

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In May 2002, a NEPAD Short-term Action Plan for Infrastructure (STAP) was produced. The importance accorded to infrastructure in the NEPAD agenda reflects the fact that one of the priorities of NEPAD is the promotion of regional integration in the continent to overcome the lack of economies of scale. Bridging the infrastructure gap has been identified as an important element in promoting regional integration. Infrastructure is also an important element in reducing Africa's economic marginalisation. There can be no meaningful development without trade – and there can be no trade without adequate and reliable infrastructure.

The 2002 STAP outlined NEPAD's response to the challenges facing the sector under four areas:

- facilitation – the establishment of the policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks to create a suitable environment for investment and efficient operations;
- capacity building-initiatives to empower the implementing institutions to perform their mandates;
- investment – in physical and capital projects; and
- studies – to prepare future projects.

NEPAD's role in ensuring the successful implementation of the STAP was seen as:

- mobilising political will and actions to implement policy and institutional reforms, including harmonising regulatory systems and ratifying agreements;
- facilitating the mobilisation of resources for regional projects; and
- facilitating knowledge-sharing, networking and dissemination of best practice among countries, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and technical agencies.

Underlying all NEPAD infrastructure programme is the objective of strengthening or developing sector governance arrangements that are rule-based, predictable, transparent and participatory. It is important to stress that the NEPAD program in infrastructure is not a new set of initiatives. Rather, NEPAD seeks to bring a new vigour to accelerate the response to familiar problems and to implement tested policies and good practices, founded on the African leadership's collective commitment and determination to urgently mobilise and harness all resources available to speed up economic growth and social development and, thus to eradicate poverty.

The STAP is to be complemented by a more comprehensive Medium- and Long-term Action Programme which is currently in the initial stages of development.

One year later, the performance under the STAP has been evaluated, and where necessary updated, to determine what lessons have been learned from the first year of implementation and to clarify and modify roles, responsibilities and procedures in order to enhance implementation performance in the future.

This report contains the results of that evaluation together with recommendations for future action.



1.2 The Updating Process

In order to investigate what progress has been made on implementing the NEPAD STAP, visits arranged by AfDB and NEPAD Secretariat by a team of consultants were made to COMESA, CEN-SAD, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and UMA. The visits were used to determine the degree of understanding of and commitment to the STAP by the RECs. The visits also solicited information on the progress of implementation of each project in the STAP, any projects that had been completed or withdrawn or for which financing had been secured and on any new projects that the RECs proposed to add. The RECs were also invited to revisit the question of the priority that they attached to each project. The consultations also sought to understand the constraints that impeded the implementation of the STAP as perceived by the RECs and to identify “fast-track” projects that could move forward rapidly if additional support were forthcoming.

The specific objectives of the visits, as well as the expected outputs of the consultations with the RECs were explained as follows:

- a) to review in detail with the RECs the STAP as it relates to them;
- b) to review key projects, which at the time of the preparation of the STAP could not be included in the programme, that can be included in view of the fact that the STAP is a rolling programme;
- c) for each of the projects/programmes to be coordinated by the RECs, to develop a detailed time-bound implementation schedule;
- d) to identify key capacity gaps that should be addressed to enable the RECs to fulfil their mandates in the coordination of the Implementation of the STAP;
- e) for each prioritised project/programme within each REC, determine gaps (capacity, financing, etc.) that need to be filled to enable the smooth implementation of such a project/programme.

In addition to the above, it was highlighted that another objective of the mission was to understand and document critical sectoral issues within the regions as well as priority infrastructure sectors of focus for each REC.

The visits also permitted an analysis of constraints to implementation, both within and across RECs. Consequently it has been possible to draw useful conclusions and make recommendations based on lessons learnt from one REC that could be applied to others.

2 The STAP Update

The first year of implementation of the STAP has been a learning process for the RECs, for NEPAD and for their development partners. There has therefore been a certain degree of perfectly understandable confusion and misunderstanding regarding roles and responsibilities. Understanding of roles, responsibilities and procedures has evolved at different rates across RECs; this is reflected in different rates of progress in the implementation of the STAP across RECs. Continuing political and