



Donor funded alliances promoting regional cooperation

Anna Louise Strachan

Consultant

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Question

What examples are there of donor funded alliances or networks that have been successful in promoting regional coordination between 3 or more countries which share common issues or transnational challenges?

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The K4D helpdesk service provides brief summaries of current research, evidence, and lessons learned. Helpdesk reports are not rigorous or systematic reviews; they are intended to provide an introduction to the most important evidence related to a research question. They draw on a rapid desk-based review of published literature and consultation with subject specialists.

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1. Overview

There are a significant number of donor funded regional cooperation arrangements across a broad range of thematic areas. However, the level of their success varies considerably, and the literature search carried out for this report did not identify any unqualified successes. Areas of cooperation include:

- **Defence:** Donor funding for regional cooperation on defence issues includes funding for the Multinational Joint Task Force in the Lake Chad Basin, which is currently engaged in fighting Boko Haram. It also includes considerable support for the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) focusing on the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). While these cooperation initiatives have had some notable successes, a significant number of challenges remain. These challenges are outlined in Section 2 of this report.
- **Environmental issues:** An example of donor funded cooperation on environmental issues is the Nile Basin Initiative, which aims to facilitate dialogue between member states and advance joint water management projects. This initiative is widely considered to be a success, although a rigorous evaluation of its achievements was not found during the course of the research conducted for this report.
- **Economic integration:** Donor support for economic integration, for example through the European Commission and SIDA, has had some successes, however due to the lack of evaluations it is unclear how this success has been measured.

There is a relatively large body of literature on regional cooperation arrangements funded by donors, however it focuses largely on obstacles rather than successes. The literature search conducted for this research identified no rigorous evaluations of the impact of donor funding on these arrangements and it is therefore difficult to determine the extent of their success, or the role that donor support has played in their achievements. The majority of the literature identified during the course of this research focuses on regional cooperation in Africa, with no successful regional cooperation efforts identified in North Africa. The literature consists of books, peer-reviewed journal articles and policy papers and is largely 'gender-blind'.

2. Donor funded alliances supporting regional cooperation

A significant number of donors are funding regional cooperation initiatives. However, their success has been varied. The literature search conducted for this report did not identify any unqualified successes when it comes to donor support for regional cooperation initiatives. Examples of regional cooperation efforts that have demonstrated at least some degree of success are discussed in Section 3.

Some of the challenges relating to donor support for regional cooperation initiatives are outlined in this section. An example of these challenges is the case of the European Commission (EC), which allocates 59 per cent of regional aid to regional economic integration. Despite their substantial support for regional cooperation, this aspect of the EC's development assistance has been marred by a number of shortcomings. A European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) policy brief identifies a number of reasons for this:

- A lack of managerial capacity among regional organisations.

- Countries having overlapping memberships of regional organisations.
- A lack of progress in implementing regional agendas at a national level, and protracted negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).
- The EC's management capacity.
- Absence of appropriate governance structures for managing regional cooperation.
- Limited synergies between national and regional programming.
- Weak monitoring systems (ECDPM, 2016).

Another ECPDM policy brief focusing on support for regional cooperation in Africa, notes that donor's emphasis on supporting the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) is misguided. It argues that many regional organisations are experiencing both internal and external challenges, stating that some regional organisations in Africa 'are clearly dysfunctional and demonstrate major implementation gaps' (Söderbaum, 2016). In these cases, there is little evidence to suggest that donor support has resulted in positive and sustainable development outcomes (Söderbaum, 2016).

In Africa, regional and continental projects and processes that have been supported through donor funds include the peace and security architectures of the AU and the regions; continental agricultural and food security programmes under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP); the mobilisation of support for Africa's priority infrastructure projects through Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA); and sensitisation on gender equality and empowerment (Vanheukelom et al, 2016, p. 30). However, there are a number of issues:

- The majority of donor finance continues to be fragmented, and is provided as project aid, not budget support.
- A lot of donor funding to regional organisations remains off-budget, reducing the potential for regional organisations and their member states and stakeholders to know what goes into the budget and who is funding what. This reduces the potential of member states to assess to what extent the budget finances policy priorities.
- The amounts and timing of the contributions by member states to the budgets of AU and RECs are not reliable.
- Due to earmarking and project focused funding, donor preferences become more central to the agenda of regional organisations. In combination with donor conditionality this can create incentives for regional organisations to signal regional reforms, rather than to strengthen core functions (Vanheukelom et al, 2016, p. 30).

3. Case studies

This section provides a number of examples of donor funded regional cooperation initiatives. Those selected are generally viewed to have had some degree of success, although this is not supported by rigorous evaluations.

Defence

Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF)

Member States: Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Benin.

The MNJTF is mandated by the AU, but operates under the authority of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). In terms of funding, the MNJTF received EUR 50 million in 2016 from the European Commission. This is meant to meet its logistical and material needs and to cover some of its human resources costs. These include land and air transport requirements; secured communications, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; equipment for the command headquarters and the camps in the sectors of operations, and bonuses for the troops (Assanvo et al, 2016, p. 9). Other donors include the UK, which has provided USD 3.5 million. Despite donor support, the MNJTF is still primarily funded by the participating countries. There are concerns that this will not be sustainable in the long run (Assanvo et al, 2016, p. 9).

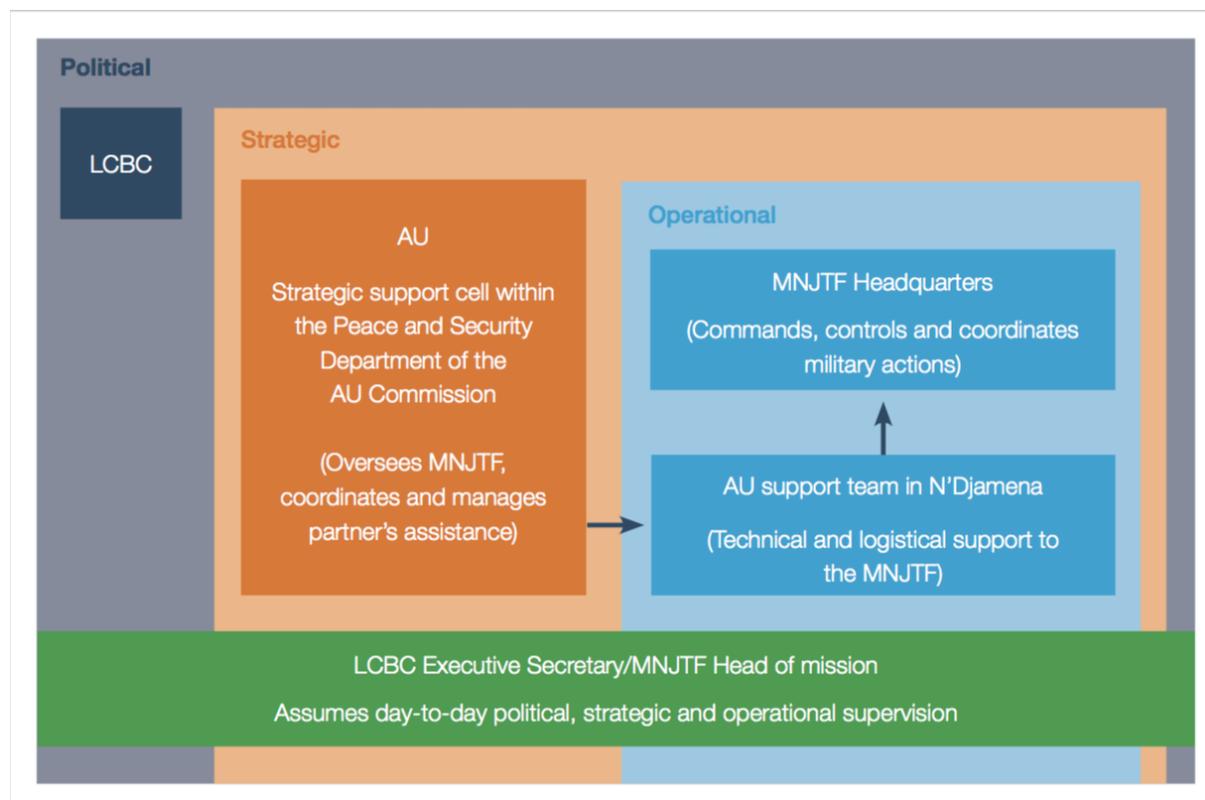


Figure 1: MNJTF institutional architecture (Assanvo et al, 2016, p. 5).

The International Crisis Group (ICG) describes the MNJTF as relatively successful in combatting Boko Haram (ICG, 2017, p. 5). This view is supported by other authors including Tar and Sunday (2017, p. 9). Specific success factors include:

- A de-escalation in fighting
- Bombing has reduced since insurgents' supply lines have been cut. They now lack food and ammunition, and their communication lines have been reduced.
- Many of the territories controlled by the insurgents have been taken back and people are returning home (Tar & Sunday, 2016)

- In the first five months of 2016, its interventions had reportedly led to the ‘neutralisation’ of at least 675 presumed Boko Haram members, the arrest of 566 others and the dismantling of nearly 32 training camps and alleged factories for the manufacture of improvised explosive devices and mines (Assanvo et al, 2016, p. 9).
- Nearly 4690 of the group’s hostages have reportedly been freed (Assanvo et al, 2016, p. 9).

Despite these achievements, attacks by Boko Haram continue. These take place mainly in northeastern Nigeria and southern Niger (Tar & Sunday, 2017, p. 9). Moreover, according to the ICJ, despite its relative success the actions of the MNJTF have driven thousands of men and women to joining Boko Haram to seek revenge or protection against the abuses they have suffered (ICG, 2017, p. 8).

AU and the RECs

Long-term donor support for capacity building in peace and security through the AU and the RECs is reportedly producing results. Achievements listed include the AU and the RECs’ involvement in the crisis in South Sudan, in combatting Boko Haram, and the AU’s peacekeeping interventions in Somalia (Söderbaum & Borlin, 2016, p. 64). However, the degree to which these interventions have been successful is not clear.

In particular, donors have provided funding for the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Under APSA, the RECs achievements in the field of peace and security include Intergovernmental Authority on Development’s (IGAD) Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), which has been deemed relatively successful. It is more developed compared to most other RECs and its involvement in assessing election related threats in Kenya in 2008 was largely considered to be a success (Lucey and Mesfin, 2016). CEWARN is supported by Germany, the US, the UK and Canada (Klingebiel et al, 2008, p. 30).

Moreover, according to Kabia (2011, p. 8) the Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS’ peace and security mechanism now includes legally binding protocols and institutional frameworks to understand and address violent conflicts. Examples include the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, and the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the West African Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Center (Dossan, 2016, p. 31). Likewise, its early warning system, ECOWARN, is an important component of its conflict prevention efforts (Tejpar and Lins de Albuquerque, 2015). However, the extent to which donor funding has played a part in these achievements is unclear.

Both IGAD and ECOWAS receive considerable donor support. Other RECs, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) receive less donor attention (Klingebiel et al, 2008, pp. 36-37)

Environmental challenges

Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) (est.1999)

Member states: Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, DRC and Eritrea (observer)

Donors: These include Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the World Bank. Other bilateral and multilateral NBI development partners include: the African Development Bank, Germany, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Italy, Japan, Switzerland, the UNDP, and the United States. The majority of funds supporting the NBI's projects and programmes are managed through the World Bank managed Nile Basin Trust Fund (NBTF).¹

According to GIZ, as a result of donor support, the NBI Secretariat is an effective organisation that is capable of delivering the services expected from a river basin organisation. Specific achievements of the NBI Secretariat include:

- It is supporting the exchange of information on water resources.
- It is able to provide hydrological and socio-economic planning scenarios.
- It has reached an agreement with the Nile Basin riparian states on common principles and strategies for many of the issues relating to transboundary water management.
- The organisation's capabilities and skills are now being used at the regional level to assist in joint decision-making, and are also being applied in the member states' own national planning processes.²

The Nile Basin Initiative has also contributed to building trust, and preventing conflict among Nile Basin states. At sub-basin level, NBI is coordinating investments in regionally coordinated infrastructure and watershed management projects with total value of around USD 1.4 billion. This includes interconnecting regional power networks so that the benefits of hydropower development in one part of the basin can be shared with other Nile Basin riparian states, thus defusing conflicts over water allocation.³

According to Byiers, the strength of the NBI lies in its technical abilities.⁴ Its Collaborative Water Assessment Process helps to model different scenarios of the water resource levels and impacts of investments.⁵ The article also states that sub-regional approaches and subsidiarity appear to allow sub-regional alignment around narrowed common interests, and thus specialisation. The NBI has two Subsidiary Action Programmes. The first one, organised around the Eastern Nile Technical Regional Office (ENTRO) for the Eastern Nile, is autonomous from the NBI Secretariat while the second is the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP).⁶

¹ <http://www.internationalwatersgovernance.com/nile-river-basin-initiative.html>

² <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/14940.html>

³ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/14940.html>

⁴ <http://ecdpm.org/talking-points/nile-basin-initiative-regional-sailboat-choppy-geopolitical-waters/>

⁵ <http://ecdpm.org/talking-points/nile-basin-initiative-regional-sailboat-choppy-geopolitical-waters/>

⁶ <http://ecdpm.org/talking-points/nile-basin-initiative-regional-sailboat-choppy-geopolitical-waters/>

Economic integration

Swedish funding for economic integration in Africa focuses mainly on supporting capacity building for increasing economic integration at the regional level. Substantial progress has reportedly been made in this area. Swedish assistance has reportedly resulted in the establishment of a certification programme for economic actors involved in import and export that has reduced the time and costs associated with international trade. However, due to several delays in the implementation of interventions in this sector anticipated results were not achieved within the estimated timeframe (Söderbaum & Brolin, 2016, p. 68).

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About this report

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