

Evaluation of the Commission's support to the region of Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean – ref. 1257

Abstract

The European Commission's cooperation with the region of Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean region has been relevant to the Region but the architecture of the programme does not fit unambiguously the African Union strategy for regional integration . Regional infrastructure represents one of the major bottlenecks in the region and priorities rightly focus on improving policies, plans and management capacity. Investment facilitation should be taken into consideration, if investment lags behind it is not possible to establish a virtuous cycle around improving capacity and investment. Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Management (CPRM) is relevant to needs in the region but EC approaches at regional and sub -regional level should be clarified and better integrated, and CPRM capacity should be strengthened .

Subject of the evaluation

This evaluation assesses the Commission's cooperation with the countries in the region of Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean during the period 1996-2007. Allocations amount to €506 million of which €12 million for regional integration and trade (42%), followed by transport and communications (29%) and natural resources management (23%). EC funding represents 55% of total donor commitments for regional initiatives for the period considered (estimated at 870 million €).

Purpose

The evaluation does provide an overall independent assessment and identifies key lessons.

Methodology

The evaluation was based on 8 evaluation questions, relating to the five DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact) plus coherence and EC value added. The evaluation was carried out in 3 phases: (i) desk (ii) field (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia) and (iii) synthesis. The evaluation entailed (i) examination of some 250 documents; (ii) analysis of the EC databases; (iii) interviews with 150 persons of which over 100 in the six countries visited; (iv) two focus group discussions; (v) light assessments of 14 selected projects or programmes.

Main conclusions:

Strategy and Global Architecture of the ESA-IO Programme

The ESA-IO regional strategies are relevant to the overall EC development strategies and to the African Union (AU) and Regional Integration Organisations (RIO) strategy and represent the stronger external support they receive. The global architecture of the ESA-IO programme, however, does not fit unambiguously the AU strategy for regional integration which is based on the rationalisation and strengthening of the role of the individual RIOs and their harmonisation.

Transport and Communications

There are significant moves towards integrated sector programmes and policies. These however are not matched by commensurate resources to be available. Regional infrastructure represents one of the major bottlenecks to trade and growth in the region and there is a risk of imbalance between capacity-building and support to regional investment in infrastructure. EC priorities in the ESA-IO region rightly focus on improving policies, plans and management capacity. Little is done, however, on investment facilitation

and, if investment lags behind, it is not possible to establish a virtuous cycle. On the other hand, capacity - building activities easily find a limit in the absorption capacity of the recipients.

Natural Resources Management (NRM)

The EC strategy in the ESA-IO region has contributed to strengthen capacity and to the attainment of significant policy achievements. The strategy – in line with the AU-NEPAD process - has provided support for raising increased consensus among participating countries and improved awareness of risks and tensions around scarce natural resources .

Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Management (CPRM)

The approach is relevant to needs in the region. The coherence of the EC funded ESA-IO CPRM programmes vis à vis EC/EU initiatives on a country and on a continental level, is questionable. Capacity to exercise CPRM mandates and activities in the region is improving, nevertheless the role played by the EC in building this capacity is limited. Although the EC has promoted the establishment of joint CPRM programming, coordination between RIOs remains low. The EC, despite its strategic scope to help establish and support CPRM strategies and build up capacity, is - at present - ill equipped to do so.

Recommendations:

Strategy and Global Architecture

Future programming should be based on strengthening the specific capacity of each Regional Integration Organisation involved and on enhancing dialogue and harmonisation within RIOs. In this framework, programmes should fit the individual RIOs' priorities, and at the same time, mechanisms should ensure coordinated and joint action in various priority areas .

Transport and Communications

The EC should support the preparation of a strategy and programme that includes a credible match between objectives, prioritisation and funding of support programmes.

Conflict Prevention, Resolution and Management

EC/EU approaches and priorities on CPRM at regional and sub -regional level should be clarified and better integrated, and capacity within the EC, at HQ, country and regional levels, to plan and implement CPRM activities should be strengthened to ensure that conflict sensitivity is successfully integrated into strategy, and programme formulation and implementation

Transferable lessons:

- 1. Improve the linkages between regional and national strategies,** - The full potential of the coordination and complementarities of its regional and national strategies has not yet been reached. *The EC can improve its impact in regional cooperation by recognizing and optimizing the appropriate level (regional or national) on which programmes act.*
- 2. When conceiving a (regional) strategy consider also related strategies, in this case the continent wide one.** The EC strategy does not fit well into the strategy of the African Union. *The EC can improve its impact in regional cooperation by fine -tuning its strategy with the concept the AU is pursuing.*
- 3. Contribution Agreements should be linked to results and their follow -up and monitoring improved** - *EC services should concentrate attention on results and monitoring of Contribution Agreements.*

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