

Supporting Development Through Regional Cooperation: Evidence from North Africa

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Questions

- *What evidence exists that regional cooperation or integration in north Africa can support stability, prosperity and development outcomes?*
- *What evidence exists on the advantages of regional programming in North Africa compared to bilateral programming, to address transboundary challenges, and common challenges?*

Contents

1. Overview
2. Regional Cooperation and Integration in North Africa: What Are the Potential Gains?
3. Regional Versus Country Programming: What are the Advantages and Risks?
4. Overview of Key Regional Programmes in North Africa*
5. Overview of Regional Programmes in Other Regions
6. References

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1. Overview

Evidences show that, countries in the North Africa region (as well as their peers in the wider Middle East region) would reap considerable economic, environmental, and security benefits if they set up successful regional cooperation and integration schemes. Effective regional cooperation and integration will (in the longer term) tear down barriers between countries; link firms to larger markets; and provide ever larger economies of scale for tradable goods and services. All countries in the North Africa region would gain from such cooperation and integration – and some of these countries are already benefiting from trade agreements with large markets outside the region (Lall and Mahgoub, 2019; IMF, 2019).

In certain cases, regional economic communities were motivated not by economic but by political goals. Security, governance, democracy and human rights are among those political goals. Regional economic cooperation and integration will indirectly improve security as it increases the level of trade between Member States – thus, growing familiarity among the citizens of the Member States and reducing the degree of misunderstanding. It can also be a tool by which principles of democracy and governance can be followed and reforms in political institutions are realised. In general, regional economic cooperation and integration can produce political and security benefits – particularly, if these were part of the goals. Yet, integration can also pose problems if the distribution of transfers (e.g. resources, costs, and benefits) is uneven between the Member States (Mwasha, 2011; Hoekman et al., 2002).

For donors and various external development partners, a ‘regional approach’ to development programming is sometimes preferred – and may yield better outcomes than country programming. This is especially the case if the programme objectives require cooperation among neighbouring countries to address regional externalities or to achieve economies of scale in pursuit of development goals in specific sectors of intervention (World Bank, 2007; AfDB, 2012; DFID, 2019; DFID GMGA, 2015).

Regional donor programming is particularly useful if it involves the management of shared (regional) natural resources. Regional programmes are critical in addressing issues such as the use of shared water basins, preservation of biodiversity and improvement in the quality of air and water. Regional programmes are often favoured when a well-coordinated and synchronised intervention is required to handle transboundary issues. Multi-country collaboration and convergence (or harmonization of policies and services) are called for in transboundary matters (e.g. regional transport corridors, regional security and post-conflict stability). Although multiple bilateral agreements may sometimes be enough, broader regional programming may be more effective. Regional programming can also be important to achieve specific national objectives efficiently. Countries with similar circumstances could be able to realise economies of scale or other efficiencies through concerted actions against shared national goals or through information sharing and regional awareness building. Examples of these kinds of mutually beneficial practices include setting up regional agencies and taskforces, regional electric power supply, and regional information networks (World Bank 2007).

Some of the evidences from key regional programmes in the North Africa region (which also often cover other Middle Eastern countries) include the following.

- The ‘Arab Partnership Economic Facility’ programme, which financed a trust fund run by the African Development Bank and the World Bank, helped to enhance the effectiveness and focus of the regional operations of the two multilateral financial institutions. One of the key areas of intervention was realizing an effective regional (and global) integration of

countries in North Africa. The resources of the regional programme and its regional coordination and integration activities have been focused on solving cross-cutting and complex challenges that commonly affect the countries in the region. Several institutional and policy reforms have also been passed by governments in the region to boost regional and global integration as well as accelerate job creation, promote social inclusion and increase the design and effectiveness of development projects.

- The 'Arab Women's Enterprise Fund' has worked on realizing the inclusion of women – which is a common challenge for countries in Northern Africa. Together with Islamic Development Bank, UK's Department for International Development (DFID) has worked on the inclusiveness of the regional markets to women – on a region wide scope. Following the programme, there were improved perceptions and social norms on the role of women in the labour markets of the region. The programme has helped to improve the welfare and income of hundreds of thousands of women in the region.
- The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has financed the programme 'Economic integration of women in the MENA region'. As the name implies – the programme has supported the cooperation and integration of countries in the region to solve the labour market problems of women in the region. Parts of this programme's objectives overlap DFID's 'Arab Women's Enterprise Fund' programme discussed above. It is not surprising that there are concerted regional efforts targeting the inclusion of women – given that the region considerably lags in this area.
- The 'Climate Action for Middle East and North Africa' programme uses limited UK ODA funding to leverage substantial 'climate sensitive' investments by the private sector and development banks in the region. The programme has promoted further integration in the region through greater regional (also international) trade, helped to enhance the resilience of regional infrastructure and economic activities to climate change, supported the generation of jobs in the climate sector of the region, as well as promoted renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- The 'Safety, Support and Solutions Programme for Refugees' is a regional programme that assisted in easing the humanitarian crisis and suffering of refugees across the Mediterranean route (including the North African region – that is both a transit route and region of origin). The programme brought together several regional and international actors and led the regional effort to assist (and fill in the gaps of) the humanitarian response to the refugee crisis across the central and eastern Mediterranean routes.

There are also several interesting regional programmes – outside the North Africa region – that have realised effective development outcomes.

- The 'South Asia Regional Trade Integration Program' has promoted both intra-regional trade as well as foreign direct investment into the poorest parts of the South and Central Asia region. Thorough joint operations of UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and DFID, governments in the region have authorised projects that strengthened regional links, cooperation and integration. Following the programme, there were marked increases in intra-regional commodity trade, cross-border energy connectivity and more FDI flows.
- The 'South Asia Water Initiative' has strengthened regional cooperation in order to effectively manage transboundary river systems in the South Asia region. The programme has contributed to the realization of inclusive and sustainable development in the region and strengthened the regions resilience to climate change. It has been particularly useful in providing a regional knowledge sharing platform and an effective shared management system for transboundary rivers.

- The 'Africa Regional Empowerment and Accountability Program' has financed regional organizations to enhance the accountability of public sectors in different African countries to their citizens. The programme has also supported joint advocacy and media events – understanding the role of media to strengthen regional integration and realise positive public opinion. Further, through the support to regional organizations such as the Eastern and Southern African Small-Scale Farmers Forum and Southern Africa Trust, the programme has contributed to better availability of knowledge and policy analysis (i.e. research) around the challenges facing the poor in the region. The regional organizations have also promoted how the poor and marginalised could benefit from regional cooperation and integrations that prioritise their interest.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that there is a limited evidence base (e.g. academic studies) around the development outcomes of regional programmes – i.e. those carried out by bilateral and multilateral development agencies. Much of the evidence in the area is from reports and programme reviews or evaluations (internal or external). Most interventions by development agencies (across wide range of sectors and topics) also tends to be carried out through country programming. The evidence base narrows further when limited to the North Africa region. Owing to the scarcity of evidence, this rapid evidence review looks at different types of available relevant literature – including reports issued by different development agencies and some academic publications.

The report is structured as follows. Section 2 briefly discusses the state of regional cooperation and integration in North Africa, the key economic benefits, as well as the roles of development partners in realizing closer cooperation and integration in the region. Section 3 briefly discusses the advantages and risks of regional programming by external development partners (e.g. FCO and DFID) – as compared to country programming. Section 4 presents key regional programmes from North Africa that are funded and/or run by external (bilateral or multilateral) development partners. While doing so, the section presents brief programme details, implication on regional cooperation and integration, and the impact on development outcomes. Section 5 also presents further examples of regional programming (much like section 4) – but from other regions.

2. Regional Cooperation and Integration in North Africa: What Are the Potential Gains?

Regional cooperation and integration enable countries to transcend costly divisions (e.g. schisms created by poor infrastructure and inefficient policies) and integrate goods, services and factor markets – thereby enabling the flow of trade, capital, energy, people and ideas. Regional integration can be promoted through a shared physical and institutional infrastructure. Particularly, regional integration needs cooperation between countries, such as on trade, investment and domestic regulation; transport, ICT and energy infrastructure; macroeconomic and financial policy; and the provision of other common public goods (e.g. shared natural resources, security, education). Cooperation in these areas has drawn on different institutional forms, with varying levels of political engagement and shared authority, and has had different priorities in various parts of the world (World Bank, 2020).

2.1 The State of Regional Cooperation and Integration in North Africa:

Often it is reported that regionalism in North Africa (and the wider Middle East, i.e. MENA region) is not well established. It is asserted that current regional cooperation platforms largely remain ineffective and that there is a lack of political integration (Del Sarto and Lecha, 2018; Fawcett, 2016; Korany, 2013). Even though the region has historically experienced the spread of regional organizations and regional cooperation mechanisms (e.g. the Arab Maghreb Union and League of Arab States), there is a clear discrepancy between the level of formalised cooperation and the level of regional integration (Del Sarto and Lecha, 2018).

The Arab Spring movement (of early 2010s) was a significant turning point, and successive regional developments opened a major window of opportunity for previously inaccessible regional cooperation and cooperative mechanisms (Malmvig 2013: 30, Beck 2015). But the upheavals also raised the level of regime insecurity in the context of shifting threat conceptions – thereby altering the preferences of various actors in dealing with regional organizations (Del Sarto and Lecha, 2018). Cooperation between MENA countries is, therefore, strikingly weak today – partly due to political tensions and violent conflicts in the region (Lall and Mahgoub, 2019).

While individual countries in the region have made significant progress in terms of trade, they stay the least integrated in the world as a region. For example, intra-regional trade accounts for less than 5% of the total trade in the Maghreb countries, significantly lower than in all other regional trading blocs across the world. Geo-political considerations and stringent economic policies have undermined regional integration. Economic policies are not coordinated and have been driven by country-level concerns. Constraints on trade and capital flows continue to be significant and limit regional integration for the private sector (IMF, 2019).

2.2 The Role of Donors and Development Partners in Regional Integration:

The Arab Spring offered countries the opportunity to embark on a faster, more comprehensive reform agenda – with strong support from donors. The partnership established in May 2011 by the G8 (i.e. traditional bilateral donors) in Deauville, France to support the region's historical political and economic change is well in sight. It calls on partner countries in the region (e.g. Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) to develop programs to promote domestic economic and governance reforms to improve national competitiveness and promote trade and FDI. On the other hand, **Deauville partners/donors** (i.e. G8 countries, nine international and regional financial institutions and well-off regional partners like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, and Turkey) **committed themselves to helping countries in the region to achieve their economic and political transformation goals through the strategic pillars of 'governance', 'finance' and 'commerce'** (World Bank, 2012).

Major bilateral donors (e.g. see Section 4) **as well as multilateral development institutions** are already helping North African countries to **promote regional cooperation and integration** through common institutional infrastructure and different regional development programmes (AfDB, 2020; IMF, 2019; World Bank, 2012; DFID, 2019;). As such, **regional development**

partners like the African Development Bank (AfDB) have shown a strong interest in regional integration. For example, AfDB envisages a private-sector led regional integration in North Africa; promotes collaboration with other regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and Europe; and engages non-state actors (private sector, civil society, academics) who want to be more involved in a bottom-up approach. In line with this, the pillars of its 2016-2020 Regional Integration Strategy Paper for North Africa (NA-RISP) prioritize: i) fostering regional connectivity infrastructure; and ii) fostering private sector industrial development and trade. This strategy is strengthened by a cross-cutting themes of ‘capacity building through information sharing’ and ‘consultation on regional integration’. The development objective of the AfDB’s 2016-2020 NA-RISP is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable growth in the six countries of the North African region, i.e. Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia (AfDB, 2020 and AfDB, 2014).

The IMF and World Bank (the other key proponents of North African integration) argue that greater regional and global economic integration will generate a favourable environment for the transition to faster sustainable growth in the North Africa region.

Opening up more intra-regional trade and investment will improve access to goods and services at lower prices, stimulate competition, foster innovation and diversification, enhance transparency, reduce economic rents, and eventually improve productivity and development in all countries of the region. These regional integrations could be a powerful tool to increase the region's growth potential, generate jobs and reducing poverty – while being complementary to domestic policies (IMF, 2019; World Bank, 2012).

2.3 The Benefits of Cooperation and Integration in the North Africa Region:

Countries in the region are conveniently located between Europe and sub-Saharan Africa and share cultural and linguistic proximity. If they are properly integrated (see Figure 1 below), they could leverage economies of scale, bring in more foreign investment, generate regional value chains and help integrate into Global Value Chains (GVCs) and reinforce their joint negotiating capacity – which would lead to even more trade and higher growth (IMF, 2019).

See: Figure 1: North African Economies and Major Regional Trade Agreements, source: IMF (2019, p.6),

<https://www.imf.org/~media/Files/Publications/DP/2019/English/EIMUSGEA.ashx> and WTO (2020), https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/region_e/region_e.htm

Regional Agreements (abbreviations): BRI = Belt and Road Initiative; ECOWAS = Economic Community of West African States; EFTA = European Free Trade Association; EPA = Economic Partnership Agreement; GSTP = Global System of Trade Preference; WTO = World Trade Organization.

Numerous quantitative estimates reveal significant welfare benefits of regional integration in the North African region. The potential impact of regional integration on growth and trade in the region, however, cannot be accurately estimated due to data constraint and a fast-changing world environment. Yet, multiple estimates point to the prospect of significant welfare benefits.

Trade integration has been shown to increase growth and enhance living standards (IMF, 2019; IMF, World Bank and WTO 2017). The World Bank also notes that regional cooperation and integration enables countries to enhance market efficiency; split the cost of public goods on major infrastructure projects; and gain additional non-economic benefits, like peace and security (World Bank, 2020).

Closer integration between North African countries makes economic sense. Integration between Maghreb countries (i.e. North Africa, excluding Egypt) was projected to generate a regional market of nearly 100 million people with an average income of around USD \$4,000 per capita in nominal terms and around USD \$12,000 in purchasing power parity terms. On the other hand, Egypt alone matches the combined population and GDP of the Maghreb countries (i.e. Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia). Closely integrating the North Africa region (as a block) would thus make it more attractive to foreign direct investment; lower the cost of intra-regional trade, facilitate capital and labour movements; and improve the efficiency of resource allocation. It would also make the North African region more adaptable to external shocks and market volatility. Integration will play a key role in the strategy to benefit from higher growth in the region. Numerous estimates show that regional integration could lead to faster growth in each nation by an average of one percentage point over the long term. Although strong domestic policies remain the main economic driver, intra-regional trade can double as a result of integration and boost growth and increase employment (IMF, 2019).

To integrate, countries in the region would need to lower trade and investment barriers and connect their infrastructure networks. Their efforts should focus on goods, services, and capital and labour market liberalization. Gradually eliminating barriers to intraregional trade, building regional infrastructure, and improving the business environment would boost trade within the region and help further integrate global value chains (IMF, 2019).

To advance faster from cooperation to integration, regional governments need to set joint policy objectives. This includes: a) Job creation through higher growth; ii) Openness of each country's economic model; iii) Inclusiveness in the distribution of growth benefits; iv) Negotiation of a new regional integration agreement; and v) Trade regionally on a much larger scale as a means to achieve those objectives (IMF, 2019).

The issues of sustainable development, trade and integration have been strongly posed by regional stakeholders in the broader MENA context. In January 2018, delegates from more than 20 countries (i.e. North Africa and other MENA countries) met in Marrakesh for a regional conference called "Opportunity for All: Promoting Growth, Jobs, and Inclusiveness in the Arab World," co-hosted by the Government of Morocco, the IMF, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab Monetary Fund (Purfield et al., 2018; IMF, 2019). The conference offered a forum for public officials, representatives of the private sector and leaders of civil society to share their views on low growth, inequality, trade and government transparency and corruption. The policy priorities that emerged from these debates underscored a development path in which gains are shared and a process that allows fair access to economic opportunities. That is, a principle of "leave no one behind" that builds strong safety nets and empowers disadvantaged groups – including youth, women, rural people and refugees (IMF, 2019).

At the end of the day, successful measures towards closer regional cooperation and integration will always include the surrender of some autonomy to the regional institutions that set and implement those laws. To date, governments have not been willing to

transfer regulatory powers to regional institutions that would regulate intra-regional trade. However, steps can be taken today that do not necessitate the surrender of sovereignty or the sacrifice of sovereignty only in limited cases. This helps build confidence and expertise to facilitate more thorough integration later on (Lall and Mahgoub, 2019).

Regional cooperation and global economic integration are processes which complement each other. On the one hand, stronger regional integration among North African states could help their global integration by letting them use the benefits of geographical proximity, fostering learning through action and fostering competitiveness efforts. On the other hand, Global integration can put additional pressure on countries to improve their regional integration. Regional cooperation and integration can, in many respects, be understood as an important step towards broader global market cooperation, with regional investment in infrastructures and trade in goods, services and factors in the region serving to boost competitiveness and encourage the development of the necessary institutions for greater integration (World Bank, 2012).

However, regional integration risks also need to be properly identified and managed. For instance, countries may have different preferences for regional integration priorities – depending on their connectivity gaps, economic geography, or sovereignty preferences. Moreover, the effects of regional integration on trade and investment flows, economic activity allocations, growth and income distribution are often difficult to evaluate. Moreover, the absence of adequate complementary policies and institutions can lead to inefficient results. For example, policy barriers at the border may offset the gains in cooperation in transport infrastructure. Regional integration, particularly within countries, produces winners and losers. Policies and institutions are necessary to make sure regionalism is inclusive – and better manage social, environmental and governance risks (World Bank, 2020).

3. Regional Versus Country Programming: What are the Advantages and Risks?

One of the first strategic considerations when designing development interventions (especially on schemes that have broader transnational application) is whether the programme will be primarily regional/sectoral or mainly a country-based approach. For example, DFID's Green Mini Grids (GMGs), a more regional and sectoral approach in Africa, sought to support the entire GMG sector in a more top-down way (e.g. where potential South-South transfer of knowledge between Maghreb, North Africa and other areas was noted).¹ This was with the conviction that leading companies, approaches or facilities will eventually gain traction in particular countries. In order to demonstrate the potential for progress (i.e. initially on a limited scale), a more bottom-up approach would first attempt to make progress in certain countries and specific contexts. Then the successful companies, technologies and approaches would be spread out (or scaled up) based on proven successes (DFID GMGA, 2015).²

A regional programme is ideal for comparing what worked between countries and developing and disseminating best practice in technology, policy and regulations. However, it can struggle to engage in certain country policy processes because it does not necessarily own

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278021/IED-green-min-grids-support-study1.pdf

² <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204784/documents>

a country. A country programme may in contrast be ideally positioned to demonstrate results and to link actors in the country, including developers, communities and financiers, by stimulating local currency loans and special arrangements. A regional programme is in a position to create sectoral standards and develop leading international capacity but could have lower long-term impacts on in-country capabilities – without clear country components (DFID GMGA, 2015).

There are advantages/strengths and weaknesses/risks in both regional and national programming approaches (see Table 1 below) and they may be effective against various barriers at different levels, but neither is superior. This conclusion also applies when the efficiency and economical characteristics of these two approaches are taken into account as regards possible regional vs. country delivery mechanisms (DFID GMGA, 2015).

Table 1: Comparison between Regional/Sectoral vs. Country-based approaches by a Donor

	Regional (or Sectoral Facility) Approaches	Country-Based Approaches
Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum programme economy of scale for the implementing organisation • Single point of contact and contract holder for donor (e.g. FCO or DFID) • Single specialist fund manager (e.g. as Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG))³ can manage a multi-country fund • Ability (in principle) to move money between countries more easily if one gets stuck • Easy to co-ordinate with international initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong local ownership and oversight from donor's country offices, governments and staff on the ground • Organisations with maximum functional and geographical specialisation can manage each function • Relatively easy to co-ordinate and position with regards to other programmes in place • Very modular and scalable since interdependence between funds is limited
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would have to be fully managed centrally, rather than leveraging donor's country presence and ownership • Very hard for regional management agent to have equally good presence, offer and positioning in each target country • Difficulty of incentivising progress in harder countries and/or sectors (e.g. conflict-affected states) • Multi-country funds can be more distant and less responsive to country contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund management capacity in countries may be limited or variable • Separate contracts for the donor to manage, and multiple sets of overheads • Possibility of disconnects between the various country funds • Harder to achieve cluster benefits and cross-learning between the country programmes • Risk of failure in isolation and lack of access to best international practices

³ <https://www.gov.uk/international-development-funding/private-infrastructure-development-group>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor’s central and country reporting lines would be less clear • Partner governments don’t necessarily recognise and access regional funds • Since there may not be a facility able to provide regional programming, there would be a tendering (and implication of setup time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success may be seen as a pocket, with low visibility
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Source: DFID GMGA (2015), <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204784/documents>, licensed under [Open Government License](#)

A combination of country programmes with a regional facility may sometimes be the best way to tackle programme challenges efficiently and cost-effectively. A hybrid approach would have both regional and national advantages. It will ensure linkages between nations, mix the results with regional visibility, maximize learning and coverage – as well as allow quick start-ups, since the maximum possible use of existing facilities is possible (DFID GMGA, 2015).

4. Overview of Key Regional Programmes in North Africa *

UK’s involvement across North Africa as well as the wider MENA region (e.g. through DFID and FCO programs) aims to stimulate further investment and ensure long-term economic, political and social change in the region. FCO and DFID regional intervention programmes (such as the ‘North Africa Good Governance Fund’ and the ‘Arab Partnership Economic Facility’) – as well as other donors (such as the ‘Economic Women’s Integration in the MENA Region’ by GIZ) have been established in recognition of the fact that the economic and political drivers of the Arab Spring are closely linked and that economic and social drivers are essentially related in the region (CAMENA Business Case, 2015).⁵

4.1 Arab Partnership Economic Facility: Trust Fund for Transition (North Africa)

- Full title: Arab Partnership Economic Facility (APEF): African Development Bank Trust Fund for Transition (North Africa)
- Value: GBP2 million (USD 2.5 million, at current prices)
- Start & End Date: 2012 to 2015
- DevTracker link to business case: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-203715/documents>

* These programmes include both regional programmes that exclusively work in the North Africa region as well as programmes that work both in North Africa as well as other regions, e.g. the wider MENA region.

⁵ <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204783/documents>

Programme Description:

The objective of the programme was to improve the focus and effectiveness of the assistance provided by two key multilateral development banks in the North Africa region. For this purpose, the United Kingdom contributed GBP 7 million (USD 8.7 million) from the Arab Partnership Economic Facility (APEF) to the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) Multi-donor Trust Funds for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (APEF Business Case 2013; APEF Annual Review 2015).

UK's support for the regional trust funds (and closer cooperation with the multilateral banks) have contributed to enabling the World Bank and the AfDB to strengthen their response to the region's challenges and to 'do business differently'.⁶ It allowed them to concentrate more on areas that address the underlying social and economic challenges in the transition countries (e.g. Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and other countries in the region undergoing a process of transition since the Arab Spring). The programme helped in strengthening governance, promoting employment, and supporting inclusive development in the private sector. The programme was also intended to assist them in developing and implementing projects that increase the chance of successful development outcomes (APEF Business Case, 2013; APEF Annual Review, 2015).

Implications on Regional Cooperation or Integration:

One of the program's key areas of focus is regional and global integration work. Other key areas include i) enhancing governance, ii) economic and social integration, iii) creating employment and iv) developing entrepreneurship and the private sector (APEF Business Case, 2013; APEF Annual Review, 2015).

The Trust Fund was designed to provide for a cross-cutting of activities that are important to address the complex challenges of reform in North Africa. The Trust Fund was complementary to other AfDB Trust Funds, such as the Fragile States Facility (FSF) and the Middle-Income Technical Assistance Fund (MIC-TAF) (APEF Business Case, 2013; APEF Annual Review, 2015).

The assets of the Trust Fund have supported joint and regional coordination activities in conjunction with the International Financial Institutions (IFI) co-ordination platform that was established under the Deauville Partnership (see section 2.2) and national coordination efforts (APEF Business Case 2013).

Development Outcomes:

In terms of outcomes, UK funding has enhanced regional governments' capacity to undertake economic and institutional reforms through effective and well-coordinated technical assistance and sector development interventions. This included both results on measures implemented within countries and enhancements in AfDB's operations throughout North Africa. Further, this programme has created a useful facility for the United

⁶ World Bank, MENA Regional Strategy Update, 2011:
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0,,menuPK:247603~pagePK:158889~piPK:146815~theSitePK:256299,00.html>

Kingdom in the region to support transition and has been an important complement to larger projects financed via other means (APEF Annual Review, 2015).

The results included a series of policy and institutional reforms in key areas of focus – including regional and global integration, a better impression by the bank's effectiveness on the part of clients, and an increasing number of technical and analytical pieces that inform or encourage policy debates on wider regional issues (APEF Annual Review, 2015).

Key specific result areas (from intermediate project review) include:

- The establishment of a significant number of new jobs in North Africa, directly or indirectly;
- Increased focus on economic and social inclusion promotion for World Bank and AfDB projects; and
- Boost to the number of new World Bank and AfDB projects – with programme design improvements through enhanced analysis of local conditions, dialog with stakeholders, inclusion of gender perspectives and the development of robust results frameworks (APEF Annual Review, 2015).

4.2 Arab Women's Enterprise Fund (AWEF)

- Full title: Arab Women's Enterprise Fund
- Value: GBP10.3 million (USD 12.7 million, at current prices)
- Start & End Date: 2014 to 2020
- DevTracker link to business case: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204325/documents>

Programme Description:

AWEF strives to ensure that markets work for poor women in North Africa (and the MENA region in general). It is a regional programme, operating in countries where poverty and women's economic participation are the main challenges. It pays due attention to operational conditions, such as security and governments' willingness. It works with key stakeholders, including businesses, government authorities and service providers (AWEF Business Case, 2015; AWEF Annual Review, 2018).

The programme embraces a flexible approach to the various country circumstances and social norms, apart from acting under the constraints of i) Women's Agency: i.e. the ability to make decisions and to act on the opportunities that lead to economic advancement; and ii) women's access: i.e. the ability to access the opportunities, services and assets needed to enhance women's economic position. Inclusive growth and development of the private sector are helping to meet the objectives of DFID to promote stability and long-term regional reform and development (AWEF Business Case, 2015)

Implications on Partnerships, Regional Cooperation or Integration:

The programme worked on the inclusion of women in markets in the region, giving it a wider regional scope and relevance – without distorting the market with large amounts of public money. The structure of the programme helped build on the expertise of its donors – for

instance, bringing the experience of DFID on market development approaches and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) on Islamic financing and regional relations and expertise (AWEF Business Case, 2015; AWEF Annual Review, 2018).

Development Outcomes:

AWEF has achieved an impressive and wide-ranging set of results across the region (especially in improving perceptions and social norms about women's roles). The partners and beneficiaries of the programme have revealed that they highly value the support of AWEF – e.g. as a facilitator for third parties and enabler of key linkages. Progress was achieved despite significant uncertainty surrounding the operations of AWEF in some countries in the region, such as Egypt (AWEF Annual Review, 2018).

An interim project review of the programme has found that its key impact objective of increasing the income and/or welfare of 150,000 poor and disadvantaged women in the region is being achieved. With the improved inclusion of cross-cutting support for access to financial services and financial literacy, the programme has consolidated its work across seven subsectors across all the countries in the region, e.g. in Dairy and Food Production, ICT, Ready Made Gleanings and Food Retail (AWEF Annual Review, 2018).

4.3 Economic integration of women in the MENA region

- Full title: Economic integration of women in the MENA Region
- Value: no clear figure available
- Start & End Date: 2010 to 2018
- Link: (GIZ) <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/15981.html> (Project) <https://econowin.org/>

Programme Description:

The Economic integration of women in the MENA region (EconoWin) was a project commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It was operational over the 2010-2018 period in countries such as Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia (GIZ, 2020; ECONOWIN, 2020).⁷

Implications on Regional Cooperation or Integration:

The programme supported regional associations of businesses and regional advisers – so that countries in the region can work together to address women's labour market challenges. Despite successful modernization and progress in training, the countries of North Africa (and the wider MENA) are still at the lowest rate of women's participation in economic life in the world. Only 25 percent of all women are employed in the countries in which the project is operating. Basic socio-cultural obstacles hinder women's economic integration across the region. Furthermore, various institutional and legal barriers exist in the region – such as lack of access to

⁷ <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/15981.html>

vocational training or jobs in the formal (mainly private) sector, lack of childcare, inflexible working time and negative labour market policy incentives (GIZ 2020).

Development Outcomes:

- Almost thirty regional business advisers and 25 associations were introduced to the idea of managing gender diversity. Local companies are being encouraged to develop women's promotion measures by calling for applications for a competition on gender diversity (GIZ, 2020).
- Twenty partner organizations conducted 325 women's and working film events through which 6,000 participants were gathered and 200 media reports were obtained; they have a website and their Facebook page, as well as YouTube and Twitter channels to reach a broader audience (GIZ, 2020).
- The project held round-table discussions in the partner countries, helping more than 150 industry representatives discuss the implementation of supporting labour legislation for women and families publicly (GIZ, 2020).
- Two thirds of the 250 women participating in the first assessment of the value chain project in the agriculture sector said they had achieved business success and became more self-assured and accepted more for their work (GIZ, 2020).
- The first year of mentoring in Egypt and Morocco gave the participants increased confidence in themselves to prepare for the transition from university to career, giving young women a better idea of particular jobs (GIZ, 2020).

4.4 Climate Action for Middle East and North Africa (CAMENA)

- Full title: Climate Action for Middle East and North Africa (CAMENA)
- Value: GBP11 million (USD 13.6 million)
- Start & End Date: 2014 - 2020
- DevTracker link to business case: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-204783/documents>

Programme Description:

CAMENA focuses its support on the region's climate-sensitive investments. In order to leverage much larger volumes of development banks' and private sector investments in climate action, CAMENA is using relatively small amounts of UK ODA. This is accomplished through financing the technical assistance (TA) needed to help identify and prepare investment opportunities as well as by investing in equity that crowds in private sector financing (CAMENA Business Case, 2015; CAMENA Annual Review, 2020).

Implications on Regional Cooperation or Integration:

DFID has noted the importance of promoting job creation and economic growth in the region. This is realised via:

- **Promoting greater regional and global trade;**
- Supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses to gain better access to finance and enhance business skills; and
- Improving the skills of women and young people for employment.

The CAMENA programme has helped contribute to each of these objectives (i.e. including the promotion of regional integration through trade). It has supported the region in creation of jobs in the climate sector, promoted energy efficiency and renewable energy, and enhanced the resilience of regional infrastructure and economic activities to climate change and variability. CAMENA has sought to improve the quantity and quality of the jobs created. The European Investment Bank (EIB) has an ongoing partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in North Africa (and the greater MENA region). The EIB has also just launched a major study analysing the renewable energy technologies manufacturing capacities of countries in the MENA region (CAMENA Annual Review, 2020).

Development Outcomes:

CAMENA has helped to catalyse several EIB investments across the region, investments totalling € 310 million (or USD 386.4 million at current prices). **These investments helped to improve climate-resilient low-carbon development in the region.** The latest (publicly available) intermediate programme reviews do not offer a thorough evaluation, as there are still several TA projects under way. There are, however, some promising signs. The EIB Board has approved investment funding for two projects that have been prepared and made bankable using CAMENA TA (in Egypt and Jordan), totalling approximately €145 million (USD 180.7 million at current prices). Furthermore, a €4m (USD 5m, at current prices) CAMENA equity investment in the Green Growth Fund (GGF) has helped to unlock additional public and private financing in the region (CAMENA Annual Review, 2020).

4.5 Safety, Support and Solutions (SSS) Programme

- Full title: Safety, Support and Solutions Programme for Refugees ⁸
- Value: GBP33.5 million (USD 41.8 million, at current prices)
- Start & End Date: 2016 – 2017
- DevTracker link to business case: <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-GOV-1-300264/documents>

Programme Description:

The SSS programme (which is framed around three pillars –‘Safety’, ‘Support’ and ‘Solutions’ for refugees) **aims to avoid loss of life, suffering, or harm to refugees and migrants –**

⁸ The programme is implemented across the North Africa region (i.e. countries spanning the Central Mediterranean migration route) as well as those in Europe, Balkans and transit countries along Eastern Mediterranean migration route.

inside and in transit to Europe (SSS Business Case, 2016; SSS Project Completion Review, 2018).

In order to offer long-lasting solutions (and deliver effective aid) to the **refugee crisis in the Mediterranean and surrounding regions (e.g. North Africa)**, the programme aimed to **fill gaps in national, regional and international systems**. The programme provided an integrated response to migration challenges through multilateral partners, NGOs and host authorities – including partners with appropriate mandates and expertise. It also built capacity and contingency to ensure that the humanitarian system is equipped to tackle people's movements into Europe (SSS Business Case 2016; SSS Project Completion Review 2018).

Implications on Regional Cooperation or Integration:

This regional, multi-partner programme delivered a package of interventions that were very responsive to the dynamic situation on the ground and **contributed significantly to the regional effort to alleviate the suffering of refugees across the Mediterranean route**. Working with a variety of partners, DFID ensured that programming met changing needs as its partners were able to move resources wherever they needed – e.g. North Africa or other relevant regions (SSS Project Completion Review, 2018).

A broad cross section of duty-bearers and service providers benefited from trainings supported by the programme. For example, Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) downstream partner, trained state police, border police, migration police, social and educational authorities as well as civil society organisations (CSOs). CRS also reported that **regional work enabled them to transfer knowledge from one local partner to another, share expertise and build awareness of best practices at regional protection levels** (SSS Project Completion Review, 2018).

The programme has supported the establishment of cross-governmental (regional) dialogues, in order to enhance understanding and acceptance of the situation of refugees and undocumented migrants by officials and local communities. For instance, CRS convened a Regional Conference along with the Migration, Asylum and Refugee Regional Initiative (MARRI), convening more than 80 civil society and governmental actors to discuss the risks of irregular migration and trafficking, and how individuals should be protected. These workshops included staff of government, journalists, influential bloggers, non-governmental organizations, and other senior staff (SSS Project Completion Review, 2018).

Development Outcomes:

Overall, the programme has been effectively adapted to meet the changing regional needs to manage the humanitarian crisis. It has improved the quality of support for static populations across the Eastern Mediterranean Route (EMR), while responding swiftly to the worsening humanitarian crisis along the Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) (SSS Project Completion Review, 2018).

This programme has managed to fill critical humanitarian gaps, such as food supplies, safe shelters and medical care for stranded and arrived migrants. It addressed long-term capacity issues, such as providing government and civil society education and support in order to better ensure that existing and future migrants are protected. The creation of an Emergency Response

Fund (CERF), which released small grants to NGO's within 72 hours of an emergency, has succeeded in innovatively responding to emerging needs, allowing them to respond rapidly (SSS Project Completion Review, 2018).

More specifically, the programme achieved (SSS Project Completion Review, 2018):

- Approximately 129,000 emergency aid cases, including food and non-food items (blankets, clothes, washing items, sanitary products) and medical assistance (including psychosocial assistance) for vulnerable migrants; This included 17,400 vulnerable people benefiting from cash support, who might otherwise have engaged in harmful coping strategies to buy food and other necessities for their families-such as survival sex or illegal labour.
- About 38,000 people were provided rapid support to meet their food and medical assistance needs.
- About 1,300 government officials, NGO staff and volunteers have benefited from training or capacity-building on protection, gender-based violence (GBV), asylum law and human rights to improve humanitarian response and migration management.
- Roughly 13,800 people benefited from improved reception services specifically designed to meet the needs of highly vulnerable people, such as women, girls, unaccompanied minors and trafficking victims, to protect them from abuse and to enhance access to secondary support services (e.g. medical and psychosocial assistance, access to justice, rehabilitation, etc.).
- Approximately 250,000 online views of data and evidence products developed to improve the targeting of the humanitarian response and to inform the migration flows to states.
- About 42,000 people on a monthly basis accessing a combined migration data and policy portal (Mixed Migration Platform) to inform policies and best practices on migration responses.
- About 37,700 monitoring visits to detention centres and immigrant communities to monitor human rights violations and target the most vulnerable protection services.
- Close to 11,000 support instances to help identify and register people who need international protection and facilitate their access to fair asylum processes.

The aim of the SSS was to support and protect the most vulnerable. The programme used criteria in assessing the many factors that contribute to the vulnerability of a person (age, disability, gender, pregnancy and motherhood, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation).

In particular, by integrating gender-sensitive approaches and protection services, the SSS programme has been adapted to the specific needs of women and girls and has earmarked GBP 8 million (US\$ 9.9 million) for the Women and Girls Protection Fund. This fund has provided targeted services to women, girls and other vulnerable persons on the move in order to prevent and respond to risks of violence, trafficking and other forms of exploitation by sex or gender. The SSS programme fully complied with the 2014 International Development (Gender Equality) Act and addresses other forms of discrimination, for example, by taking into consideration the needs of people with disabilities and ethnic minorities (SSS Project Completion Review, 2018).

5. Overview of Regional Programmes in Other Regions

A recent evaluation report by DFID (2019) had shown that regional programmes have the advantage of creating broader (i.e. regional) platforms – where federal and state level actors can

engage with each other. This has improved regional cooperation and integration across different economic sectors.

5.1 Regional Cooperation on Transboundary River Systems

Programme:

The South Asia Water Initiative (SAWI) is a USD 31 million **trust fund that boosts regional collaboration to manage major South Asian river systems in the Himalayas**. It has worked to achieve sustainable, equitable and inclusive regional development and climate stability. It covers seven countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, Pakistan and others. In the period 2013–December 2018, DFID (56 percent), Australia (36 percent) and Norway (8 percent) financed SAWI-II. The World Bank has administered SAWI-II on behalf of the development partners, and the Trust Fund has funded five pathways of change: i) knowledge generation and sharing; ii) trust building through dialogue of regional actors; iii) participatory processes involving a variety of stakeholders; iv) informing the World Bank's investment scope and design and v) building water resources capacity of organisations and professionals to manage transboundary rivers in the South Asia region (DFID, 2019).

Outcome:

The programme has **benefited countries in the South Asia region by offering new knowledge-sharing opportunities**. It has also created a greater awareness about the holistic management of rivers. Although there is an unequal starting point between regional actors (in terms of technical skills and knowledge gaps), regional programs such as SAWI have helped to level the field, including through capacity building activities (DFID, 2019: 29).

5.2 Regional Trade Integration

Programme:

Intra-regional trade in goods, electricity and foreign direct investment has been promoted by the South Asia Regional Trade Integration Programme (SARTIP). SARTIP focused on the poorest parts of South and Central Asia (i.e. across Afghanistan, northern Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh) and South East Asia (e.g. Burma) (DFID, 2019).⁹

The programme responded to DFID priorities by focusing on the potential gains to economic growth and poverty reduction from enhanced regional trade in goods and power. It was achieved through the production of technical studies, stakeholder capacity building, effective communication, consensus building, and high-level advocacy to stimulate regional trade, integration, and economic growth – thereby leading to regional poverty reduction (DFID, 2019: 31-33; Baker et al., 2019).¹⁰

Outcome:

⁹ <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-203035>

¹⁰ http://iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati_documents/38996325.odt

Support from SARTIP has facilitated national investments which were instrumental in promoting regional integration. In some cases, **relationships between DFID and the FCO influenced national governments to advance regional project authorisation.** For instance, through the 'Champions Network', the programme has influenced the authorizing environment of governments – where the political will to develop regional links (e.g. in Bangladesh and Nepal) emerged. The electricity sector appears to be the most successful intervention, partly due to high power demand, and the benefits of increased regional power transfer. The programme demonstrated flexibility in diverting resources to interventions in other parts of the region, where intractable political difficulties in the relationship between Pakistan and India hindered progress. Certain positive programme highlights (related to regional integration) include (DFID, 2019 p31-33):

- Intra-regional commodity trade rose from USD 45.1 billion in 2012 to USD 47.9 billion in 2016, equivalent to a compound annual growth rate of 2 percent.
- During the implementation of SARTIP, cross-border energy connectivity between India and Nepal increased substantially, with electricity trading growing from around 694 GWh in 2011 to 2175 GWh in 2017. Likewise, the capacity for transmitting energy across borders increased from around 20 MW to 700 MW. SARTIP helped contribute to some of these positive results, although DFID support for the Nepal-India transmission line feasibility study was provided in advance of SARTIP.
- SARTIP countries also witnessed a marked increase in FDI inflows during the duration of the programme. FDI inflows in the region stood at USD 61.2 billion in 2016, a substantial increase from USD 41.4 billion in 2012.

5.3 Regional Empowerment and Accountability

Programme:

To support accountability and empowerment on the continent, the Africa Regional Empowerment and Accountability Programme (AREAP) has funded a portfolio of regional organisations. GBP19.9 million (USD 24.7 million) was offered by the UK Government for the programme. The program's aim was to make the region's public sector better accountable to citizens (AREAP, 2016).¹¹

Outcome:

The overall outcome was better regional and national policy making, and policy implementation through the influence of citizens and non-state actors (AREAP, 2016).

AREAP's Implementing Partners **facilitated joint advocacy and media events.** Partner organizations, for example, worked together to plan and convene a media **dialog on the media's role in regional integration.**¹² Regional organizations also participated in the Roundtable of Pan African Parliament with development partners and joint initiatives – on the side-lines of the Pan-African parliament (AREAP, 2016).

¹¹ <https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-202501/documents>

¹² <http://www.southernafricatrust.org/is-media-playing-its-role-in-regional-integration/>

The Southern Africa Trust (SAT), one of the regional partners, observed that **the availability of knowledge and analysis relevant to the poverty dimensions of regional integration was inadequate in quantity and in quality before the AREAP programme was implemented.**¹³

The programme has helped the Trust to build its ability to produce relevant knowledge articulating policy recommendations that inform policy development or about ways to alleviate the problems of the poor in the region (AREAP, 2016). For example:

- The Trust commissioned a study in 2012 and encouraged the establishment of a National Task Force to understand the challenges that beneficiaries in Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, and South Africa face in obtaining their benefits (AREAP, 2016).
- The Trust has played a significant role in providing adequate consideration of the priorities of smallholder farmers in the new Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) (adopted in 2014) for the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Trust has supported local organizations such as the Eastern and Southern African Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) via the presentation of research on smallholder farmers' issues, engagement with key stakeholders such as SADC, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), national governments and farmers' unions in Southern Africa (AREAP, 2016).¹⁴
- The Trust has also carried out studies on i) the status and functionality of the social security systems within SADC, Europe and the South American trade bloc (i.e. Mercosur) to inform the SADC Cross-Border Portability Framework; ii) alternative sources of funding to inform the development of the SADC resource mobilization policy framework; and iii) options for SADC in its engagement with non-state actors (AREAP, 2016).

¹³ <https://www.southernafricatrust.org/>

¹⁴ <http://satrust.citiblu.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/regional-food-security-policy-dialogue.pdf>

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