

Tool 2

Security Sector Reform Programming

Mpako Foaleng and Amadou Mahamane Ousmane



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DCAF

The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) is a world-leading institution in the areas of good governance and reform of the security sector, established as an international foundation in 2000. In Africa, DCAF supports regional organisations, national institutions and non-state actors in their efforts to improve the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector.

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About the toolkit



What is the toolkit?

This publication is part of the *Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa*. Its aim is to support implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) policy framework for security sector reform and governance through practical advice and guidance tailored for the West African context and based on regional experiences. It specifically aims at facilitating policy development, implementation and management of SSR processes at the national level.

Who is the toolkit for?

The toolkit has been developed as a resource for the ECOWAS Commission and all national stakeholders within ECOWAS member states, including the executive, the parliament, the judiciary, statutory oversight institutions and civil society. It can also be useful to other actors involved in SSR processes, such as international partners.

What is the structure of the toolkit?

The toolkit comprises eight complementary chapters (or tools):

Tool 1: Political Leadership and National Ownership of Security Sector Reform Processes

Tool 2: Security Sector Reform Programming

Tool 3: Good Financial Governance of Defence and Security Institutions

Tool 4: Effective External Support to Security Sector Reform

Tool 5: Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector

Tool 6: Civil Society Involvement in Security Sector Reform and Governance

Tool 7: Non-State Justice and Security Providers and Security Sector Reform

Tool 8: Integrating Gender in Security Sector Reform and Governance



Who developed the toolkit?

The toolkit has been produced by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) at the request of ECOWAS.

The tools are written primarily by West African experts and have been examined by an editorial board made up of world-renowned researchers and practitioners. The members of the board are West African specialists in security sector reform and governance, with long experience and excellent knowledge of the region.

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Acronyms

AU	African Union
CSO	civil society organisation
DDR	disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
ECOMIB	ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
PRSP	poverty reduction strategy paper
PTC	primary technical coordinator
REC	regional economic community
SSR	security sector reform
UN	United Nations



Preface

It is a great pleasure for me, as Head of the Regional Security Division of the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS), to present the **Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa**. This publication is a practical guide in eight volumes, designed to facilitate the implementation of the ECOWAS regional normative framework on security sector reform and security sector governance. It was developed by DCAF – the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance - at the request of the ECOWAS Commission as part of a long-term collaboration.

In the light of this, DCAF and the ECOWAS Commission are working hand in hand to promote democratic governance through security sector reform in West Africa. It is within the framework of its draft “Policy on Democratic Governance and Reform in West Africa 2016” that ECOWAS is collaborating with DCAF to build operational security capacity through specific guidance tools. Indeed, DCAF provides in-depth guidance to support the development and implementation of solutions tailored to the region’s context.

This project is consistent with ECOWAS current efforts to promote security sector reform and governance standards and principles in the region and this process will help us achieve “ECOWAS Vision 2050”, which envisions West Africa as a stable and prosperous corner of Africa where people can live in peace and prosperity with accountable and effective security system. Indeed, security challenges are a key issue for respecting human rights and driving development in West Africa.

With a view to achieve coherence and harmonization of regional security and defense regulations and an optimal normative system, ECOWAS wishes to endow itself with essential good governance mechanisms to meet the challenges of human security. The ambition is to provide national authorities in charge of security with all the tools and mechanisms necessary for a coordinated approach to security risks and challenges in order to attain prosperity.

The aim is to develop and strengthen a West African security strategy to support the regalian imperative of democratic governance, protection and defense for the region’s serene development prospective. This security effort is part of the pursuit of regional development, so it is appropriate through this practical guide to maintain an overall balance between these two dimensions.

In its drive to deploy and consolidate regional integration capacities in the area of security forces, ECOWAS aims to increase the effectiveness of its regional normative framework by equipping itself with relevant practical tools in the area of security sector reform and governance. The **Toolkit for Security**

Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa strives to support the implementation of the ECOWAS security sector reform project. For this purpose, the Toolkit provides practical advice and guidance drawn from regional experience and adapted to the West African context. The advice promulgated applies to the various dimensions of security and therefore offers resources to facilitate the transition from theory to practice.

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Introduction

Programming is an important step for any state engaging in security sector reform (SSR). It provides an opportunity both to identify the nature of sought-after changes in the security sector and to organise their implementation in a manner measurable over time. Programming therefore contributes to both structuring and documenting the entire reform process.

From a technical point of view, the programming exercise meets the traditional requirements of a programming cycle based on the principles of responsibility and measurability. By focusing on the effects and impacts to be achieved in a given society rather than the activities implemented, the programming exercise involves developing a structured set of activities designed to meet specific objectives which contribute to improving the governance and effectiveness of the security sector.

It is important for SSR programming to be run, right from the beginning, by a participatory national system which guarantees the overall coherence of the programme and enables local ownership. The programming exercise typically includes the following actions:

- identification of the relevant stakeholders;
- conducting an assessment to identify security threats and requirements, and determine the institutional capacity for addressing them;
- definition of the objectives to be achieved through SSR and identification of priority areas of reform;
- design of programme content and definition of implementing arrangements;
- development and implementation of a communication and awareness-raising strategy;
- development and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system to document progress towards objectives and make any necessary adjustments;
- establishment of a programme budget and mobilisation of funding;
- implementation of the programme and coordination of stakeholders.

These various actions form the steps on which this tool is based. Although each step is defined independently, it should be noted that programming is a continuous process comprising a series of interdependent operations, as illustrated in Box 1.

Box 1: Overview of SSR programming phases

Throughout: Communication, coordination, monitoring and phase-by-phase evaluations



Fundamental approach: National leadership of programming
with continuous ECOWAS support

Guiding principles of SSR programming

SSR programming is based on a number of guiding principles that are essential to ensure the coherence of the process and to foster local ownership. While the context and extent of SSR processes vary from one situation to another, the objective of any reform is to increase both the effectiveness of the security sector and the level of accountability of the actors involved in it. These objectives must guide all SSR programming.

Several essential principles must be systematically taken into account to ensure that these objectives are achieved. They include, in particular, buy-in to the process by all stakeholders, the inclusive and participatory nature of the process, anchoring SSR in state reform and adopting a holistic approach to the security sector with an emphasis on governance issues.

2.1. Buy-in to and ownership of the process by institutions and the population

As a fundamentally national process which should be locally owned, SSR entails active participation by all national stakeholders, who must feel involved and have a sense of ownership of the process. Far from being limited to decision-making centres, the process requires active buy-in from all national stakeholders, at several levels.

To ensure local ownership, a sense of mutual involvement and joint responsibility must be shared by stakeholders at four levels:

- **citizens and communities**, namely the various segments of the population (men, women, girls and boys¹) who are the primary beneficiaries of security and justice objectives;
- **the state**, which is responsible for national stability and responding to the security and justice needs of each individual, in accordance with the principle of responsibility enshrined in Articles 4 and 41 of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework;
- **security and justice institutions**, which are the instruments through which the state takes concrete action to improve security and justice for the population;
- **staff of these institutions**, namely the women and men who represent and act on behalf of security and justice institutions.

To guarantee local ownership, which is the primary requirement for any national SSR process, it is important for all four categories of actors to reach a shared understanding of the security needs of the people and the state, the capacity of security institutions to respond to these needs and the objectives to be achieved through SSR. It is essential for the points of view expressed by actors at all the various levels to be taken into consideration in SSR programming; this provides an initial guarantee of the appropriateness of the adopted approach.

2.2. National leadership and the inclusive and participatory nature of the process

National stakeholders provide leadership for the reform process, defining its content and terms; the role of international (or external) partners is to support and back the process rather than to lead it.

Since SSR is a national process, it is essential for the SSR policy and process to be developed, managed and implemented by national actors rather than external ones. It is national actors who instigate the SSR process and take responsibility for managing it, including programming aspects, through a broad intersectoral mechanism that allows an inclusive and participatory approach. This means setting up interactive platforms that are open to all national stakeholders, from national institutions to trade unions, youth associations, women's organisations and other sections of civil society.

An inclusive system of this kind helps foster a common sense of responsibility and a collaborative momentum among all national stakeholders, generating concerted, home-grown solutions that are tailored to address the particular problems and needs identified. Tuning the reform process to such inclusive and participatory dynamics encourages the adoption of a wide-ranging approach designed for the long term.

At an institutional level, asserting national leadership in managing the reform process often involves establishing a national SSR management and coordination structure, as was the case in Guinea (see Box 2). Although this structure is supervised centrally by the leading national policymakers (heads of state and government and leaders of key institutions), it relies on a multilayer structure that goes down to the decentralised level, allowing for a participatory process (see also Section 7.3). It is important that women be part of the structure at every level, including in decision-making positions. This is not merely a formal requirement, but guarantees an inclusive, representative and sustainable process. Membership of the national SSR management and coordination body is reserved for national stakeholders (including civil society), although external partners may be invited to participate at one or more levels depending on carefully defined terms.

It is important for the national SSR coordination structure or mechanism to be created by a high-level executive decision, such as a presidential decree, which gives it an explicit mandate and demonstrates the political support necessary for it to achieve its objectives. Good practices recommend that such official documents should also provide for the various internal bodies of the structure being created, including their organisation, prerogatives and operational arrangements.

1

See Tool 1:
Political leadership
and national ownership
of SSR processes

Box 2: National SSR management structure – The example of Guinea

Guinea appointed a National Steering Committee for SSR to supervise its SSR programme, provide political and strategic guidance, and monitor its implementation. Created by decree in April 2011 following the recommendations of a May 2010 assessment report on the security sector, the National Steering Committee for SSR was placed under the authority of the President.

2.3. Anchoring SSR programming in state reform

SSR should not be viewed as isolated from other governance efforts; rather, it falls within the state's overall vision of development as defined by the relevant strategic documents. It is therefore important to anchor SSR programming in the wider framework of institutional reforms and efforts to modernise the state and public administration.

West African countries usually have framework documents that define their policies, strategies and general orientations in terms of governance, in particular national poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) aligned on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).² In the case of Sierra Leone, consistent alignment of SSR with successive PRSPs since 2005³ has helped improve the programme's coherence at a strategic level. In neighbouring Liberia the *Agenda for Transformation* for 2030 serves as a strategic reference document for integrated programming of SSR and other national priorities.

In addition to PRSP-type framework documents, some countries also have a national security and defence policy that defines specific priorities in these fields. Such policy documents present an integrated view of security at the national level.

When none of these strategic documents exists, it is important to plan for their development prior to embarking on an SSR programming exercise. In particular, formulating or revising national defence and security policy and strategy documents is a prerequisite for any reform, even on a limited scale.

2.4. A single vision, an overarching programme, sectoral and cross-cutting projects and action plans

An SSR programme should stem from a holistic view of security, based on a comprehensive intersectoral approach which identifies all security challenges and ensures both institutional coherence and operational complementarity between security actors.

Whether triggered by a crisis or major conflict or undertaken as part of continuing efforts to ensure ongoing improvement in security governance even in peacetime, SSR programmes deal with issues related to the performance of security mechanisms, their compliance with ethical norms of individual and collective behaviour and their responsiveness to democratic oversight. Far from being isolated interventions, SSR programmes form an integral part of the broader process of strengthening the rule of law and consolidating peace. As such, SSR must be run in conjunction with other governance processes that are sometimes undertaken in parallel, such as transitional justice, the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants or efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Although the reform should be designed in a holistic, integrated manner, it is nevertheless implemented through sectoral projects and action plans, which may be regarded as implementation mechanisms specific to each area of intervention (defence reform, police reform, customs reform, etc.).

In addition to sector-specific projects and action plans, it is useful to develop projects that are common to the whole of the security sector to address cross-cutting themes or areas that affect all actors. Typically, these cross-cutting projects relate to questions such as gender mainstreaming, modernising administrative structures, implementing effective human resources management systems, developing internal control mechanisms, strengthening democratic oversight, etc. (see also Section 5.3).

Box 3: Taking account of the complexity of the political and socio-economic context

In many West African countries weak institutions and democratic governance, insufficient domestic resources and socio-economic gloom underpin an unstable political and security environment. Although at different stages, all ECOWAS member states are engaged in democratic transition processes, some of which have reached a consolidation phase (such as in Ghana, Senegal and Cape Verde), while others are working to establish true state authority and legitimacy.

Like other portions of the nation, defence and security forces are engaged in transition and transformation processes aimed at establishing their role and mission in building a democratic system governed by rule of law and compliant with fundamental freedoms. It is therefore important to anchor SSR programming into a broader national conversation on the roles and responsibilities of the security sector, in light of the balance of power and good governance principles.

2.5. Prioritising governance over restructuring and infrastructure

When programming SSR it is important to consider two distinct yet complementary dimensions: “soft” and “hard” elements of reform.

“Soft” areas of reform refer to anything intangible or governance related, namely:

- ethical and deontological values and standards;
- legal and regulatory frameworks;
- individual and collective attitudes and behaviours;
- accountability standards;
- capacity building, awareness raising, etc.

“Hard” elements of reform, on the other hand, are anything physical or related to material resources, such as security sector equipment and infrastructure, including their maintenance and training people to use them.

Experience shows that administrations often tend to focus on material requirements, to the point where grievances in this area are seen as isolated from management and governance issues. There is then a significant risk of slipping from an SSR programme to an equipment programme for defence and security forces, which does not provide a sustainable response to the challenges observed. Furthermore, the costs of security equipment and infrastructure can reach astronomic levels, and seem excessive to the point where the quality of programming is questioned and partners are discouraged.

Contrary to “hard” investments, which have a limited lifespan, focusing on the “soft” aspects of reform generates longer-term impact on human and material needs, in particular through modernising the human resources management system, rationalising the procurement and asset management procedures, improving internal communication and mainstreaming gender.

It is therefore important to ensure an appropriate degree of complementarity and balance between soft and hard elements of SSR programming. For instance, training and equipping the defence and security forces should not be regarded as stand-alone goals, but rather as a means to the ends of increased professionalism, more sustainable management of the human resources these forces represent and

optimal use of available material resources. Although all grievances related to material aspects should not be dismissed, it is important to ensure that these are not disconnected from questions of governance and service delivery, which lie at the heart of SSR.

This means, for example, that when new combat or law enforcement equipment is acquired, staff members should not only receive technical training in how to use it, but also be trained on the ethical rules governing the use of force. In addition, institutional capacity related to equipment maintenance and stock records keeping should be strengthened, to guarantee transparent, optimal management of assets. Whether all these considerations do inform the decision to purchase new equipment is a decisive factor in the operational effectiveness of defence and security institutions.

The SSR coordination body might need to educate security sector actors to help them understand that reform is not simply a matter of material requirements, but also requires an improvement in management and governance structures in order to achieve the expected strategic results.

Identifying key programming actors and their roles

SSR affects the prerogatives of a multitude of national actors, who, based on their different roles, should be consulted for programming purposes. Given the political and technical nature of SSR, it is important to create a broad and inclusive consultation framework at the beginning of the process, while nevertheless maintaining a workable number of actors to create a truly operational programming environment.

The national SSR coordination body is usually responsible for coordinating the programming exercise by bringing together all the relevant actors. Involving these actors in SSR programming is essential because:

- they can influence the context of SSR programming upstream;
- they are best placed to ensure that the SSR programme takes adequate account of their respective roles in security governance;
- their active participation contributes to broad national ownership, which constitutes the fundamental approach of SSR.

The list of national actors to involve in programming varies from one country to another, depending on the context.⁴ Conducting a mapping exercise helps to identify relevant actors and classify them according to predefined criteria, such as their institutional role, technical contribution or legitimacy. It is in light of these parameters that the ways of engaging with each type of actor and the appropriate moment for bringing them in are determined. Some, for example, will be involved throughout the programming cycle, in ways that may change from one stage to the next, while others will only be consulted at particular stages.

Among the main actors that should usually be involved in the programming exercise are:

- state justice and security providers;
- the main ministries responsible for the sector;
- other ministries and institutions concerned;
- parliament;
- independent oversight institutions;
- non-state justice and security providers;
- civil society organisations (CSOs);
- external (i.e. international) partners.

3.1. State justice and security providers

State justice and security providers are key actors and their involvement in programming is essential, as it is through them that numerous institutional and individual changes will be implemented. They include all defence and security institutions commonly referred to by the term “uniformed personnel”. The following groups should be involved:

- **The armed forces:** army, air force and navy, gendarmerie, presidential or national guard, etc.
- **The security services:** police and other law-and-order services, civil defence, the customs, immigration and border management services, etc.
- **The intelligence agencies** (civilian and military).
- **The justice system and penal administration.**

In many cases these institutions have special status and are governed by management rules that derogate from the rest of the public sector.

3.2. Main security sector line ministries

Line ministries to which state justice and security providers report are responsible for their political, administrative and financial management, which is essential for the conduct of programming actions. Sectoral programming is managed by these ministries. In the West African context this mainly includes the ministry of defence, the ministry of the interior and/or security and the ministry of justice.

3.3. Other relevant ministries and institutions within the executive branch

The ministries responsible for finance, planning and regional or local administration are also involved in SSR programming due to their respective areas of competence. These civilian departments can provide both direct technical support to the programming exercise and additional expertise to ensure consistency between the various sectoral plans and the cross-cutting projects that will be implemented.

Other ministries (social affairs, gender and/or women's affairs, employment, education and training, etc.) and bodies that report to the executive (such as the national DDR commission, the national commission to combat the proliferation of light weapons, etc.) will be involved in SSR programming because of their areas of activity. Involving these actors at key points in the programming process helps to establish links between SSR and other related processes or issues, such as DDR, gender mainstreaming, combating sexual and gender-based violence, human rights violations and corruption in the security sector. It also means strengthening the coherence of the SSR programme in relation to other national programmes, in accordance with the need for a holistic approach.

3.4. Parliament

Parliament plays a crucial role in SSR programming, particularly by adopting a legal framework that creates the right conditions for SSR to start with:

- Parliament ensures the clarity of constitutional and statutory provisions establishing the roles and responsibilities of the various actors within the security sector.
- It passes the laws that govern the security sector and provide the framework for its democratic oversight.
- In some cases it approves the national security policies and strategies that set the strategic framework for the SSR programme.

Involving the parliament in SSR programming also helps to ensure that its permanent role in security sector governance is adequately taken into account. This role includes the following functions:

- **Representation:** Parliament creates the conditions for a national debate on the security concerns of the people and ensures that these are taken into account, both as part of the national security policy and in subsequent instruments, such as military programming laws.⁵
- **Budgeting:** Parliament approves the state budget and thereby determines the resources available for the regular functioning of the security sector, as well as for its reform. It also monitors budget implementation by security sector institutions.
- **Oversight of public policy:** Parliament ensures democratic oversight of the actions of both the executive and the defence and security forces that report to it. This involves establishing operational parliamentary oversight mechanisms.
- **Legislation:** Parliament is responsible for continually updating the legal and normative framework applicable to the security sector.

*See Tool 5:
Parliamentary
oversight of the
security sector.*

5

3.5. Independent oversight institutions

Other institutions may also be involved in the programming exercise, depending on the context. These are independent institutions with a mandate for security sector oversight, such as the justice system, economic and social councils, ombuds institutions, national human rights institutions, national anti-corruption agencies, supreme audit institutions, etc.

Although these institutions do not necessarily take part at every stage of the programming exercise, it is important to involve them at key points due to their institutional role and legitimacy. They may be involved through consultation meetings aimed at defining the content of the SSR programme, or through seminars and workshops aimed at sharing and validating programming results.

3.6. Non-state security providers

Depending on the context, and particularly in the case of a lack or inadequacy of defence and security forces presence on the ground, non-state actors can play an important role in providing justice and security services. Such actors may include community or religious guards, traditional justice institutions, self-defence groups, armed groups, militias, security guard firms and other private security companies.

All these actors should be taken into consideration in SSR programming, both because of their influence on the security environment and because they are sources of information on justice and security needs.

Some non-state actors may happen to perceive the reform process as a threat and oppose it, which could represent a risk factor to be taken into consideration. The SSR process may indeed have an impact on the activities and image of such actors.

*See Tool 7:
Non-state justice
and security providers
and SSR*

7

3.7. Civil society organisations

In the full range of their diversity (see Box 3), CSOs are significant actors on the ground, including in the most remote places. They generally have a good knowledge and understanding of the aspirations of particular groups, the problems and challenges they face, and opportunities and social dynamics at the community level. Because of their close relationship with communities, CSOs provide a citizen's perspective on security issues and the relationship between the population and the defence and security forces, and help to generate innovative and relevant solutions.

Box 4: Diversity of CSOs

All kinds of CSOs can make a specific contribution to SSR, depending on their area of involvement.

- Youth and student organisations
- Women's organisations
- Human rights organisations
- Victim support organisations
- Organisations promoting good governance practices
- Developmental organisations and poverty reduction initiatives
- Trade unions and professional associations
- Denominational organisations and religious groups
- Think-tanks, research institutes and academia
- Media organisations (media watchdogs, journalists' unions, press owners' associations), etc.

These organisations may be active on a regional or national scale as well as at the community level; and they may work independently or coordinate their activities in collectives, networks, movements, etc. Programming benefits from taking into account the added value offered by each type of CSO.

In addition to the strategic and operational advantages their participation presents, involving CSOs falls within democratic principles and supports national ownership of SSR. CSOs can play an important role as intermediaries between the general population and institutions throughout the process. They can thereby help to increase the relevance of the options under consideration, the coherence of interventions and the chances of securing the desired effects and impacts.

CSOs should be identified and mapped based on their expertise in terms of governance, security, programming or other areas of interest for SSR, to ensure that civil society is involved as effectively as possible.

*See also
Tool 6: Civil society
involvement in
security sector
reform and
governance*

6

3.8. External partners in SSR programming

The role of external (i.e. international) partners in the SSR process is to provide support to national actors. When it comes to programming, external partners are mainly regional organisations and international institutions, such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, the European Union and bilateral partners.

See Tool 4:
*Effective
management of
external support to
security sector reform*

4

West African states facing multiple challenges may have limited capacity for organising the SSR process entirely on their own, and may therefore call for external assistance. Even under such circumstances, it is important for the state concerned to formulate an official request for assistance based on a realistic country-led evaluation of reform needs and domestic resources to cover them. This sends a strong message of national leadership, and can thus help to mobilise external support.

Given the critical importance of the principle of national leadership, it is imperative that strategic decision-making and operational management remain the exclusive prerogative of national actors, even if the operation is funded by an external partner. Where there is an actual or assumed lack of local expertise, some external partners may be tempted to bring in their own human resources and thereby impose their own approach and vision. This presents a high risk of undermining local ownership and the overall coherence of the reform process. In reality, national capacity building through targeted technical assistance and long-term skills transfer offers a better solution to a shortage of local expertise.

To ensure inclusiveness and consistency, SSR programming must bring together and involve all partners in a common effort, to take advantage of the full range of expertise and experience available. Information sharing is a major issue in this area, and an effective means of curbing inappropriate ambitions or inclinations from any actors. This requires identifying clear priorities and exercising judgement, tact and diplomacy.

Because programming is a demanding technical and political process, it can be useful to build capacity among all the actors involved, including the experts from external partner institutions, at an early stage. Depending on the context, organising training on SSR programming or a methodology workshop at the start of the programming exercise may give all actors the opportunity to harmonise their methodologies and can create a positive momentum.

Conducting an SSR assessment

4.1. What is an SSR assessment?

As outlined in Box 1, the first stage in programming is to carry out an assessment of the situation. This involves making an initial assessment of threats to and the security needs of the people and the state, as well as the institutional capacity to respond to them. Based on information gathering, the assessment sets out a detailed evaluation of gaps, problems and malfunctions within the security sector, formulates recommendations aimed at matching security expectations with institutional capacity for response, and helps to identify initial activities needed to launch SSR as a whole.

Among other things, the assessment must determine:

- the security and justice needs of the people;
- the different social groups to be included as stakeholders (men, women, girls, boys, social classes, regions, ethnic and religious groups, etc.);
- the capacity of security institutions to respond to identified needs;
- existing initiatives and programmes, including ongoing local responses to identified challenges, projects supported by national and international actors, and how well these match the needs identified;
- the adequacy of the resources available in relation to the needs identified.

This stage culminates in an assessment report, which describes the initial situation and identifies appropriate entry points. It includes all the preparatory stages for producing an actual SSR programme. In the context of a targeted reform, the initial assessment usually focuses on a specific security institution or particular area of intervention, such as the police, border management, the public prosecution service, civil defence, etc.

4.2. How is an assessment conducted?

The assessment phase can be divided into several stages: preparation, information gathering, analysis, report writing and, finally, communicating the results.

4.2.1. Preparing for an assessment

To be productive, the assessment phase must be meticulous. This involves the following:

- **Mobilising all actors concerned at a political and diplomatic level** (national actors and international partners), explaining the justification and working methods of the assessment. It can be useful, at this stage, to secure the support of a multilateral partner such as the UN or one of its agencies or programmes, the AU or ECOWAS.
- **Establishing a team of multidisciplinary experts with responsibility for leading the assessment (see Box 5).** This team of experts is generally supervised at a technical level by a select committee made up of senior national executives and specialists from key partner institutions. The committee's supervisory role consists of validating the methodology and quality of work, at each stage, of the team of experts responsible for carrying out the assessment.
- **Providing the financial resources** needed to carry out and validate the assessment.
- **Carrying out a preparatory review of documentation,** to identify the type of information to be gathered and the main actors targeted, and to develop the assessment methodology (see Box 5).

All information sources that are not available when the methodology is being developed will be sought when the actual data collection begins. In general, the methodology should include:

- **plans for producing interview guides and questionnaires;**
- **planning contact visits with key actors,** including those responsible for management and oversight of security institutions;
- **organising logistical aspects related to the deployment of experts and the collection of information in the field.**

Box 5: Establishing a team of experts responsible for conducting the assessment

The national SSR steering and coordination mechanism may commission a team of multidisciplinary experts with the necessary technical expertise to carry out the initial SSR assessment. In such cases, it may be useful to take the following steps:

1. Produce terms of reference, spelling out the objectives and expected outcomes of the assessment and the skills required to achieve them.
2. Recruit national and international experts to make up the multidisciplinary team.
3. If technical expertise is available nationally and there is an appropriate level of trust, priority should be given to recruiting national experts, since this helps build their capacity through practice and strengthens the long-term viability of the technical process.

Sometimes the SSR assessment (as well as the programming) may also benefit from the support of a team of foreign SSR experts, in order to avoid suspicion and guarantee a degree of neutrality. Should such international support be needed, it is recommended first to consider impartial West African experts, who are familiar with the realities of the region, before looking for outside expertise. This also strengthens regional ownership, as the logical extension of the principles of local and national ownership to the ECOWAS level.

Box 6: Sources of information for the preparatory review of documentation

A preliminary review of documentation may be useful when preparing the assessment, as a way of grasping the general context and developing the most appropriate methodology for information gathering. Various information sources can be used for this purpose:

- **documents from the legal framework**, such as laws and regulations, treaties, national policies and strategies on defence, security, justice, human rights, etc.;
- **the corpus of ethical norms and standards that govern the defence and security institutions**, such as codes of conduct, anti-corruption policies, policies to address abuse of power, harassment and sexual harassment, gender equality policies, etc.;
- **professional training curricula** for the defence and security forces;
- **documentation on previous or existing projects and programmes**, including project documents, work plans, reports of other preliminary, mid-term or final programme evaluations, and reports of seminars or workshops;
- **media and civil society analyses**, particularly documentary films, audio recordings, press articles, studies, reports and results of surveys carried out by CSOs or research centres, etc.

Depending on the context, these elements may be available in written or audio-visual format. In addition to using public archives and those held by key actors, it can be useful to seek access to private archives to view items such as rare documents kept personally by retired security sector personnel.

4.2.2. Gathering and processing information

Once the preparatory steps have been completed, the multidisciplinary team of experts is in a position to determine the most suitable methodology for gathering the information that will be used to produce an initial assessment of SSR needs.

With this aim in mind, it is important to:

- identify first and foremost the type of information sought and the actors to be consulted;
- contact the relevant actors and draw up a plan for meeting them in person;
- design information-gathering tools that are appropriate for the target actors and the information required (see Box 7); and finally
- roll out the information-gathering plan on the ground.

To gather information, the team of experts will need to travel to different locations and visit the premises of various institutions, such as police headquarters, detention centres, archives and documentation centres, etc. It is important to ensure a balanced geographical (regions, provinces, towns, administrative districts and villages) and institutional representation in light of the context.

Box 7: Examples of information-gathering tools

Interview guides: Interview guides can be produced to steer one-to-one conversations or small group discussions, based on the specific characteristics of each person or target group. The guides should not be handed out to the people being interviewed, but rather used as a checklist for the information-gathering team to ensure that all relevant questions are addressed.

Questionnaires: Questionnaires can be produced and distributed to groups of people representing stakeholders in the SSR process. These groups are generally identified either on the basis of particular skills or by using a sampling principle.

Note: Where necessary, the distribution and collection of questionnaires should be organised in a way that preserves the anonymity of the respondents. The use of online questionnaires must take access to computer facilities and the internet into account. When considering written methods of information gathering, the expert team should be mindful of the level of literacy of the respondents.

The following are among the most common methods used to gather information:

- **Field surveys**

Once in the field, members of the team can carry out surveys on a particular subject or aimed at a particular target group. Despite the logistical constraints that it may entail, this method can help ensure a balanced geographical and social distribution of responses, particularly by getting outside of capital cities.

- **Focus groups**

Facilitating discussions in small groups helps to identify shared concerns. This method is most successful if all participants feel free to express their opinions in the presence of other members of the group. In an institutional context, it is therefore recommended to avoid significant gaps in levels of seniority. Focus groups can be organised at a community level as well as in institutions and organisations. In some cases a climate of trust can be created by organising groups that bring together people of the same gender, generation, geographical region or political tendency.

- **Interviews with key contacts**

Contacts may be identified among people who will have useful information for the programming exercise. They may be personnel from defence, security and justice institutions (at various levels of seniority), staff from external oversight institutions (such as the national ombuds institution, human rights commission, current or former parliamentarians, etc.), members of civil society, or community and opinion leaders (traditional chiefs, denominational authorities, trade union representatives, local elected representatives, etc.). In some cases an interpreter may be required to assist with the interviews. Interpreters should be prepared in advance by explaining the context of the interview, the subjects to be addressed and any sensitivities to be taken into consideration.

Throughout the gathering of information in the field, the team of experts should observe the dynamics, attitudes and behaviour of actors in the security and justice system and, more generally, of the people they meet in various contexts. Important contextual elements may come out anywhere, including in the street, and inside and around the vicinity of security, defence, justice and external oversight institutions.

Once the requisite data have been gathered, they are processed by the assessment team. This involves gathering together the data collated in the field and analysing them to produce observations that can then be organised in a logical manner. Processing the data requires knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, which should be included in the required skills when producing the terms of reference for the multidisciplinary team of experts.

Box 8: Gender considerations for information gathering

Women, men, girls and boys do not perceive threats and security in the same way. Data gathering must therefore take account of the differences in perception and priorities influenced by gender roles in order to produce a faithful reflection of society. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- ✓ by extending access to both women and men to participate as members of the data-gathering team and respondents;
- ✓ by including women's organisations and representatives of minority groups;
- ✓ by taking appropriate measures to enable and encourage participation by women and girls in group discussions;
- ✓ by documenting the source of the responses gathered so as to be able to break down the data by gender, age and institutional affiliation or by the geographical location of the respondents;
- ✓ by including an analysis of national, sectoral and institutional gender-related policies in the documentary review.

4.2.3. Drafting the assessment report

Once the information has been gathered and processed, the assessment phase is completed by drafting a report, which involves several stages.

An initial draft of the assessment report is produced once the data gathered have been analysed and organised. This draft report should include:

- an overview of the general context;
- information on security threats, challenges and needs from the point of view of the state and the people;
- a description of the structure of the security sector (including civilian and democratic oversight mechanisms);
- an analysis of the sector's capacity to respond to the needs identified, and an analysis of problem areas;
- a definition of needs for reform and the different options available for improving the effectiveness and accountability of the security system; and
- supporting documents, including a roadmap that formulates recommendations specific to each key actor to ensure the success of the whole programming process – the roadmap helps both to plan the next steps efficiently and to channel the expectations of all stakeholders.

Once the draft of the assessment report has been produced, the multidisciplinary team of experts initially submits it to the committee supervising its work and then sends it for comment to the consultation framework established for the programming exercise. The preliminary results should also be presented to the actors interviewed, to confirm the accuracy of the observations made. These various levels of consultation can be completed at discussion and feedback meetings. The aim is to complement and get an initial validation of assessment findings, encouraging broad national buy-in through an inclusive and participatory approach.

Taking account of relevant observations gathered during these discussions and those expressed by external partners involved in the reform process should help the multidisciplinary team to finalise the assessment report, which is then sent to commissioning authorities for approval before it can be published.

Once the assessment report has been approved by its commissioners, it may be helpful to organise either a national workshop or seminar on SSR or sector-specific meetings. These should be part of a general communication strategy and can serve to build national ownership of the content of the assessment report. This helps to develop a shared vision of SSR and supports a consensual definition of the reforms to be implemented and their order of priority.

Managing multilateral and bilateral partners often represents a major technical challenge during the assessment phase. A coordination framework needs to be established at this stage to channel input from all parties involved (see Sections 7.4–7.6).

Designing the programme

5.1. What is the programme design phase?

The programme design phase is devoted to the actual production of the SSR programme document. Among other things, it includes first establishing a design framework and then developing the content for the programme document and a corresponding budget, ensuring adequate consideration is given to both sector-specific reforms and cross-cutting issues.

The design of the programme should be based on the results of the security sector assessment (contained in the assessment report) and other reference documents, such as:

- national policy framework documents, including the government's general political programme, PRSPs, national strategies for achieving the MDGs, etc.;
- general guidelines and reports on the national vision of security and/or SSR, reports of national seminars on justice, defence, security and/or SSR, etc.;
- sector-specific policy documents (defence, security, justice etc.) – where such documents do not exist or are obsolete or inappropriate, they should be produced or revised prior to embarking on reform, even if the reform is limited, to ensure an appropriate policy framework.

The aim of the design phase is to produce a document that sets out a comprehensive, coherent, strategic framework for clear actions in order to resolve the problems and malfunctions identified during the assessment. It is therefore a technical exercise requiring expertise that is sometimes difficult to mobilise at the national level. Nonetheless, it is essential to hand responsibility for formulating the SSR programme to an intersectoral, national technical body or team, supported if necessary by international experts, to guarantee the necessary national leadership and ownership.

5.2. How is the programme design framework structured?

Good practice recommends first of all establishing an organised working framework that will facilitate the design process. This involves two things: appointing a technical group responsible for designing the programme, and defining a clear process for the programme design.

As part of a clear division of responsibilities, the task of developing the programme content may be entrusted to a technical group made up of representatives of national stakeholders. To put in place an inclusive framework for programme design, representatives of the different stakeholders who will play an active role in producing the programme document should be identified.

Once the technical programme design group has been set up, it is advisable to organise it into thematic subgroups, to ensure adequate consideration of all important aspects. Typically, these subgroups might focus on defence, security, intelligence, justice, customs, parliamentary oversight, gender, etc. Box 9 outlines Guinea's experience with regard to organising the technical group responsible for designing the SSR programme.

Box 9: Organisation of the technical programme design group in Guinea

The responsibility for setting up the SSR programme in Guinea was assigned to five sector-specific working groups, plus a group responsible for ensuring consistency between the proposals formulated by the five sector-specific groups once they had completed their work.

This division of work enabled an inclusive approach to be taken by the executive branch of government, with each ministry appointing competent technical staff to take part in the various groups. As a result, each ministry was able to ensure that the programme responded effectively to its priorities. By encouraging the active participation of the main ministries concerned throughout the programme design process, this approach helped to strengthen local ownership of SSR and a sense of shared responsibility among stakeholders.

Nonetheless, it is important to be aware that the Guinean approach had its limitations, in so far as it was restricted to institutional actors and left little room for direct contributions from civil society, which is essential to an inclusive process.

It is essential to adopt a results-based approach when designing the programme, starting with identifying clear strategic objectives to be achieved through the reform. The technical group's working methodology should also set clear deadlines for finalising the programme document, and specify the division of roles and responsibilities. Finally, it is important to define mechanisms for coordination, monitoring progress and adjusting the design process, as well as procedures for evaluation and quality control for the products delivered. Establishing a structured working framework that includes all these elements creates an environment conducive to smooth and timely production of the programme document.

Since programme design is a demanding technical exercise, it may be necessary to organise specific training to build capacity among members of the technical group.

For the sake of efficiency, the work of the technical group responsible for formulating the programme should be clearly spelled out in dedicated terms of reference, which explicitly set out:

- the operational arrangements for the design exercise, stipulating that priority will be given to national actors, who should lead the process;
- the need to proceed on an inclusive, participatory basis, without overlooking civil society;
- technical requirements relating to content and operational consultation processes with partners;
- the establishment of a system for monitoring and sharing information with all actors on the progress of the programme design exercise; and
- the arrangements for validating the final programme document.

Validation of the programme document is generally a three-stage process: firstly, internal approval within the technical group responsible for programme design; secondly, a select committee made up of representatives of the main national actors and international partners examines and endorses the proposal from a technical and then a political point of view; and finally, the programme is submitted for broad national endorsement opened to all stakeholders and implementation partners involved in SSR.

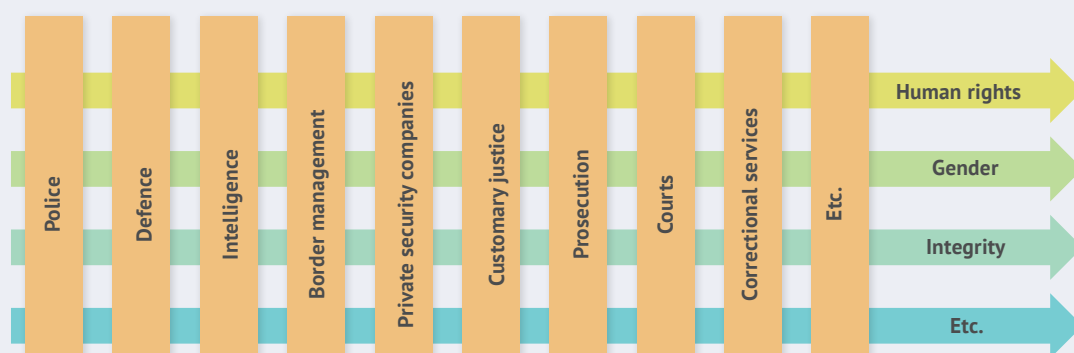
Although the design of the SSR programme is primarily the responsibility of national actors, they can if necessary call on the support of international experts recruited for this purpose. Using external technical expertise can help to improve the quality of work while maintaining the necessary independence regarding the specific approach of any funding partner of the programme design phase.

5.3. Ensuring a holistic and integrated programme

To ensure a holistic approach, SSR must be based on integrated programming that:

- takes both sectoral pillars and cross-cutting issues into account (see Box 10);
- sequences the interventions in a logical way and defines pilot projects that are adapted to the context;
- guarantees the overall coherence of the programme and its coordination with other national processes that affect governance and security;
- sets out the preparatory steps required to make the programme successful.

Box 10: Examples of sectoral pillars and cross-cutting issues



5.3.1. Sectoral pillars

In SSR terminology, the sector-specific components of the programme are often called “pillars”. This approach identifies key security actors by area of activity, distinguishing, for example, the armed forces, the police, gendarmerie, prosecution, correctional services, etc. Problems observed at the level of these actors are dealt with through sector-specific projects or plans focusing, for example, on defence reform, police reform, border management reform, etc. In addition to primary state security providers, programme pillars include non-state justice and security providers, such as traditional justice authorities and private security companies.

The programme document should set out a dedicated action plan for each sectoral pillar, split into specific projects and stating:

- the sector-specific objectives and results expected from the reform;
- the expected outcomes at a sectoral level;

- the outputs that will secure the expected outcomes;
- the activities that will lead to the identified outputs;
- the resources needed to implement the activities;
- tools and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, based on the expected results;
- implementation timeframes and reporting deadlines;
- identification of partners, a definition of their roles and the support expected.

Each sector-specific work plan must be validated by the national authorities in the form of state SSR implementation bodies and the concerned ministries. At this stage partners should also be consulted for a joint technical validation of the relevance and feasibility of the proposed work plan.

It is important to maintain a balance between the different sectoral components of the SSR programme. For example, an excessive focus on defence, to the detriment of the needs expressed by other sectors, risks causing counterproductive imbalances and generating frustration that will be difficult to address (see Box 11).

Box 11: Taking account of the imbalance between different elements of the security sector

In some countries the armed forces are more influential than the security forces, which means that the latter struggle to assert their views in discussions on SSR programming. Similarly, discussions may be tense between the defence and security forces and civilian authorities, or between the latter and civil society actors. It is therefore important to establish the conditions for equal and peaceful dialogue between the various actors.

This imbalance between actors is a significant challenge for programming, and makes it complicated to prioritise the different activities of the SSR programme. Sometimes there can be similar problems within a single sector or institution because of internal competition, for example between two departments, services or forces. Prioritizing needs is a delicate process, which should first be addressed by sector, by year and between different sectors for each year. Above all, interventions should be sequenced based on a logical order of activities, ensuring that planning is coherent overall.

5.3.2. Cross-cutting issues

In addition to the sectoral pillars, there are cross-cutting issues in SSR that affect all actors in the security sector. These include questions relating to good financial governance of defence and security institutions, respect for and protection of human rights, gender, democratic and civilian oversight of the defence and security forces, etc. Systematic consideration of cross-cutting issues such as these is important at every level of designing and implementing sector-specific projects and action plans.

However, cross-cutting issues should also be addressed by specific projects. For example, the national SSR programme may set up a specific project for integrating a gender perspective in security sector governance. A project of this kind would target all institutions involved in SSR and allow additional attention to be paid to the critical question of gender. It is important to note that implementing projects on cross-cutting themes in no way removes the need to ensure that they are systematically taken into account in sector-specific projects; rather, the two approaches are complementary.

5.3.3. Guaranteeing programme consistency

Given the adoption of a holistic approach, the national SSR programme may have a complex structure, including several sector-specific and cross-cutting projects. It is important to ensure the overall coherence of the programme across its various sector-specific and cross-cutting components. As such, it is often best to sequence interventions, taking into account the interactions between various projects or action plans.

Given the complexity of the national context, it is also essential to ensure that the SSR programme is coherent with other national processes being implemented at the same time, such as DDR, transitional justice, control of small arms and light weapons, combating anti-personnel mines, electoral processes, etc.

5.3.4. Planning preparatory actions and priority projects

Before starting to implement the sector-specific components and cross-cutting projects which have been identified, there is generally a need for a series of preparatory actions designed to create an environment that will support successful implementation of the programme. Although these preliminary actions are often overlooked during programming, they are prerequisites that should ideally be included in the programme document.

Typically, they may include:

- a revision of the legislative and regulatory framework to align it with international standards and commitments;
- raising awareness of key actors about the planned reforms and the democratic standards underpinning them;
- strengthening the basic functions of the main ministries concerned, to allow them to play a full role in implementing the reform programme (e.g. making sure line management structures and internal control mechanisms are operational);
- capacity building for other actors – both national and international – with a view to programme implementation.

In addition to preparatory actions, the programme document should identify operational entry points to make it easier to get the programme underway. These may include pilot projects aimed at producing swift results and fine-tuning the programmatic approach.

Prompt implementation of pilot projects provides an opportunity to kick off the reform process through concrete actions and to address swiftly the most urgent security concerns of citizens. Rapidly visible results of such projects, however limited, stimulate the process and strengthen its credibility. They also provide an opportunity to learn from this first experience so that any necessary adjustments to the SSR programme can be made as quickly as possible. The programme document should therefore include flexibility mechanisms that enable ongoing adjustments to be made in the wake of priority projects. After the initial phase, these flexibility mechanisms will allow the programme to be adapted to changing situations and requirements, for instance through work plan revisions.

From a technical point of view, it is recommended to create a planning matrix for the immediate implementation of the priority projects, with a budget, funding plan, timelines and evaluation mechanisms specific to these initial projects.

5.4. Including the necessary programme management tools

The technical group responsible for designing the programme ensures that the final programme document includes the following tools:

- A presentation of the context and justification for the reform, including the country's general and security situation, the situation of the defence and security forces and identification of the problems to be addressed. This information comes primarily from the assessment report.
- Identification of the strategic prerequisites for implementing the programme, such as entering into a peace agreement, finalising certain phases of DDR or signing sector-specific decrees.
- A description of the desired impact of the programme, combined with a theory of change describing the sequence of actions and results required to achieve that strategic impact.

- Programme planning, i.e. identification of the various components (see Section 5.3) of the theory of change, their sequencing and order of priority and how they translate into operational work plans.
- A mapping of partners and a preliminary identification of areas of synergy, i.e. listing the actors who will be involved in implementing the programme, and identifying their comparative advantages and how to optimise cooperation among them. It is important to clarify coordination mechanisms as well as strategic options for implementation with the ministries concerned on the one hand, and international partners on the other.
- An assessment of the cost of the programme, based on an estimated budget, combined with a resource mobilisation strategy and a description of financial management mechanisms (see Section 6).
- A monitoring and evaluation system that includes indicators, points of comparison and predefined targets, through which progress towards the predefined objectives of each programme component can be monitored.
- A risk assessment and risk management plan (see Box 12).
- A communication strategy (see Section 5.5).

Coordinating the various actors is a major challenge and one of the most common difficulties in implementing SSR programmes. It is important to specify the different responsibilities of national actors (contributions, mandates and coordination) as well as the role of partners at the programme design stage, as actions need to be coordinated among international actors on the one hand and with the national authorities on the other.

Box 12: Planning risk management

Risk management is “all the activities involved in identifying the risks to which [an entity or operation] is exposed and then defining and implementing appropriate measures to eliminate or mitigate the consequences of the risk incurred”.⁶ Risks are defined as the “probability of the occurrence of a harmful event and the possibility of the existence of a more or less foreseeable threat that may influence the achievement of [predefined] objectives”.⁷

In the specific context of an SSR programme, “risk” means any event whose occurrence would have a negative impact on the progress of the programme and achieving its objectives, with a potential impact on costs, quality, deadlines or other aspects of the programme. As a result, risk management in the SSR context operates not only at the level of the programme itself but also at the level of its various components (sector-specific action plans, cross-cutting projects, etc.).

What does risk management planning involve? A possible approach to risk management is given below, although there are other options.

Step 1: Risk identification, analysis and ranking

- Identify the risks (internal and external) that could affect programme implementation and performance.
- Document the nature and main characteristics of the risks concerned.
- Evaluate the probability of risks occurring.
- Estimate the severity of the potential impact (direct and indirect consequences) on the programme.
- Rank risks based on both these elements, from the most probable with the most decisive impact to the least probable with the least decisive impact. A scoring system may help to clarify the ranking process.

Step 2: Risk anticipation and prevention

- Implement a risk monitoring mechanism: the nature, probability and gravity of risks may change over the course of the programme and should therefore be monitored on a regular basis.
- Define risk prevention strategies: what preventive measures should be implemented to avoid the identified risks from occurring (i.e. the actual occurrence of events with a negative impact)?
- Assess the cost and reliability of prevention methods.
- Determine whether it is better to avoid the risk (for example, by deciding not to proceed with the action subject to the risk) or accept it (and therefore prepare to address it).
- If the decision is to accept the risk, develop an appropriate response plan. The risk response plan documents the strategies agreed on for addressing each risk, provides details of planned risk management actions and defines responsibilities for implementing them.⁸ It is also important to identify and examine the negative consequences that could arise from the response to the risk: is there a risk of making the situation worse?

Step 3: Response to the occurrence of a risk

- Should a risk (i.e. a negative event) occur, implement the previously defined response plans. This might, for example, involve mitigation measures designed to lessen the impact of the negative event on the programme.
- Adjust the response plan as necessary to address unforeseen circumstances.
- Assess the consequences of the responses implemented.

Step 4: Monitoring and control of residual risks

- Monitor residual risks and implement systems designed to prevent their resurgence and/or reduce their long-term impacts on the programme: this involves adopting a sustainable response to the risk.
- Identify any new risks and update risk prevention and management mechanisms.

Step 5: Documenting and building on risk management

- Document risk management using relevant monitoring tools.
- Archive supporting documents used in risk management.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the risk management process throughout the project or programme.
- Draw lessons from the experience, and document, archive and share them.

5.5. Developing a communication and awareness-raising strategy

1

See also Tool 1, which sets out how national authorities can develop an SSR communication strategy

It is essential to develop a multichannel, multisector communication strategy at the programme design stage. The strategy should identify the information requirements and how to meet them for every stage of the SSR process. This will involve identifying and analysing the target audiences for both internal and external communication, and their information needs. It implies making rigorous decisions about the messages to be conveyed and the communication tools to be used, ensuring they are appropriate to each case.

5.5.1. Why develop a communication strategy?

There are several reasons for developing a communication strategy to support the SSR programme, including the following:

- Informing the population and all partners about the development of the SSR process, its different stages and its ongoing activities.
- Filling in gaps in knowledge, including among international actors, relating to the fundamental principles of SSR, the importance of the reform and the challenges associated with implementing it.
- Developing a common view of the reforms to be implemented, namely one that is shared by the various stakeholders (including the population).
- Placing national ownership at the heart of the SSR system by raising awareness among the various national actors and external partners about the importance of leadership at the national level and the importance of prioritising local solutions.
- Raising interest among partners and mobilising them, particularly those who seem reticent or who lack confidence in the process due to insufficient information.
- Clarifying the place and role of each actor or partner in the SSR process: the coordination role of the national coordination body, the role played by all national stakeholders as active participants, and the backing and support role played by external partners. Clear communication on the guiding principles of SSR aimed at external partners helps to reduce the risk of unilateral initiatives that can undermine national leadership and local ownership of the reform process.

Effective management of public relations encourages all stakeholders to feel fully involved. It also strengthens the credibility of the process in the eyes of the population and the various stakeholders, and encourages the mobilisation of partnerships which respect the need for national SSR leadership.

Box 13: Strengthening the relationship between army and nation through communication: The case of Togo

The national SSR programme launched in Togo in 2007 placed a great importance on communication.

A mixed group, consisting of experts from the different parts of the defence and security forces, representatives of civil society and members of the National Assembly, worked together to produce communication materials and activities, including television and radio programmes, conferences, workshops, documentary films, wall posters, leaflets, etc. An awareness-raising campaign was dedicated to promoting trust between the armed forces and the civilian population, on the theme of “Civilians and the military, building the nation together”. The media visibility of this plan contributed to the start of a thawing of the relationship between the defence and security forces and the civilian population, which was particularly tense at the time in a context of post-electoral upheaval.

The Togolese authorities drew on what they had learned from this encouraging experience to pursue their communication efforts. Open days were organised with the defence forces in 2011, under the banner of “Defence and security forces together for peace”, which contributed to efforts to re-establish the relationship between the armed forces and citizens. The chief of staff at the time stated that the three-day initiative represented “an opportunity for the population, in all its diversity, to get to the heart of the system and see how the Togolese armed forces are organised, the difficulties they face, their expectations and the sense of hope that can be nurtured” in them. The development of an official, regularly updated website about the Togolese armed forces is also part of more open, accessible communication at an institutional level.

Sources: UNREC, *Report on Security Sector Reform Activities in Togo*⁹ and the official website for the Togolese armed forces.¹⁰

5.5.2. How should appropriate messages be defined?

In addition to the general messages communicated to all stakeholders, everyone involved in SSR should be targeted with appropriate messages based on their importance or specific characteristics. Nonetheless, targets can be grouped into coherent sets of actors who share the same interests or objectives and are likely to be receptive to the same types of messages and communication tools. Mapping the key programming actors usually helps to pinpoint common interest and identify homogeneous target groups.

The messages to be communicated depend on both the communication need and the target:

- **Communication needs:** What needs to be said? What impact should it have on the recipient of the information? Basic communication needs relate to core information, such as the principles of SSR, the programme content, actors involved and their roles, coordination mechanisms, the information system, etc.
- **Target audiences:** Who are they? What are their expectations, fears and intentions? How do they process the information they receive? What do they already know or not know? What would they like to know about SSR? What do they need to know? Etc.

Communication is not only about conveying information; it is also an important lever for action. Indeed, it is possible to shape the messages to be communicated so as to prompt an action, reaction or decision not to act by the people who receive the information.

Given the variety of communication methods and tools available, the choice should be guided by the communication context, the nature of the message to be communicated, the audience being targeted and the changes in behaviour expected.

5.5.3. How should appropriate communication methods be identified?

The communication strategy needs to incorporate various communication techniques and approaches depending on the targets identified. A variety of methods can be used for both internal and external communication.

Internal communication

In the context of SSR programming, internal communication targets the actors, bodies and institutions directly involved in implementing the programme. It aims to create the conditions for an effective but controlled flow of information between these actors.

Typically, internal communication methods used in SSR programmes include:

- **information-sharing meetings**, such as periodic consultation meetings or bilateral working and other meetings aimed at informing the main stakeholders about the progress of activities;
- **recreational and team-building activities**, such as informal meetings or social events (dinners, outings, etc.), aimed at encouraging informal discussions and establishing a climate of cooperation, trust, mutual respect and socialisation between the various actors;
- **awareness-raising among key stakeholders** (ministers, chiefs of staff, ministerial chiefs of staff, high-level institutional leaders, directors of associations, etc.) about the fundamental principles of SSR, procedures and practical working methods in the context of the national SSR programme, the role of their institution and the concrete steps and actions they need to take in order to support the roll-out of the programming process or implementation of the reform.

External communication

The aim of external communication is to ensure wide-ranging dissemination of the general objectives and implementation strategy of SSR, to raise awareness of the reform programme and to make it accessible to actors who are not directly involved in its design and implementation.

External communication also helps to ensure the visibility of the national SSR programme by distributing information materials (factsheets, leaflets, brochures, etc.) and by creating a visual identity using elements such as logos, headed paper, colours, signs and emblems associated with SSR.

External communication, which targets an audience that goes beyond the institutional circles, can be done using both mass methods and targeted approaches.

- **Mass communication** means the use of methods for broad dissemination to transmit information or convey messages to a wide audience – for example, communities all over the country or in one or more target regions or, even more specifically, men, women, girls or boys within these same communities. Communication of this kind uses a range of tools (see Box 14) and helps keep the general public informed about changes in the SSR process, to encourage broad national support.
- **Targeted external communication** consists of sending personalised messages to policymakers, institutional managers, opinion leaders or other key figures identified. This type of communication uses a range of methods (letters, individual conversations, etc.) and can take place in both formal and informal settings.

Box 14: Examples of mass-communication tools

Numerous tools can be used for mass communication, including multimedia tools such as websites dedicated to the SSR process as a whole or to certain sector-specific components in particular (defence reform, police reform, etc.). Pages about SSR can also be hosted on the website of institutional stakeholders (such as the external partners' coordination body). Another option is producing and broadcasting audio-visual materials such as documentary films dealing with the programme's context, its vision and the stages in which it will be implemented.

Media presence is another important channel for mass communication. A robust media policy should be designed for this purpose. Relevant activities include press conferences marking the main stages in the reform, regular press updates outlining the progress of the process, putting out press releases related to events or issues of importance, participation by representatives of the main stakeholders in interviews to help explain the process, and broadcasting radio and/or television announcements or programmes related to SSR, including interactive programmes.

Finally, awareness-raising and information campaigns are also important mass-communication tools. In the West African context, these campaigns generally include conferences, debates, open days and information meetings at different levels, including community meetings, workshops and seminars, awareness caravans, etc.

5.5.4. Who is responsible for communication?

Communication about the SSR process is essentially institutional. The primary responsibility for it lies with the national SSR coordination mechanism, alongside other directly involved institutions. This relative centralisation helps to maintain the consistency of the information published, optimise management of any rumours and thereby strengthen the credibility of the process. It helps to guarantee that the actors involved in SSR send out a coherent message, which reduces the risks of confusion.

Members of the national coordination mechanism are responsible for most of the communication with partners, essential to the success of the programme. Communication activities include visits from official representatives of the public services, the diplomatic corps and other institutions; meetings and conversations with stakeholders; maintaining official correspondence and producing technical notes; producing photos and accounts of activities; organising official or informal events related to the process, etc.

In addition to staff working for the SSR coordination body and other institutions involved in the process, it may be useful to call upon communication professionals to support implementation of the public relations aspects of SSR. Specialists of this kind have the task of providing strategic and operational advice on public communication methods, for example through:

- support and advice on developing the communication strategy;
- support for developing operational tools such as media coverage plans or event programming;
- the production of awareness-raising and visibility tools and materials.

If a communication strategy is not available when the SSR programme design is launched, its development must be included in the priority activities to be implemented before the design process is complete. This is necessary in order to be able to include communication costs in the budget.

Programme budgeting and funding

SSR is a long and costly process, and requires realistic budget planning that is sustainable over the long term. Budgeting involves evaluating the cost of reform actions, securing their funding through various sources and organising the distribution of the resources mobilised in accordance with priorities. Budgeting also enables the state to determine the size of the security sector which it is really in a position to support in the long run. This encourages a realistic definition of needs and contributes to the long-term viability of the chosen solutions.

Tool 3 addresses financial management of the security sector by national authorities

3

6.1. What criteria should be applied to an SSR programme budget?

The cost of the programme must be affordable for the state and comply with defined national macroeconomic objectives. SSR costs should not jeopardise the ability of the state to address other national priorities, such as basic social needs of the population (water, sanitation, health, energy, education, etc.), implementation of the poverty reduction strategy, national reconciliation efforts or public sector reform.

To avoid producing an excessively high budget which could seem unrealistic, it is advisable to implement a series of technical filters aimed at reducing and controlling programme costs without compromising effectiveness. Good practice in this area recommends the following:

- Focusing programming on the problems identified: each intervention should contribute to correcting at least one clearly recognised malfunction.
- Focusing on desired impacts and effects, linked directly to the problems observed, rather than on activities.
- Limiting the identification of needs to what is strictly necessary: this means analysing each activity and eliminating any cost that is not essential to achieving the desired result. Only relevant activities that make a direct contribution to the expected result should be retained.
- Systematically prioritising long-term funding solutions, since these are more effective and viable in the long run.

- Supporting security institutions in formulating their needs for the programme. In the absence of clear guidelines, security institutions sometimes have a tendency to produce lists of grievances relating to equipment, materials, vehicles and infrastructure intended to improve their living and working conditions, instead of looking at the institutional changes needed to enhance their effectiveness and capacity to respond to democratic oversight over the long term (see Section 2.5).

6.2. Incorporating SSR programming in the state's annual or long-term budget

Funding SSR programmes through the national budget is one of the best indicators of two essential factors for success: political will and national commitment.

This approach to funding illustrates the responsibility of the state in respect of sovereign expenditure on defence and security, and thereby asserts national leadership and facilitates the mobilisation of external resources. In low-income countries, although the level of national resources allocated to reform is certainly important, the commitment and political support expressed by the allocation itself are equally decisive.

**See Tool 1 on
political leadership
of SSR processes**

1

Several mechanisms help to ensure national funding for SSR. Incorporating programme costs in the state budget is an essential starting point, and has methodological implications on at least two levels during the programming exercise.

On the one hand, when establishing the technical programme design group (see Section 5.2) it is important to involve certain actors with an essential role in budgeting from the outset. In particular, they include the following.

- Ministries responsible for drafting the state budget, such as the ministries of economy, finance, budget and planning. This provides an opportunity to integrate SSR programming in the national budget at a very early stage, and to produce the technical tools required for this integration as the programme develops.
- Budget and finance units within security departments and institutions. This ensures that budget managers have a good understanding of reform objectives and activities, and are then in a position to identify areas of redundancy and guarantee that programming is realistic in terms of managing the accounts (timescales, procedures, etc.).
- Parliamentary committees for budget and finance, as well as parliamentary committees for defence and security. The active involvement of representatives of these committees throughout the programme design process also makes it easier to include programme costs in the budgeting process, which is generally approved by the adoption of the state budget by parliament.

Incorporating SSR costs into the state budget supports the sustainability of the process and demonstrates national leadership. It also facilitates the strategic allocation of resources based on priorities, and the systematic inclusion of external funding.

On the other hand, with regard to the working methodology of the technical group responsible for designing the programme, it is important to:

- organise the content of the SSR programme according to priority and split it into annual sections, which facilitates incorporation of the programme costs into the annual budget of the state;
- define a strategy for incorporating the first SSR programme activities into the budget for the current year (for example through an amended Finance Act or other budget adjustment mechanism) and prepare for the programme's inclusion in the budget for the following year in advance;
- provide for all expected spending on materials, equipment and infrastructure to be included in the state's investment budget, to guarantee better transparency and planning of defence and security spending;
- sequence the programme over several annual periods and ensure it is included in the state's long-term financial planning framework (such as a three- or five-year plan, long-term planning legislation, etc.).

6.3. Mobilising additional resources from development partners

Depending on the state's financial capacity, national authorities may call on financial support from external partners to cover some of the costs of SSR. Organising a round-table conference with partners can enthuse potential partners, especially if quick-impact projects prove successful. Nonetheless, mobilising financial partners remains a delicate business in both technical and political terms, and requires the development of tailored strategies for each potential partner, taking into consideration their specific priorities and intervention principles.

It can be useful, for example, to produce dedicated documentation based on the national SSR programme for each potential partner, emphasising points of convergence with their specific areas of interest. Without distorting the content of the agenda or betraying national priorities, this approach consists of highlighting the target partner's preferred areas of support (such as gender mainstreaming, combating corruption, child protection, support for decentralisation and local governance, promoting and protecting human rights, etc.) to stir its interest. This way of producing tailored documents to present the SSR programme, through what could be described as a "marketing" approach, can prove particularly effective in raising the interest of partners that are not represented in the country.

Even if attention is focused on a particular aspect of the reform, it is important to present the programme as a whole and emphasise its overall coherence in terms of coordination and expected outcome. This helps to reassure partners about the robustness and sustainability of the general implementation framework.

An effective strategy for partnership and resource mobilisation requires effective communication. The communication strategy should therefore include a specific section on partner relations, aiming to establish the credibility of the programme in the eyes of partners, with a particular emphasis on:

- **the internal coherence of the programme and the clearness of its intervention logic**, expressed through the definition of clear objectives, the development of a realistic strategy for achieving them and the inclusion of foreseeable risks;
- **local ownership of the programme**, highlighted both by the creation of an inclusive national framework for implementing SSR involving civil society and by funding for the programme allocated from the national budget;
- **the reliability of management mechanisms**, demonstrated by the establishment of an inclusive coordination framework, an effective monitoring and evaluation system and transparency mechanisms that support integrity in resource management;

- **the contribution of the SSR programme to broader governance objectives**, such as peacebuilding, strengthening social cohesion, reinforcing the rule of law and democratic governance – at a regional level, it can also be useful to emphasise the positive impacts of the national SSR programme on the transnational security environment.

Effective coordination of the external partners (UN,AU,ECOWAS) which is successful in providing technical support, capacity building and supporting national leadership can facilitate the swift mobilisation of external resources to support SSR programming (see Section 9.1.3).

Beyond securing one-off resources, the aim of mobilising external support should be to establish long-term partnerships in support of SSR. Successful reform requires the mobilisation of a variety of resources (not only financial, but also human, technical and political) as well as several years of sustained effort. The stability of external partnerships is therefore a significant factor in sustainability of the process.

6.4. Matching external contributions to national funding

As with national resources allocated to SSR, funding provided by development partners must be included in an integrated programming approach and allocated within the state budget.

Establishing convergence mechanisms between national investments and external contributions helps to guarantee budget consistency and the rational use of all resources allocated to SSR. There are matching mechanisms for this purpose, which can be used to link the use of external contributions to that of national resources. The most frequently used mechanisms are joint project funding and counterpart financing.

Joint project funding consists of the state contributing to funding every project supported by an external partner. The proportion (percentage) of the cost that the state intends to cover is determined for each project. In joint funding arrangements the national authorities play the role of a donor on the same basis as the external partner, which strengthens national leadership.

In technical terms, joint project funding entails the state and the external partner agreeing on a shared management system, from setting up the project to evaluating costs, determining what expertise is required, recruiting consultants, establishing procurement procedures, designing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation framework, etc. Implementing a system of this kind can be difficult in a fragile state with particularly limited resources.

Counterpart financing, on the other hand, involves planning a provisional joint fund in the national budget, aimed at covering the state's share of funding for all SSR activities and components. This provides the twofold benefit of the immediate availability of funds and relative flexibility as to their use. It can be a convenient solution when reciprocal charges are not yet agreed with each partner, or the share of the state has not been calculated in detail.

In this mechanism, however, there is a risk of a lack of transparency or efficiency in the use of funds. To limit this risk, it is recommended to tie counterpart financing with management rules designed to foster transparency, such as eligibility criteria for the activities to be funded and the implementation partners, an upper limit on funds available for grants, disbursement and control mechanisms, etc. Good practice dictates that the mechanism used for disbursing funds should provide for producing a funding agreement with the external partner, and for the submission of periodic implementation reports to justify counterpart financing transactions.

Regardless of the matching mechanism used, it is important to **include national budget charges** when estimating the total cost of the SSR programme. Indeed, projects developed by external partners generate costs that are often considered, wrongly, as obligations imposed on the national party to enable the external partner to implement activities as part of the project it is funding. Such costs may be unduly

trivialised but are essentially technical and logistical counterparts (also called “contributions in kind”), such as human resources from public authorities, or public premises, equipment and infrastructure made available to the project.

When the budgeting of SSR projects is left to the sole care of technical and financial partners, they generally fail to include project-generated costs that are borne by national public resources. To ensure the budget is comprehensive and integrated, it is critical that these “invisible costs” are explicitly included in the SSR programme.

Box 15: Important points about national funding for the SSR programme

- ✓ Incorporate SSR costs in the state budget.
- ✓ Take account of the state's financial capacity in allocating national resources to the SSR programme.
- ✓ Mobilise external funding to complement national resources.
- ✓ Agree the division of costs and mutual accountability mechanisms with financial partners.
- ✓ Implement joint funding mechanisms that combine the use of external funds and a national contribution.
- ✓ Attach financial transparency procedures to joint funding mechanisms.
- ✓ Guarantee probity in the use of both national and external funds by monitoring the accounts and conducting internal and independent audits.
- ✓ Include the “invisible costs” generated by projects funded by international partners in the overall estimate of SSR budget requirements.

Mobilising and coordinating actors for programme implementation

Once the programme has been developed and its funding is secured through appropriate mechanisms, the actual implementation phase begins; this involves mobilising and coordinating all the actors concerned.

7.1. Mobilising security institutions and their line ministries

Security institutions and the ministries responsible for them are the main parties affected by reform of the sector. Indeed, for the reform to produce the expected results, there need to be changes in attitudes, behaviours and practices within these institutions. It is therefore essential for them to be actively involved in implementing the reform programme.

In the first place, this means clearly identifying who these actors are, defining their roles and responsibilities in the context of reform, and preparing them for the process.

Preparing defence and security institutions for reform often requires an internal reorganisation and raising awareness of what SSR is among the women and men who run them. The need to raise awareness is not limited to their senior ranks: it must reach all levels of responsibility within the defence and security forces and their line ministries – from troops on the ground to leaders.

A campaign to raise awareness among staff within the institutions should not only tackle the objectives, content and methods of reform but also the challenges it creates for the country's peace, security, stability and development. It is important that the awareness-raising programme clearly presents, at all levels, the expected impact of the SSR process on the future of the defence and security forces, and emphasises new opportunities in terms of career prospects, retraining or socio-economic reintegration in the event of a reconfiguration of the national forces.

When preparing institutional actors for the reform, technical deficiencies that may undermine the work of the public authorities and cause significant delays in planning and implementing SSR activities should also be taken into account. Reinforcing knowledge and skills that are useful for SSR through training activities as well as harmonising working tools and methodologies may help to overcome hurdles resulting from technical shortcomings.

7.2. Identifying implementation partners in civil society and building their capacities

CSOs are important implementation partners for SSR programmes and play a central role in rooting them at the heart of citizens' concerns. Although SSR falls under the responsibility of the state, it includes civilian aspects that are related to the areas of expertise and day-to-day activities of CSOs, including reporting misconduct by members of the defence and security forces, combating corruption and impunity, supporting local governance, civic education, overseeing government action, promoting transparency, providing assistance to vulnerable groups, etc.

CSOs are not only unelected representatives of the population; they sometimes also constitute pools of expertise and offer a diverse range of valuable technical skills. Thanks to their contact with the population, they are an important channel for messages and a powerful tool for interacting with local communities. Using CSOs as implementation partners offers an opportunity to involve non-institutional actors in SSR, take advantage of their specific expertise and, at the same time, benefit from the credibility they have built at the community level. Entrusting certain activities to competent actors in civil society also helps to lighten the workload of the public authorities.

“Many SSR programmes still tend to focus on reforming state institutions with little effort to systematically involve civil society, despite the fact that effective programmes require local participation and ownership to build confidence and ensure that programmes respond adequately to the needs of the population.”¹¹

Where the relationship between the defence and security forces and the population has deteriorated or even broken down entirely, CSOs can help re-establish dialogue and restore the confidence needed for successful SSR. This was confirmed in Guinea, among other places. Following the massacre of 28 September 2009, which involved the death of at least 156 demonstrators, 109 cases of rape and over 1,300 people being wounded,¹² CSOs in Guinea played a central role in gradually re-establishing the relationship between the civilian population and the military.

Given that involving CSOs is an essential element in implementing SSR, the main partners must be identified from the outset of the assessment and programme design phases, taking their respective forms of added value into account. The CSOs to be involved in implementing the programme, including those selected by external partners, should be chosen based on a transparent process and objective criteria, formulated so as to avoid any suspicion of favouritism.

In addition to CSOs, it may be useful to cooperate with other types of non-state actors, such as customary authorities and opinion leaders, who enjoy direct access and a degree of legitimacy among the population.

For further information see
Tool 6: Civil society involvement in security sector reform and governance

6

Box 16: Challenges related to the independence and neutrality of CSOs

Political instrumentalisation of CSOs, either by national actors or external partners, is a common but harmful practice which can discredit CSOs and undermine the legitimacy on which their participation in SSR processes is based.

If they develop an excessive level of financial dependence on a particular actor, CSOs can find their credibility undermined and their ability to take independent action called into question. These situations can complicate SSR implementation on the ground and accentuate operational challenges.

7.3. Creating a national coordination body for SSR

The national SSR management and coordination body has the primary responsibility to coordinate all national actors and international partners involved in SSR. To do so, it must have a specific mandate provided by a high-level official order or decree (see Section 2.2). This body plays a coordinating role at several levels by establishing an inclusive framework which breaks down into national and local levels and covers both general and specific areas (see Box 17).

At the national level, it is essential for the coordination mechanism to be designed in a sufficiently broad and inclusive manner to enable participation by both institutional and non-institutional actors, such as traditional authorities, trade unions and professional associations, women's organisations, youth organisations and other civil society entities. Women's participation is particularly important at all levels of the national coordination framework, from decentralised systems to central decision-making levels.

The aim is to ensure the overall coherence of the SSR programme and create synergies based on a comprehensive approach that takes account of all actors, both internal and external, at different levels of intervention. The effectiveness of national coordination therefore depends, among other things, on the capacity of the structure established to identify all actors involved in SSR, engage with them in constructive dialogue and define in detail their respective areas of intervention and the terms of their participation.

Box 17: National coordination framework

Levels of coordination	
Central political level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by a high-level decision-maker (president or prime minister). • Cross-cutting and interconnected, involving ministerial departments in SSR.
Intersectoral technical coordination level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure broad participation of defence and security forces, parliament, CSOs and other national elements.
Sectoral and technical level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector representation: police, defence, justice, customs, civil defence, etc. • Participation by other national actors such as CSOs must be guaranteed.
Decentralised system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build upon the country's political and administrative divisions, ensuring fair representation. • Ensure dissemination of information to and participation of regions, towns and villages throughout the country in the SSR process.

One of the main responsibilities of the national coordination body is to act as a central repository for information, disseminating it to various stakeholders and development partners. The national coordination structure is responsible, among other things, for presenting the results of the security sector assessment to all actors concerned, informing them about the national SSR system and work under way, and helping to make it easier to exchange information between the parties concerned.

Exchanges of this kind are an opportunity to recall the national priorities that should guide any intervention and emphasise the importance of an integrated approach. The aim is to avoid certain national actors or development partners, unilaterally or based on their own agenda, starting projects or programmes that are supposed to support SSR but which, in reality, fall outside the established coordination framework and risk undermining national leadership of the process.

Throughout the implementation of the national SSR programme, the national coordination body should collect data on the interventions of various actors, continuously evaluate the overall coherence of the actions taken and their alignment with national priorities, and make any necessary adjustments if problems are observed or simply to optimise the overall effectiveness of the programme.

7.4. Management of external partners by the national coordination mechanism

As part of its role in coordinating both national and international actors, the national coordination body ensures that all interventions, including those by external partners, are consistent with the priorities defined in the national SSR programme and are based on the national programme management mechanisms (see Box 18).

It is the responsibility of the national coordination body to be as well informed as possible of each partner's specific areas of interest in terms of national priorities, and the amounts partners are planning to allocate to supporting the reform process. It is important to formalise rules for support from external partners in order to maintain national control of all SSR initiatives. In many cases, long-established bilateral military or police cooperation partnerships with certain traditional partners will need to be revisited to ensure they are consistent with the SSR programme.

Use of a prior approval mechanism such as a memorandum of understanding provides a means of reaching a formal agreement on the areas of intervention of external partners that wish to be involved in the process. The advantage of a framework document of this kind is that it clearly sets out the terms, conditions and specific objectives of the collaboration agreed between an external partner and the host state, represented in this instance by the national coordination body.

Box 18: The necessity for national leadership

It is absolutely critical that government authorities assert national commitment and provide political leadership for the SSR process in general and programming in particular. Similarly, it is essential for national actors to take primary responsibility for the organisation, planning, management and coordination of the SSR programme, based on a national agenda and priorities. Without this, there is little chance of a successful SSR programme.

In the absence of strong national leadership, the reform process runs the risk of being biased by exogenous approaches, models and solutions imported by external partners with little understanding of specific national characteristics and/or driven by their own agendas. In some cases, partners focus their support on areas of interest that are specific to their foreign policy but which do not necessarily constitute a national priority for the country where they are taking action.

To avoid pitfalls of this kind and ensure coherence and sustainability, external partners must be coordinated in a way that ensures external interventions are scrupulously aligned with the national priorities defined by the host country. It is also essential that the coordination of partners systematically prioritises the transfer of knowledge and skills that will contribute to building local capacity over the long term.

Tool 1 addresses the importance of political will and national leadership in SSR

1

7.5. Coordination between external partners

As indicated above, support for the SSR programme from external partners must be coordinated by the national party, which therefore implements and takes primary responsibility for the reform process.

However, there needs to be a second level of coordination within the community of external partners, specifically put in place for this purpose, and made the responsibility of an actor with a certain degree of legitimacy, such as the UN, the AU or ECOWAS. A bilateral partner could also be called upon by the host state to play this role. As far as promoting regional solidarity and leadership are concerned, ECOWAS acted as a coordinator for external partners in Guinea-Bissau. In Côte d'Ivoire, the UN – through UNOCI¹³ – acted as the coordinator for international partners in the SSR reform process started in 2012.

In all cases, choosing the actor to be entrusted with responsibility for coordinating external partners is a highly strategic decision, since its political and diplomatic engagement will determine the success of the coordination system. Its role requires a high level of trust, from both the national party and other external partners. In the West African context, where the domestic political climate is often tense and characterised by suspicion, the credibility of the partner coordinator depends on both its effectiveness and its impartiality.

At a methodological level, it is important that the partner coordination framework is established on the basis of clear terms of reference, backed by the fundamental principles of international development aid as set out in the Paris Declaration (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and noted at the High Level Forum in Busan (2011). Support from partners must emphasise consistency between policies, responsibility and implementation by national actors and the use of government procedures for disbursements and accounting of the funds provided.

As the primary point of contact, the partner coordinator must be in a position to provide continuous support for the development of national capacity necessary for reform to be implemented under national leadership. Because of its status as the head of external partners, it may also be asked to produce a specific plan to develop technical capacity, not only among national actors but also among the partners it coordinates. A plan of this kind can help to identify gaps in skills related to planning and programme management, as well as to thematic areas specific to security sector governance.

According to the recommendations of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, the implementation of programmes supported by international partners must be based primarily on national management structures and mechanisms. If necessary, it is preferable to strengthen national management systems, in particular with the support of the partner coordinator, rather than replacing them with external systems.

Since internal coordination of partners is a demanding technical and political task requiring minute attention to detail, the partner coordinator should establish a dedicated team, made up of specialists placed under the responsibility of a primary technical coordinator (PTC/SSR). It is important to plan very early on – from the programme design phase onwards – to create the team that will be specifically responsible for internal coordination of partners and to allocate a budget to managing it, including costs related to human resources, operations and activities.

See also Tool
4: Effective
management of
external support
for SSR

4

Box 19: Examples of mechanisms for coordination between external partners

An effective framework for partner coordination is based on a wide range of elements, the most important of which are:

- regular consultation meetings at both technical and political levels, and producing and using their reports;
- a regularly updated map of partners, combined with an integrated table of their current and future interventions;
- a regularly updated list of contacts of national and international experts who can be mobilised quickly to support SSR;
- joint information management tools such as publications, joint websites and centralised archiving systems;
- joint planning, monitoring, review and evaluation mechanisms to ensure continuous monitoring of the coherence of support provided by external partners.

7.6. Challenges of coordinating external partners

Coordinating external partners poses a number of challenges, some solutions to which are outlined in Box 20. The main point is that the partner coordinator must take care to prevent the actors it is coordinating from implementing redundant or even competing projects. Duplicate projects reflect an irrational dispersal of support and entail high administrative costs for all actors concerned, as well as for the national party. In the long term, inconsistencies of this kind generate fatigue with the process.

As with development assistance, the various partners involved in SSR must cooperate to harmonise their support, optimise synergies, improve project effectiveness and efficiency, in particular by reducing administrative costs, and work with a long-term perspective. They are guided in this by the national coordination body and partner coordinator.

Box 20: Challenges related to coordinating external partners and possible solutions

Coordination between external partners		
Problem	Potential impact on the SSR process	Possible solutions
No coordination mechanism exists among external partners (no team or resources for coordination).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited strategic and operational coordination of partners. • Ineffective circulation of information between partners. • Limited impact of partners' actions because of dispersed or even contradictory activities (poor cost-effectiveness ratio). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establish a coordination support team, placed under the supervision of a PTC/SSR. ✓ Provide the resources needed for the team to implement coordination between external partners. ✓ Ensure the team produces technical tools for partner coordination.
A coordination mechanism exists between partners, but some actors do not participate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakening of the coordination mechanism. • Ineffective sharing of information. • Lack of information on actions by partners outside the coordination mechanism, and therefore inability to develop synergies. • Inability to incorporate partner funding in a holistic vision. • Inability to orient support towards SSR objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work with the national party to implement an awareness-raising strategy for all external partners on the importance of their participation in the partner coordination system.
Some partners continue to provide bilateral aid in the SSR field without going through the coordination schemes in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idem.¹⁴ • If this situation is prolonged it can lead to significant failures, particularly if the support provided outside the coordination mechanism is contrary to the objectives of SSR. <i>Example:</i> An army unit responsible for various forms of abuse benefits from capacity building and resources, although SSR recommends it should be dissolved and some of its members brought to justice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Idem. ✓ The partner coordinator should, with the national coordination mechanism, approach the country's highest authorities to explain the benefits to them of systematically redirecting all external support targeted at the security sector towards the SSR partner coordination mechanism, in order to guarantee improved consistency as part of a holistic approach.

Coordination of external partners by the national mechanism

Problem	Potential impact on the SSR process	Possible solutions
The national authorities support interventions outside the coordination mechanism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Idem
The national coordination system is weak or not operational.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of both national and international actors is ineffective. • The state has limited visibility of the interventions of various actors. • Redundant activities are a burden on public funds. • The SSR process lacks harmony, which has a significant negative impact on results. 	<p>The partner coordinator is well placed to provide technical and political support to ensure effective ownership and leadership by the national party. This means it can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ make a vigorous effort to raise awareness among the authorities of the need for effective operation of the national coordination system; ✓ build capacity among staff of the national coordination body; ✓ support the implementation of coordination tools aimed at the national coordination body.

Monitoring and evaluation of the programme

8.1. What is monitoring and evaluation?

Because it is designed to achieve specific results, the national SSR programme must be accompanied from the outset by a methodical and rigorous monitoring and evaluation system that makes it possible to examine progress towards the predefined objectives. As an integral part of the programme document, the monitoring and evaluation framework is developed when the programme is first designed (see Section 5.4).

Monitoring takes place on an ongoing basis, throughout the life of the programme; it aims to verify gradual progress towards the predefined objectives, and should make it possible to reveal shortcomings in the implementation of the programme so that they can be corrected as it proceeds.

Evaluation, on the other hand, is carried out periodically and at the end of the programme; it aims to determine, at key moments, whether the changes sought in society have been – or are being – realised. While it measures the results and impact of an SSR programme, evaluation also provides an opportunity to learn lessons from the experience and identify best practices.

The monitoring and periodic examination, notably midway through the programme, help to strengthen national oversight of the reform and hold the actors involved in its implementation, including external partners, responsible and accountable.

The technical services of the national SSR coordination body, in particular the programme management unit, are the main actor involved in monitoring on a day-to-day basis, although partners may be involved in certain specific activities, such as joint reviews, field visits, etc. Evaluation can be conducted either internally or by an independent organisation, i.e. by impartial specialists who stand outside the SSR scheme.

Monitoring and evaluation are complementary, and together contribute to controlling the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the programme's impact.

8.2. Developing a monitoring and evaluation system

The monitoring and evaluation system is derived from the programme's theory of change or logical framework, and verifies its operational implementation. This means developing a chain of results (see Box 21), which identifies the resources (human, material and financial) invested in each activity, and makes the link between:

- each activity and the output (goods and services provided) to which it contributes;
- each output and the outcome (changed caused in the medium term by the goods and services provided) in which it participates;
- each outcome and the broader impact it intends to generate in society over the long term.

It involves describing – on the basis of a series of cause-and-effect relationships – the intervention logic that leads from resources to activities and produces results at several different levels, from narrowest to broadest, namely outputs, outcomes and impacts. The same activity can contribute to several outputs, and a single output to several outcomes.

Box 21: The chain of results (simplified representation)



Developing the chain of results assumes that stakeholders in the SSR programme agree on the results and changes to be monitored and evaluated throughout its implementation.

In addition to the chain of results, developing a high-performance monitoring and evaluation system involves putting in place monitoring and evaluation tools:¹⁵

- Define indicators that can be used to verify progress towards the results expected from the reform. These indicators are agreed between the actors concerned at a sectoral and intersectoral level, and communicated to the partners supporting the reform process.
- Identify baseline data (or reference data) in relation to the selected indicators: this means establishing the starting point for each indicator in order to measure its subsequent development. The information contained in the SSR assessment generally makes it possible to establish a baseline for each indicator. If necessary, additional information can be collected for the same purpose.
- Define a timeline for implementing activities and monitoring indicators: it is important to decide in advance when programme activities will be implemented, which will determine the frequency of collection of data relating to the indicators.
- Organise the collection of monitoring data in advance: this means defining the methods used for data collection beforehand (studies, visits, surveys, report analyses, etc.); estimating costs and including them when budgeting for the SSR programme; and defining, at a very early stage, each actor's responsibilities in respect of collecting monitoring data.
- Complete data for indicators on an ongoing basis: this means collecting data according to the frequency agreed earlier. These data are included in the monitoring matrix and used to establish progress towards the desired objectives or, conversely, identify periods of slowdown or stagnation that need to be overcome.

- Analyse and process the data gathered in the monitoring matrix, and make the necessary adjustments on an ongoing basis as the programme is implemented.

8.3. Coordinating monitoring and evaluation

8.3.1. National coordination of monitoring and evaluation

The need to create a body with specific responsibility for project and programme monitoring and evaluation is often recognised at a late stage in a national SSR process. Yet the multiplicity of information sources, the often incomplete nature of data and the difficulty of gathering them and differentiating the needs of the various elements (army, security, justice, etc.) demonstrate the technical complexity of the task and make it necessary to create a dedicated body, ideally hosted by the institution responsible for coordinating the implementation of SSR.

The body should largely be made up of national technical staff, supported as necessary by specialists in monitoring and evaluation from international institutions. It is responsible for multiple tasks, such as:

- developing and implementing the overall monitoring and evaluation system;
- developing reporting procedures, which includes defining the types of report, identifying mandatory reports, developing a timetable for submitting reports combined with a system of reminders for producing them, designing frameworks and other tools for formal harmonisation, etc.;
- designing and documenting dashboards (see 8.4.) and other integrated monitoring and evaluation tools;
- executing and/or supervising technical tasks related to monitoring and evaluation, such as collecting, centralising and analysing data, producing periodic reports, conducting project reviews, etc.;
- quality control of monitoring and evaluation processes, and the outputs derived from them;
- formulating recommendations from monitoring and evaluation, and documenting lessons drawn from the experience.

The monitoring and evaluation coordination unit is also responsible for examining the periodic reports and various dashboards, summarising them and using them as the basis for an overall SSR dashboard.

8.3.2. Joint monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with external partners

Another important role of the monitoring and evaluation coordination unit is organising joint examinations and reviews, which are the best possible means of carrying out verifications and checks in complete transparency within the context of cooperation between national and international partners. By increasing the degree of convergence between actors involved in SSR, these exercises contribute to improving the effectiveness of the programme and projects, organising and increasing the complementarity of partners' actions and creating synergies. Above all, joint examinations and reviews help to forge a common vision and increase trust between the national party and external partners.

Joint reviews are participatory and have an educational goal. They are of prime importance since they support capacity building for the national party and joint identification of the lessons to draw from the experience. However, organising a joint review of all projects or the programme as a whole is technically complicated, financially costly and particularly challenging in terms of practical arrangements and the availability of experts from external partners. This is why it is recommended that joint review exercises be limited to specific projects or components, even if it means repeating them for a series of projects.

The joint review exercise is implemented under the technical supervision of a joint group, made up of experts from the government, civil society and external partners. Depending on the situation, the group

may be assisted by private service providers such as independent technicians (consultants) specialising in the relevant areas.

As a shared exercise, the joint review should be governed by terms of reference produced by the monitoring and evaluation coordination unit, which actively combines all the partners concerned. The terms of reference set out the agreed objectives and methodology, specifying the project(s) concerned, the tangible results expected, indicative timetables, the list of participants involved in the review, the distribution of responsibilities and the logistical arrangements. They also identify the documentation used as the basis for the review.

8.4. Documenting the programme's operational and financial performance

Programme monitoring and evaluation imply careful control of both operational and financial performance. Several types of exercise and documents can be used for this purpose:

- **Periodic technical reports:** these are the progress reports for the projects or activities included in the programme. Their frequency (quarterly, six-monthly, annual, mid-term, final, etc.) is defined in the project document or the agreement used as a contractual basis. It is recommended that reporting mechanisms should be harmonised, in particular by developing periodic reporting templates to facilitate subsequent summaries.
- **Project audits:** these must be systematically scheduled during programming, as they are an effective tool for ensuring transparency and a powerful means of oversight, particularly with regard to the regularity of financial transactions. There are several kinds of audit, with varying levels of relevance in terms of monitoring and evaluation. Regularity audits are more closely associated with financial oversight than with monitoring and evaluation, whereas performance (or operational) audits are a reliable means of judging the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the actions undertaken. Operational audits are conducted internally and are a useful tool for self-assessment and continuous improvement. They are conducted by an independent service provider, and help reassure all stakeholders and partners about the effectiveness of the programme and confirm its credibility.
- **Dashboards:** these are monitoring tools that offer a summary presentation of the elements included in periodic reports and project audits. Dashboards are produced at different levels that must be distinguished from each other, since each dashboard is submitted to a separate body that is responsible for examining it, putting forward proposals or making decisions in relation to it (see Box 22).

By using data disaggregated by sex, age or other relevant criteria, dashboards can help address challenges related to gender and diversity in decision-making. The aim is to guarantee that the SSR process remains as representative and inclusive as possible.

Box 22: Example of dashboard levels and targets

Dashboard ranking (from general to specific)		Body to which it is submitted
SSR dashboard (national programme level)		National SSR council Sectoral reform committees Senior authorities (president, prime minister, the entire government or certain ministries in particular) All audiences for broad communication on the progress of the reform under way.
Sectoral dashboards (examples)	Army reform dashboard	Army reform sectoral committee Chiefs of staff (army, air force and navy) Minister of defence Defence council
	Justice reform dashboard (etc.)	Justice reform sectoral committee Ministry of justice Higher council of the judiciary Prison authorities Bar and state prosecution service
Project dashboard		Project steering committee

8.5. Using existing internal and external mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

Within the context of SSR, it is essential to encourage the development or improvement of regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that already exist within the public administrative authorities. Implementation of the SSR programme is an opportunity both to improve monitoring and evaluation methods and to give national bodies, both within and outside the security institutions, a sense of responsibility for their role in monitoring and evaluation, regardless of whether an SSR programme exists. The aim is to have a longer-term view of the entire process, through building the national capacity for monitoring and evaluation in a sustainable manner.

8.5.1. Operational implementation and use of internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Defence, security and justice institutions have departments responsible for strategic planning and investments. Reviewing the missions and roles of these departments, analysing their effectiveness and supporting improvements in their performance are essential components of SSR that need to be taken into account during programming.

The SSR programme should provide support for improving planning tools and techniques for monitoring activities at the level of these departments, for example through systematic implementation of a gender-sensitive approach to data collection and processing. It is also desirable to plan support for widespread use of dashboards as monitoring and evaluation tools to facilitate decision-making.

By doing this, the data gathered using the improved mechanisms will feed into the overall monitoring and evaluation scheme for SSR. Above all, such mechanisms will remain as a national asset after the implementation of the SSR programme.

8.5.2. Using data from external oversight of the security sector for monitoring and evaluation purposes

Clearly, democratic oversight mechanisms must not be confused with monitoring and evaluation tools. However, the information gained as a result of certain democratic oversight activities can enhance monitoring and evaluation data which are relevant to the national SSR programme. The monitoring and evaluation coordination unit would therefore benefit from making use of these sources, which often overlooked.

These data may be the results of investigations carried out by democratic oversight institutions (parliament, the national audit office, the office of the general auditor, national mediation and human rights protection institutions, etc.). Reports from national democratic oversight activities carried out by these institutions usually contain valuable information which is useful for assessing the progress of SSR, particularly in terms of effects on the behaviour of members of the defence and security forces and the impact on the life of civilian populations. Relevant data should therefore be collected from such institutions so that they can be incorporated in the various SSR dashboards. In using and disseminating the information, any confidentiality requirements must be taken into account, given that some of the reports produced by such institutions may not be public.

Similarly, reports of independent studies, surveys or polls produced by academic research centres or specialist institutes in civil society are information sources that can be used to support monitoring and evaluation of advances in SSR.

8.6. Establishing the programme's evaluation procedure

Several kinds of evaluation should be carried out throughout the life of the programme:

- **At mid-term**, it is useful to carry out an interim evaluation to measure the progress of programme activities, the advances which have been made and progress towards achieving the expected results. This evaluation is an opportunity for in-depth analysis of the gaps between the resources, activities and outputs initially envisaged. It also serves to identify any obstacles to achieving the desired objectives and to propose any corrective measures. Lessons drawn from the mid-term evaluation can help to improve programme implementation in its second phase.
- **At the end of implementation**, an evaluation of the impact of the SSR programme on the security of people and of the state can be used to assess programme interventions and analyse all the results obtained. Useful lessons can also be drawn from the final evaluation and applied to future work on security sector governance.
- An **evaluation after the event**, or *ex post* evaluation, is also recommended. This should be carried out several years after the end of the programme to assess the sustainability of the results achieved. Although all too frequently neglected, this offers the opportunity for a systematic analysis of medium- and long-term effects. With sufficient distance, the *ex post* evaluation checks the levels of national ownership of the results, and the extent to which improvements in governance have been integrated into the practices and habits of the security sector.

Strengthening the role of ECOWAS as a regional organisation

In terms of SSR, the AU Policy Framework on SSR reserves a special place for regional economic communities (RECs) such as ECOWAS. In particular, the RECs have an important role to play in supporting the design, implementation, oversight and evaluation of SSR processes in their member states, with the strategic objective of promoting peace, security and development at the regional level (see Box 23). The role of ECOWAS in terms of SSR is simultaneously political, normative, technical and operational.

Box 23: The role of RECs in SSR, according to the AU Policy Framework on SSR

Article 6: **African ownership** of security sector reform processes includes ownership by local communities, national ownership by Member States, regional ownership by the RECs and continental ownership by the AU.

Article 14(a): **The specific objectives of this policy framework** are to [...] provide the policy framework for AU Member States and RECs to formulate, design, implement, monitor and evaluate security sector reform processes.

Article 16(b): **SSR and regional integration**: [...] Regional cooperation in the area of peace and security will endeavour to include cooperation in security sector reform processes.

Article 16(j): **Coordination of SSR assistance**: Coordination of security sector reform assistance is ultimately a national responsibility. When and where national authorities lack the capacity for coordination, the RECs, the AU and/or the UN may, where appropriate, partner with national authorities to facilitate coordination of SSR assistance and to build national capacities for the Member State to eventually assume a lead coordination role.

Source: African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2013).

9.1. Understanding the political and strategic role of ECOWAS

Depending on its available capacities and in response to a given situation in a member state, ECOWAS may recommend implementing an SSR programme and/or support an initiative of this kind by contributing community resources and expertise.

9.1.1. Supporting reconfiguration of the internal landscape

Thanks to its diplomatic weight in the region, ECOWAS is often in a position to influence the political development and evolution of the security sector in its member states, in particular by adopting resolutions that affect the actors concerned.

Where it intervenes as a mediator following a conflict, ECOWAS can encourage SSR requirements to be taken into account in the peace agreement. It can also negotiate the signing of mission agreements with national authorities for SSR programmes, as was the case in Guinea-Bissau (see Box 24).

9.1.2. Promoting a regional approach

In addition to the challenges posed by internal governance, West Africa is affected by increasing insecurity, notably characterised by the recurrence of violent uprisings in the Sahel-Sahara region, the increase in piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, drugs trafficking and illegal trade in natural resources.

Given the complexity of the regional context, SSR programmes must be designed based on an analysis of security needs that takes account of transnational threats, fostering coordination and cooperation between the defence and security forces of neighbouring countries and anticipating the impact of national SSR processes on the surrounding area.

Furthermore, given the porosity of borders, it is important that national SSR programmes include border management services, which are often neglected. By improving the effectiveness and accountability of these services, the SSR programme can contribute to reducing the cross-border insecurity that affects both populations and states in the region.

9.1.3. Strengthening strategic national leadership

As part of its strategic support for member states, it is essential for ECOWAS to stress the importance of national leadership of the reforms and focus on raising awareness among the political authorities about national ownership, responsibility and leadership.

In particular, ECOWAS should emphasise:

- the importance of a shared understanding among national stakeholders of the SSR process and the nature of the reforms to be implemented;
- development of a national roadmap defining the various stages of the process and setting out the framework for programming;
- the production of coordination tools and definition of the terms of support from external partners;
- the definition of strategic objectives and immediate priorities by national actors.

It is absolutely critical that government authorities assert national commitment and provide political leadership for the SSR process in general and programming in particular. Similarly, it is essential for national actors to take primary responsibility for the leadership, organisation, planning, management and coordination of the SSR programme, based on a national agenda and priorities. Given its strategic advisory role, ECOWAS is often well placed to remind member states that, without this, the SSR programme has little chance of success.

Moreover, when one of its member states is emerging from a situation of extreme fragility, such as an armed conflict or a long period of failure of the public institutions, ECOWAS can support the efforts of the legitimate national authorities to re-establish the credibility of the state and national leadership in relation to international partners. As a regional organisation it plays a crucial role in terms of support and solidarity, which essentially consists of providing expertise and experience on SSR issues and supporting the national authorities in their interactions with external partners.

Exceptionally, and in particular when the state concerned is not in a position to assert its leadership in relation to external partners, ECOWAS's role can extend to providing leadership "by proxy", to avoid the negative effects of external support that is inappropriate to the national context, or even harmful to the local or regional environment. In practical terms, taking on the role of leader can occur in various ways, such as leading the partner coordination body, making technical expertise available, taking charge of the monitoring and evaluation system, conducting external audits or organising joint reviews with partners.

9.1.4. Supporting member states in managing international assistance

Acquiring the financial resources necessary for implementing an SSR programme in the ECOWAS region is a major operational challenge. Where national funding capacity does not allow for full coverage of the costs of the programme, ECOWAS can support its member states to mobilise partnerships and additional funding (see also Section 6.3).

ECOWAS can act as an intermediary to engage in advocacy with bilateral and multilateral partners. The political and diplomatic support of a regional organisation such as ECOWAS is a valuable tool for attracting the attention of international partners and increasing the chances of success. On a number of occasions ECOWAS has supported efforts to mobilise the resources deployed by its member states, both by organising or participating in funding round-tables and partner conferences, and by committing community resources to support the SSR processes undertaken in its member states.

Box 24: Political support from ECOWAS in Guinea-Bissau

ECOWAS played a proactive, strategic role in providing political support in Guinea-Bissau through the creation of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB).

The withdrawal in 2012 of the Angolan Military Technical Mission for assistance and reform of the defence and security sector left a void in the landscape of international assistance for SSR in Guinea-Bissau. In light of the reticence of numerous international partners to engage in a long-term and complex issue such as SSR in the volatile Bissau-Guinean context, ECOWAS confirmed its regional leadership by establishing ECOMIB, a multidimensional peace-support operation.

Since its deployment, ECOMIB has played a significant role in mobilising and coordinating international support for the programme to reform the defence and security sector in Guinea-Bissau. The establishment of ECOMIB also provided ECOWAS with the opportunity to negotiate with the authorities in Guinea-Bissau on the terms of a status of mission agreement, taking into account regional standards and principles of security sector governance.

9.2. Understanding the normative role of ECOWAS

In addition to its revised 1993 Treaty, ECOWAS has developed a series of normative instruments aimed at its member states, which together set out the principles that should underpin governance of the security sector. Most of these texts also note the role of ECOWAS in this area. The main ones are:

- the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (1999);
- the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001);
- the Conflict Prevention Framework (2008);
- the Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa (2011);
- the Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa (draft document, 2015).

Box 25: Basic principles of SSR programmes according to the draft ECOWAS policy framework

In its draft Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa, ECOWAS sets out for its member states a series of fundamental values for implementing SSR programmes, notably:

- solidarity and partnership in Africa and West Africa;
- respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- the link between regional integration on the one hand, and reform and democratic governance of the security sector on the other;
- national and regional ownership;
- the importance of gender in security sector reform and governance.

One of the main objectives of the framework is to provide “guidance for Member States and other stakeholders on developing, implementing and monitoring security sector reform and governance programmes and projects”.¹⁶

In addition, ECOWAS can initiate research and develop normative tools to support SSR programming, such as community guidelines on:

- funding military and security investments and spending;
- monitoring the budgets allocated to the armed forces, justice or security as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP);
- long-term programming of military and security spending;
- periodic review of military spending, etc.

Tools of this kind would be used within the community area to strengthen convergence criteria on managing the defence and security forces and encourage member states to comply with international standards on defence, security and justice. The Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa (2011) is already part of this approach. It sets out terms and conditions for the defence and security forces in ECOWAS member states as a means of ensuring compliance with discipline, individual human rights and democratic and good financial governance principles throughout the community area.

Based on these shared values, each country may be invited to develop a plan for compliance with the community criteria defined, based on its particular situation. ECOWAS could also develop methods and mobilise resources to support all of its member states in effectively achieving good governance objectives in the security sector. Section 9.3 sets out a number of tangible recommendations to this end.

9.3. Recommendations to strengthen technical and operational support from ECOWAS

Based on the guidance set out in the *AU Policy Framework on SSR* and in accordance with the ECOWAS policy framework for security sector reform and governance, ECOWAS has an important role to play in supporting member states in conducting SSR programmes. Over the years, numerous support activities in this area have already been implemented for member states.

In particular, in regard to a sustainable transfer of skills, ECOWAS can support security sector evaluation activities and strategic planning exercises carried out at the national level.

However, beyond the *ad hoc* support dictated by countries' specific needs, ECOWAS could increase the impact and general scope of its technical support through a number of strategic initiatives. This would mean providing a structural response to the operational challenges encountered by member states, such as the shortage of local expertise and the difficulty of documenting, building upon and sharing lessons learned.

9.3.1. Documenting good practice and lessons learned from experience in the region

Since the end of the 1990s several West African countries have embarked on SSR initiatives in multiple ways, appropriate to each specific context. Examples include Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo. Numerous lessons can be learned from these experiences. As a regional organisation, ECOWAS can play a significant role in building upon and managing the knowledge gained from such experiences.

Indeed, by documenting and analysing the past experiences of its member states in implementing SSR programmes, ECOWAS could develop a body of regional knowledge that will be useful in the future. Furthermore, documenting regional experiences, with a view to sharing and managing community knowledge and know-how in the long term, would allow ECOWAS to offer its member states a useful resource, outlining good practice adapted to the regional context.

Developing a good practice guide of this kind would represent a tangible contribution by ECOWAS to

sharing experiences between member states. By promoting local expertise and experience, this document could help to increase the use of original, innovative practices such as using popular theatre troupes, arts groups and traditional communicators (griots) in raising awareness among the population. Above all, it would be helpful to ensure this document is available in at least the community's three official languages (English, French and Portuguese), to guarantee equal accessibility to all member states.

9.3.2. Creating spaces for member states to share ideas and experiences

Box 26: Sharing experience of SSR from Guinea

In March 2011 Guinea invited representatives from neighbouring countries (Senegal, Sierra Leone and Liberia) to take part in its national seminar on SSR. The Guinean process was therefore able to take advantage of the experience of all three countries, which share a number of common challenges.

In 2013 a mission from Guinea also travelled to Burkina Faso to share experiences in preparation for the introduction of community policing as part of the reform of the Guinean police force.

Given its important role in facilitating South-South cooperation between member states, ECOWAS is in a position to support this type of initiative, which aims to pool lessons learned based on experience. This can be achieved through various mechanisms, such as putting national leaders in contact with each other, organising regional forums on SSR and supporting the participation of invited specialists and policymakers in strategic activities carried out by other member states..

As well as producing a guide building upon experience, ECOWAS should support the creation of spaces where its member states can share ideas and experiences in the context of South-South cooperation.

One possibility would be to establish a forum for discussing experiences of SSR, which would support convergence, development and sharing expertise and experiences at the regional level. In a simplified form, this system could be based on a virtual platform such as a website, with resource documents on SSR processes in the ECOWAS area and around the world. The platform would be facilitated by experts from ECOWAS, in particular through the publication of articles and moderation of discussion forums on SSR and associated topics, such as peacebuilding, democratic governance, civilian and democratic control of the defence and security forces, etc.

A system of this kind could be usefully supplemented by regularly organising regional meetings on SSR, around themes defined to reflect the specific needs of the countries concerned: national ownership and leadership, national coordination of external partners and the role of certain actors, such as civil society, parliament, internal control services, etc.

9.3.3. Facilitating training for West African experts in SSR

Given that the shortage of local technical expertise is one of the major operational difficulties faced by member states wishing to engage in an SSR process, training for regional experts by institutions affiliated to ECOWAS represents an important area of technical support.

ECOWAS can, indeed, initiate or support research and surveys by institutes and universities in the region to develop training tools for the benefit of peacekeeping training centres, military academies with a regional focus and other training institutions in the region. Moreover, the process of developing studies and training tools on SSR will help to create and/or consolidate the abilities of the regional experts who contribute to them, on the basis of practice.

Among other research and training institutions, ECOWAS has three regional centres of excellence for training in peacekeeping and security issues, which are also important places for interaction between civilian professionals and staff in the defence and security forces:

- the Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping School (Bamako, Mali), which is responsible for training at a tactical level;
- the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (Accra, Ghana), which provides training at an operational level;
- the National Defence College (Abuja, Nigeria), which focuses on training at a strategic level.

There are also regional civil society networks and organisations that play an active role in training West African actors about questions of democratic governance, peace and security. These organisations represent pools of expertise and potential partners for developing regional capacity for supporting SSR processes.

9.3.4. Creating a shared mechanism to manage and deploy regional experts

To ensure that training regional experts in SSR produces the desired effect, ECOWAS will need to establish a mechanism to identify and manage experts as a way of coordinating their rapid deployment in support of member states. A system of this kind would facilitate technical support to the processes under way in member states, by calling on a pool of West African experts.

This presupposes the creation and administration of such a roster by ECOWAS, as well as the establishment of mechanisms to ensure the personnel can be deployed rapidly. The same roster could also serve to facilitate the ECOWAS platform for sharing experiences (see Section 9.3.2).

Creating a roster of this kind would also contribute to strengthening the regional leadership of ECOWAS and supporting more balanced relationships between multiple and powerful external partners on the one hand and sometimes weakened and/or failing West African states on the other.

Indeed, in the absence of a scheme of this kind to facilitate access to high-quality regional expertise, states often call on external partners to carry out SSR assessments and even design SSR programmes. The consequence of this can be to bias the initial assessment or gear the programme design based on the vision and priorities of external partners, with the corresponding risk of weakening the national leadership and local ownership of the process.

Box 27: Practical tips on creating a roster of regional experts

The main steps in creating a roster of regional experts include:

- developing terms of reference for the roster (recruitment and deployment methods, defining the categories of expertise required, etc.)
- recruiting experts for the roster on the basis of clearly defined professional requirements;
- organising methodology workshops for the experts recruited;
- running and managing the roster (information to members, themed workshops, deployment and feedback of experience).

Checklist: Addressing the challenges of SSR programming

1. Initiate the process.

- SSR is triggered at the initiative of the national authorities; it may also be instigated in response to a mandate or resolution by the UN or a competent regional organisation (AU or ECOWAS), but always in agreement with the legitimate national authorities.
- At the start of the process, establish an inclusive national framework for implementing SSR: this includes identifying actors (see point 2 below) and establishing a national body responsible for implementing and coordinating the SSR process.
- The structure of this body is formalised through a presidential decree or specific law, setting out the missions, resources and responsibilities assigned to it.

2. Identify national stakeholders and external partners to involve in the programming process and programme implementation, without overlooking:

- the defence and security institutions and the ministries responsible for them (defence, security and justice);
- other relevant ministerial departments (budget and finance, planning, etc.);
- relevant specialised institutions (national DDR commissions, institutions working to combat the proliferation of light weapons, etc.);
- non-state security providers, such as private security firms, community self-defence groups and actors involved in traditional justice;
- external oversight institutions, such as parliament, independent mediation and human rights defence institutions, and supreme audit institutions;
- CSOs, the media and other relevant public oversight actors;
- international partners, including both states and intergovernmental or international organisations.

3. Carry out an assessment of the security sector:

- Establish terms of reference for the assessment, and identify experts for conducting and supervising it.
- Establish formally a group of national and international experts responsible for conducting the assessment, guaranteeing participation by both men and women.
- The group is then responsible for collecting the preparatory information and developing the methodology for the assessment.
- Ensure funding and organise logistics for the deployment of the group of experts responsible for carrying out the assessment in the field (data collection).
- Finalise the assessment report and ensure broad national validation of the results, for example at a national seminar on SSR.

4. Define the framework for cooperation with international partners:

- Appoint a partner coordinator with clear credibility among both national actors and other external partners: this may be a regional organisation (such as the AU or ECOWAS), a UN agency or mission (such as the UN Development Programme or a peacekeeping or other mission) or a bilateral partner.
- Encourage the establishment by the partner coordinator of a dedicated technical team, under the supervision of a PTC/SSR.
- Define the terms of intervention for external partners (national approval mechanisms for any support project, memoranda of understanding, etc.).

5. Design the programme and its content.

- Develop terms of reference specifying the role of each actor, operational methods and the procedure for final validation by national actors.
- Strengthen capacity in programming for national and international actors if necessary.
- Establish a technical group responsible for designing the programme, and provide it with the necessary resources.
- Set up a system for monitoring and sharing information with all actors.
- Take both sectoral pillars and cross-cutting issues into account during the design phase.
- Plan preparatory actions (updating the legal framework, raising awareness among actors, capacity building for institutions involved in implementing the programme).
- Identify priority projects and define programme implementation steps and sequences.
- Validate the results of the programme design exercise based on the predefined process, emphasising broad and inclusive national approval.

6. Budgeting and programme funding.

- Calculate the cost of the planned reforms.
- Develop a national funding mechanism and incorporate SSR costs in the state budget.
- Develop and implement a strategy to mobilise additional resources, aimed at external partners.
- Implement joint funding mechanisms and rules for mutual responsibility.
- Strengthen national management, oversight and audit mechanisms if necessary.

7. Develop and implement a communication strategy.

- Identify internal and external communication needs; identify targets and their expectations, fears and intentions; select appropriate communication tools.
- Train internal actors on the importance of communication and communication techniques.
- Develop the tools and mechanisms necessary for sharing information throughout the SSR programme.

8. Implementation, coordination and monitoring and evaluation.

- Mobilise, raise awareness and prepare the national departments and institutions concerned.
- Identify and build capacity of CSOs as implementation partners.
- Establish coordination tools (mapping of partners and projects; monitoring and data-collection mechanisms, etc.) for use by the national SSR coordination body.
- Ensure the effectiveness of the coordination framework for support by external partners.
- Develop joint tools and mechanisms for evaluating the progress of reforms, auditing, monitoring and evaluation, and sharing experiences.

9. Strengthen the role of ECOWAS in supporting SSR programmes in its member states. This role includes:

- political support for reshaping the internal landscape;
- capacity building for strategic national leadership;
- support for managing international assistance;
- establishing a regional normative framework for SSR;
- building on regional experience and knowledge management;
- creating spaces for member states to share ideas and experiences;
- training West African experts in SSR;
- establishing a roster of regional experts.

Additional resources

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Hans Born, Jean-Jacques Gacond and Boubacar N'Diaye (eds), *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: ECOWAS Parliament–DCAF Guide for West African Parliamentarians* (Geneva/Abuja: DCAF/ECOWAS Parliament, 2010), www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Parliamentary-Oversight-of-the-Security-Sector-ECOWAS-Parliament-DCAF-Guide-for-West-African-Parliamentarians.

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Jody Zall Kusek and Ray C. Rist, *Ten Steps to a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System: A Handbook for Development Practitioners* (Washington, DC: World Bank 2004), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/14926/296720PAPER0100steps.pdf?sequence=1>.

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OECD, *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* (Paris: OECD, 2005), www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf.

OECD, *Accra Agenda for Action* (Paris: OECD, 2005), www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/34428351.pdf.

OECD, *Aid effectiveness, website*, www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/.

Okey Uzoechina, "Security sector reform and governance processes in West Africa: From concepts to reality", DCAF Policy Paper No. 35 (Geneva: DCAF, 2013), www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Security-Sector-Reform-and-Governance-Processes-in-West-Africa-From-Concepts-to-Reality.

Notes

1. "Girls and boys" means persons who have not reached the age of majority as defined by the law in their country. "Girls" means female minors and "boys" means male minors.
2. The MDGs cover the period 2000–2015. A post-2015 development agenda (Sustainable Development Goals) has been produced by the UN to replace the MDGs when they expire on 31 December 2015.
3. Sierra Leone's first PRSP covered the period 2005–2007. It was followed by a second PRSP entitled "Agenda for Change" covering the period 2008–2012, and a third entitled "Agenda for Prosperity" covering the period 2013–2018. All three documents address the need for security reforms.
4. For a definition of actors in the security sector see *African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform*, section A1, para. 4 (Addis Ababa: African Union Commission, 2013).
5. For more information on the role of parliament in SSR see Hans Born, Jean-Jacques Gacond and Boubacar N'Diaye (eds), *Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector: ECOWAS Parliament–DCAF Guide for West African Parliamentarians* (Geneva/Abuja: DCAF/ECOWAS Parliament, 2010).
6. Original definition (in French) from the Quebec Board of the French Language (*Office Québécois de la Langue Française*), www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/ressources/bibliotheque/dictionnaires/terminologie_risque/.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, *Report on Security Sector Reform Activities in Togo*, (Lomé: UNREC, 2008).
10. Website of the Togolese armed forces: <http://forcesarmees.tg/>.
11. Eden Cole, Kerstin Eppert and Katrin Kinzelbach, *Public Oversight of the Security Sector – A Handbook for Civil Society Organizations* (Bratislava/Geneva: UNDP, DCAF, 2008).
12. International Commission of Inquiry on Guinea, "Report of the International Commission of Inquiry mandated to establish the facts and circumstances of the events of 28 September 2009 in Guinea", UN Doc S/2009/693, United Nations, 2009.
13. UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire.
14. The term "idem" in Box 20 refers to all the points set out in the cell above.
15. Jody Zall Kusek and Ray C. Rist, *Ten Steps to a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System: A Handbook for Development Practitioners* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004).
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