agency level (e.g. regional directors (up to 30)), with additional participation by deputy directors, senior advisors and officers. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Executive Secretary chairs the meeting.	United Nations entities active in the Latin America and Caribbean region (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), funds, programmes and specialized agencies). Meetings convened at the level of regional directors	Heads of the European offices of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies. Between 15 and 22 European offices of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies were represented at the meetings; Level varies - directors and chiefs of divisions.	Membership reached 26 agencies and organizations. Level varies and includes representatives, local and regional coordinators, regional directors, deputy directors, chiefs of divisions, senior policy advisors, programme officers and regional advisors.

Mode of operation	"Cluster" system The clusters are: Infrastructure development, water and sanitation, energy; transport and information and communication technologies (ICTs); and governance; Environment; population and urbanization; human resource development Employment and HIV/AIDS; agriculture, food security and rural development; science and technology; advocacy and communication Peace and security Industry, trade and market access	There are currently six thematic working groups that operate as subsidiary bodies of the RCM: Education for all; environment and disaster management; health; poverty and hunger; international migration and human trafficking; and gender	Plenary discussion	For all meetings, the participating agencies requested to produce a brief note highlighting their major work orientations in their respective areas of expertise. Three clusters established: (a) social data and benchmarking; (b) gender and economy; and (c) information and communication technologies.	Plenary discussion
Evolution of focus	Started in support of United Nations-wide Special Initiative for Africa and thereafter to support NEPAD and currently "Delivering as One" to support the AU through the Ten-year Capacity Building Programme	Areas of focus at the executive level for the period 2005-2007: United Nations alignment and harmonization measures; Status of progress on MDG achievement in the region; evaluation-regional cooperation initiative; knowledge management in support of evidence-based advocacy. Additional areas; United Nations reform/Delivering as one Mapping of regional United Nations programmes; Strengthening of the United Nations' development pillar for Asia-Pacific	Initial focus on information exchange to establish the priorities of each entity in the region, with a view to identifying potential areas of collaboration to avoid duplication (a) The consolidation of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in the region, in which ECLAC has systematically participated (b) The inclusive approach of the	Initial focus was on addressing the major development issues related to countries with transition economies. Until 2008, focus was placed on system-wide topics (e.g. the "Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change", established by the Secretary-	The Millennium Development Goals "Delivering as One". Recent focus on MDGs

| | | | UNDG/Regional Director Team, (c) the emergence of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the basis for a shared agenda for all United Nations development entities and (d) the sustained effort by the Secretary-General and Member States to reform the development sector of the Organization (High-level Panel, and others) | General, and on the achievement of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (e.g. the MDGs) relevant for the region) | |

Source: Compiled by the Capacity Development Division from various United Nations Resident Coordinated Office reports.

1.3   Coordination in the regional context

Among the regional economic communities in Africa, there is an ongoing effort to coordinate subregional activities. Within the agencies of the United Nations, there are various regional coordination schemes. In 1999, the first regional consultation meeting was held for United Nations system agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the African Union and its NEPAD programme as part of reforms by the organization to enhance coherence and harmonization. Its aim was to promote synergy and coordination in order to improve joint programming in support of regional development efforts and initiatives. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Following the launch of NEPAD by African leaders, the third regional consultation meeting for Africa, held in October 2001, agreed to use it as the United Nations system framework for improving its collective response to the challenges faced by the continent. Subsequently, the General Assembly, per resolutions 57/2 of 16 September 2002 and 57/7 of 4 November 2002, made NEPAD the framework within which the international community, including the United Nations system, should concentrate its efforts for Africa's development. It entrusted ECA with the responsibility to coordinate United Nations system-wide support to NEPAD at the regional and subregional levels through a special coordinating unit.

The regional consultative meetings were changed to become, Regional Coordination Mechanisms and RCM-Africa set up five "clusters" of United Nations agencies around different thematic areas, to enhance operational alignment with the needs and priorities of NEPAD as well as United Nations efficiency. The clusters increased to seven and further to the current nine in 2004 and 2006 respectively, some with several "sub-clusters". The nine clusters are: Governance; science and technology; infrastructure development; social and human development; agriculture, food security and rural development; peace and security; environment, population and urbanization; advocacy and communication; and industry, trade and market access.

The seventh and eighth regional consultation meetings held November 2006 and November 2007 respectively, confirmed the leadership role played by ECA in the United Nations system-wide coordination, as convener of the regional consultation meetings, and strategic coordinator of United Nations support to the African Union and its NEPAD programme. ECA was accordingly requested to coordinate the United Nations' relationship with the African Union at the regional and subregional levels and the implementation of the United Nations-African Union cooperation framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union (TYCBP-AU) under the framework agreement signed on 16 November 2006 by the Chairperson of the African Union and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The TYCBP-AU Declaration was signed in November 2006, as an evolving framework for United Nations system-wide engagement with the African Union, which addresses a wide range of issues, based on the Union's needs and strategic priorities. General Assembly Resolution (A/61/L.70 September 2007) requested an accelerated implementation of the Declaration through RCM-Africa. TYCBP-AU is aimed at enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in their areas of competence and in conformity with their respective mandates. The main objectives of TYCBP-AU are to enhance the capacity of the African Union organs and the subregional organizations to act as effective United Nations partners. It is a comprehensive programme, which reflects a broad range of United Nations

support to the African Union, in areas such as institution building; human resource development and financial management; peace and security, human rights, political, legal and electoral matters; social, economic, cultural and human development; and food security and environmental protection. The programme establishes a basis for expanding and strengthening consultations and cooperation between the United Nations system and the African Union.

The ninth meeting of RCM held on 21 and 22 October 2008 changed the RCM acronym from the "Regional Consultation Mechanism" to the "Regional Coordination Mechanism", as the mechanism had shifted its focus from consultation to coordination. Resolution 61/296 of 17 September 2007 calls upon the United Nations system to support the African Union and its member States in their efforts to implement internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. It further requests the United Nations system to cooperate with the African Union and its member States to implement appropriate policies to promote Africa's development, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and NEPAD. It also calls for the implementation of the TYCBP-AU.

In line with the spirit of the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on the United Nations system-wide coherence reform titled "Delivering as one", RCM-Africa is a mechanism designed to enable the Organization to deliver as one in promoting development in Africa, through the implementation of continent-wide priority programmes, such as NEPAD, TYCBP-AU and the MDGs.

At the fifteenth session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa held in March 2014 in Abuja, it was recommended that coordination capacity should be strengthened at the subregional level to enable the regional economic communities, in collaboration with the United Nations system agencies and organizations, to support more effective implementation of African Union priorities, especially in the context of regional integration. This would cement the links between African Union and subregional programmes and further create synergy at the national level. It would also establish standards and guidelines for the coordination needed to strengthen ownership and implementation of joint programmes at all levels among United Nations and African Union organizations, agencies and entities.
Strengthening capacity at the regional and subregional levels is key to ensuring the realization of Africa's transformation agenda in terms of peace and security, human rights and the rule of law. These are vital areas of United Nations support, in addition to those envisaged under Agenda 2063 and the post-2015 development agenda.

The organization of RCM-Africa may be described as follows:

(a)   The annual session, which is organized by the joint AUC-ECA RCM secretariat and chaired by the Deputy AUC Chairperson and the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, reviews programme results of the clusters and provides general guidance for United Nations system support to the African Union and its NEPAD programme.

(b)   Cluster meetings are held regularly to develop and review the implementation of business plans and prepare reports on cluster activities for the annual session. The clusters and sub-clusters are co-chaired by AUC and United Nations counterparts.

1.3.1 Achievements of the African Union-United Nations Regional Coordination Mechanism

RCM-Africa has facilitated strong leadership for coordinating United Nations system support at the highest level. The RCM is co-chaired by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General and the AUC Deputy Chairperson. Non-United Nations partners in Africa have increasingly expressed interest in collaborating with RCM-Africa. Its demand-driven agenda provides opportunities for developing joint business plans by clusters that build on African Union/NEPAD priorities, with clear expected results and performance indicators. Emphasis is placed on joint activities.

Specific achievements include:

- Jointly drafting the African position on development effectiveness for the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness within the framework of the African Platform for Development

- Jointly contributing to the process of articulating Agenda 2063 for Africa

- Jointly contributing to the preparation of Africa's progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post 2015 Development Agenda

- Jointly designing frameworks for mainstreaming crosscutting issues such as gender, employment, health, governance and youth in the development agenda

- Undertaking comprehensive and participatory capacity needs assessment and designing a programme for capacity building in support of AUC

- Establishing the RCM secretariat,[1] dedicated to the actualization of the coordination mechanism of United Nations support to the African Union and its NEPAD programme at the regional level. The secretariat is responsible for: (a) organizing the annual session of RCM; (b) supporting the implementation of key recommendations of the annual session, through the clusters; and (c) spearheading a number of initiatives for the implementation of the recommendations of the meetings held in the context of RCM-Africa

1.4 Coordination in the subregional context

Various mechanisms for coordinating development activities have been designed for the subregions, especially after the ECA Assessing Regional Integration in Africa (ARIA) 2004 publication. These include the COMESA-EAC-SADC tripartite framework to promote programme harmonization in trade, customs, movement of people and infrastructure development among the three regional economic communities. Within the African Union institutions, various protocols have been strengthened to promote closer cooperation among the regional economic communities, to accelerate regional integration by mainstreaming continental programmes in the subregional development agenda. The United Nations Secretary-General's report to the Sixty-first General Assembly requested support to strengthen the ECA

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[1] The Economic Commission for Africa established the Mechanism secretariat to coordinate United Nations support to the African Union and its NEPAD Programme. At the tenth session of RCM-Africa (November 2009), it was recommended that the secretariat should be jointly operationalized by the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission. Accordingly, a joint secretariat was established to promote greater synergy and coherence between the United Nations and African regional and sub-regional organizations and to organize the annual sessions of the Mechanism.

subregional offices to, among other things, develop a framework for coordinating programmes and activities of the United Nations agencies in the subregion.

2.   Subregional Coordination Mechanisms

2.1   Rationale

The objective of the Subregional Coordination Mechanism is to reduce fragmentation in United Nations operations and increase coherence, coordination and cooperation in the work of the Organization's agencies to support the programmes and priorities of the African Union and the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations operating in the various subregions. The sixty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly (A/61/471) held in 2006 provided the basis for the SRCM.

The need for strengthened coordination of United Nations support to the African Union/NEPAD at the subregional level was first discussed at the then 7th Regional Consultation Meeting in 2006, which agreed on some guiding principles, notably, the recognition of the regional economic communities in the development process and alignment of United Nations programmes with those of the regional institutions. The Eleventh Session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism held in Addis Ababa in November 2010 emphasized the need for the SRCMs to focus on programme areas where the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations can build on the comparative advantages of the United Nations agencies and organizations and add value, based on their defined priorities and programmes on the continent.

The idea to strengthen subregional coordination stems from: (a) the need for accelerated efforts towards continental integration, as exemplified by the adoption of Agenda 2063 and the Continental Free Trade Area; (b) the adoption of common African positions on global issues such as the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and the post-2015 development agenda

Concretizing the existence of coordination mechanisms at the subregional levels took a while. The first to be established was SRCM-Central Africa, in 2009.

2.2   Structure of Subregional Coordination Mechanisms in Africa

The following table describes the SRCMs, mode and year of operationalization.

Table 2
Establishment of SRCMs

SRCM	Year of establishment	Description
Central Africa	2009	A joint indicative programme for the period 2010-2012 was adopted; it covered six priority areas for cooperation, which corresponded to the priorities of the Economic Community of Central African States and the Economic and Monetary Union of Central Africa: infrastructure (transport, energy, water and hygiene); governance, peace and security; industry, trade and market access; agriculture, food security and the environment; science and technology, employment and training; and HIV/AIDS
Eastern and Southern Africa[2]	2011	The joint subregional mechanism itself was launched in November 2011, following the adoption of the tripartite framework. A business plan for the period 2013-2017 was adopted at the following meeting in 2012. The business plan covered five priority areas, namely: regional integration and infrastructure development; climate change and natural resource management; governance; gender and social development; and agriculture and food security. The business plan also covered industrial development; tourism development; information and communications technology for development; and science and technology.
West Africa	November 2013	Launching meeting held in Dakar in November 2013 and organized by the ECA subregional office for West Africa. The subregional mechanism will serve as a framework for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the intergovernmental organizations of the subregion that are part of the West African intergovernmental organizations framework. Six development priority areas for cooperation between United Nations agencies and the West African intergovernmental organizations framework were determined: governance, peace and security and humanitarian action; economic integration; infrastructure development; human development and gender equity; agriculture and food security, water and the environment; development of the private sector, industry and mines.
North Africa	June 2013	The first meeting of the SRCM, in Rabat, focused on integration in the Maghreb region in light of the new sociopolitical context of the subregion. The objective of the first meeting was to discuss the medium-term challenges of regional integration and develop an action plan and platform for the implementation of decisions. Four priority

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[2] The SRCMs for East Africa and Southern Africa decided to merge their programmes, in line with the tripartite agreement in 2009.

SRCM	Year of establishment	Description
		areas were identified for the re-launch of the regional integration agenda:
		(a) A programme to fast-track worker mobility
		(b) A regional strategy for youth employment
		(c) A Maghreb agricultural strategy
		(d) A regional electric power agreement

2.3   Guiding principles for the Subregional Coordination Mechanisms

Subregional coordination work is guided by core principles, which include:

(a)   Recognition that regional economic communities are important in the implementation of NEPAD programmes at the subregional level and that the ECA subregional offices should play a role in bringing together other United Nations agencies to support the African Union and its NEPAD programme.

(b)   The activities of the United Nations in the subregion should mainly be geared toward capacity-building for the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations, in order to enhance their ability to own and manage the implementation of African Union and NEPAD priorities, including human resource, organizational, institutional and legal framework development.

(c)   Consultations between United Nations agencies and the regional economic communities and non-governmental organizations were essential for better alignment and targeting of United Nations support to the African Union and NEPAD priorities and vision at the subregional level.

(d)   The regional economic communities should be invited to participate actively in RCM.

2.4   Linkages between the Regional Coordination Mechanism and the Subregional Coordination Mechanism

Establishing a clear linkage for integration between RCM and SRCM is important in strengthening vertical and horizontal linkages between regional and subregional programmes in Africa, and for utilizing synergies among development institutions. Coordination mechanisms provide nuclei for regional development effectiveness (see figure 1).

Figure 1
Coordination mechanism: Nuclei for regional development effectiveness
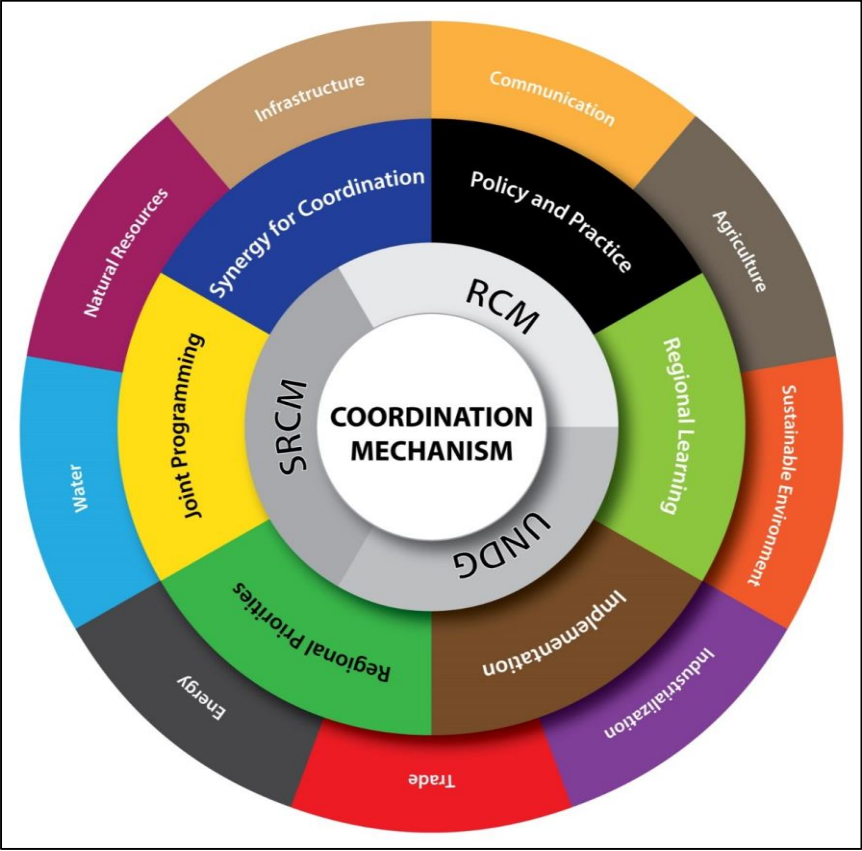
At the core of all the coordination mechanisms, be they at the country, subregional or regional level, is coordination itself. Coordination mechanisms rely on the effective, efficient, accountable and results-driven use of development resources to strengthen: programme formulation and implementation; coherence of development assistance; beneficiary ownership of development policies and programmes; the building of more inclusive partnerships and the promotion and accountability of development results. These coordination mechanisms include the African regional integration agenda and the objectives of Agenda 2063. Joint programming is a coordination tool, which can be effected when a common agenda is implemented and synergies are harvested. The beneficiaries are the usual key sectors in member State economies that support regional development priorities. The mechanisms are built to target priority areas, especially for quick wins and flexibility, where stakeholders come together to discuss and decide on the priority projects presented by the African Union and the regional economic communities.

The RCM is structured to emphasize the United Nations system-wide coordination, with clearly delineated clusters and sub-clusters that are supported by UN agencies in response to the developmental needs expressed by AUC and the regional economic communities. UNDG regional teams complement the RCM at the country level, while the SRCMs do the same at the subregional level.

Under the SRCM, the regional economic communities and inter-governmental organizations promote joint coordinated activities in the subregions to support the regional

integration agenda with financial and technical support from United Nations agencies and other development partners.

Sustaining joint programming for optimal use of resources requires capacity, not only in the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations, but also for the coordinating entities, the partner States and related private sector and civil society institutions. Addressing development challenges in the regions entails employing capacities to carry out the planned support to improve productivity. The capacity needs are discussed in section V of the document.

2.5   Learning from the Subregional Coordinating Mechanism process

Responsibility for the implementation of regional integration goals ultimately lies with member States. The regional economic communities and subregional institutions are intermediaries in the achievement and harmonization of goals. For regional integration to take place, there is a need to coordinate and align efforts at all levels. The regional economic communities and the intergovernmental organizations help to group countries by common interest and occasionally by common level of development. Analysing subregional level structures, activities and interventions by thematic areas and the initiatives by regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations generated the lessons and practices including: ownership, sustainability, mutual trust, accountability, coherence and capacity.

2.5.1   Ownership and sustainability

The establishment of an SRCM and its work programme requires inclusive consultations with different stakeholders and development partners. The lessons from the establishment of SRCM in some of the regions indicated that there was a need to institute structured engagement with continental organizations, regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations.

Ownership and participatory approaches are core values of the SRCM establishment process and ensure the success of its programmes. The activities examined under various cases supported the need for extensive involvement by the regional economic communities and the need to take into account the priorities of member States, as part of the learning exchange. The Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme, for instance, demonstrates the usefulness of involving stakeholders in enhancing the ownership and guidance of the agricultural reform process. The African Peer Review Mechanism shows the importance of mutual trust in promoting accountability and peer-to-peer learning.

2.5.2   Joint programming

The lessons from the different subregions indicated that SRCM promoted joint programming and implementation to enhance the synergy and impact of the expected outcomes. Tripartite mechanisms such as the COMESA-EAC-SADC free trade area encourage the addressing of issues common to all the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations. Given the different challenges and processes in the regional economic communities, including the levels of development of the various initiatives, their approach to development priorities of common concern had to be cast flexibly around binding agreements,

with the same policies, programmes, rules and implementation time frame for all stakeholders involved.

It was observed that a flexible arrangement enhances internal coherence, i.e., the vertical coherence between national development initiatives and the regional economic community-specific regional undertakings, as well as the horizontal coherence between national development priorities and other subregional cooperation development priorities, which the specific regional economic community is bringing forward.

2.5.3   Research and development

The ultimate product of regional integration is an increase in intraregional trade. In order to realize effective integration, the regional priority and funding is generally directed at research and development in the various fields, including value chains. To achieve this, the SRCMs encouraged support for the establishment of research networks to link up research opportunities and institutions identified, from where centres of excellence should be determined and supported in each member State, to carry out specific research work based on comparative advantages.

2.5.4   Intraregional cooperation

The significance of subregional cooperation was highlighted as best practice in the case of East Africa and Southern Africa, where the EAC, COMESA and SADC tripartite arrangement is already institutionally operational, particularly in the area of infrastructure development. Subregional cooperation promotes joint programming and collaboration between the entities in different regional economic communities and member States to achieve benefits from regional integration. This entails learning on all sides and sharing information with each other.

A case story from the Horn of Africa demonstrated how the Intergovernmental Authority on Development had established an appropriate environmental nexus with other sectors to advance collective knowledge on the environment and the rest of the economy, thereby promoting cross-regional learning and cooperation.

Other cases are summarized in the table below:

Table 3
Opportunities for cross-regional learning

Sector	Activity	Cooperating entities
Regional integration and trade	Establishment of a continent-wide free trade area	All
	Harmonization and simplification of trade policies and establishment of a single free trade area	Southern and Eastern Africa
	Establishment of a bank for investment and development to finance and promote regional economic growth	West Africa
		West Africa

	Enhancement of free movement of people and goods between member States	Central Africa
	Promotion of mechanisms governing the movement of persons and property in the countries of subregion	Southern Africa
	Adoption of common policy measures to enhance regional integration	Eastern Africa
	Implementation of an advocacy strategy on informal cross-border trading to offer a safety net for unemployed people through skills support and entrepreneurship incubation	
ICT	Establishment of cyber security	Southern and Eastern Africa
	Framework for harnessing ICT for peer learning, knowledge sharing and knowledge management to achieve regional integration	Southern and Eastern Africa
	Use of information technology to promote e-employment	Central Africa
Infrastructure	Implementation of transboundary water resource sharing and conservation	Southern Africa
	Promotion of the harmonization of norms and standards of road construction	Central Africa
	The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has granted greater priority to regional roads, and member States are allocating resources from national programmes for the construction and rehabilitation of strategic trunk roads, and road maintenance	West Africa
Agriculture	Implementation of a regional agricultural market information system and creation of database	Southern Africa
	Increased focus on value addition to smallholder farmers though value chain promotion	Southern Africa
Tourism	Consensus building on common position on key issues affecting tourism	Southern Africa

2.6   Challenges

The subregional mechanism serves as a bridge in the continuum of United Nations system support to Africa's development through RCM-Africa, at the regional level, and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, at the national level. It provides the subregional offices a framework to promote joint coordinated actions with member States, with the support of United Nations agencies, working in tandem with the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations. The success of the joint collaboration will depend on a clear understanding of the challenges of the joint approach. These challenges include:

(a)   Aligning the programme activities of the subregional institutions with the priorities of the subregion and the African Union;

(b)   Coping with the various stages of development of initiatives by the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations;

(c)   Achieving flexibility in programming the activities required for meeting subregional development objectives;

(d)   Mobilizing resources for joint activities that may have more than one phase and involve more than one implementing institution

(e)   Reinforcing a continuum in the work of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, the Subregional Coordination Mechanism and the United Nations Development Group.

3. Joint programming in the context of strengthening subregional coordination

3.1 Introduction

Joint programming is the collective effort of partners working together to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate activities to effectively and efficiently achieve agreed development goals. Through joint programming, common results and the modalities for supporting programme implementation are identified.

3.2 Purpose and scope

United Nations effort to embed joint programming as a strategy for achieving development effectiveness goes back many decades. In 2009, for example, a guidance note was issued to contribute to the Secretary-General's call for the United Nations to articulate a coherent vision and strategy for a unified approach towards common development goals at the regional and country levels. It replaced that of June 2000 on joint programming.

The key to successful joint programming is the existence of common development frameworks such as the MDGs, with the commitments, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration as well as the outcomes of international conferences, summits, conventions and human rights instruments, including sector-wide initiatives such as the NEPAD programmes on agriculture, science, technology and innovation and mineral exploitation. The launching of Agenda 2063 and the finalization of the African Union paper on the Common African Position of the post-2015 development agenda also present great opportunities for regional and subregional organizations to engage in joint programming as a way of maximizing development effectiveness on the continent.

The Secretary-General's 2002 agenda for further United Nations reform[3] called for increased joint programming and pooling of resources to enhance the effectiveness of the organization's system in developing countries, and ensure optimum use of its combined resources. These measures are intended to maximize the organization's effectiveness, reduce its transaction costs, as well as that of governments and donors, and strengthen its [4] joint programmes with governments. They also seek to respond to donor and country concerns about enhancing the United Nations' contribution in the current context of international development assistance, with a focus on self-reliance and capacity building.

Not only would joint programming at the regional and subregional levels create awareness among development programmes and organizations, it would also help build synergies, reduce overlaps and optimize the use of scarce resources, including administrative time. In addition, it would create opportunities for harmonizing operational principles and standards, such as results-based management and their application to development activity among organizations. In short, joint programming could contribute to more coherent, effective and efficient support toward the achievement of Africa's development goals. It would help avoid duplication, reduce transaction costs and maximize synergies among development partners and their contributions, in terms of the normative framework and technical and programming expertise and strategies.

3.3 Key elements of joint programming

3.3.1 Planning

Planning starts with a joint assessment and analysis of the subregional situation by the governments of the subregion, with the support of United Nations system organizations, and in the context of regional development frameworks such as Agenda 2063 and subregional development objectives. This analytical assessment/analysis should lead to the identification of priority areas for the subregion. Joint programming may cover a single event, activity or programme, or even entire economies, social sectors and agendas, as a comprehensive exercise.

3.3.1.1 Planning cycle

Many organizations have cycles that facilitate planning and costing, and schedules for programme implementation. The partner States and most of the regional institutions have a form of planning cycles, by way of development plans, strategic plans, business plans or project planning cycles. The cycle of planning for joint programming is depicted in figure 2 below, which distinguishes five stages of planning and implementation. A key challenge in the planning cycle, where there are multiple agents, is synchronizing the individual planning cycles.

Figure 2
Cycle of joint planning
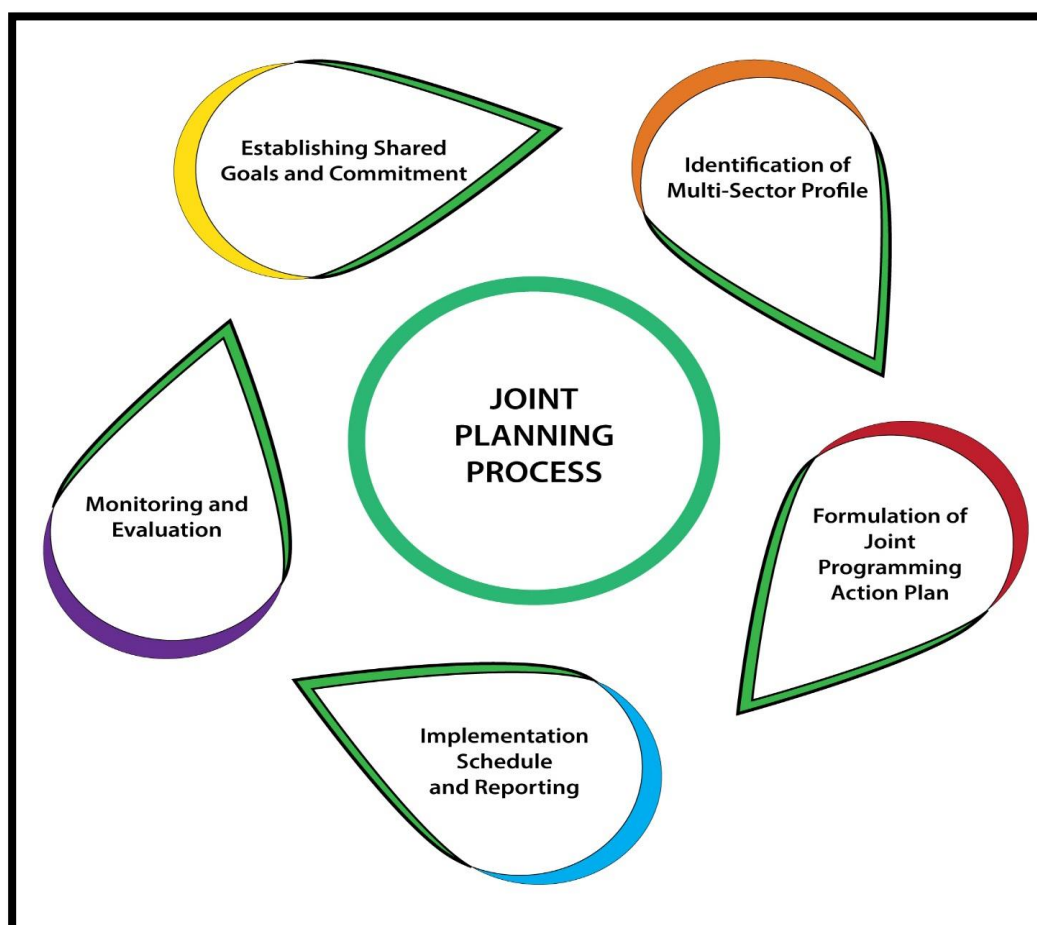
3.3.1.2 Results matrix

A key programming tool is the **results matrix**, which sets out (in a logical framework) every development partner's contribution to each of the development priorities and outcomes. The results matrix is updated through an iterative process, derived from the subregional development assistance framework and linked with country-level programmes and projects, in particular, UNDAF country programme documents and country programme action plans.

In countries where an UNDAF has not yet been prepared, United Nations organizations can coordinate their activities in the context of United Nations theme groups, such as HIV/AIDS, gender and food security. This will ensure that national entities and United Nations organizations work closely together, with clearly identified common goals and assigned roles. Joint programming can also occur within regional and other country frameworks, such as emergency appeals (Consolidated Appeals Process) and in countries where UNDAF is not required. The subregional development results matrix may be derived from national UNDAF or other thematic priorities.

3.3.2   Implementation

The next step in joint programming is implementation. Joint programming involves each of the United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies working closely together and with national partners to coordinate interventions toward the achievement of agreed development outcomes, as set out in the subregional development results matrix.

3.3.2.1   Implementation arrangements

The implementation of the initiatives articulated in the joint programmes need to follow an agreed time frame. This should be based on a jointly developed operational plan. The contents and emphasis may differ for each subregion, as their starting points and actual implementation drives may not be the same.

The operational plans at both the regional and country levels would endeavour to keep the common goals and objectives of the joint programme. The planning modalities would remain flexible enough to accommodate the unique features of the participating countries and the mandates of the regional institutions and participating United Nations agencies. The flexible approach and in-built internal coherence and harmonized joint programming management would build around existing subregional development visions and strategic plans, and are already well incorporated into the implementation of strategic development challenges in the regions.

The added value of this approach would be to look at the progress being made by each of the flagship regional initiatives, the participating countries and regional institutions, so as to find a niche for joint initiatives, either in the form of synergy creation across multi-sectors and countries or as multi-purpose programmes related to specific sectors such as infrastructure, industry or value chain development plans, which identify and address parallel bottlenecks that inhibit the progress of regional initiatives.

3.3.3   Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting takes place throughout the duration of the programme cycle and is based on the monitoring and evaluation plan. Monitoring of the interventions of the United Nations programmes, funds and specialized agencies, together with exchange of information and progress updates, occurs throughout the year and culminates in the annual review against work plans (for some United Nations organizations, it is every other year). Joint monitoring and evaluation activities will be identified and undertaken as part of the monitoring and evaluation plan. The evaluation includes an assessment of United Nations system collaboration, which encompasses joint programming.

4.   Joint programming

4.1   What is a joint programme?

In the context of RCM, a joint programme may be defined as a set of activities contained in a common work plan and related budget, involving two or more United Nations organizations and regional, subregional and national partners. The work plan and budget will form part of a joint programme document, which will also detail the roles and responsibilities of partners in coordinating and managing the joint activities. The joint programme document is signed by all participating organizations and regional, subregional and national partners.

4.2   How is a joint programme developed?

The starting points for developing SRCM joint programmes could be the annual work plans of the executive committee of agencies, the UNDAF results matrices, the African Union priority list for the subregion and the annual work plan of the relevant regional economic communities in the subregion. Based on the agreed list of priorities, participating institutions strategize and identify where they plan to support common results and where they have common subregional or national partners, and/or work in the same geographical area. Where they have identified these common elements, two or more United Nations organizations may then consider joint programmes as a way to increase effectiveness and efficiency. The decision on whether or not to develop a joint programme by combining activities into one work plan will depend on the judgment of the subregional partner(s) or regional economic communities and the United Nations organizations. Opportunities for joint programmes may also be identified during annual reviews of subregional institutions.

A joint programme could involve any of the following combinations:

(a)   Category 1: Two or more United Nations agencies work together to support the regional economic communities in implementing a specific regional priority goal;

(b)   Category 2: One or more United Nations agencies invest resources jointly with regional institutions to undertake a particular priority programme for the subregion;

(c)   Category 3: Programme/project initiative is implemented in phases by an agency or a regional institution. Once phase one is completed, phase two is designed and handed to the next agency/regional institution with the comparative advantage to implement that phase. This progression may be repeated until the highest value addition from the progressive programme is achieved. The assumption here is that all the prospective agencies and regional institutions are identified and involved in the joint programming at the design stage. Thus the relay modality becomes a design factor in the progressive project implementation model;

(d)   Category 4: Joint collaboration between the public and private sectors with support from United Nations agencies.

All subregional and United Nations organizations participating in a joint programme should develop a common work plan, setting out the activities that will carried out during each year of the joint programme, the expected outputs to which these activities will contribute, the inputs needed to carry out the activities, and the time frame, the budget and the responsibilities for completing the activities.

The requirements of joint planning and coordination should be taken into account when a joint programme is being considered. In planning for joint programmes, the capacity of government or the regional economic communities and participating United Nations organizations to coordinate, manage and provide inputs (cash, kind, supplies, or technical expertise) to support implementation and monitor joint programmes should be carefully considered. Where applicable, differences in methodology and approach, for instance, prioritization of areas and populations, the methodology for community mobilization and modality of delivery of technical assistance, should be identified and resolved at the planning stage.

4.2.1 Identifying key actors

It is important, from the outset, to identify the key actors. These actors should share ideas among themselves and develop understanding of the process for joint programming. They should jointly develop and agree on a strategy for operationalizing the components of the programmes as well as determining specific resource needs for them. It is important to:

- Cross check the goals and mandates of the parties involved and jointly explore how they may help or inhibit the implementation of the joint subregional initiatives.

- Jointly define the expected results and outcomes of the joint initiative.

- Undertake a design process for formulating a joint programming strategy, using country visions and regional strategic plans to deepen the linkages between the different development clusters and priority sectors.

4.2.2 Flexibility and coherence in joint programming

The initiatives under the SRCM aim to promote joint programming and implementation to enhance the synergy and impact of the expected outcomes. The priority areas would encourage initiatives that bring together several partner States and regional institutions to address a particular development challenge. For instance, tripartite arrangements such as COMESA-EAC-SADC provide a good case to build on.

Given the different challenges and processes in the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations, including different stages of development of initiatives, the joint approach by the regional institutions to development priorities of common concern should be cast flexibly around binding shared goals and agreements, rules and implementation time frames for the subregions and their member States. Flexibility should allow each regional institution to:

(a)   Achieve its internal coherence, i.e., the vertical coherence between the country development initiatives and the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations' specific regional undertakings, as well as the horizontal coherence between the participating countries' development priorities and those of the regional cooperation, brought forward by the specific regional institutions.

(b)   Implement the required regional plans articulated in the different planning instruments of the participating countries and regional institutions according to the time frame agreed. Keeping common goals and objectives of the visions and planning instruments this approach would translate into flexibility within the regional coordination mechanism, with

regional institutions or blocs of countries voluntarily entering into different programmatic partnerships on specific joint initiatives, at different times, depending on existing progress and constraints.

Flexible, internally coherent and harmonized joint programming can also be built around existing regional institutions and groups of countries, which already cooperate well in specific areas. The added value of this approach would be to look at existing multi-sector progress in each regional institution's partner State and find a niche for joint initiatives either as synergy creation across sectors and countries or in some cases, as multi-purpose programmes related to specific sectors such as agriculture or value chain development plans, which identify and deal with parallel bottlenecks in natural resources, infrastructure corridors and trade.

A flexible approach to setting goals for planning could also mean that specific groups of countries would design and implement joint programmes, only among those with a concrete interest in that particular area, and regardless of membership in one or more of the regional institutions. An example could be a regional irrigation programme only among those who share water resources (building on existing structures and processes led by lake and river basin commissions), e.g. Angola, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, for the Zambezi; Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda for lake Victoria; Indian Ocean countries, given the peculiar challenges they share; and the Mano River basin initiative.

4.2.3 Creating shared goals

In planning for joint initiatives, it is important, from the outset, that the regions envision goals and make commitments to embrace the joint programming approach, through sector or activity prioritization. In most cases, the development priorities have been expressed in the country or regional development visions. The visions are used as reference points to trigger current and proposed initiatives as well as identify opportunities.

It is important for participating countries, the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations to have a shared vision and be committed to joint initiatives, as a critical starting point for joint programming. For development change to take place, the partner States and the regional institutions themselves need to act as change agents. There is a need to be willing to champion the course of joint initiatives and to inspire others to become involved.

Effective joint programming requires that such commitments transcend the level of a few individual country commitments to become a regional commitment, shared by the region as a whole. At the same time, a regional commitment should become a national commitment for those working on the joint initiatives identified, with the responsibility to execute joint missions and mandates.

4.3 How is a joint programme (event or activity) managed?

4.3.1 Roles and responsibilities

SRCM development activities are based on the premise that regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations have the primary responsibility to work with the participating countries in the regions for the development of their countries and for establishing and leading the regional development agenda. This principle applies in different development contexts, be they at different stages of development or in post-conflict and early recovery situations. In all cases, SRCM focuses its support to the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations on building national capacities to tackle development challenges.

This inclusive participation approach by the regional institution is at the heart of how SRCM can promote and apply the principle of ownership by the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations, in liaison with participating countries. The regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations have to work in collaboration with United Nations agencies to support the regional integration initiatives and address the subregional development challenges. The participating countries are instrumental at the country level implementation of joint programmes and in ensuring coherence with the regional strategies. The private sector will be engaged at all times in the process of converting policies and innovation into practice.

4.3.2 Coordination and steering

Once a joint programme has been identified and developed, all the necessary arrangements for coordination are made by the participating institutions in a timely manner to ensure prompt implementation. This will include an agreement on the division of responsibilities among participating United Nations organizations and subregional partners for the implementation of the activities, management of funds and coordination and review of programme results. In particular, the decision-making process agreed for managing and implementing the joint programme and the monitoring and reporting should be clearly set out in the joint programme document.

The joint programme coordination mechanism should involve senior personnel of all signatories to the programme document with similar level of decision-making authority. The joint programme coordination mechanism may also have other members, such as donors and other stakeholders as observers.

4.3.3 Mobilizing resources for joint programmes

As joint programmes are developed as an integral part of the subregional programmes of the United Nations, African Union and the regional economic communities, participating United Nations organizations are expected to allocate the resources available. Any resource mobilization effort should be coordinated, while participating United Nations organizations should inform each other of the source of the funds allocated to the joint programme.

Start-up human and financial resources may be identified as necessary for initiating preparatory activities leading to a joint programme, including for coordination, planning and formulation of programme proposals for resource mobilization.

4.3.4   Communication

Subregional partners and each United Nations organization participating in joint programmes should be duly recognized in all external communication methods used to publicize the initiative. The role of each participating United Nations organization should be acknowledged in all communications, reports and publications with partners, donors, beneficiaries and the media.

4.3.5   Creating an enabling environment

Headquarters, regional and field office management and staff are encouraged to create an environment in which contribution to joint programming is acknowledged and agency representatives and staff are encouraged to explore opportunities for joint programmes, where suitable.

4.4   Monitoring and evaluation of joint programmes

A joint programme is monitored throughout its duration and evaluated in accordance with a monitoring and evaluation plan. Participating organizations should share information and progress updates, and undertake joint visits where appropriate. The evaluation will include a specific assessment of the joint programme, looking in particular at the system of collaboration. The scope of the assessment will depend on the size and strategic importance of the joint programme. When an evaluation of a joint programme is undertaken, traditional evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability) apply, with an emphasis on results and on the joint programming process. Suggested specific additional questions may include:

- **Effectiveness:** Have the resources invested produced the desired results? How has the joint programme contributed to achieving the subregional agenda? How has the joint programme enhanced ownership and contributed to developing subregional capacity?

- **Efficiency:** How has the joint programme affected transaction costs for subregional governmental organizations involved in the programme? How has the joint programme affected the pace of implementation?

- **Coherence:** To what degree are actors working toward the same results, with a common understanding of the relationships between interventions? To what degree are approaches such as human rights-based approach to programming and results-based management understood and pursued in a coherent fashion? To what degree are crosscutting strategies, such as capacity development based on and pursued according to a common analysis? What is the added value of having a joint programme?

- **Management and coordination:** How well are responsibilities delineated and implemented in a complementary fashion? How well have coordination functions been fulfilled? What are the effects of co-ordination or lack thereof on the programmes?

Deriving from the SRCM process in different subregions, it has been learnt that monitoring and evaluation should be conducted by way of systematic and objective assessment of ongoing or completed key areas of focus. The aim of monitoring and evaluation of the joint

initiatives is to determine the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the development areas of focus. Overall, monitoring and evaluation endeavour to explore the alignment of interventions, policies and change processes that support the implementation of the development areas of focus.

Monitoring and evaluation of joint activities is designed to compile the information stated in the joint programme operational work plan as they relate to the strategic development areas. As a part of best practice, the performance achievements are assessed at the joint programme/project level. This has to be done jointly by regional institutions, member States and the development partners. Monitoring and evaluation must not only report on implementation, coordination and development results but also assess achievements, in terms of intended outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation must also be verified by evaluation data and the lessons learned and best practices identified.

4.5   Reporting on joint programmes

The annual review of a joint programme done collectively by subregional and regional partners and participating United Nations organizations, leads to a single consolidated report, thus reducing transaction costs. A common format for reporting based on key principles such as results-based annual programme-level reporting should be used, to the extent possible. All reports will be shared with relevant stakeholders through the coordination mechanism. Reporting arrangements and accountabilities will vary depending on the fund management option chosen, or combination thereof. The arrangements for each of the fund management options are stated in the annexes.

At the regional level, progress and final reports serve several key functions including:

- Being used as means to demonstrate accountability
- Providing inputs for monitoring programme activities and a means of communication between regional institutions and partners during the course of the programme implementation
- Disseminating the outputs to a wider audience

Programme progress and final reports generally provide a description of actual activities, the programme outcomes achieved and the extent to which these outcomes are in line with the objectives, as set out in the original programme document.

Progress reports describe programme activities that are still underway. Final reports look backwards on activities that have been completed and place more emphasis on describing outcomes.

Programme reports would feed into the learning processes of the regional institutions. These provide an important source of information for regional programme performance and how well the programme can be improved. The reports can also be used in mid-term and ex-post evaluations to provide feedback on what a programme has achieved and the lessons to be learned from experience.

4.6 Fund management options

Financial resourcing of joint programmes is usually a complicated issue, even though under normal circumstances, participating in a joint programme and collaboration are part of the normal work programme of an organization. Appropriate funding mechanisms for contributing to a joint programme are organization centric. Contributions in kind are generally accepted, although other options do exist. In the United Nations system, there are three fund management options for joint programmes as described by the UNDG: (a) parallel; (b) pooled; and (c) pass-through. These options can also be combined.

The decision to select one or a combination of fund management options for a joint programme should be based on how to achieve the most effective, efficient and timely implementation, and reduce transaction costs for national partners, donors and the United Nations.

(a) **Parallel fund management:** This fund management option is likely to be the most effective and efficient when the interventions of participating United Nations organizations are aimed at common results, but with different subregional, national and/or international partners. Under this option, each organization manages its own activities within the common work plan and the related budget, be it from regular or other resources.

(b) **Pooled fund management**: This fund management option is likely to be the most effective and efficient when participating United Nations organizations work for common results with a common subregional partner (e.g. department, provincial office, non-governmental organization) and/or in a common geographical area. Under this option, participating United Nations organizations transfer pool funds together to one United Nations organization, called the Managing Agent, chosen jointly by the participating United Nations organizations in consultation with the subregional partner.

(c) **Pass-through fund management:** Under this option, two or more organizations develop a joint programme, identify funding gaps and submit a joint programme document to donor(s). If the donor(s) and participating United Nations organizations agree to channel the funds through one participating United Nations organization, then the pass-through modality applies. The United Nations organization channelling resources, called the Administrative Agent, is selected jointly by all participating United Nations organizations, in consultation with the relevant regional economic community or African Union institution. The common work plan would clearly indicate the activities to be supported by each of the participating United Nations organizations and subregional partners that would be managing their respective components of the joint programme.

The pass-through mechanism may also be used as a funding mechanism in broad subregional- level planning and resource mobilization processes, most commonly for special trust funds approved for emergency purposes. In such cases, unless there is a common work plan around specific results, the pass-through is used as a funding mechanism but is outside the framework of a joint programme.

Combination of options: Joint programmes may require a combination of fund management options. For example, participating United Nations organizations might decide to pool funds under a Managing Agent for those parts of a joint programme to be managed jointly, while other parts of the joint programme would be managed through parallel funding, within the overall framework of the joint programme. Where this occurs, it is especially important that

participating United Nations organizations inform each other about the source of funds allocated to the joint programme, independent of the fund management option, and conduct any resource mobilization efforts for the joint programme in a coordinated manner.

Under a combination of options, an aggregated/consolidated budget for a joint programme will include resources allocated under each fund management option used for the joint programme. Aggregated/consolidated reporting (both narrative and financial) will likewise include each of the fund management options used in the joint programme.

4.7   Institutional framework

Regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations in the regions are the main pillars of cooperation in the effort to attain joint programming. Through SRCM, the participating regional economic communities and the regional institutions would promote a joint programme of collaboration with United Nations agencies and private sector entities to foster regional integration and development on a number of key areas.

The joint activities under the SRCM are to be formulated within the framework of the key area of focus identified in the regional goals, strategic visions and plans. The regional institutions and the respective United Nations agencies and other development partners, including the private sector, will have agreed the key priority areas in the process of articulating a common goal.

It is envisaged that to actualize the joint programming initiatives, United Nations agencies, regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations will enter into a memorandum of understanding and agreements for inter-agency, joint programming and joint implementation by regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations of specific projects, including providing technical and capacity building support. Such memorandums of understanding and agreements will take into account the mandates of the participating institutions.

4.8   Utilization of lessons learned

Lessons and case stories from the continent's different subregions demonstrate forms of development cooperation relationships that illustrate horizontal partnerships where peer-to-peer learning, mutual knowledge exchange and sustainable investments are promoted. These lessons show that cooperation and partnerships are based on trust, mutual benefits and equity among the parties engaged in the joint cooperation. Trust and mutual respect is fundamental to the success of development partnerships.

Another important aspect of cross-country partnerships is the equity challenges faced by the partners involved in joint programming. The need for the perception of sharing the same contextual opportunities is a key threshold for building a strong foundation for an effective cross-country partnership. This is strongly reflected in the peer learning processes of public sector capacity development in post-conflict Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan.

5. Developing capacity for joint programming and coordination

5.1 Work processes

During the expert group meeting held in December 2014 in Addis Ababa, a number of work processes emerged that need to be strengthened, as part of capacity building for improved joint programming at the regional and subregional levels. These include: coordination, monitoring and evaluation, project management, reporting, work planning and procurement.

Box 1 provides a list of various work processes that would normally be considered for strengthening in order to enhance the process capacity of coordination organizations. Inadequate resources for work processes limit the effective implementation of the programmes, resulting in low productivity. They also lead to fewer responses to the key partners, thus undermining the ability to mobilize resources and harness synergies. The capacity to coordinate and utilize development assistance is easier to understand at the country level, where countries are often overwhelmed by the multiplicity of projects and lack of focus. Unfortunately, the same capacity shortfalls exist at the regional and subregional levels on both the demand and supply sides.

Joint programing requires effective operational systems that include clarity in the management systems of such processes as resource mobilization, procurement, recruitment, delegation and use of ICT. Within the framework of SRCM and cluster activities, a wide variety of work processes can be identified for reengineering in order to enhance effective and efficient delivery of planned results.

Box 1
List of work processes

• Preparing, harmonizing, prioritizing work plans	• Extent of information technology use
• Budget allocation/distribution process for activities in work plans	• Monitoring and evaluating of programmes/ projects
• Identifying and developing projects/programmes	• Managing/prioritizing meetings, workshops and conferences
• Supporting/implementing activities at various levels (including regional)	• Processes for initiating policy-driven programmes and programme-driven policies
• Developing collaborative work mechanisms with AU/NEPAD departments	• Balancing upstream and downstream programme focus
• Systematizing work arrangements with regional economic communities	• Structured process for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of annual work plans and adjusting them for lessons learned
• Integrated planning/harmonization of regional economic community activities by various divisions/programmes	• Basic administrative and financial management processes
• Internal and external information sharing	• RM policy efficiency
• Inter-programme collaboration arrangements (missions)	
• Regional institutional resource mobilization	

Source: Adapted from Report on Capacity Needs Assessment for NEPAD, 2013

The elements of capacity for joint programming can also be summarized as structure, leadership, strategies, legal framework, resources, knowledge and information systems,

equipment, infrastructure, staff skills, and cooperation culture. The European community summarizes the elements of capacity in a five-core capability model or the 5Cs.

- Capability to commit and engage
- Capability to carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks
- Capability to relate and attract
- Capability to balance diversity and coherence
- Capability to adapt and self renew

Attending to these capacity elements would help both the RCM and SRCM elucidate the question regarding relevance.

At the institutional level, it is critical to establish and maintain networks and create an enabling environment for the mechanisms to thrive. At the organizational level, leadership, coordination structures and service delivery are critical, as are establishment and integration structures, processes and procedures and regular updating and circulation of information. At the individual level, the staff must have the skills to perform coordination duties, which include soft skills, in addition to the hard and tangible ones. The development and utilization of adequate skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes, reduction of staff turnover, facilitation of skills and knowledge transfer within the institution improves institutional memory and coherence.

5.2   Capacity development needs for joint programming

Shared vision on the need for joint programming is critical in ensuring sustainable development effectiveness in the regions. This is to be realized by focusing on shared goals, mobilizing potential in the regions and promoting integrated strategies for capacity development at the continental, regional and national levels. The main aim is to enable: African countries and institutions to harness and optimize existing capabilities to achieve the development goals agreed; and the United Nations organizations and agencies to utilize the coordination mechanism by harnessing synergies in order to have an impact, even with the limited resources at their disposal.

A system for capacity development is required for creating an enabling environment and organizational processes aimed at unlocking the resourcefulness and creativity of the regions at the individual, institutional and collective levels. The Africa Capacity Indicators report (*ACBF 2011*) says that adequate capacity remains one of the critical missing factors hampering progress towards achieving the MDGs, implementing poverty reduction strategies and optimizing aid effectiveness. Capacity development in joint programming would help all stakeholders in harnessing the coordination mechanisms for better results.

Box 2
Best practice lessons for cluster

In 2007, ECA commissioned an external review of the cluster system and an ad hoc expert group meeting discussed this in October 2007. They concluded that the characteristics of successful clusters and examples of best practice are that:

- The head of agency or highest level of leadership should be involved
- The AUC and NEPAD Secretariat should also be involved
- The clusters should have terms of reference or rules and procedures, with sub-clusters where necessary
- Gender issues should have a central role
- There should be resources such as dedicated support to coordinate the clusters
- Cluster meetings should be held at least twice a year
- Programmes and resources should be aligned with African Union and NEPAD priorities
- Joint programmes or action plans should be developed and cluster agency cycles aligned
- Clusters should bring tangible benefits to all stakeholders, including members
- Develop a strategy to mobilize resources and funding
- Monitor actions and outcomes based on value addition by the United Nations system
- United Nations support to NEPAD should take into account the role of other regional players
- Each cluster should submit reports on its activities to ECA

Source: ECA (2009), Delivering as One for Africa

Subregional coordination is essential, as it is the link between regional activities and country-level national priorities, actions and implementation. The long-term aspiration under the SRCM capacity development strategy is to lead to an established pool of expertise in joint programming. Based on the strategic development challenges identified in the various regional policy documents and within the framework of continental capacity needs, the following broad aspects will have to be addressed for effective joint regional programming.

5.3   Institutional capacity

Capacity development issues to address regional programme coordination will include:

- Clarity of mandate and vision
- Organizational effectiveness and planning
- Leadership commitment
- Feedback mechanisms
- Clarity of roles and functions
- Decision-making process
- Results-oriented managerial skills
- Oversight and accountability
- Institutional administration and finance management

5.4 Organizational capacity

5.4.1 Joint programme coordination

The capacity needed to enhance joint programming includes:

- Programme management capacity
- Mechanisms for coordination
- Specialization versus coordination
- Mechanisms for internal and external policy coordination
- Mid-stream and upstream focus
- Partnership modalities
- Networks – internal and external

5.4.2 Joint programme implementation

The following aspects will have to be considered in preparing for joint programme implementation:

- Skills and tools for implementation
- Programme development skills
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; data collection and analysis
- Resource mobilization
- Results-oriented mechanism for reporting
- Audit and reporting
- Programme impact

5.4.3 Communication strategy for working together

The focus needs to be on:

- Communication and information dissemination
- Communication strategy
- Institutional trust
- Team-work and identification with the institutional vision
- Culture of information sharing
- Technology effectiveness for communication
- Information coordination between programmes

5.5   Human capacity

5.5.1   Hard skills

While tangible skills do exist at all levels, by and large, they must be in certain quantities if they are to be effective, and if organizational priorities are to be addressed. Also, sustainability brings the issue of retention and institutional memory to the fore. The sustainability of joint programming and coordination mechanisms requires an increase in skills or adaptation of structures and processes. This entails constantly looking at ways to do more with less manpower.

In many RCM meetings, the capacity of the joint secretariat to carry out the mandate, especially on the demand side, has consistently been said to have to do with the staff strength available to carry the work. The hard skills generally include:

- Coordination
- Logistics
- Business process
- Communications

5.2.2   Soft skills

For the effective implementation of joint initiatives, there is a need for the conscious application of soft skills in implementing regional organization. The key soft skills include: teamwork, accountability, result orientation, proactivity and commitment (see boxes 3 and 4). It is important to undertake capacity building to enhance these soft skills.

Box 3
List of soft skills
- Commitment to development outcomes   - Proactivity   - Result orientation (result driven)   - Accountability (for results, efficiency)   - Continuous high level of energy/commitment   - Speed and sense of urgency for work/achievement   - Team work abilities/ commitment   - Trust   - Heavy workload abilities   - Problem solving skills   - Diligence and thoroughness   - Negotiation/persuasive abilities   - Stakeholder partnership building abilities

> Box 4
>
> **Importance of soft skills development**
> - Build on staff commitment to elevate the success of the agency
> - Promote organizational learning
> - Promote teamwork
> - Emphasize results-based management
> - Reward for innovations
> - Promote results orientation

Teamwork helps to galvanize ideas from team members. Each team member has a responsibility to contribute equally and offer his or her unique perspective on a problem, to arrive at the best possible solution. Teamwork can lead to better decisions, products or services.

The quality of teamwork may be measured by emphasizing collaboration among team members: communication, coordination, balance of member contributions, mutual support, effort and cohesion. These are virtues that the communication strategy of the regional institutions must emphasize.

Proactivity, for instance, implies that the staff in the regional entities are change-oriented and self-initiated. It involves acting in advance of a future situation, rather than reacting.

It means taking control and making things happen rather than simply adjusting to a situation or waiting for something to happen.

5.6 Tools for joint programming and coordination

UNDG has gone further and defined tools for joint programming. These have been adapted and proposed to the RCM and SRCM as possible tools for improving coherence and supporting the effort towards delivering as one.

Before deciding on possible joint programmes, it is important to understand the priorities of the client as well as the stakeholders. In the case of RCM and SRCM, the clients are the African Union and its NEPAD programme as well as the regional economic communities, which are the building blocks for a united Africa. The strategy would be to select a few priorities, two to three, on which the coordination mechanisms can have an impact either at cluster level or as initiatives, depending on the mode of operation of those mechanisms.

Attached as annexes 1–5 are tools that help to align the priorities of the subregions to those of the African Union, as well as map the interests or areas of focus of United Nations organizations and agencies.

Annex 1 is a table that can be developed to inform on the priorities of the African Union and the NEPAD programme, based on excerpts from the first ten-year implementation plan for agenda 2063.

Annex 2 is useful for identifying common priorities between the subregion and the region. It can be further developed to drill down to output/outcome level. The fact that priority 1 at the regional level may not be priority 1 at the subregional level may be due to their different development levels. Some of the priorities may have prerequisites that do not exist at the subregional level. The main function of this matrix is to visualize the linkages between subregional priorities and the regional priority.

Annex 3 is a matrix that brings better understanding to all stakeholders in terms of United Nations organizational mandates and areas of focus in Africa. This can be useful in deciding on joint programmes in the United Nations system. It is generally understood that participation is usually voluntary but more and more, for the purpose of maximizing benefits from limited resources, understanding the partners/players is a requirement. It also provides an immediate view of the United Nations system. This table is applicable at the regional and subregional levels for the African Union, the regional economic communities and the United Nations system.

Annex 4 - Once the top three priorities and mode of operation at the regional and subregional levels have been selected, the outputs and outcomes can be agreed on. It is from this table that the joint work programme can be created; and roles and responsibilities assigned.

Annex 5: This is a draft matrix showing the work programme that has been agreed on, including agreements on the contributions of each stakeholder and beneficiary. This document will then be followed by other documents towards the delivery of the output. It will also be an input into the monitoring and evaluation process.

5.7   Conclusion

Institutional arrangements and commitment as they relate to effective coordination and collaboration will require:

- Managing the planning cycle, programme and project design and activities, a diversity of approved funding and resources for programmes and projects, supporting the ecosystem, including RCM, SRCM and all stakeholders.

- Strategy and tools for alignment and collaboration for resource mobilization across the ecosystem.

- Competent and committed human resources and "smart leadership".

- Ensuring synergy between programmes, project activities, funding and resources across the ecosystem.

- Taking advantage of what experienced people have learnt over time, which can help improve project design, and is likely to result in swift, effective and sustainable RCM-led interventions.

- Throughout the ecosystem, ensuring:
    - Ownership
    - Strategic alignment
    - Harmonization of programmes, project activities, funding and resources
    - Measured, transparent and shared results
    - Mutual/joint accountability
    - Joint implementation

Endnotes:

[1] The Guidelines is not primarily intended for:
- Joint events, which occur regularly and are co-funded by several United Nations organizations (e.g. UN days).
- Funding arrangements, whereby programmes are funded by one United Nations organization and implemented by another. Such arrangements can be a part of the joint programming process but do not denote a joint programme per se.
- A pass-through fund management mechanism used solely to channel resources without a joint programme work plan.

[2] For ease of reference, joint programme is used henceforth to refer to joint programme/project.

[3] "Strengthening of the United Nations: An Agenda for further Change". Report of the Secretary-General. A/57/387, 9 September 2002. United Nations, New York

[4] United Nations organizations include United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

References

1. ECA (2011). *Coordinating Development in Africa: A background study*. Prepared by Kwabia Boateng, Robert Lisinge and Mama Keita.

2. ECA.

3. UNDG.

4. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/publications/Planning%20Toolkit_Web%20Version.pdf.

5. AU Agenda 2063.

6. AU First Ten-Year Implementation Plan for Agenda 2063.

7. AU/NEPAD Capacity Development Strategic Framework.

8. European Community. Capacity4development website.

Annex 1
African Union First Ten-Year Implementation Plan for Agenda 2063 Goals

Goal No.	Objective	Output	Outcomes	Date Due
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				

Annex 2
Building linkages between regional and subregional priorities (first ten-year implementation plan)

	Subregion A priority	**Subregion B priority**	**Subregion C priority**	**Subregion D priority**	**Subregion E priority**
Regional priority 1					
Regional priority 2					
Regional priority 3					
Regional priority 4					
Regional priority 5					
Regional priority 6					
Regional priority 7					
Regional priority 8					
Regional priority 9					
Regional priority 10					
Regional priority 11					
Regional priority 12					

	Subregion A priority	Subregion B priority	Subregion C priority	Subregion D priority	Subregion E priority
Regional priority 13					
Regional priority 14					
Regional priority 15					
Regional priority 16					
Regional priority 17					
Regional priority 18					
Regional priority 19					
Regional priority 20					

Annex 3
Understanding organizational mandates

	Name of organization and agency	Mandate	Area of focus	Business cycle
1.				
2.				
3				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				

Annex 4
Establish clear cross-cluster perspective

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
AU priority 1				
Output 1 Activity 1 Activity 2 Activity 3				
Output 2 Activity 1 Activity 2 Activity 3				
Output 3 Activity 1 Activity 2 Activity 3				

Annex 5
Joint work plan

Date:_____

Joint work plan for: period:

African Union goal:

Objective	Expected accomplishment	Indicator of achievement	Output/deliverable	Agency/role	Funding	Deadline	Status

Annex 5
Activity tracking table

Activity	Agencies	Start	Finish	African Union priority	Status
OUTPUT 1.1:					
1.1.1					
1.1.2					
1.1.3					
OUTPUT 1.2:					
1.2.1					
1.2.2					
1.2.3					
OUTPUT 2.1					
2.1.1					
2.1.2					