

GOVERNANCE OF AFRICA'S REGIONAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMMES: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the value addition of institutional arrangements created to manage Africa's regional transport infrastructure programmes and the extent to which they are equipped to meet the challenges to the implementation of these programmes. Specifically, it examines the extent to which existing institutional arrangements act as delivery platforms and mobilise funds for regional projects and explores their performance in galvanising partnerships for project implementation. The analysis in the paper is a synthesis of empirical findings from case studies of selected regional and sub-regional transport infrastructure programmes in Africa, including the Trans-African Highways Programme, the North-South Corridor Programme in Southern and Eastern Africa and the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Programme in West Africa. The paper shows that African regional and sub-regional infrastructure programmes are generally being implemented in an uncontrolled environment with actors at the regional level having little or no authority over those at the national level. In essence, the interface between decision-making and implementation structures at regional and national levels is weak and vague. The paper concludes that efforts to enhance the performance of regional projects should concentrate on clarifying and strengthening the interface between regional decision-making and implementation structures and national ones.

KEYWORDS: Governance, Institutional Arrangements, Africa, Regional Infrastructure, Transport, Projects, Programmes.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is consensus among observers of Africa's development that the continent's transport infrastructure network is inadequate. It is also widely acknowledged that regional integration, which is a major development strategy of African countries, hinges on adequate regional transport infrastructure. This is expected to physically connect countries on the continent and support the free movement of goods and services across borders. The desire to deepen regional integration and to boost intra-African trade, which hovers only around 12 percent of the continent's total trade, has therefore led countries on the continent to adopt several sub-regional and regional infrastructure programmes over the years. It is envisaged that good quality cross-border roads will reduce transport costs which are twice as high in Africa as the world average - 12.6 percent compared to 6.1 percent, with the continent's landlocked countries having transport costs that could be up to 50 percent higher than those of their coastal neighbours (*1*).

Despite the strong rationale for a regional approach to infrastructure development in Africa, the performance of the continent's regional infrastructure programmes is generally unsatisfactory. For instance, the Trans-African Highways (TAH) network is incomplete, with missing links constituting more than 20 percent of the 57,300 km network. Similarly, only 15 percent of projects of the NEPAD Infrastructure Short Term Action Plan were completed between 2002 and

2010. This unsatisfactory performance is attributed to several challenges that could be grouped under the following broad categories: political instability and insecurity; weak ownership and political will; inadequate institutional framework and project management; lack of funding; inadequate technical capacity; difficult natural settings; as well as low demand, lack of interest, and conflicting priorities.

This paper focuses on the institutional framework for managing Africa's regional infrastructure programmes. The importance of defining and establishing the structure of accountability and responsibility of a programme or project at the outset cannot be overemphasised. Effective, accountable and transparent institutions are needed to create an enabling environment for regional infrastructure development and accelerate the implementation of regional projects.

Strong institutions are also needed to mobilise resources to implement projects, and to support cooperation among countries and organisations in addressing shared challenges. The paper assesses the value addition of institutional arrangements created to manage Africa's regional infrastructure programmes and the extent to which they are equipped to meet the challenges to the implementation of these programmes. Specifically, it attempts to answer the following questions: to what extent do existing institutional arrangements act as delivery platforms for regional projects? To what extent do they act as funds or raise funds for the implementation of the projects. How successful are they in galvanising existing partnerships and enhancing policy coherence?

The analysis in this paper is a synthesis of empirical findings from case studies of selected regional and sub-regional transport infrastructure programmes in Africa, including the Trans-African Highways (TAH) Programme, the North-South Corridor Programme in Southern and Eastern Africa and the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Programme in West Africa. The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the theoretical considerations that shape the analysis in the paper. Section 3 explores the reality on the ground by examining the institutional arrangements of the three ongoing programmes mentioned above. Section 4 discusses the policy implications of the analysis in Section 3 and Section 5 concludes the paper.

2. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1. Governance

The literature reveals a lack of consensus in defining the concept of governance. For Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido-Lobaton (2), governance refers to the traditions and institutions by which authority in a government is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of the citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them. According to the World Economic Forum, governance, in its purest form, describes the structures and decision-making processes that allow a state, organization or group of people to conduct affairs (3). The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) also defines governance as the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented) (4).

The notion of governance as 'the way human communities organize themselves' explains why its analysis often focuses on the actors involved in making and implementing decisions as well as the structures created for decision-making and implementation. These actors – who have different interests, values, power and knowledge - organize themselves through formal and

informal institutions (5, 6). According to Douglass North (7, p.3) “Institutions are the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction”.

Governance is used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. While corporate governance focuses on ethical values and moral choices that honour the citizenship role of organizations, project governance is project-focussed, and describes how project management processes are governed throughout the project lifecycle (8). In general, governance, in the context of projects, could be conceptualised as building consensus necessary to achieve an objective in an arena where many different interests are in play (9). Project governance provides the structure through which the objectives of the project are set, the means of attaining those objectives determined, and the means of monitoring performance are determined (10, 11). A project governance structure consists of mechanisms and policies for coordinating and safeguarding exchanges between partners of a project or firms participating in a project.

2.2. Performance

Han, Yusuf, Ismail, and Aun (12) reviewed the notion of success in construction projects and concluded that there was no agreed definition of what constitutes a successful project. However, they found a convergence of views that project success had two main dimensions, namely, success factors and success criteria. Prabhakar (13) distinguished between project success and project management success, and noted that the former was measured against overall project objectives while the latter was measured against traditional performance measures such as time, cost and quality.

The concept of project life cycle is also used as the basis for assessing changes in the status of various projects in a programme. The various stages of the project cycle that could be used in the assessment include: (i) building enabling environment; (ii) project definition; (iii) project feasibility; (iv) project structuring; (v) transaction support; and (vi) implementation. In this approach, progress is assessed by the extent to which projects shifts across the six phases of the project cycle. These stages are grouped into four in the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), namely: early concept proposal; feasibility/needs assessment; programme/project structuring and promotion to obtain financing; and implementation and operation.

In a nutshell, project performance has three dimensions namely: progress in project development cycle measured through shifts across stages in the cycle; achievements measured using indicators related to project delivery such as the length of road constructed as well as time, cost, and quality of construction work; and effectiveness measured in terms of the extent to which overall project objectives are met. Given the long gestation period of infrastructure projects and the fact that most projects in Africa’s regional infrastructure programmes are still in the early stages of the project development cycle, it may be premature to measure their performance in terms of the achievement of the overall project objectives or even in terms of factors such as cost, time and quality. It would therefore be appropriate to use intermediate indicators to measure the performance of programmes. This could include enhanced technical capacity of key actors, notably regional organisations and member States as well as additional financial resources mobilised for the programme.

3. REALITY ON THE GROUND

This section presents the generic decision-making and implementation structure for Africa's regional infrastructure development. It also presents the institutional arrangements for the management of selected regional and sub-regional infrastructure programmes. The background of each of the programmes as well as the structures created for the engagement of actors at the technical and political levels are discussed.

3.1. Institutional Architecture for Infrastructure Development in Africa (IAIDA)

Africa's regional and sub-regional infrastructure programmes have always had institutional arrangements, which have, in many cases, been ineffective due to the absence of legally binding inter-governmental agreements, ownership by all concerned member states and regional organisations, as well as sustainable funding. For instance, the two United Nations Transport and Communications Decades in Africa (UNTACDA I & II) from 1978 to 1988 and 1991 to 2000 had several bodies, including: National Coordination Committees; Sub-regional Working Groups; Sectoral Working Groups; and an Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (IACC) that reported to the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Transport and Communications (14).

The recently developed Institutional Architecture for Infrastructure Development in Africa (IAIDA) is innovative because it provides a clear picture of where each of the numerous actors – including the African Union Commission (AUC), NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), countries, development partners, private sector, and specialised agency - fit in the complex decision- making and implementation process of Africa's regional infrastructure programmes (figure 1). This is an important contribution to addressing the problem of coordinating the various infrastructure initiatives at sub-regional and regional levels in Africa as well as the multiplicity of actors that support infrastructure development on the continent. IAIDA succinctly articulates the different stages and institutions involved in the decision-making and implementation of infrastructure programmes in Africa. It is considered as the implementation strategy for the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).

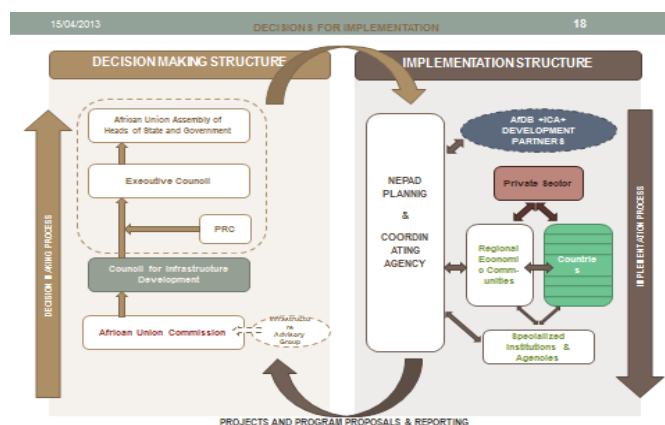


FIGURE 1 Institutional architecture for infrastructure development in Africa

Source: AU & NEPAD

While IAIDA has improved clarity in the governance structure of Africa's regional infrastructure development, it also has some shortcomings. For instance, there is a need to further clarify the

roles and responsibilities of various actors identified in IAIDA. In the case of PIDA, for example, an attempt has been made to articulate the outputs and expected deliveries of AUC and NPCA, as well as other involved stakeholders, notably the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Development Bank (AfDB) and development partners. However, these outputs and expected deliverables are not articulated in a precise, targeted, and integrated manner. Moreover, they are not of the scale that would make a significant impact on the implementation of the projects. The outputs include: promoting and facilitating the implementation of the PIDA Priority Action Plan (PAP); publishing PIDA progress reports; developing and managing the Virtual PIDA Information Centre (VPIC) and the African Infrastructure Database (AID); building the capacity of RECs and AUC; mobilising resources and enhancing partnerships; and communicating PIDA. While these activities could create an enabling environment for the implementation of projects, they can only complement and not replace efforts by member States as it is more effective for them to be the primary delivery platforms of projects.

IAIDA is a broad conceptual framework with the decision-making structure being more clearly articulated than the implementation structure. Several organisations are included in the implementation structure but their exact roles and responsibilities - the level (regional or national) and type of their interventions - in the project development cycle is unclear. It is not obvious how the different organisations act as delivery platforms or contribute to the delivery of projects. It is expected that this will be clarified in the PIDA manual that is being developed. If applied diligently, the decision-making structure of IAIDA could galvanise existing partnerships, increase policy coherence, reduce duplication and waste and above all ensure political leadership of projects. However, this structure is defined at the regional level which is incomplete as this has to be complemented by clearly articulated national decision making and implementation structures that enable the prioritisation of regional projects at the national level. It appears inappropriate for the project delivery platform to be articulated only at the regional level as the projects are ultimately implemented at the national level.

In a nutshell, a number of challenges are envisaged in operationalising IAIDA. First, the roles and responsibilities of the various actors have to be clearly defined. Second, all concerned institutions have to be aware of and agree with the roles and responsibilities assigned to them, and this is critical for collective ownership of IAIDA. Third, these institutions, especially AUC, NPCA, RECs, and member States need to have the political will, capacity, and financial resources required to fulfil their roles and responsibilities in IAIDA.

3.2. Trans-African Highways Programme

The Trans-African Highways (TAH) network was conceived in the early 1970s to link the different countries of the continent. However, it is still incomplete, with missing links constituting more than 20 percent of the 57,300 km network (15). The different highways of the TAH network had Bureaus to coordinate activities related to the development of the network. Presently, only the Bureau for the highway linking Algiers to Lagos (TAH2) is operational, while the others have stopped functioning. The process of establishing an intergovernmental agreement to underpin TAH was initiated by African Ministers of Transport in their Luanda Declaration of 2011 in contrast to the Asian Highway network whose intergovernmental agreement was adopted in 2003 and entered into force in 2005, even though the two networks were conceived around the same time (16). The intergovernmental agreement was endorsed by

African Heads of State and Government in their Summit of June 2014 in Malabo. The objectives of the Agreement are to:

- Contribute to the physical, political, economic and social integration and cohesion of Africa;
- Contribute to the facilitation of safe movement of goods and persons and reduction of transport costs on the continent;
- Ensure road transport facilities between important areas of production and consumption on the continent; and
- Set-up common minimum norms and standards for the design and maintenance of the Trans-Africa Highways with all-weather roads of good quality.

The intergovernmental agreement stipulates that the AUC shall act as the Secretariat of the TAH network. With a view to ensuring and facilitating the implementation of the Agreement, the Secretariat is envisaged to establish a Working Group on TAH to consider the implementation of duties, obligations and responsibilities enshrined in the Agreement. The Agreement also stipulates that the Working Group should be composed of AUC, ECA, NPCA, RECs, AfDB and African Specialised Institutions and Agencies. The Secretariat is expected to ensure that a Conference of State Parties is established; develop guidelines on the implementation of the Agreement in partnership with the Conference of State Parties; facilitate the creation of conditions to the set-up of minimum norms and standards for design and maintenance of the TAH network; assist State Parties to implement the Agreement and coordinate the evaluation of its implementation.

The Agreement provides that TAH routes shall be brought into conformity with the classification and design standards provided in its Annexes within a maximum period of ten years for existing routes and fifteen years for routes under construction, from the date of entry into force of the Agreement; and States Parties shall include the development of the missing links of TAH Network in their national priorities and make every possible effort to develop the network consistent with the Agreement, subject to the availability of budget and other forms of funding and in accordance with their laws and regulations.

So far, AUC has not convened a meeting of the Working Group on TAH and none of the provisions of the Agreement have been fulfilled. Indeed, the TAH Agreement has not even entered into full force because it has not been ratified or signed by up to 15 member States - the minimum signatories/ratifications required before it enters into force. This suggests that AUC faces challenges in playing its role as the Secretariat of TAH. The structures stipulated by the Agreement – the Secretariat, Working Group and Conference of State Parties - have not acted as delivery platforms for projects because they are not functional or do not even exist. Even if they existed, it is unlikely that these structures would be equipped to serve as delivery platforms for TAH projects. However, the structures, if and when they become functional, could play an important role in galvanising existing partnerships among major regional organisations and African countries in support of regional infrastructure projects. They could also increase policy coherence by ensuring that TAH projects are made national priorities by State Parties and that the projects comply with the standards set in the Agreement. Presently, the Bureau for the highway linking Algiers to Lagos (TAH2), the Trans-Saharan Liaison Committee (TRLIC), which is the only functioning TAH Bureau, has been instrumental together with NEPAD in mobilising funds, from the AfDB and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), to complete the missing links of TAH2. The last missing link, the 225 km of road between Assamakka and Arlit in Niger, was completed in 2017 (17). The absence of functioning

Bureaus for other highways of the TAH network does not mean that their missing links are not being addressed. The reality is that member States are engaging development banks, such as AfDB, directly to implement TAH projects. This was the case when AfDB provided funds to Cameroon and Nigeria to implement the Enugu-Bamenda project which is part of TAH8 that links Lagos in Nigeria to Mombasa in Kenya.

3.3. North-South Corridor Programme

The North-South Corridor Programme is a widely known transport programme that has received much attention, support, and promotion from sources both within and out of Africa since its inception. It was launched by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) Tripartite platform as a pilot Aid-for-Trade Programme in Lusaka, Zambia in 2009. The Corridor has a total length of 10,647 km and links seaports to landlocked countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, covering a total of 8 countries, namely, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Aid-for-Trade is a World Trade Organisation (WTO)-led initiative that seeks to mobilise resources to address the trade-related constraints of developing and least developed countries. The Tripartite Project Preparation and Implementation Unit (PPIU) was established in 2011 as a central project preparation mechanism and fits within the broader governance structure of the Tripartite, which has the following components:

- COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Summit;
- Tripartite Council of Ministers;
- Tripartite Sectoral Committee of Ministers;
- Tripartite Committee of Senior Officials; and
- Tripartite Task Force (TTF), which includes the PPIU.

The PPIU is the central coordination unit of the North-South Corridor Programme and in that capacity facilitates better cooperation among the wide range of available project preparation facilities in Africa to leverage adequate funding for preparing Tripartite infrastructure projects to a bankable stage. It also provides technical support throughout the project life cycle in areas where specific gaps are identified. The PPIU worked closely with Trade Mark Southern Africa (TMSA) a project funded by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom – terminated prematurely in 2013 - in performing its duties. In that regard, many core outputs of the North-South Corridor Programme such as developing and implementing a new set of regional procurement procedures and providing technical support to member states in preparing detailed design and bidding documents for projects, were reported as joint PPIU-TMSA outputs (18, 19).

In broad terms, the North-South Corridor Programme has a clearly defined project implementation structure. In this regard, the Secretary General of COMESA, on behalf of COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite, is a contract signatory and receives grants from institutions such as AfDB. The AfDB funds are drawn from the New Partnership for Africa's Development Infrastructure Project Preparatory Facility (NEPAD-IPPF). AfDB approves the grants, pays consultants, and undertakes project supervision missions to the concerned countries. The PPIU, hosted by COMESA, is responsible for project identification and definition; project management; project administration; developing and applying management information systems; and resource mobilisation. It also provides overall quality assurance, prepares quarterly reports and payment requests, monitors and evaluates projects, and prepares project completion reports.

National Road Agencies (NRAs) are clients for projects. They provide day-to-day management of services, liaise with consultants, certify invoices, check and approve outputs and deliverables. Project Steering Committees consisting of COMESA, National Road Agencies and PPIU procure consultants; review and approve their terms of references, request for proposals, as well as project outputs and deliverables. The Committee is responsible for the overall coordination of the project (20).

Overall, there was strong leadership of the North-South Corridor Programme as well as clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the different actors of the programme until DFID terminated its support to the programme in December 2013, following a review by the United Kingdom's Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI). This underscores the political economy dimension of regional programmes and the risk of relying on a single donor for funding of a programme (21). South Africa, through the NEPAD Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative (PICI) has taken the leadership mantle dropped by DFID but it has not systematically built on the gains made in the corridor through PPIU and TMSA, both funded by DFID, notably because of its approach to redefine the Corridor.

The value addition of the North-South Corridor institutional arrangement has mainly been through fund raising and undertaking feasibility studies. DFID and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) contributed £ 67 million and £ 1 million respectively to a Tripartite Trust Account (TTA) seed fund, aimed at leveraging funding from development partners, commercial funders and Tripartite member countries for infrastructure investment, including the North-South Corridor road network. Nearly a third of the available funds in the TTA were committed to North-South Corridor projects by October 2012 (22). DFID also provided funding of £ 5 million to support the operations of the PPIU. Moreover, TMSA helped to mobilise funds for project implementation. The PPIU was equipped to address some of the challenges to the implementation of North-South Corridor projects, particularly those related to project preparation, because of the availability of a seed fund and funding for its operations. It faced greater challenges in moving beyond feasibility studies to implementing projects in terms of undertaking construction works. In essence, the PPIU as a project delivery platform was more successful in mobilising funds for feasibility studies, particularly from AfDB, and in undertaking such studies than in the actual construction of roads. It also galvanised partnerships around North-South Corridor projects. For instance, jointly with TMSA, it developed and implemented a new set of regional procurement procedures and provided technical support to member states in preparing detailed design and bidding documents for projects.

3.4. Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Programme

The Abidjan-Lagos Corridor is the most important section of the Trans-West African Highway network because a larger volume of goods and number of people are transported along it than any other section of the network. It links the cities of Abidjan, Accra, Lome, Cotonou, and Lagos, which are among the largest urban areas and centres of economic activities in West Africa. The Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Programme covers a distance of 1,028 km. The Programme consists of modernising and upgrading the Corridor by constructing 4 One-Stop-Border Posts (OSBPs); and a 6-lane (2x3) dual carriage highway with provision for rail and fibre optics.

The Programme has a Steering Committee composed of Ministers of line or sector Ministries from each of the member states – Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria - which plays an oversight role in its execution and the Minister of Works of Nigeria chairs the Committee.

The Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS) Commission is the Secretariat of the Committee that has mandated it to undertake the necessary feasibility studies and detailed designs of the programme. ECOWAS Commission is also mandated to engage the Ministers of Justice of the concerned member states to develop the legal framework, and the Ministers of Finance to come up with a financial mechanism, for the implementation of the programme. In addition, the commission has the responsibility to engage potential financiers and development partners for possible programme preparation financing; as well as financial advisors and fund mobilisers for their services, as necessary. In this regard, ECOWAS has already secured commitments from AfDB and the German International Cooperation (GIZ), through AUC, to fund programme preparation activities. ECOWAS, in its capacity as programme sponsor, has presented the programme at high level meetings such as the Dakar Financing Summit on Africa's Infrastructure convened by President Macky Sall of Senegal in June 2014.

AfDB has committed to fund the feasibility study and detailed design of the highway because it seeks to leverage the momentum generated by the signing of the treaty on the establishment of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor. The Treaty is perceived as a key milestone which demonstrates the commitment of the member states to the implementation of the programme. NPCA, on its part, supports the Abidjan-Lagos Highway through the programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). The Highway is one of the 16 projects of the PIDA Priority Action Plan (PAP) that are being fast-tracked in the framework of the Dakar Financing Summit, mentioned above, and the Dakar Agenda for Action which was the main outcome of the summit. NPCA has developed various instruments to fast-track the implementation of PIDA priority projects, such as the Abidjan-Lagos Highway, including:

- The Service Delivery Mechanism (SDM): which is a fund for early project preparatory activities and aimed at addressing capacity gaps of African countries;
- The Virtual PIDA Information Centre which is part of the PIDA monitoring and evaluation framework and aims at providing updated project information to stakeholders and potential financiers; and
- The PIDA Capacity Building Support Programme of AUC, NPCA and AfDB that seeks to provide long-term technical experts to RECs to boost their infrastructure units. In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the ECOWAS Commission and NPCA.

Overall, Nigeria and ECOWAS Commission are leading efforts to implement the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Highway Development Programme and AUC and NPCA are playing a supporting role. The value addition of the institutional arrangement of the Programme has mainly been through resource mobilisation. The Programme has attracted financial commitments from various sources, including the concerned member states themselves, financial institutions, bilateral donors, and African continental organisations. For instance, member states have committed to contribute US\$ 50 million to set up a Seed Fund for the Programme. Nigeria, in line with its posture as the economic leader in the region, agreed to provide the entire Seed Fund to kick-start the implementation of the Programme, with the other concerned countries agreeing to reimburse it with amounts equivalent to their assessed contributions. The Seed Fund has so far not been deposited. In the absence of the seed fund the Project Steering Committee and ECOWAS Commission that acts as its Secretariat are not well equipped to spearhead the implementation of the programme. ECOWAS Commission is acting as a fund raiser and a project delivery platform. For instance, the feasibility study for the programme will be financed by a grant from AfDB to ECOWAS. The Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Treaty established the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor

Management Authority having a legal personality and financial autonomy, and the responsibility to construct, manage and operate the Corridor. Work is ongoing on the establishment of the Authority with the detail institutional framework being developed – including its rules of procedure (23, 24). ECOWAS, acting as the Secretariat of the programme has galvanised existing partnerships to support infrastructure development in West Africa. This has included the active participation of AUC, NPCA, AfDB and GIZ.

4. DISCUSSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The organisational structure of Africa's regional infrastructure programmes, both the decision-making and implementation components, generally has two distinct levels, namely the regional and national levels. The decision-making component of the structure at the regional level, particularly in relation to strategic planning and project preparation activities, is more clearly articulated than the implementation component that deals with actual construction works or implementation of decisions in general. Moreover, actors at the regional level have little or no authority over those at the national level. For instance, decision makers at the regional level rarely have the authority to direct projects at the national level – with the exception of feasibility studies undertaken under the leadership of regional organisations. In essence, the interface between decision-making and implementation structures at regional and national levels is weak and vague. Often, decision-making and implementation structures for regional projects are non-existent at the national level. For example, the mechanism for including regional projects in national road sector development plans is not clearly defined. Similarly, in many cases, there are no project management teams or units created specifically for regional projects, and project managers or team managers are not appointed at the national level for most of these projects. This is not surprising as regional projects are not necessarily national priorities and are therefore neither included in national programming documents nor allocated budgets. This partly explains the delays in the implementation of regional projects. Therefore, creating structures for managing regional projects at the national level and integrating them with those at the regional level could contribute significantly in overcoming these delays.

This integration is critical in light of the limited, though useful, contribution of regional organisations such as AUC, NPCA, RECs, and ECA to the implementation of regional projects which usually revolves around resource mobilisation, undertaking studies, galvanising partnerships, and ensuring coherence and harmonisation of policies. Regional organisations are generally not well equipped to act as implementation platforms for projects in terms of undertaking activities beyond studies – such as actual construction works. It appears more appropriate for member States to have the primary responsibility to implement projects, as envisaged by the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), with regional organisations playing a supporting role. The reality on the ground, however, seems to be the opposite with the perception of many actors, especially at the national level, being that regional organisations are primarily responsible while member States play a supporting role.

The above discussion suggests that it would be more effective for regional organisations to focus on their comparative advantage – galvanising partnerships, ensuring policy coherence, harmonising policies, and undertaking studies – and for member states to unambiguously be the delivery platforms for projects. This implies that efforts to enhance the performance of regional projects should concentrate on clarifying and strengthening the interface between regional decision-making and implementation structures and national ones. This calls for unity of thinking and action of regional organisations and member States and for them to be accountable

to each other for collective results. For a start, regional organisations need to build trust in member States by reaching out to them, listening and taking their ideas on how to fast-track the implementation of regional projects on board in the management of these projects.

5. CONCLUSION

African regional organisations and their member States – to a limited extent - with the support of development partners have articulated the institutional architecture for infrastructure development on the continent. Institutional arrangements have also been defined for existing regional and sub-regional infrastructure programmes. However, the defined structures are inadequate for decision-making and implementation of regional programmes, particularly as they do not permeate into the national level. Moreover, there is a disconnect between designed structures, that are usually not fully functional, and actual practice.

This paper has shown that African regional and sub-regional infrastructure programmes are generally not managed in a structured manner – it seems they are being implemented in an uncontrolled environment. IAIDA, and indeed the institutional arrangement of existing programmes, defines the decision-making processes at the regional level but not at the national level thus leaving a huge gap between regional planning and implementation of projects at the national level. The defined implementation structure at the regional level is often vague and mostly limited to a list of key actors without details of their roles and responsibilities as well as the accountability framework in which they operate. In addition, dedicated units are not created at the national level for projects that are part of regional programmes. Member States are generally required to nominate focal points for these programmes, but some of them fail to do so. Moreover, they are not compelled to provide progress reports on projects in their territories to regional decision-making bodies, and most of these projects are not even in national development plans. In essence, member States do not appear to share ownership of these programmes with regional organisations such as AUC, NPCA and RECs.

This appears to be an ineffective approach, given the limited progress in the implementation of projects. To improve this situation, regional organisations need to step up their engagement with member States. In doing so, they need to ensure that no project in a programme is “left behind” in the decision-making and implementation process. A way to ensure an inclusive process is to unite decision-making and implementation structures at the regional and national levels, and addressing all categories of projects in a programme including those whose implementation are ongoing; those that could be implemented within a short period of time, those whose implementation are longer term prospects, and those that require support, technical and financial, for implementation.

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