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Getting ready for take off:

Lessons for regional CAADP

Dolly Afun-Ogidan, Francesco Rampa and Jeske van Seters

Introduction

Time flies. This is true also for the first 'Africa led, Africa owned, Africa wide' agriculture and food security initiative: almost a decade has gone by since the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) was launched in 2003. The endorsement of CAADP by African heads of states presented a timely approach to renew interest in and prioritize the continent's agriculture agenda, as well as put food security objectives at the fore of national, regional, continental and even global processes. In many ways, this framework has offered an opportunity to move away from business as usual. With CAADP, governments and regional economic communities (RECs) are more inclined to initiate, take ownership and commit to being responsible for their own national and regional agricultural development actions. But even more so, the process of introducing, developing, launching, implementing and eventually monitoring CAADP, holds great potential to serve as a rallying point for a wide range of stakeholders- from development partners to non-state actors to private sector investors.

As traction around the CAADP framework has gradually increased, a lot of emphasis has been placed on driving the CAADP agenda at the country level. In comparison, the regional dimension of CAADP has not quite received as much attention until recently. While 29 countries across Africa have launched CAADP compacts, only one regional compact has been developed.

Yet, many stakeholders, especially development partners and continental actors like the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), who have always acknowledged the value and importance of a comprehensive regional approach to agriculture, are now interested in taking more concrete steps to support RECs' priorities through the CAADP framework. This emerged during the 7th CAADP Partnership Platform in Yaoundé that took place in March 2011, where the need for accelerating the development and implementation of regional CAADP compacts was recognized. In addition, as national compacts are being developed, there is general agreement among various stakeholders that better progress can be ensured if complementary efforts and investments are made at the regional level. Similarly, there is a growing awareness about the importance of improved coordination, coherence and complementarity between regional processes and actions in different but related areas such as agriculture, trade, infrastructure and natural resources, as well as development partners' support therein.

In order to identify concrete actions for faster progress on regional CAADP, it was important to take a step back to get an overview of where each REC stands. On this basis, the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) was given the mandate by the CAADP Development Partners Task Team (DPTT) to conduct a series of mapping exercises of the CAADP regional process in COMESA, SADC, EAC

and ECOWAS.[1] As part of this independent mapping, ECDPM engaged with and interviewed various regional stakeholders, including REC officials, regional donors, regional farmers organization and CAADP focal points at the country level. The mapping (available at www.ecdpm.org/dp128) assessed the major challenges and opportunities for the design and/ or implementation, as the case may be, of a regional CAADP compact. It also highlighted the role played so far by key stakeholders and explored the synergies between regional food security processes, other regional initiatives and overall progress on regional integration. This Briefing Note presents: a short overview of the state-of-play of regional CAADP in the four RECs (Section 1); a synthesis of key crosscutting messages and challenges from the regions (Section 2); ideas on how to address those challenges to make the regional CAADP more effective (Section 3).

1. Small steps or big strides? Overview of regional approaches to CAADP

It can be argued that the approach to regional cooperation and integration, adopted by a group of countries in a regional bloc is usually unique, based on the mandate, priorities and overall ambitions of the member states (MS) and specific REC. This is also the case for regional approaches to food security: each REC, in general, recognizes agriculture development as a priority, but the manner in which regional action on this thematic area is taken forward, and degree of progress differs from REC to REC.

West Africa is ahead of the game when it comes to CAADP at the regional level. In fact, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had already initiated and adopted a framework of guidelines for the creation of a common regional agricultural policy for West Africa (ECOWAP), as far back as 2001. This conveniently coincided with the period when CAADP gained momentum and global interest, and by 2005, the ECOWAP was adopted as the reference framework for CAADP implementation at the regional level in West Africa. Soon after, in 2009 the ECOWAS CAADP regional compact was launched followed by an introduction of the Regional Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP) in 2010. Since then, ECOWAS has kept up the drive to operationalize regional CAADP, including by formulating a "strategic and operational plan" and initiating the creation of an agency and a fund to facilitate proper implementation. Yet, it would be misleading to say that things are picture perfect in West Africa. ECOWAS still struggles with the usual regional integration challenges. Coherence and complementarity between national and regional compacts and investment plans (*vertical coherence)*, as well as between ECOWAP and other thematic regional processes (*horizontal coherence)* could be better articulated to exploit synergies. Non-state actors participation in ECOWAP could be improved, and donor coordination, although already effective, could be strengthened through better alignment to the ECOWAP and increased harmonization of support programmes.

In the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), a regional compact document was ready in 2010, but this document was never formally adopted since the COMESA Ministers of Agriculture decided the draft should be fine tuned as a 'Tripartite' regional CAADP compact, to be prepared jointly with the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). The COMESA compact process has not been as straightforward as the ECOWAS one, in some ways because of the overlapping membership of COMESA countries with the three different RECs. Nevertheless, other regional agriculture initiatives, many supported by donors, are ongoing. The effectiveness of these approaches is yet to be seen, as most are relatively new compared to initiatives in other regional cooperation sectors. Overall, COMESA is making good progress, but there is still space to: improve the systematic coordination of agriculture programmes, both within the REC and among donors; make stronger synergies with regional markets, institutions, natural resources and infrastructure which are inherently linked to food security; and ensure a multi-stakeholder participatory approach.

In the East African Community (EAC), regional CAADP has also been on the back burner until recently. The region has been active in developing a regional food security action plan and other initiatives geared toward regional agricultural development, but this has been done outside the framework of CAADP. It was not until August 2011 that EAC agriculture ministers gave the go ahead to the EAC Secretariat to start the regional

[1] In 2011, COMESA, SADC, EAC and ECOWAS worked on aspects of CAADP at the regional level. Other RECs such as ECCAS and IGAD have also started discussions on regional CAADP initiatives, but these are not reflected in this Briefing Note. This note is part of a series of region-specific publications on CAADP (see www.ecdpm.org/dp128). This work has been made possible by the financial support of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

compact process. It is envisaged that existing initiatives will be integrated into the compact. However, there are questions arising: can regional CAADP be a real priority for the EAC, given their current preoccupation with establishing a monetary union? Is the EAC Secretariat prepared to more effectively and regularly engage non-state actors, including farmers' organizations, in the compact preparation? To what extent does the EAC Secretariat have capacity to coordinate the implementation of a regional compact? Is there sufficient political will and interest to implement such a regional approach at the country level? What steps should be taken to ensure that a regional compact complements EAC countries' national compacts? How will the complexities associated with a tripartite arrangement, if this happens, be handled? Are donors ready to collaborate better on regional agriculture?

The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) is in the process of developing its own Regional Agriculture Policy (RAP), which is planned to be fully 'CAADP compatible'. The SADC Secretariat initiated the RAP in 2008, but for long the RAP and CAADP were perceived as two competing frameworks. This perception is gradually changing as SADC is currently working to explicitly align the RAP to the CAADP. It is expected that by August 2012 the SADC Council would endorse the RAP, followed by the preparation of an investment plan, with the aim of completing the RAP by end 2012. According to many stakeholders in the region, to arrive at SADC's planned destination of a qualitative, effective regional tool for agriculture, some more work needs to be done on the *content* and *process* of the RAP. The *content*- substance of the RAP and investment actions should foster vertical and horizontal coherence among member states and between various regional initiatives; in terms of *process*, substantial room for improvement is possible for full ownership and inclusivity.

In general, regional CAADP is gradually picking up speed. Other regions- Central Africa and the Horn of Africa- are starting to initiate processes to develop regional CAADP compacts. In particular, the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is currently coordinating the design of a regional compact document, a process that started in the last quarter of 2011, in response to the recurrent Horn of Africa food crises, and as an opportunity to catalyze collective commitments by all partners to strengthen the region's resilience to food insecurity. The IGAD regional CAADP compact is expected to be launched in June 2012, and an investment plan will follow shortly afterward. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) plans to officially launch the regional CAADP process in May 2012. This is expected to result in a regional compact by the end of the year, followed by a regional investment plan ready by the end of 2013.

2. Different regions, shared challenges

Regional action on food security

All RECs are **increasingly recognizing the importance and potential added value of *regional* action on agriculture**. In the past few years, regional agricultural development is slowly getting centre stage in Africa. Some regions have embraced CAADP as the tool to address regional agricultural challenges, while others have developed separate regional food security strategies, policies and programmes. West Africa pioneered CAADP at the regional level, by launching a compact in 2009, the ECOWAP, and a regional investment plan the following year. In the EAC a Food Security Action Plan has been adopted to provide strategic direction for regional food security initiatives; SADC is working on a Regional Agricultural Policy; while COMESA has adopted an Agricultural Strategy to guide interventions on agricultural markets, productivity-enhancing technologies, and agricultural policy environment between 2010 and 2014. In most RECs, other sub-sectoral programmes existed before the launch of the CAADP process, for instance on regional markets promotion, famine early warning system, pest management and other sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures. Despite the peculiar challenges each region faces, all RECs acknowledge the value of regional initiatives to boost their respective agriculture sectors.

A **regional approach to food security can catalyze political and investment traction, attracting important stakeholders from all sectors to the regional cooperation processes**. It is also timely that greater focus is given to the regional dimension, as the Horn of Africa and Sahel regions face crippling droughts and food crises. A regional CAADP compact and investment plan can provide a rallying point for a wide range of key actors- national governments, regional organizations, non-state and private sector representatives, development partners, etc, to align to the regions' priorities and task-divide on commonly identified priority actions.

However, the regional CAADP process should be expected to **take time,** for identification of priorities, stakeholder consultation, and especially implementation of agreed policies and investments, also given the number of countries involved in each REC and the complexities at stake. It takes a lot more than simply drafting the regional compact and investment documents. Identifying the right institutions and strengthening

their capacity to fully deliver on their mandate to implement the regional compact could be quite complicated. In the case of ECOWAS, creating an agency and regional fund dedicated to the ECOWAP process is clearly an important step in the right direction. However, when weak capacity, unclear roles between regional bodies (e.g. the ECOWAS Commission, UEMOA[2], CILSS[3], etc) and duplication of efforts (including by donors) are not addressed, the potential of such an agency and/ or fund to properly support the ECOWAP implementation is weakened. The need to 'get the process right' also emerges from the COMESA experience, showing how crucial it is to **consult all the right stakeholders and to** reconcile differing views **while developing the regional compact**. Otherwise, there is a risk that the compact may not be endorsed by key stakeholders.

Articulating the national-regional nexus

Any **regional CAADP approach should be designed in a way that is coherent with ongoing national efforts and fosters synergies between the two levels of intervention**. There is consensus in all regions that the substance of a regional compact, i.e. policies, investments and actions of various actors, should complement the substance of CAADP compacts in the MS of that REC.

However, **this vertical coherence (between regional and national levels) is not yet quite visible**. In the ECOWAS region, the starting point for CAADP was the regional compact. Member states' national compacts soon followed. Despite developing both regional and national compacts almost simultaneously, coherence is far from satisfactory according to some stakeholders, with national compacts predominantly 'inward looking'. The ECOWAP also includes interventions, such as the co-financing of social safety nets, which some believe could be better dealt with by MS and their compacts, rather than the regional compact. In East Africa, many stakeholders feel that because the EAC Secretariat was not strongly involved in the preparation of its MS compacts, the regional dimension was not properly articulated and reflected at the national level. So far, **no analysis has been conducted in any region to better articulate the coherence between national compacts and (existing or possible) regional compacts,** as well as **identify gaps where a regional compact could complement national efforts**. For those RECs that are in the process of developing a regional compact- IGAD, COMESA, SADC and EAC, this is the perfect time to conduct such analysis.

In all regions, it seems that while MS recognize the importance of regional food security and even commit to regional agreements to boost agriculture, when push comes to shove, **national interests take priority**. During regional food shortages, governments are swift to take actions that address national concerns first, shutting borders, placing export bans and essentially shunning previous regional commitments, sometimes at the detriment of neighbouring countries. Apart from national governments, farmers and other businesses also concentrate on the national challenges they face in the sector, probably because they have little resources and time to devote to the regional dimensions. In West Africa, farmers in bigger MS are not particularly motivated to explore regional markets, as they feel they gain enough from local markets. The usual regional integration challenges hold for agriculture as well: **implementation of regional commitments at country level is not always considered a priority**. It is crucial now that each region works through these bottlenecks to enable a regional CAADP compact deliver results.

For RECs that are currently working toward launching a regional compact, part of the process of articulating the national-regional nexus would include **increasing awareness on what value a regional CAADP compact can bring in addition to a national CAADP compact**. For instance, in COMESA, many stakeholders refer to the need to show more clearly the benefits of regional integration especially to weaker MS and population segments like small farmers. In most regions, many grass root farmers are not aware of how they could contribute to the CAADP process or how a regional compact can help connect them to bigger regional markets. In some cases, such as in the EAC, REC Secretariats do not seem to have made enough effort to keep regional farmers representatives abreast of plans and developments around the regional compact process. As well, there also seems to be **limited knowledge about regional agriculture initiatives in national ministries**. For instance, some key actors in the agricultural ministries of certain SADC countries did not know much about the RAP documents or process.

Regional institutions could help MS, their national ministries of agriculture, farmers' organizations, and other key stakeholders, think through and **identify what is needed as regional action to contribute to food security objectives**. Part of this process could also mean that the REC organizes more regular platforms where such actors can come together to discuss those issues. The ECOWAS Commission for example played

[2] The West African Economic and Monetary Union/ L'Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA)
[3] Comité permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS)

a strong role in mobilizing external support, as well as dedicating its own resources to facilitate consultations among country actors on both the national and regional compact processes.

For regional integration to work, including cooperation on agriculture and CAADP at regional level, it is fundamental to better **match the bottom-up regional integration processes and dynamics**, which tend to be driven by the private sector and various forms of investment, **with the top-down regional integration moves**, such as policy frameworks and protocols that are usually driven by the governments and the public sector. Matching such bottom-up and top-down processes would require also a better coherence and coordination of what is planned at regional level with what really happens in the countries.

There seems to be widespread consensus in most regions that the **value of regional CAADP lies in strategic regional action and investments that individual countries, acting alone, cannot achieve or afford**. Most actors concur that the regional compact would serve to accelerate individual country agricultural growth by enabling them to benefit from regional spillovers and economies of scale in technology, human and policy development, as well as in trade and investment.

Articulating the national-regional nexus would in some cases also mean clarifying how to exactly apply the 'subsidiarity' principle, based on relevant existing protocols and treaties. Significantly, how to apply 'subsidiarity' should be clarified for each specific dimension of food security, since responsibilities and the most effective task-division among national and regional institutions can differ from one particular food security initiative to another.

Multi-stakeholder approach and participation of non-state actors

Experiences with non-state-actors (NSA) engagement, in particular farmers' organizations, show that it is extremely **important to identify the right stakeholders who shall participate in the regional compact preparation and signature**. This also includes proper clarification of mandates, roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the compact. For instance, during the drafting stage of the initial COMESA compact, some stakeholders felt the preparatory process was not truly open and multi-actor. Regional farmers' organizations complained that their national members were not sufficiently consulted and that the regional process did not link to the national CAADP compacts, which eventually led to delays in the finalization of the regional compact. The **type of consultation also matters**. In some cases, stakeholders complained that exchanges to formulate the regional compact took place only through emails and often stakeholders were given only a few days to comment on the relevant preparatory documents. **When the consultation process is criticized and stakeholders don't feel their voice or interests are taken into consideration in the compact, there will be differing views on the quality of the regional compact, which could lead to a deadlock**.

One of the **crucial 'process' dimensions of regional food security plans is 'ownership'** by stakeholders. Arguably, farmers and other private sector actors are very important pieces of the CAADP puzzle, and need to be involved in the design and implementation of regional CAADP policies and investments, both as key contributors to food security and as beneficiaries of support programmes. However, farmers, and in particular **small-scale farmers, suffer seriously from lack of voice in agriculture and rural development (ARD) processes**. This experience is similar across most RECs, though with differing degrees of concern. In the EAC, although the East African Farmers Federation (EAFF) has been given observer status at ministerial meetings, the Secretariat has so far not given regular opportunities for NSA to provide input during the preparation of the regional compact. In the ECOWAS region, on the other hand, despite room for further improvements, the ECOWAS Commission has been commended for promoting an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach, which has generated a sense of ownership for the CAADP process among stakeholders.

Like small-scale farmers, other non-state-actors, such as NGOs and **private businesses, face challenges in terms of engagement in regional decision-making.** Though there is a general perception in the SADC region that at national level most intermediary civil society and business organizations are quite strong, regional platforms for regular involvement are lacking. For instance the SADC Business Forum launched in 2005 does not play any role in the RAP formulation process. Similarly in COMESA, private businesses face challenges with their representation in the regional CAADP process. In East Africa, many stakeholders also agree that more involvement of private sector is needed. While it is recognized that private investment in regional initiatives is increasing, this has been mostly limited to infrastructure projects. Private investment in agriculture has so far not been initiated at a similar scale as in the infrastructure sector, mostly due to the perceived long-term low return on investments and perceived high risks for agricultural projects. Many

stakeholders see an **opportunity for increased private sector collaboration, if RECs and national governments can create a conducive environment for public–private dialogues** and attract private investment in the agriculture sector. In West Africa, as part of the process to implement the regional investment plan, the ECOWAS Commission has created the Advisory Committee for Food and Agriculture, which would bring together representatives of West African regional institutions, MS and donors, as well as representatives of the private sector.

In general, the engagement of NSA on regional policy-making is limited as **platforms for regular involvement are lacking**. In some cases, national farmers' organizations are not keen on engaging in regional dialogue, especially where these actors prefer to focus on local and national markets and don't recognize the benefits that could accrue from regional economies of scale. But most of the time, farmers' organizations are limited in their capacity to analyze policies that affect them, which weakens their power to influence national and regional policies. Some regional farmers' organizations like the EAFF and Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU) are undertaking a number of important activities and intend to do more in terms of: conducting awareness workshops on CAADP for farmers and other agriculture stakeholders; supporting policy engagement of farmers' organizations; strengthening national farmers' organization's capacities on CAADP technical issues; supporting communication on CAADP in the region through the media; and informing on the links between national and regional CAADP processes.

The **formulation of a regional compact should guarantee stakeholders' ownership and aim at gathering support for its implementation**. The regional CAADP process therefore should: be inclusive and transparent; effectively take into account the different points of view of all relevant stakeholders; and include the design of mutual accountability mechanisms allowing for the monitoring of stakeholders' implementation responsibilities and the evaluation of food security impacts. In terms of the way forward, it is felt by many stakeholders in different regions that engagement with NSA has to be pursued and deepened in the implementation and monitoring of the national and regional investment plans, to keep the momentum for genuine multi-stakeholder participation.

Role of Regional Economic Communities

The Secretariat or Commission of any REC plays a key role in the CAADP process. As a general rule, RECs are responsible for overall coordination and implementation of regional policies. But the **political will and ability to drive a regional initiative such as CAADP is a major determining factor for the success of this framework at the regional level**. Both the ECOWAS Commission and COMESA Secretariat are commended by national and regional stakeholders for providing effective and timely assistance to MS with the identification of their food security needs and coordination of external support to them, especially during the national CAADP process. The COMESA Secretariat took the lead in facilitating its MS, many of which are also members of EAC and SADC, in signing the national CAADP compact. In West Africa, it is widely accepted among stakeholders that the ECOWAS Commission has been instrumental in progress made at the national level. To advance the process at the national level, the Commission provided from its own resources financial assistance of over USD 0.4mn to each MS to define national compacts and organize the NAIP formulation process (studies, modeling, consultation workshops). In collaboration with other institutions, the Commission also provided technical support to its member states. In addition, ECOWAS MS have committed to contribute USD 150mn to facilitate implementation of the RAIP, and set up a Regional Agency for Food and Agriculture (RAFA) and a Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food (ECOWADF). Therefore, many stakeholders perceive the ECOWAS Commission as a driving force behind both regional and national processes. In comparison, the SADC and EAC Secretariats have not been as active in pushing the CAADP agenda. From these experiences, it is obvious that there is a direct correlation between support from the REC and the progress that could be achieved on regional CAADP.

It is generally recognized that **regional organizations in Africa have weak institutional capacity** Some stakeholders mention that the current institutional structure of some REC Secretariats is neither efficient nor sufficient to support implementation of regional agriculture strategies and programs. As for the EAC, an institutional restructuring is planned to transform the Secretariat to a Commission, with Commissioners from each partner state, to strengthen the mandate of the REC and address the regional challenges better. This may benefit the regional CAADP agenda.

The role played so far by most REC Secretariats for CAADP, relates to a series of constraints that limit the effectiveness of its regional coordination function (i.e. consultation processes with the MS and sector stakeholders), including the complexity and costs associated with organizing regional meetings, particularly as national budgets are under financial pressure. At these REC Secretariats there is **little interdepartmental**

coordination, few meetings among (perceived) isolated units and even less operational linkages that should guide inter-sectoral coordination at regional level. Some observers point to a 'silos mentality' due to both the 'working culture' and the lack of managerial direction to coordinate. Moreover, a key general problem mentioned is that these Secretariats tends to centralize all preparatory work, including technical, despite its limited human resources; while, according to critical views, it should only act as good facilitator of national level input and manager of external expertise.

Role of continental level

Institutions responsible for CAADP implementation at pan-African level, such as the African Union Commission (AUC) and the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) are also important actors in the regional food security processes. 'Mixed feelings' are found among stakeholders in some regions, especially ECOWAS and COMESA, regarding the role that continental institutions have played on the regional dimensions of CAADP so far. In some RECs, there is the perception that the NPCA does not sufficiently involve the REC when engaging with its MS. In COMESA, while technical and financial support is obviously acknowledged, there is a general sense that pan-African organizations could do much better to really promote implementation of CAADP at regional level. On the other hand, perception of NPCA in EAC is quite positive: REC representatives are glad that the continental body has been involved in supporting its partner states' compact development processes.

Many stakeholders feel that the sometimes **strained relationship could be due to the lack of sufficient coordination and consultation between various African institutions at different levels**. Despite official mandates of all involved actors are clear vis-à-vis CAADP implementation, different approaches and sometimes disconnected priorities of different agencies would lead to insufficient coordination among major African players such as RECs and NPCA, with risks of duplication of efforts, high transaction costs and unnecessary burden for the ultimate beneficiaries i.e. the African countries. The NPCA for instance would have often failed to communicate effectively and timely with regional stakeholders about various aspects of the CAADP processes, including in terms of opportunities to share lessons across different RECs as well as avenues to access external funding through 'multilateral' mechanisms such as the CAADP Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). There seems to be general agreement that there is a need for pan-African institutions to align more effectively to RECs' regional approaches, timeframes and institutional dynamics.

Donor support, coordination and harmonisation

Another important actor in the regional food security processes is the group of development partners (DPs), comprising all major international donors which support with substantial funds and other inputs the CAADP and other related programmes. **Donor engagement around regional agriculture and CAADP differs in each region**. In COMESA, many stakeholders believe there is room for significant improvement. First, there appears to be a lack of clarity on the side of DPs, about what regional CAADP action could actually be, especially in relation to the regional integration dynamics within COMESA. Second, there is insufficient donor coordination and weak engagement between DPs and COMESA around implementation of broader agricultural initiatives at the regional level. In the EAC, it is perceived that donors engage less at the regional than at country level, resulting in limited external financial resources for regional initiatives. Also, because there are fewer donors working on regional agriculture, the impression is that there is less urgency and little incentive among donors to adopt a common approach. The engagement between the SADC Secretariat and its DPs is organised through a formal system of joint working groups for specific themes under the overall umbrella of a Joint Task Force. But many consider the contribution of most DPs to agriculture-related processes at the regional level, as lukewarm. On the other hand, in West Africa, the **ECOWAP/ CAADP has provided a good rallying point for donors to align to the region's priorities and strengthen donor harmonization**. A regional Donor Working Group (DWG) has been set up around the ECOWAP to support regional initiatives and plans around CAADP. Donors and the ECOWAS Commission generally perceive this as a well-functioning and useful platform. The DWG has adopted its own rules of procedure, meets on a regular basis; once a month, and as such presents a good platform to share information among donors and formulate joint positions for discussions with ECOWAS. Representatives of the ECOWAS Commission, particularly staff members of the agriculture department, often attend the DWG's meetings. Yet, improvements can be made. As regional DP representations are often spread across countries in the regions, information exchange between national and regional levels is still fragmented. Actual harmonization still remains a challenge, even in regions where coordination is more advanced.

In some RECs, such as SADC, the lack of engagement (and enthusiasm), contrasting with the proactive approach to CAADP taken by many donors in other African regions, is explained by certain officials from donor

offices, as a result of the **lack of certainty about the real prospects for a regional CAADP compact** in SADC and the relatively slow progress of the existing regional agricultural plans, which on the contrary should be guiding donors' involvement and generating clear demands for external support.

Another reason for the weak engagement of DPs in regional food security initiatives is that **working at regional level on ARD is relatively new** for most donors, traditionally involved in supporting national food security action. Many actors in most regions believe that **the regional level is the right one for donor engagement and coordination in support of regional CAADP processes**, compared to donor engagement from the headquarters' level, which is too far away from the regional dynamics or compared to local donor representation in countries, which focuses on supporting countries to address national challenges. Some donors however expressed the view that donor support and coordination at national level should also be a priority, to allow regional CAADP initiatives to build on policies and investments included in the national compacts/ investment plans and to address the regional-national nexus.

In many RECs, including SADC and EAC, coordination is most often defined by ad hoc exchange of information. Several DPs finance regional programmes that contribute to agriculture and to one or more of the CAADP/RAP thematic areas, but there is no fully-fledged common approach, support and alignment to one regional ARD framework. Other important donors do not have regional agricultural programmes, facing therefore **little incentive to create or participate in sectoral coordination.** DPs admit that they do not have a structured platform through which regular exchange and discussion could take place in order to improve coordination on their support to regional agriculture initiatives. In the ECOWAS region, experience has shown that **coordination structures can easily be set up around a regional CAADP compact, incentivizing harmonization of interventions** around not just regional agriculture and food security but also other related sectors DPs support.

Regional integration and the multi-dimensional nature of CAADP

The **implementation of regional CAADP has the potential to significantly contribute to overall regional integration and cooperation efforts**. But bottlenecks for regional integration, including the gap between regional commitments and their application at the national level, if not addressed could limit this potential and possible progress.

The **bottlenecks to deeper regional integration in most RECs start with the economic heterogeneity of member states**. In many RECs, regional integration has not shown its benefits to the weaker economies and countries. There is the general impression, and sometimes rightly so, that only bigger MS, e.g. South Africa and few other strong countries in SADC, or Nigeria in ECOWAS, etc, stand to gain from certain regional initiatives. When the benefit to these countries is not obvious, or they are satisfied with the current degree of regional cooperation and integration, there is usually little support from such MS for regional programmes. According to many actors in some regions, another obstacle to regional integration is that **'regional thinking' is not institutionalized in many MS**, and arbitrary unilateral policy measures are still common and contradict basic principles of regional cooperation. For example, among certain groups of stakeholder, the private sector in particular, a certain degree of mistrust remains with respect to the regional institutions such as the REC Secretariats. These are often defined as "highly political" organisations, perceived to pay too much attention to the internal political dynamics within each MS, to the detriment of the speed and depth of overall regional integration. This is compounded both by the low levels of technical personnel, managerial capacity and financial resources of the regional institutions, as well as by the scarce efforts devoted by the countries to their effective participation in REC coordination structures.

In all regions several policies and programmes are already in place, which are important to achieve food security objectives, in particular in the area of trade, infrastructure and natural resources. Because **agriculture is inherently linked to other sectors, slow action on regional trade, infrastructure, and other related regional initiatives have consequences for regional food security** and agricultural development. In the elaboration process of a regional CAADP compact, progress and obstacles in cross-cutting regional initiatives need to be taken into account.

Many stakeholders in all regions realize the importance of linking a regional CAADP to ongoing initiatives on agriculture and rural development, trade, infrastructure and natural resources. While some **linkages will naturally emerge**, such as on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, 'agriculture trade corridors', irrigation as well as existing regional agricultural programmes and institutions, other synergies will need to be carefully analyzed, to identify the opportunities for horizontal coherence between regional CAADP and other regional thematic areas.

Assessing the progress made by the other policies and programmes relevant to food security, understanding their strengths and weakness, what major bottlenecks they encounter, is **crucial to avoid duplication and identify opportunities and challenges for the creation of synergies with regional CAADP**. It is also important to understand whether the implementation of CAADP at regional level can build on the progress in other sectors and possibly contribute to removing current obstacles to other regional initiatives. In all RECs, synergies can be identified and capitalized upon to ensure horizontal coherence between regional policies and investment in food security and other regional cooperation initiatives.

While there is consensus in most regions that implementation of CAADP at the regional level could be a significant contribution to the regional integration agenda, it is clear that the **complexities and political dynamics of regional cooperation would influence regional policy directions and overall efforts to strengthen the regional dimension of CAADP**. The multi-dimensional nature of CAADP, overlapping membership of RECs, economic diversity of MS and the power of regional hegemons (e.g. South Africa in SADC, Kenya in EAC and Nigeria in ECOWAS) are all factors that suggest a flexible and gradual approach to the building of regional food security compacts around different cooperation areas.

In the eastern and southern African **region,** where a 'Tripartite' free trade area has been under development for several years, discussions are taking place about a possible Tripartite approach for the regional CAADP. Given different challenges and processes in **COMESA-EAC-SADC**, including **different stages of development of CAADP**, one emerging idea is that such **'Tripartite compact' could be an overarching framework**- comprehensive and multidimensional, but also **flexible**. A 'Tripartite' compact, or any joint approach by the three RECs to food security issues of common concern, cannot be a rigid and binding agreement, with the same policies, programmes, rules and implementation time-frame for all three RECs and their MS. Rather, a flexible approach would allow each REC to achieve its own **internal coherence**, i.e. the vertical coherence between national CAADP compacts and the REC-specific regional compact, as well as the horizontal coherence between CAADP and other sectors of regional cooperation which the specific REC is bringing forward; implement the required regional plans (both REC-specific and common to the three RECs) according to a **realistic time-frame**, which may be different for different RECs and countries, depending on different starting points and actual implementation drive.

While keeping a common CAADP framework and objectives, this would translate into a '**differentiated gears**' 'Tripartite' compact, with RECs or blocs of countries entering different programmatic partnerships on specific sectors/themes, gradually, depending on existing progress of various parts of regional cooperation and on voluntary basis. The **added value** of this approach would be to look at existing sector progress in each REC and MS and find a niche for CAADP either as synergy-creation across sectors and countries or in some cases as multi-purpose programmes related to food security, e.g. value chain development plans which identify and address in parallel bottlenecks on natural resources, infrastructure corridors, and trade.

3. Ideas for faster progress and REC-specific roadmaps

Given the potential of regional cooperation for food security, it is time to move from discussing opportunities and obstacles to identifying concrete actions for faster progress on regional CAADP. The following table provides a number of suggestions, summarizing and systematizing ideas that emerge from stakeholders in Africa about actions to address the numerous challenges described in Section 2 above.

Area of improvement	Challenge to be addressed	Possible way forward for one/more Regional Economic Community			
		ECOWAS	***COMESA***	***SADC***	***EAC***
Status of regional compact & *Substance* of regional CAADP	*Design & implementation of compact & investment plan*	• RECs to identify & implement programmes leading to increased investment from MS • DPs & private sector support actual operationalization of regional CAADP. Investment in *facilitation* of CAADP processes should gradually decrease, including from DPs, while investment in *programmes* and activities should increase, e.g. promote specific regional value-chains, establish market information system, etc			
		Fully implement ECOWAP & RAIP	Finalize design of regional compact & fast-track preparations for investment plan	Finalize RAP (ensure CAADP-compatibility) & prepare investment plan	Fast-track preparations for regional compact & investment plan
	Full support for regional food security (FS) action	Increase consensus on the need for regional action. For this, RECs could raise awareness about the benefits of regional approaches and provide more evidence on results achieved so far, for various regional cooperation areas relevant to food security (FS)			
	Articulating the national-regional nexus in FS action (vertical coherence)	• Where needed, RECs to clarify how to apply principles of subsidiarity in FS actions (and mandates) • RECs (with possible DPs' support) to organize policy dialogues/ analysis to articulate better the national-regional components of regional compacts/ investment Plans. This could include analysing: o The complementarity, coherence and coordination between national and regional compacts; o Comparisons between national investment plans, so as to identify funding gaps & clarify where corresponding regional action is needed			
		Monitor vertical coherence in ECOWAP & RAIP implementation	Analyse vertical coherence while designing regional compact & investment plan		
***Process* of regional CAADP & Role of different actors**	*Multi-stakeholder approach & participation of non-state actors*	• RECs (with possible DPs' support) to set up a consultative platform to increase involvement of NSA (regional farmer organizations, business organizations, knowledge institutions) in regional CAADP. This could be done through regional meetings, but also by funding institutional strengthening for both regional and national farmers organizations. Avenues for financing NSA participation in regional CAADP should be explored, e.g. access to the MDTF by NSA • A strong mutual accountability framework could be set up to ensure adequate governance of those responsible for implementation of regional CAADP. NSAs should have a role in this framework and be involved in monitoring results of regional action			
		• Strengthen (where needed) participative dynamics, e.g. by promoting more dialogue between farmers' and agro-business regional organisations, anglophone/ francophone farmers organizations, etc	• Revisit & clarify roles and mandates of key stakeholders in the compact/ investment plan signature & implementation	• Make information on RAP process widely available, including through more consultative meetings with NSA actors	• NSA to provide input to draft compact, based on real farmer experiences & lessons learnt from national compact processes
	Enhancing the role of REC Secretariat	• Various African institutions involved in CAADP at national-regional-continental levels to better align to REC Secretariats' plans & processes around regional CAADP, including through stronger coordination & consultation • DPs could contribute to capacity strengthening of REC Secretariats & other regional institutions responsible for CAADP implementation (where needed/requested)			
	Enhancing the role of DPs	DPs at headquarters (HQ), regional, national levels to improve coordination, alignment and harmonisation around regional compact. Financial support for regional FS action could also be increased.			
		• ECOWAP Donor Working Group (DWG) to concretize the regional-national network of donors • Each DP to ensure more proactive participation in DWG. HQ should give their representations in DWG better input, information and clearer	COMESA DPs to use existing donor engagement frameworks, e.g. ACTESA donor group, to enhance their coordination/support on regional CAADP	DPs to build on/ revitalize existing joint working groups with SADC (established through the Windhoek Declaration)	DPs to build on the 'Friends of EAC' forum & other existing donor joint working groups to improve coordination/ support to regional CAADP

		mandate for regional decisions and action • DPs could channel funds through the regional fund for agriculture and food and/or use complementary multi-donor financing mechanisms to support the implementation of the RAIP	Establish a regional donor working group (where needed) based in the regional 'capital' (e.g. Lusaka for COMESA) to improve coordination on FS action and provide the REC with a counterpart that is available for more regular interfacing on regional CAADP. A Lead Donor could be appointed to guarantee effectiveness.		
Regional CAADP & *overall Regional Cooperation*	*CAADP & overall regional integration (horizontal coherence)*	• Draw lessons from general progress/ obstacles to regional integration • RECs and DPs through their respective roles and interventions should make efforts to tap into concrete business-led developments like infrastructure corridors, trade & investment joint ventures between neighbours, FDI flows, etc. • RECs can identify and prioritize 'quick wins' interventions from the regional compact & investment plan, especially those that have the potential to benefit weaker economies (and not only bigger MS) • MS to devote more efforts to their effective participation in REC coordination structures/processes, on regional CAADP and other regional integration areas • Secretariats to improve interdepartmental coordination to ensure coherence, complementarity, coordination between policies & investments across the RECs' different regional integration areas (in some cases high-level policy organs may need to be involved for horizontal coherence)			
			• EAC, SADC, COMESA to develop their individual regional compacts based on comparative advantage/REC-specific priorities, while working on a possible 'Tripartite compact' addressing shared challenges (e.g. SPS); • Both REC-specific compacts & a 'Tripartite compact' could follow a 'differentiated gears' approach, which builds around existing REC plans & identifies which sectoral cooperation area can be handled by what REC/ country and at what pace, depending on progress		
	Synergies between regional compact & other regional initiatives relevant to FS	• RECs (with possible DPs' support) to organize policy dialogues/analysis to explore synergies between regional compact & other regional policies/programmes. Such policy dialogues could address themes such as regional value chains & private sector development & value addition, and/or designing/implementing multipurpose programmes that integrate agriculture/trade/infrastructure/natural resources development • More effective dialogue platforms on regional CAADP should include the involvement of other relevant sectors & officials from Secretariats and DP agencies			
	Agriculture	ECOWAP/RAIP exists as the overarching framework for regional Initiatives on agriculture	A more holistic framework (compact) could better synergise and coordinate ongoing/recently launched programmes		EAC Food Security Action Plan (2010) could serve as basis for regional compact
	Trade	Regional Aid for Trade (AfT) Strategy & ECOWAS Common Trade Policy (under development) to be coordinated with ECOWAP	Specific measures on Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) & supply-side-constraints which limit trade can be incorporated in the regional compact. E.g. set up NTB monitoring systems, design agricultural AfT strategy		Compact to synergise with EAC SPS protocol
	Infrastructure	RAIP to contribute to a more comprehensive & coordinated corridor approach	Compact to synergise with corridors ('agriculture trade corridors') and contribute to removing 'software' bottlenecks		Compact to contribute to public-private investment partnerships
	Natural resources	ECOWAP could provide guiding framework for better regional natural resources management (NRM), starting with water	Compact to contribute to improving regional cooperation on NRM	Compact to synergise with regional Water Programme, possible model for better NRM cooperation	Compact to contribute to improving regional cooperation on NRM

Despite the fact that some of the challenges are common across regions, this table shows that the status of regional CAADP implementation, likely pace of progress, economic and political dynamics as well as possible solutions are very different across the four RECs. Region-specific approaches therefore are required, while lessons can still be learnt from other regions on some of the shared challenges. In terms of concrete next steps, each REC will need to stimulate regular and targeted dialogue among stakeholders on how and what they can contribute to the development and effective implementation of regional CAADP. In this sense, a 'roadmap' would be useful, bringing together clear statements from each actor on what role they intend to play, better focused strategies and action points (or milestones), as well as improved coordination mechanisms.

Each REC could follow a 'roadmap' detailing what the region intends to do in the next years to make a regional CAADP compact effective, in other words a publicly announced 'workplan' to which each interested stakeholder could then respond and associate through enhanced support, alignment and coordination. In some cases a sort of 'roadmap' already exists, for example for those RECs (e.g. ECOWAS and COMESA) who follow a 'Strategic and Operational Plan' in utilizing the resources they have received from the CAADP MDTF in the form of a 'Child Trust Fund'. However, such plans are mostly about the *process* and not the policy *substance*; and in many cases they are not well known outside of the REC Secretariats. A roadmap building on existing plans by the REC Secretariat may then also contribute to multi-stakeholder ownership in every REC: all interested actors could come together to jointly identify milestones, timeframes and responsibilities for regional food security actions.

In this sense, the table above could be useful, as initial step meant to stimulate further discussions among involved stakeholders and to contribute to the consultative processes in each region around the implementation of CAADP at regional level.[4] The table suggests that a roadmap could cover: different areas of needed improvement, the specific challenges to be addressed for such improvements and the concrete actions that a REC would adopt as way forward. Significantly, "areas of improvement" in the roadmap would include both the *process* to finalize and implement the regional compact and the *content* of the compact, so to clarify a number of policy issues and not only the formal steps to design a compact or investment plan. In fact, to remain relevant, regional CAADP needs to tap into the real business-led developments in the RECs such as infrastructure corridors, trade and investment joint ventures between neighbours, foreign direct investment flows, etc. And this may require as 'specific actions' a combination of: institutional strengthening, more dialogue platforms, more investment, better policies but also more analysis, e.g. to understand the impact of poor business and trade facilitation on specific agricultural value chains with respect to intra-regional trade, and how SMEs/farmers could better benefit from regional CAADP and related sectors such as trade corridors.

Finally, a third "area of improvement" to be covered in the roadmaps would be the relation between implementation of CAADP at regional level and the overall regional cooperation efforts in the specific REC. Indeed, the regional CAADP compact should be an overarching framework that: i) gives guidance to, and fast-track, a number of interventions for food security which are already in place (e.g. regional work on SPS, or value chain development); ii) promotes new regional policies and investments where gaps exist today; iii) clarifies synergies and coordination among ongoing and new regional initiatives in several sectors relevant for food security. Therefore a well-defined roadmap would also be important to counter any perception that different sectors of regional cooperation compete for visibility or resources rather than working synergistically towards the same goals such as regional food security.

ECDPM Briefing Notes

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info@ecdpm.org
www.ecdpm.org
KvK 41077447

HEAD OFFICE
SIÈGE
Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
6211 HE Maastricht
The Netherlands *Pays Bas*
Tel +31 (0)43 350 29 00
Fax +31 (0)43 350 29 02

BRUSSELS OFFICE
BUREAU DE BRUXELLES
Rue Archimède 5
1000 Brussels *Bruxelles*
Belgium Belgique
Tel +32 (0)2 237 43 10
Fax +32 (0)2 237 43 19

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[4] More details about each of the ideas outlined in the table can be found in the Discussion Papers summarized through this Briefing Note (www.ecdpm.org/dp128).