

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Consultancy on

REPORT ON STRENGTHENING SUBREGIONAL COORDINATION IN SUPPORT OF THE AFRICAN UNION AND NEPAD

1. Background and Justification

Background

1. The United Nations (UN) System recognizes regional cooperation as essential for promoting awareness of the UN core and global values, standards and commitments through its analytical and normative works in the area of development.

2. In the context of UN's cooperation and partnership with Africa, the UN General Assembly has consistently been according special attention to the needs of the continent. The UN has a rich presence in Africa. It brings many assets and expertise to the region and its Member States. Because of the multiplicity of UN agencies and organizations at the regional level, it was found necessary to come up with an institutional arrangement that would ensure effective complementarities and synergies while building a genuine culture of cooperation among partner organizations.

3. Through Resolution 1998/46, ECOSOC mandated the Regional Commissions to hold regular inter-agency meetings in each region with a view to improving coordination among the organizations of the UN system in that region. Consequently, since 1999 the Commissions have been convening regional meetings focusing on policy and programming issues of regional nature guided by regional priorities. This has led to the creation of a formal process for system-wide coherence. A process to further strengthen regional cooperation and coordination among each other and to adopt more collaborative approaches to support development initiatives through the diverse technical capacities and know-how of the UN system.

4. In Africa, the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa) and the Subregional Coordination Mechanisms (SRCMs) have become the framework for the UN family to work together in supporting the priorities of the African Union and its organs, the regional economic communities and other regional and subregional organizations. RCM-Africa is created to promote and enhance UN system-wide policy coherence, coordination and cooperation at the regional level to 'deliver as one' in response to identified regional priorities and initiatives of the AU.

5. Similarly, the SRCMs serve as vehicles for UN agencies and organizations operating at the subregional level to work with the regional economic communities and other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) with a view to reducing fragmentation in their operations and increasing coherence, coordination and cooperation in their support for the programmes and priorities of the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations operating at the subregional level. There are four SRCMs currently operating in Africa covering North

Africa, West Africa, Central Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa¹.

6. Accordingly, the *raison d'être* of both Mechanisms is to support the achievement of this objective by fulfilling the following functions:

- i. Coordinating UN system interaction with AU organs and organizations, including the regional economic communities.
- ii. Providing a high-level policy forum for exchanging views on major strategic developments and challenges faced by the region and its subregions, and interaction of the region with the global level.
- iii. Devising coherent regional policy responses to selected global priorities and initiatives, and providing regional perspectives to the global level on such issues (MDGs/SDGs; climate change challenges and green growth, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, response to the financial and economic crisis, etc.).
- iv. Promoting policy coherence and joint programming in support of regional and subregional integration efforts and initiatives (New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), AU Agenda 2063, etc.).
- v. Promoting inter-agency and inter-organization coordination and collaboration in terms of response to policy recommendations and analytical findings emanating from regional and subregional strategic priorities and plans, including through joint programming.
- vi. Providing the forum for exchange of best practices and lessons learned and for interagency and inter-organization analysis and elaboration of interagency and inter-organization normative and analytical frameworks.

7. RCM-Africa and the SRCMs have been supporting the AU and its organizations, including the regional economic communities and other IGOs, through the implementation of global, continental and subregional programmes and priorities, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and its successor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Agenda 2063, the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union and its successor the Framework for a renewed UN/AU Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda (2017-2027) (PAIDA).

8. RCM-Africa and the SRCMs have been particularly effective in terms of deepening consultations and refocusing on ways of strengthening the UN-AU partnership and the scaling up of UN support for the AU and its organizations, including the regional economic communities.

9. The annual meetings of RCM-Africa and SRCMs provide an opportunity to take stock of achievements during the year, share experiences and good practices, identify and address challenges, and agree on ways to further improve UN support to the AU and its organs/organizations.

¹ Eastern and Southern Africa is served by one SRCM covering three REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES namely, EAC, COMESA and SADC considering the tripartite arrangement between the three where coordination is already institutionally operational. ECA Sub-regional Office for Eastern Africa (SRO-EA) and ECA Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa (SRO-SA) facilitate the work of this SRCM.

10. While the contribution of the UN has been significant as indicated above, there are still gaps in terms of delivery and concrete results. Through its successive reform programmes, the UN has been working to create a more coherent, effective and efficient support and delivery mechanism to guarantee a better life for all citizens of the world without leaving “no one behind”.

11. The ongoing reform is based on extensive and inclusive consultations within the UN development system and Member States, and in-depth analysis of relevant studies and data on the system’s present functions and capacities to support the 2030 Agenda. These consultations provided evidence on gaps and overlaps and makes recommendations for the delivery of the Agenda. The reform is also geared towards improving the accountability and overall coordination of the entities of the United Nations development system and their oversight by Member States, particularly the RCM and the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)².

12. In terms of division of labour, the reform proposal is for the Regional Economic Commissions to be “empowered as the lead voice of the UN development system on policy making and research and production of knowledge projects at the regional level that nurture integration and balanced progress on sustainable development”. At the country level, the UN Country Teams will “preserve the primary role in supporting national governments in implementing, monitoring and reporting on the SDGs”.

13. The proposed working modalities are to reinforce the coordination between the RCM (policy pillar) and the UNSDG (operational pillar), with a common secretariat for both mechanisms. In this regard, the existing “Statement of Collaboration” between Regional Economic Commissions and the UNSDG will be revised to strengthen the partnership and collaboration between regional commissions and the UNSDG with related accountabilities to ensure a clear division of labour”. It is envisaged that the revised statement will include UNDESA and UNCTAD as collaborating partners. In the medium term (2020), partners will work towards one coordinating mechanism by merging the RCM and Regional UNSDGs.

14. At the same time, the African Union (AU) is also implementing its reform agenda informed by the findings of the Kagame report, which was submitted in January 2017. Those relevant to the RCM relate to the need for the Union to focus on key priorities and to institute a division of labour between the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with regard to their implementation.

Justification

15. The study is motivated by the fact that the UN System continues searching for efficiency in its delivery mechanisms by avoiding overlaps, duplications and gaps. Particularly now, considering the ongoing reform exercise aimed at repositioning the UN to effectively deliver on Agenda 2030, and in the context of Africa, Agenda 2063 as well. While the focus of the present study is strengthening the SRCMs in Africa, it is expected to contribute to the

² The UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) is what used to be called the UN Development Group (UNDG).

reflections on reinforcing synergies between country, subregional and regional actions and other cost-efficiency and rationalization measures.

16. At the subregional level, the ECA subregional offices, in their capacity as the secretariat of the SRCMs, have been reporting on the United Nations support to the regional economic communities and intergovernmental organizations. The major common issues faced by the SRCMs are as follows:

- i. *Ownership and leadership by the principal stakeholders:* there are disparities between the roles and levels of participation of the various stakeholders, which somewhat affected performance. Increased ownership of the mechanism both at the level of the UN system and the regional economic communities and other IGOs and clear guidance from the beneficiaries will undoubtedly improve the performance of the mechanism. The capacity of the regional economic communities and other IGOs to understand and take ownership of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals should be strengthened. The designation of focal point by each regional economic community for full participation and involvement in the Mechanism was proposed to alleviate this shortcoming.
- ii. *Weak coordination of activities among the agencies of the United Nations system:* Internal coherence, synergy and coordination of the UN is still questionable. What is it that we can capture from the ongoing reforms? The establishment of a task force under the umbrella of the Mechanism to address the reforms put forward by the African Union and the Secretary-General, as well as the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda is suggested.
- iii. *Overlaps and the duplication of efforts:* There is a need to complete the mapping of the United Nations agencies, regional economic communities and regional United Nations Development Groups for the purpose of understanding their comparative advantage for avoiding duplications.
- iv. *Linkages between the regional and the subregional coordination mechanisms:* Annual meetings of the regional and subregional mechanisms are one means but other ways of strengthening the interface between the two needs to be investigated.
- v. *Resource constraints for implementation:* this includes absence of dedicated resources and insufficient time allocation for implementation. Resources must be made available on a sustainable basis for the mechanism to be effective and credible.
- vi. *Unrealistic number of projects to be implemented:* there need to be agreement among partners on the definition and the number of programmes/projects to be implemented in a year (adequate collection of information and follow-up, exact time frame for activities, deadline for focal points to provide information, etc.). Also the need of addressing new and emerging situations should be considered.

- vii. *Lack of an effective planning, monitoring and evaluation framework:* there are many constraints at this level explaining the difficulties in demonstrating tangible results and achievements.
- viii. *Weak information and communication channels:* There is a communications strategy developed by the Advocacy and Communications Cluster and endorsed at the seventeenth session of RCM-Africa. There is a need to implement this strategy and the many recommendations made to increase awareness and involvement and improve the process of providing feedback and sharing information among stakeholders at all levels.

17. In view of the issues enumerated above, the ongoing AU reforms towards a more effective continental body, as well as the ongoing SG reforms towards making the UN system more fit for purpose in serving its member States, including supporting the implementation of global and regional development agendas, the study is timely.

2. Objectives of the study and description of tasks of the consultancy

2.1 Objective of the study

18. The overall objective of the study is to investigate how the SRCMs could be strengthened to ensure efficient and effective support to RECs and IGOs taking into account the issues and challenges presently faced by the mechanism and emerging ones. The intent is to leverage the momentum in the ongoing AU and UN reforms for a more coordinated and fit-for-purpose support at the subregional level, while ensuring effective linkages with national and regional level UN coordination mechanisms.

2.2 Objective of the consultancy and description of tasks

19. The objective of this consultancy is to undertake a study and produce a robust, analytical, and well-informed report in order to:

- i. Provide practical solutions to the identified issues and challenges, as well as emerging ones in the light of the ongoing reforms at the UN and AU levels in order to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the SRCMs.
- ii. Promote the achievement of intended results and impacts in the UN support to RECs and IGOs.
- iii. Contribute to the strengthening of policy coherence and cost-effectiveness of United Nations development operations at various levels.
- iv. Promote a more unified United Nations presence at the subregional and country levels that effectively links with regional level mechanisms.
- v. Contribute to the thinking towards reinforcing synergies between country, subregional and regional actions and other cost-efficiency and rationalization measures.
- vi. Contribute to the Secretary-General's drive in leading the process of change and instituting sound management throughout the United Nations System.

Consultancy tasks

20. The core analysis for the study will be informed by secondary data and information that will be obtained mainly from desk reviews of relevant documents, including but not limited to those pertaining to the functioning of the RCM, the four SRCMs, the regional UNDGs, the UNCTs, the AU and UN reforms, global, regional and subregional development frameworks and priorities, preparation and implementation of UNDAFs. The study will cover the four SRCMs. It will identify and analyse issues pertaining to strengths, weaknesses, gaps, challenges and opportunities in terms of delivery and concrete results and optimal functioning of the SRCMs. In doing so, it will identify interventions needed to strengthen the SRCMs to make them more fit for purpose.

21. The analysis will include an identification of mechanisms, approaches and tools to enhance synergies, linkages and coherence for a coordinated implementation and results based monitoring and evaluation of activities. This will take into account interventions needed for close collaboration between the RCM, SRCMs regional UNSDGs and the UNCTs in the context of the AU and UN reforms.

22. With the above in mind, the consultant will carry out the following tasks among others:

- i. Prepare an inception report detailing among other things, the work to be undertaken, the conceptual framework, the methodology, work plan and annotated report outline;
- ii. Undertake extensive desk review to collect data and information relevant to the assignment and carry out other necessary consultations as required. Particularly, s/he should have consultation with the RCM Secretariat, the five ECA subregional offices, the regional UNDGs and selected UNCTs (covering the five subregions of Africa) on matters related to the delivery on the assignment.
- iii. Review each of the four SRCMs in terms of identifying and analysing issues pertaining to their mandate and functioning, including strengths, weaknesses, gaps, challenges and opportunities for optimal functioning and delivery of concrete results, taking into account linkages with the RCM, UNDGs and UNCTs.
- iv. Carry out a general appraisal of the priorities of each subregion in relation to the goals and targets of 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and other related subregional development frameworks and priorities.
- v. Identify and analyse the mechanisms and tools used by each SRCM to promote and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and other related subregional development frameworks priorities on the basis of the strategies and approaches used/adopted by the SRCMs.
- vi. Analyze and present a solid case for the role of the SRCMs in promoting coherent and coordinated design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and other related subregional development frameworks and priorities, taking into account the need for a strong UN system coordination and collaborative arrangement at the subregional and linkages with regional and national level mechanisms. Win-wins, trade-offs, challenges and opportunities need to be included in the analysis.

- vii. Based on the findings, make robust conclusions and action oriented recommendations on the efficient and effective functioning of the SRCMs, including their linkages with the RCM, regional UNDGs and UNCTs in promoting coherent and coordinated design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 and other related subregional development frameworks and priorities.
- viii. Prepare and submit for review by ECA and partners a robust, analytical and well-informed report on “Strengthening Subregional Coordination in Support of the African Union and NEPAD”. The report will be prepared using both quantitative and qualitative information. It shall cover the issues identified above and have an outline including the specified issues, an executive summary, key messages, introduction including the analytical framework for the report, references and annexes.
- ix. Revise the report on the basis of comments and inputs provided by ECA, partners and other key stakeholders.
- x. Provide necessary support for the organization and servicing of an expert group meeting on the draft report.
- xi. Prepare and make a presentation of the report at the expert group meeting.
- xii. Finalize the report on the basis of comments and recommendations of the expert group meeting as guided by ECA.

3. Duration of the assignment and time lines

23. The assignment will require two months, commencing in third week of August 2018 and will be executed in accordance with the following time lines:

Time frame	Activity
1 week after signature of the contract	Consultant submits to ECA an inception note, detailing the conceptualization of the assignment: methods, data collection and analysis, work plan.
2 weeks after signature of the contract	Consultant submits to ECA an annotated outline for the report
5 weeks after signature of the contract	Consultant submits the first draft report
Within one week after receiving the first draft	ECA and partners review and provide comments on the draft report.
8 weeks after signature of the contract	Consultant submits a revised draft report
October 2018	Consultant participates in the expert group meeting (EGM), presents the findings of the report and provides substantive support to in the servicing of the meeting.
Within two weeks after the EGM	Consultant finalizes the report on the basis of comments and recommendations of the EGM as guided by ECA.

4. Deliverables

24. The consultant will deliver the following:

- i. An inception report detailing the conceptualization of the assignment that strongly demonstrates a clear understanding and interpretation of the tasks; and includes a conceptual framework; the methodology, including data and information collection and analysis, and a work plan;
- ii. An annotated outline of the report;
- iii. A robust analytical report on “Strengthening Subregional Coordination in Support of the African Union and NEPAD”.
- iv. For charts, graphs, etc. presented in the report, the Consultant shall provide ECA with the datasets (preferably in Excel format) used to generate the figures.
- v. A power point presentation at the EGM; and
- vi. Substantive support and inputs to the organization and servicing of the EGM and preparation of the report.

25. All the written outputs shall be prepared in English or French. Except for the power point presentation, all outputs shall be prepared using single line spacing, times new roman 12 font size, contain page numbering, list of acronyms, a table of contents, foot notes, references, relevant annexes and appendices.

All work submitted must be the original work of the consultant, and contain proper citation and recognition of reference documents and data sources.

5. Qualifications

26. The required qualifications are as follows:

Education: Advanced university degree (Masters Degree or equivalent) in economics, development economics/studies, sustainable development or related discipline is required.

Experience: A minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience at the national and/or international level in planning or policy development-related work. Experience in research/analytical work on economic or sustainable development-related areas in the context of Africa and the UN Development System, either in the academia or in private, public or civil society organizations is highly desirable.

Language: The consultant shall be fluent in written and spoken English or French. Good working knowledge of the other language is desirable.

Communication: The consultant must possess excellent drafting abilities and have proven abilities to prepare reports in a clear, concise and compelling manner. He/she should be able to interact with senior people including heads of AU, RECs, IGOs, UN agencies, government ministries, the private sector and other stakeholders and individuals.

Other skills: The consultant shall also have good publication record, including in the fields of development policy and strategy or related fields. Good computer skills for compilation and analysis of statistical data are required.