Tool 4

Effective Management of External Support to Security Sector Reform

Valerie Yankey-Wayne

DCAF Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance

Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa

ECOWAS

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CEDEAO ECOWAS

About the author

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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 stakeholders in their efforts to improve the effectiveness and accountability of the security sector.

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 West African 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 Management of 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
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GBS	general budget support
ODA	official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SBS	sector budget support
SPS	sector programme support
SSG	security sector governance
SSR	security sector reform
SSRG	security sector reform and governance
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UN	United Nations
VFM	value for money

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

Security sector reform (SSR) is a highly political and technically complex process which requires considerable human and financial resources. The management of these resources is, in itself, a politically sensitive and technically challenging matter which involves defining a shared agenda for security, rolling out complex budget processes, setting up reliable mechanisms for financial accountability of security-related expenditures and, in many instances, engaging in constructive partnerships[1] with both domestic and external actors for complementary funding on the grounds of national leadership and mutual accountability. In the context of SSR, failure to support reform needs in an effective and transparent manner can have negative impacts on the security of the state and the people.

West African states facing limited financial capacities may want to request support from bilateral or multilateral counterparts in funding their SSR processes. While external assistance is an opportunity for ECOWAS member states willing to engage in SSR, mobilising and managing such support entails political, policy and technical challenges. Most critically, the value of partnerships that aim at filling the resource gaps of a national SSR process should be balanced with the necessity of maintaining national ownership and leadership of the reform process, regardless of the origins of complementary funds supporting it. Indeed, it is common for sovereign states to express reservations about opening up to international partnerships that bear the risk of resulting in external interference in core domestic affairs, such as defence and security-related issues.

Despite an extensive contribution on framing international assistance relations, the general discourse on development assistance has only benefited the area of SSR and security sector governance (SSG) in a limited way, and mostly from the perspective of international assistance providers. Yet context-sensitive application of the principles of effective partnerships for development can provide nations engaging in SSR with a workable framework for effective management of external support to the reform process.

This tool is based on the observation that there is a relative wealth of guidance for international actors willing to support SSR as part of their foreign assistance engagement, while practical advice aimed at countries implementing such reforms on how to manage relationships with external partners remains scarce. Acknowledging the unique challenges that West African states may face while extending their development cooperation relationships to the field of SSR, this tool aims to provide ECOWAS member states with practical guidance on how to manage external assistance to SSR in a way that supports national vision, secures cost-efficiency, enforces mutual accountability and strives for sustainable results.

It also discusses the role of ECOWAS in supporting member states in managing their relations with partner countries and institutions in a manner consistent with regional norms for good SSG and international standards for effective development partnerships.

Due to the scope of its topic, the tool is mainly aimed at national administrations of ECOWAS member states specifically in charge of planning, managing and overseeing internal and external resource allocation to SSR. However, it may also be useful for non-statutory oversight stakeholders involved in monitoring the national security agenda, the national budget or cooperation policies, such as the media, academic research centres and civil society observatories and organisations.

Relevance of external support to SSR in West Africa

2.1. What is security sector reform?

ECOWAS defines SSR as "the process by which countries formulate or re-orient the policies, structures, and capacities of institutions and groups engaged in the security sector, in order to make them more effective, efficient, accountable and responsive to democratic control, and to the security and justice needs of the people".[2] See also Box 1 for African Union (AU) definitions.

Box 1: SSR definitions in the African Union 2013 policy framework

3. **Security:** As guided by, but not limited to, the definition of security given in the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP). The CADSP gives a multi-dimensional definition of security which encompasses both the traditional state-centric notion of the survival of the state and its protection from external aggression by military means, as well as the non-military notion of human security based on political, economic, social and environmental imperatives in addition to human rights.

4. **Security Sector:** The components of the security sector vary according to each national context. However, in general terms and in an African context, a security sector comprises individuals, groups and institutions that are responsible for the provision, management and oversight of security for people and the state. These include but are not limited to the following:

(a) **Primary Security Institutions:** such as the armed forces, the police, gendarmerie and other law enforcement agencies, presidential guards, anti-terrorist units, border management, customs and immigration authorities, Office/Directorate of the State Department, as well as any other services set up by a Member State;

(b) **Specialized Intelligence and Security Institutions:** such as those that are in charge of finding and using intelligence to preserve state sovereignty, state security and to defend vital national interests. These may be involved in security activities such as counter espionage, counter terrorism and the fight against all forms of organized crime;

(c) **Public Oversight and Management Bodies:** such as the executive, the justice ministries, the legislature, national security advisory bodies, parliamentary sub-committees, anti-corruption bodies, customary authorities, the Pan African Parliament, and regional parliamentary bodies;

(d) **Justice and Rule of Law Institutions:** such as the judiciary, prisons and other correctional facilities, Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Public Prosecutor, ombudspersons, traditional and transitional justice systems, human rights commissions, tribunals and courts;

(e) **Civil Emergency Units:** such as search and rescue services, firefighting, riot control, natural disaster management and natural resource protection units; and

(f) **Non-state Security Bodies:** such as private security companies, informal, traditional and customary authorities and others, as may be decided by each Member State.

5. **Security Sector Reform (SSR):** In this policy, SSR refers to the process by which countries formulate or re-orient the policies, structures, and capacities of institutions and groups engaged in the security sector, in order to make them more effective, efficient, and responsive to democratic control, and to the security and justice needs of the people. This policy takes note that "Security Sector Reform" is sometimes expressed as security sector governance, security sector transformation, security sector development, security sector review as well as security and justice reform.

Source: AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform, Addis Ababa, 2013.

The SSR agenda acknowledges that sustainable peace, security and development require a security sector that:

• is responsive to the actual security needs of the state and the people;

• guarantees and delivers effective and accessible justice and security services to all women, men, boys and girls;

• offers equal opportunities to men and women to contribute to public safety and security at local and national levels;

• is respectful of human rights and abides by the rule of law, notably through strict observance of the separation of powers and submission to civilian authority (see Box 2);

• displays high standards of professionalism, notably by operating ethically, showing integrity and being responsive to democratic control.

Box 2: Civilian supremacy and loyalty to constitutional authority

Article 2 Civilian Supremacy: The Armed Forces and Security Services shall be at the disposal of the constitutionally established political government and are subordinate to the constitutionally, democratically elected authorities. Political authorities and groups shall refrain from undue interference or extending partisan politics to the operations of the Armed Forces and Security Services. Personnel of the Armed Forces and Security Services shall observe strict neutrality in political matters.

Article 13 Loyalty to Constitutional Authority: Personnel of the Armed Forces and Security Services shall be disciplined and loyal to the State at all times. They shall owe loyalty and obedience to democratically elected constitutional authorities and all lawful commands of such authorities shall be executed.

Source: ECOWAS Code of Conduct for the Armed Forces and Security Services, 2011.

The main goal of SSR is to improve SSG, which "refers to the structures, processes, values and attitudes that shape decisions about security and their implementation".[3]

An essential aspect of an efficient and accountable security sector is the responsiveness of security institutions to both internal control and external democratic oversight mechanisms. The draft ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa defines democratic governance of the security sector as "the provision, management and control of security sector based on democratic

principles and values for the benefit of the people. It requires separation of powers, a participatory and inclusive approach involving citizens through their legally and regularly chosen representatives in decision-making processes, management and control of state activities and functions in the security sector." See also Box 3.

Box 3: What are reform and democratic governance of the security sector? ECOWAS definitions

The draft ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance offers the following definitions.

"**Security sector reform:** In this policy framework, SSR refers to the process by which countries formulate or re-orient the policies, structures, and capacities of institutions and groups engaged in the security sector, in order to make them more effective, efficient, accountable and responsive to democratic control, and to the security and justice needs of the people.

Democratic governance of the security sector: Refers to the management of public affairs based on democratic principles and values for the benefit of the people. It requires separation of power, [and] a participatory and inclusive approach involving citizens through their legally and regularly chosen representatives in decision-making processes, management and control of State activities and functions."

Source: Draft ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance, Articles 4–5.

The draft policy document also specifies that, "while security sector reform and governance (SSRG) is a key component of conflict prevention, ECOWAS recognises that SSRG should also be part of a broader reform agenda on promoting human rights, the rule of law, peace-making, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustainable development".

In practice, this means that SSR targets both the reinforcement of operational capacity and the consolidation of integrity and accountability of the entire security sector. SSR also acknowledges the importance of the role of civil society actors in regards to democratic governance of the security sector.

The security sector of a country is a product of its history, its context, its culture, etc. This is why every country possesses a unique security sector. Sustainable changes within this sector need to be based on these peculiar characteristics. Local ownership is a primary condition, not only to ensure that the actual security needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, but also to arrive at a legitimate and trustworthy security sector which is sustainable.

As a change process which touches on core national values, SSR is about reinforcing or sometimes even introducing a new approach to security governance, on the basis of democratic values, transparent management mechanisms and constructive relations with the people. This process of change cannot be imposed from the outside; it must grow from a national conversation on the kind of security architecture that is desired by all segments of the population. As such, the role of external actors is not to lead SSR, but to support national authorities leading it.

2.2. Why is national funding of SSR challenging?

National funding of SSR is a powerful way of demonstrating national ownership and leadership of the reform process. However, this can prove challenging in national budgets for several reasons, some of which are listed below.

- **Because it requires covering security costs at multiple levels simultaneously**

  SSR is an expensive process which requires intense and long-term budgetary effort. The budget requirements associated with SSR can be identified at three distinct yet complementary levels which operate concurrently.

(a) **Funding the ordinary structures and activities of the security sector,** such as the operating budgets of the armed forces, police, gendarmerie, domestic and foreign intelligence services, border management agencies, courts and public prosecutions, penal administration, etc., including the operating costs of their line ministries (ministries of defence, security and justice) and internal control mechanisms such as inspectorate services, internal audit departments, anti-corruption taskforces, martial courts, etc.

(b) **Funding governance mechanisms that are responsible for ongoing democratic oversight of the security sector,** which usually include parliamentary bodies such as the defence and security committee, budget and finance committee and any relevant parliamentary inquiry commission, statutory oversight bodies such as the ombuds institution and national human rights commission, office of the auditor general or court of accounts, independent anti-corruption agency, the judiciary and any special oversight body. Unless adequately resourced, these institutions cannot perform their oversight duties in an effective way, which in turn jeopardises the possibility for any significant improvement in the governance of the security sector.

(c) **Funding the specific reform process that aims to reframe security policies, institutions and governance structures** towards increased efficiency and accountability. This reform process has specific budget requirements, such as the costs of conducting a security needs assessment, organising national consultations on security, developing and funding a far-reaching national SSR programme or limited reform initiatives, funding the right-sizing of the national security architecture and the modernisation of security sector pension systems, etc.

- **Because it requires balancing the funding of state responses to security needs and other social and institutional needs**

Taking charge of security costs at multiple levels while also meeting other essential commitments, such as the provision of basic social services, can prove a major challenge for West African economies, most of which are classified by the World Bank in the low or middle-low income categories.[4] The combination of scarce national resources and tremendous development needs demanding high levels of public and private investments leaves most ECOWAS member states in a difficult position for financing the development and implementation of an SSR process matching the governance and security needs of both the state and the population.

SSR funding requirements should be adequately balanced with the funding of socio-economic development sectors. National authorities arbitrating fund allocation should be wary of the risk for a securitisation of development, acknowledging that failure to respond to basic social needs of the population may increase risks of insecurity. There are multiple examples of how poor provision of accessible education, health and employment services has contributed to an increase in violence, criminality and radicalisation of certain segments of the population.

- **Because it requires enabling long-term national planning**

SSR is a long-term endeavour which can cause more harm than good if actions undertaken are left unfinished. As a process of change, it takes time to become rooted within the society and to generate sustainable impact on the mechanisms governing the security sector. SSR funding must therefore be arranged in the long term and through sustainable mechanisms.

Multiyear funding arrangements help secure sufficient predictability of domestic funding to enable consistent support to SSR interventions in the medium to long terms. However, this can prove extremely challenging in national budgets that are subject to high fluctuations from year to year.

In the context of unstable macroeconomic frameworks subject to frequent variations of growth and income and backed by poorly efficient tax systems, it can be difficult to plan for long-term investments into structural improvement of security service delivery and associated oversight mechanisms. To mention just two of many challenging factors, uncontrolled vulnerability to exchange rate volatility and disproportionate reliance of national revenue on unpredictable sources of income, such as oil or other natural resources highly subject to global price fluctuations, can hinder sustainable funding of public policies in general, including SSR.

- **Because it requires managing expectations**

Experience has proven the importance for national authorities to monitor cautiously and address promptly expectations relating to the reform process. Unsatisfied expectations, including financial expectations, can generate frustrations and create spoilers. This can eventually jeopardise the improvements of SSG, or the security situation at large.

Some actors may expect the reform process to improve their own financial status, for instance through reform of the military pension system or a re-evaluation of pay scales as part of the revision of human resource policies. The example of Guinea-Bissau speaks for how disappointed expectations can trigger resistance from influential local actors. In this case, a large proportion of high-ranking military officials had serious reservations about an earlier SSR programme that was managed by outsiders. Their main complaint was that the funds spent on foreign programme advisers could have been used to support their retirement package.

Where there is a lack of communication about what SSR is, security institutions may also expect an increase in their operating budgets as a result of SSR being declared a national priority. However, experience proves that an arithmetic increase in military budgets is not necessarily the most effective way to improve the performance of security institutions.

Therefore, national authorities leading the SSR process should closely monitor the emergence of unrealistic expectations, and improve communication on the reform process in order to diffuse such expectations at an early stage. If false hopes are allowed to take root in security sector institutions or personnel, they will result in high levels of disappointment and mistrust, which are detrimental to SSR.

Expectations are not only projected by individuals or groups on the reform process designed by others; they are also shaped by those developing the SSR programme. When programming SSR it is important to set strategic and operational goals that are attainable in light of the technical, institutional and financial capacity of the state. Although the provisional budget for SSR can integrate the assumption that external support will be mobilised to complement domestic funding, the impact of this assumption should rely on a realistic assessment of the state's attractiveness for external partners and ability to mobilise external resources.

SSR programming requires high levels of awareness and realism in terms of both the budgetary effort that can be maintained in the long run and the amount and nature of support that a country can realistically expect to mobilise and manage. In cases when the estimated costs of reforms needed are by far disproportionate to the means of the state, it may be useful to sequence the reform programme according to predefined priorities, and identify affordable high-impact entry points which come close to the funding capacity of the state as starting points.

> *If unrealistic expectations are allowed to take root in security sector institutions or personnel, they will result in high levels of disappointment and mistrust and generate avoidable resistance. This is detrimental to the success of SSR.*

- **Because it requires managing resistance**

SSR requires state authorities to go through a process of consulting security professions and the people in the definition of a security agenda, finding common grounds for reform objectives, explaining policy arbitrations, negotiating, convincing and sometimes overcoming resistance to build broad-based national ownership. In most cases this consultation process, which is necessary to diffuse resistance at an early stage, will consume time and resources, adding to the financial burden of SSR.

SSR is also challenging because it involves rethinking how the state budget is allocated to security institutions. This may result in a redistribution of resources among institutions, with the risk of antagonising actors who may face a decrease or reframing of their funding allocation.

SSR further looks into transactional cultures in the security sector, and involves striving for efficient and transparent use of national resources in a way that reflects agreed priorities. As a consequence, SSR is likely to question individual and institutional habits relating to financial management in the security sector. In many cases, the promotion of integrity, transparency and accountability will make some national stakeholders nervous, strengthening the need for firm political commitment and efficient change management mechanisms.

2.3.   Why is there increasing will in the international community to assist SSR?

There is increasing interest and readiness among international actors to support SSR in West Africa (see Box 4). This trend represents an opportunity for ECOWAS member states, as it increases financial feasibility of SSR in a region faced with the challenges of scarce resources.

Several factors contribute to SSR increasingly topping the international cooperation agenda.

- **Over the years, SSR has built credibility as an important peacebuilding tool and a critical stabilisation instrument, which makes it worthy of national and international interest.**

  Both states engaging in SSR and their international partners understand the process as being part of broader and long-term stabilisation, peacebuilding and democratisation efforts. The final conclusions of the Africa SSR Forum held in November 2014 in Addis Ababa recommend that "good security sector governance, oversight and management, including in the area of public financial management, should be key priority areas for international support".[5]

- **There is a common recognition that the costs incurred by SSR may exceed the financial capacity of most West African countries.**

  Budgeting and funding SSR are first and foremost a national prerogative. However, acknowledging the challenges of exclusive national funding of SSR in low- and middle-income countries, the role of external actors is to support efforts by national governments to meet their security needs, notably by supplementing resource gaps that cannot be filled through domestic means. This helps enhance the ability of the state to respond to its own security needs and to those of the people.

- **There is a general consensus on the need to articulate the development agenda with the response to security needs of the state and the people, which requires a delicate balance of budget allocations.**

  The human security approach acknowledges that rule of law, development and security are intrinsically interconnected. Impunity for human rights violations, endemic poverty, illiteracy and other social ills lie at the roots of a wide range of security threats, from domestic violence to urban criminality and violent extremism. Therefore, while it is important to link SSR with the national development agenda, there is a danger of this process leading to the securitisation of development, shifting critical resources from development to security. In the long run, this could result in increased social tensions and consequently the emergence or intensification of security threats fuelled by high levels of social frustrations.

  By increasing the amount of resources available to implement the national security policy, external partners contribute to lightening the overall budgetary burden, so that fund allocation to SSR does not impede resources needed for other critical socio-economic programmes.

- **External support to SSR is not a matter of charity, but a strategic tool for promoting global peace and security.**

  There is constantly increasing awareness of the interdependency of security challenges faced across the region, as well as their strategic implications at the international level. The multiplication of transnational security threats and the impact of local insecurity and national instability on regional and international peace and security have been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt by the dynamics of recent conflicts, such as the 1990s' conflicts in the Mano River Basin (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) and the 2012 crisis in Mali. Some threats faced in West Africa are transnational in nature, such as piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, cross-border human trafficking and arms and drugs smuggling, and development of terrorist factions in the Sahel, northern Nigeria and bordering regions. These threats do not only affect single West African countries, but impact on the neighbourhood and more generally on global security.

  Thus supporting West African states to strengthen their governance structures with the aim of enhancing their ability to respond effectively to threats is also a way for international partners to help contain strategic threats with global implications, such as terrorism and transnational crime. As such, the provision of external assistance to SSR offers a win-win situation for the recipient countries and external partners.

- **SSR touches on a variety of broader, interconnected governance issues in which external partners may have special interest.**

  Through increased effectiveness and accountability of security institutions, SSR helps improve state capacity to strengthen aspects of governance and human security that may be prioritised by external partners under their international cooperation policy.

  In the wider framework of the national agenda set by the country engaging in SSR, external partners may be willing to support specific components of the reform programme which relate to their own priority areas of intervention. For instance, supporting a police reform project can be a way for external actors to support a variety of governance and human security elements, such as the strengthening of institutional response to gender-based violence, promotion of gender equality in public institutions, decentralisation of public service delivery, local dialogue mechanisms, human rights, civil society engagement in policymaking and public service accountability, etc.

  As such, support to a variety of SSR features falls under the development assistance interests and priorities of many external partners (see also Section 5.5.1 on how to highlight these advantages in communication with potential partners), which is conducive for a win-win approach to cooperation.

Box 4: A few examples of external support to SSR processes in West Africa

The increasing interest of the international community in supporting SSR is an opportunity for national stakeholders to access additional human, logistical and financial resources.

- ECOWAS has supported the SSR processes in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau since the 1990s.
- In Sierra Leone the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) has been a major partner in national SSR efforts after the 1991–2002 civil war.
- The United Nations (UN) Regional Office for West Africa has also made SSR a priority area for its support to conflict prevention efforts in Guinea.
- In Mali the UN and European Union (EU) have developed programmes that support SSR after the 2012 crisis, through the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the EU Training and Capacity Building Missions (EUTM/EUCAP Sahel Mali).

Source: Ornella Moderan, "Political leadership and national ownership of security sector reform processes", in Ornella Moderan (ed.), *Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

Addressing risks and challenges associated with external support to SSR from a national perspective

Although external assistance increases SSR feasibility in West Africa, it also comes with a number of challenges from a national point of view. These disincentive factors may cause external assistance to be perceived as a double-edged opportunity, thereby hampering its relevance in the eyes of countries engaging in SSR. Acknowledging these obstacles and setting up mechanisms to diffuse them are essential in order for West African states to make the most of external support opportunities while minimising their downsides.

Some of the challenges that may discourage West African states from engaging in international cooperation on SSR are outlined below, with suggestions on how to overcome them.

3.1. Challenges in national sovereignty

Arguably, a sovereign state should not depend on foreign support for a sector that is central to national security and autonomy and deeply intertwined with core values of society, such as justice, security and human rights. The actual or perceived risks of interference in domestic affairs constitute a major political challenge and require careful selection of external partners.

Several aspects of external assistance partnerships have a potential for challenging self-determination.

3.1.1. Limitation of policy autonomy

Risk: Countries engaging in SSR are often concerned that external actors providing human and financial assistance may also try to influence the elaboration of national policies. Accepting external assistance would therefore represent a risk of reducing the country's own policy autonomy.

What can be done: Anchor partnership in early political conversation.

It is legitimate for external partners to try to ensure that they are not supporting a state apparatus which runs against their values. However, it is just as legitimate for countries engaging in SSR to ensure that the partners they are interacting with respect them as equals and show consideration to their sovereignty and their own core values within the limits of international law. National authorities should insist on

building partnerships of equals that are based on common and shared values, rather than on the forced, unsustainable internalisation of principles that are perceived as imported.

As a forerunner to any form of SSR cooperation, political conversation must take place at a high level of representation (between heads of state or government, foreign ministers, ambassadors, etc.) on the core values underlying the reform process, on the national vision of security and on nationally set objectives. This conversation offers both parties the opportunity to assess whether there is sufficient convergence in their visions to form a reliable ground for partnership. Following this process, countries engaging in SSR should be prepared to turn down a funding offer if the basic conditions for a mutually respectful partnership are not met.

See also Section 3.2.1 on how to overcome the negative impact of financial dependency on policy autonomy.

Caution: The phase of political conversation is sometimes overlooked, with the consequence of developing partner projects or programmes that are only negotiated at a technical level, without a clear consensus on underlying values or a common understanding of the broader framework for action. This can result in unbalanced relationships which hamper national ownership and leadership of SSR.

3.1.2. Partner conditionalities

Risk: Linked to the issue of policy autonomy is the issue of conditionalities, which are sometimes perceived as illegitimate, unilateral ways for foreign actors to try to dictate a conduct to a sovereign state. At first sight, countries engaging in SSR might feel their sovereignty questioned by conditionalities imposed by international actors as prerequisites for the provision of any assistance.

What can be done: Allow conditionalities to run both ways, and foster mutual understanding of the political context in both partner countries.

National authorities should enter the conversation on conditionalities from a constructive perspective and on an equal footing, with a clear vision of what is and is not negotiable on their side and on the partner's side. In order for the discussion to be constructive, conditionalities should be approached as indications of the political context of both partner countries.

Equal footing from the start. Systematic rejection of all forms of conditionalities has not proven an effective way of building trust with external actors and securing partnerships. Rather, the establishment of equal partnerships requires both parties to state their own exigencies openly and decide freely and knowingly whether or not they are willing to comply with each other's demands. Conditionalities should therefore run both ways. It is important for West African states not only to examine the preliminary demands of potential partners, but also to expose their own exigencies and prerequisites. This is necessary if the *rules of the game* are to be defined collaboratively and not imposed unilaterally.

Mutual understanding of political contexts throughout the partnership. When faced with partner restrictions which were not initially discussed, West African countries should consider the origins and motivations of such modifications. When partner conditionalities evolve in the course of a partnership, recipient countries are sometimes prompt to condemn such evolutions as abusive without a deeper analysis of their cause.

Such evolutions may be dictated by political developments in either the recipient or the partner country. For instance, a deterioration of the human rights situation in the country receiving assistance is normally considered a legitimate cause for the introduction of additional prerequisites to further the cooperation. Unforeseen restrictions on the collaboration may also result from a change in the political situation of the country providing assistance, such as a shift of government following elections.

Sometimes a hardening of the parliamentary opposition in the country providing assistance can lead its ministry of foreign affairs to introduce new restrictions proactively, with the aim of protecting existing

programmes against the risk of parliamentary or other forms of political pressure that could lead to their premature closure. In such situations, it may be in the interest of the country receiving assistance to "help the partner help them", by accepting additional conditions as a way to demonstrate their transparency and protect the partnership programme from exposure to political manipulations on the side of the country providing assistance.

As a general rule, it is of the utmost importance that the authorities of receiving governments are well aware of the political context in the partner country. Mutual understanding of domestic political challenges in both countries is an advantage for successful cooperation.

> *When external support arrangements depend on measures to be taken by the national government, the fulfilment of these commitments should be guaranteed according to the agreed timeframe. In case of delay, it is necessary to reduce the negative impact by timely communication.*

To build effective partnerships for SSR assistance, West African states should ensure that:

- the conditionalities attached to partner assistance are consistent with their own national vision;
- there is mutual understanding of the characteristics and challenges of the reform process, including its objectives;
- there is mutual understanding regarding the necessity to maintain constructive ongoing political dialogue, and awareness of each other's political context as it affects the partnership;
- external partners also accept the prerequisites set by national authorities of the country conducting SSR, such as the obligation to focus on national priorities and report on a national canvas, the limitation of funds allocated to international consultants and partner operating costs to a certain ceiling, or the strict compliance of all partner staff to national legislation on sexual abuse and exploitation.

Box 5: Understanding the political challenges faced by foreign administrations supporting SSR abroad

Avoiding losing external partners also means understanding the (often political) context within the partner countries.

Often the context of the country in which SSR takes place is the only context observed, while the political dimensions of assistance for SSR within the partner country are ignored. Governments of partner countries can easily be challenged by their political opposition if the process stalls, and certainly in cases of human rights abuses. In that case partner governments can take one-sided measures to avoid losing domestic political support. Good relations and a sense of mutual commitment are very helpful in these circumstances. Good and open relations with human rights non-governmental organisations can also help in maintaining good relationships with partners.

3.1.3. Outsider agenda

Risk: One fear is that the nature of external assistance could cause West African governments to prioritise the demands of development partners at the expense of state responsiveness to the needs expressed by citizens. This would hamper inclusive national ownership of the reform process and cause SSR to be guided by misplaced aims.

What can be done: Establish the buy-in of external actors into a broad-based national vision of security as a precondition for partnership.

At the stage of the preliminary political conversation (Section 3.1.1), it is important for national authorities of countries engaging in SSR to build consensus with external partners on the division of roles: leadership of and primary responsibility for SSR by national actors; supportive role of external actors.

ECOWAS member states should frame any request for external assistance not just in terms of funding needs, but on the basis of a political buy-in from potential partners into the national vision of security developed by the country itself through a consultative process.

This involves developing a home-grown agenda that reflects the security needs of a broad constituency of national stakeholders, including through consultations with civil society and in local communities. Not only does an inclusive process contribute to broad national ownership, but it also establishes a more legitimate and credible framework for external partners to buy into.

> *The fundamental and abiding principle of national ownership is that external support and engagement must be informed, directed and led by national stakeholders. It is therefore crucial, to the extent possible, for external actors to seek to buy into national reform processes, rather than to bring national actors on board for ideas and processes that are externally generated and inspired. National stakeholders should be encouraged and supported in seeking the commitment or "buy-in" of externals into locally generated, negotiated and inspired ideas, and their vision of security. Where that buy-in is lacking, the strategic opportunity for sustainability of the reform process will be lost.*
>
> *Source:* UN Inter-Agency SSR Taskforce, *Security Sector Reform, Integrated Technical Guidance Notes* (New York: United Nations, 2012), p. 16.

Caution: Building inclusive consensus on a national vision of security is one of the critical and fundamentally sovereign areas of SSR that are often rushed by international partners eager to move fast. At times, partners may even propose their own analysis as a less costly and easier alternative to what can be perceived as a laborious process of national consultations. Despite the difficulty of resisting such pressures, national authorities should invariably commit sufficient time and effort to determine their own national policy needs in consultation with the people. Involving civil society actors in the consultation process is an effective way to build legitimacy and collective ownership among national stakeholders. This often requires national authorities to temper the will of some international actors to fast-track policy development processes. Ultimately, the elaboration of a national policy agenda through an accessible, transparent and inclusive process will reinforce national ownership and motivate external partners to support reform implementation.

3.1.4. Exposure of confidential defence and security information

Risk: Countries engaging in SSR are sometimes concerned that involving external actors in this process will require them to share information that should remain strictly national and confidential. Used for

intelligence purposes, such information may undermine the geostrategic position of the country and increase its vulnerability to diplomatic pressures or security threats.

What can be done: Set clear norms on the nature of information to be shared for programmatic reasons.

One the one hand, effective partnership requires constructive communication and information sharing. On the other hand, contributing to filling funding gaps in the SSR process does not entitle external partners to access all information relating to this sector.

To balance these two requirements, it is advisable to develop clear guidelines on the nature of information that can be shared and processes for sharing it. Not only should such guidelines be in place, but they should also be well known by national personnel working closely with external partners. The rules contained in these guidelines should be consistent with national classification laws. They should not be theoretical and subject to interpretation, but rather practical and easy-to-understand instructions that can be integrated into the operating standards of security institutions interacting with external partners. In most cases, the information actually needed by external partners for programmatic purposes remains fairly basic and does not threaten national security.

> *Opening SSRG to international assistance is often seen as bearing the risk of letting outsiders' eyes into core national security matters, thus raising issues of unbalanced access to information by the partner country compared to the recipient. Clear regulations on the type of information to share and procedures for sharing it can help to address this challenge.*

3.2. Challenges in financial autonomy and sustainability

External assistance carries the risk of generating dependency, and consequently hindering national control over the reform process. Unpredictable partnerships expose SSR to financial uncertainty. In cases where the feasibility of reforms largely relies on external funding, unforeseen withdrawal of commitments by external partners can paralyse the SSR process.

Sometimes the modalities attached to external assistance can seem subject to unilateral interpretation, which amplifies a sense of dependency and vulnerability to partner desiderata. Overall, a lack of predictability in terms of the volume, conditions and timing of financial assistance affects the state's ability to carry out the reform according to a strategic and fine-tuned plan.

With respect to national ownership of the security sector, governments should consider sustainable ways to scale down their dependency on external support in the medium to long term. Here are a few solutions to be considered.

3.2.1. The risks of financial dependency on policy autonomy

Risk: There are legitimate concerns that systematic recourse to external support may inhibit the state's initiative and ability to mobilise domestic resources in support of national priorities. This may in turn limit autonomy in the framing of a policy agenda.

What can be done: Prioritise domestic funding of core decision-making processes and highly political consultative actions.

The mobilisation of external resources should not be a systematic reflex action, but a carefully considered decision in each instance. Far from being automatic, it should rely on a clear definition of needs and assessment of national capacities to cover them, as only the gap may legitimately require external support (see Section 4.2).

3

See also Tool 3 on good financial governance of defence and security institutions.

To the extent possible, the core and most sensitive components of SSR, such as the definition of priorities (see Box 6) and strategic-level interventions, should be funded by national resources, as a way to maintain core national independence in the guidance of the reform.

Box 6: National funding for national definition of priorities

It is advisable that process-oriented initiatives which aim at establishing an initial diagnosis of governance challenges calling for reforms are integrally or at least significantly covered by domestic funding.

Nationally funded actions to identify SSR priorities may include:

- conducting an assessment of the security sector at large, or an organisational audit of particular security institutions;

- reviewing security sector legislation, possibly in collaboration with parliamentary staff, academic experts and civil society practitioners;

- conducting a gender assessment of either the security sector in general or particular security institutions;

- holding a governmental seminar on SSR, as a way of formally initiating a collective reflection on areas of improvement in SSG;

- initiating dialogue with civil society and local communities on the self-identified security needs of men, women, boys and girls living in the national territory.

Considering that such initial actions will typically inform the definition of national priorities, ensuring their coverage by domestic resources helps to reduce the risk of external actors influencing the definition of the reform agenda according to their own interests or concerns. It thereby contributes to ensuring not only that external support is demand driven, but also that this demand is actually home-grown.

Self-funding of core fundamental activities aimed at shaping the national agenda is a crucial element to strengthen the state's capacity to channel external support towards areas truly determined by national stakeholders, rather than by outsiders. To the extent possible, external support should come at a later stage, as a way to fill particular resource gaps identified by national authorities.

3.2.2. The risks of open-ended funding agreements for SSR sustainability

Risk: There is an argument that open-ended funding arrangements create the expectation for constant renewals of external funding. Not defining clear timeframes for partnerships increases the risk of dependency on external funding, as it does not encourage the search for national funding options that are sustainable in the long run. In the absence of clear exit strategies, partner withdrawal usually comes as unexpected and destabilises the SSR process, which is a very long-term undertaking.

What can be done: Anchor partnerships in clear timeframes, and plan early for exit strategies.

When entering partnership with external actors, national governments should start planning for exit strategies and sustainable national funding options right away, without waiting for the last phase of the partnership. Linking partnerships with external actors to predetermined and clearly stated objectives and timeframes from the beginning helps to delineate partner engagement in time. Funding renewal beyond strictly contractual commitments should not be assumed or taken for granted. It can also be useful to integrate a section on partner exit strategy in the partnership agreement.

3.2.3.   The risks associated with short-term partners' commitments

Risk: Experience has shown that external partners sometimes prefer to engage through repeated short-term assistance commitments, rather than a single longer-term commitment. This allows them more flexibility in the renegotiation of partnership terms at the time of each funding renewal. However, this practice deprives the recipient country of the possibility of planning effectively in the medium to long term.

What can be done: Focus on medium- to long-term commitments.

National governments engaging in SSR with external support should give priority to external partners willing to commit to medium- to long-term assistance programmes. As a general rule, the national policy or guidelines for partner relations should prioritise coherent, multiyear partnership agreements over one-off assistance opportunities, however often repeated.

Multiyear assistance agreements have the advantage of giving better visibility of incoming partner funding, which can therefore be included in the national budget process beforehand. They also have lower transactional costs, as the assistance framework does not require constant renegotiation. In contrast, short-term assistance offers do not allow for a strategic overview of available resources and thus hinder the consistency of national budget planning. They also generate higher transactional costs, as assistance needs to be rearranged more often.

3.2.4. The risks of unfulfilled commitments and partner withdrawals

Risk: Even when best negotiated, the commitments of partners are not always fulfilled. Unmet commitments leave the country engaged in SSR with unanticipated resource gaps (see Box 7).

What can be done: Diversify partnerships and formalise commitments.

Good practices recommend systematically formalising external support arrangements in official partnership documents that specify the scope of respective commitments and mutual responsibilities of all parties, and identify a clear timeframe and modalities for the provision of agreed assistance. The observance of contractual arrangements should be closely monitored by the government engaging in SSR.

Box 7: External funding is never guaranteed

Unexpected withdrawals of commitments can harm the overall process due to the potentially counterproductive impact of unachieved interventions. A change of government, a shift of foreign policy or an economic crisis are just a few examples of events that can cause unexpected withdrawals by partners, leaving the recipient country unable to carry on the reform process.

Many SSR processes in West Africa have been hamstrung by external partners unexpectedly withdrawing their commitment at a time when it was most needed. For example, security institutions in Sierra Leone, Ghana and Guinea-Bissau have been affected by funding cuts in the wake of the 2008 global economic crisis. Such situations have highlighted the need for national core funding, clear partnership frameworks and contingency plans to cope with the uncertainty of external support.

Source: Ornella Moderan, "Political leadership and national ownership of security sector reform processes", in Ornella Moderan (ed.), *Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

When external support arrangements provide for multiple settlements, it is advisable to match each settlement with a coherent unit of activities, as a damage-control precaution in case of partner withdrawal. Indeed, matching funding settlements with coherent programme sequences helps to guarantee the funding of each meaningful set of interventions almost as stand-alones. In this way, a suspension of external funding will neither hinder ongoing activities nor leave an organic set of actions disturbingly unachieved. This approach helps countries engaging in SSR to secure a minimum level of certainty over the availability of funding for each sequence of intervention (either particular projects or programme components) before initiating it.

West African governments should also insist on committing external partners to an agreed framework for timely disbursement of funds. A practical way of doing this consists of requiring external partners to provide official forecasts of scheduled disbursements at least four to six months before the commencement of the preparation of the annual budget. This allows partner commitments – at least in the short term (less than a year) – to be captured in the annual national budget planning, and increases the political weight of such commitments.

To minimise the impact of unexpected individual withdrawals, national governments should also consider diversifying funding sources and planning for flexibility to reassign or renegotiate assignment of external funding to unanticipated priorities. For the purposes of such flexibility, general budget support modalities are usually preferable (see Section 5.2.3).

3.3. Challenges in institutional capacity

Although it can be an opportunity, external funding also comes with a price for national administrations. External resource mobilisation and management require time and effort; they also create the need for coordination and multiply reporting requirements. External funding eventually increases pressure on often already scarce human resources and stretches limited institutional capacity.

3.3.1. High transaction costs

Risk: External partners often place significant expectations on governments in terms of the use of a country's resources to enable the implementation of assistance programmes, while imposing heavy contractual constraints. National administrations are expected to meet multiple country assessment missions and dedicate time to numerous and sometimes redundant partner consultation processes, keep up with iterating reporting demands, etc. This results in high transaction costs.

Furthermore, the fragmentation of external assistance in a multitude of small and medium projects multiplies operating costs without necessarily increasing the scale of results. It also compels national administrations to commit more in-kind and sometimes financial resources to the coordination of international partners. The combination of these elements heightens transaction costs, which in turn lower the actual value of assistance received.

Considering the transaction costs against the sometimes limited added value of international cooperation partnerships, the benefits of external assistance may not always seem to be worth the investments required to make them possible.

West African countries should not consider external assistance as a grant mechanism devoid of any cost to them, but rather as partnership mechanisms that require a certain level of investment by the recipient country. Hence it is important to secure a strategic overview of costs and gains associated with external assistance, in order to make rational partnership choices.

What can be done: Assess the benefits of external assistance in a comprehensive manner and encourage synergies.

By encouraging external partners to adopt synergies and joint initiatives, such as joint funding mechanisms, national authorities of countries engaging in SSR can minimise the operating costs associated with fragmented partner interventions. This can be stated as a national preference in the national cooperation policy or equivalent. Alternatively, it can be discussed on a case-by-case basis with external partners, based on the identification of common interests with different partners.

Building synergies among external partners helps to:

• reduce management and operating costs;

• scale up impact;

• lower the burden of coordination and reporting requirements on the national administration.

To ensure that partnerships present sufficient net value, national authorities should also assess the promised commitment of partners in terms of the direct and indirect costs of their assistance. This helps to get a more comprehensive and realistic overview of the actual benefits of external assistance, which facilitates sound decision-making on the opportunity of engaging in a particular partnership with an external actor.

Moreover, it is important to track and report the costs associated with external assistance as part of the national contribution to the success of assistance projects implemented by international partners (see Box 8). This is necessary for both strategic management of SSR costs and policy evaluation purposes (evaluating the national cooperation policy as well as the SSR strategy).

Box 8: Acknowledging the burden of external assistance on the national budget

The national budget covers the costs of often overlooked in-kind contributions, such as the provision of public premises and the allocation of civil servants' work time to support external partners. Although seldom properly accounted for, these "invisible costs" of partners' programmes and projects represent an additional burden on scarce national resources – which can only be outweighed by significant results from international assistance.

To be able to account properly for external assistance, West African governments accepting external support for their SSR processes should strengthen national capacities for analysing the content of expenses reported by partners as official development assistance (ODA) relating to SSR. This will provide a solid basis for discussing the contribution of external partners accordingly, and ensuring that partners' reports to international arenas match the data accepted by the recipient country as SSR support. This eventually helps to secure a common ground for negotiating further assistance.

2

Tip! To match the requirements of their activities with the calendar of the recipient government with minimum inconvenience, development partners should be required to share a harmonised calendar containing major development activities (missions, meetings, reviews, strategies, etc.) on an annual or biannual basis, with agreed flexibility mechanisms to review it periodically.

3.3.2. Duplication of efforts due to uncoordinated procedures

Risk: Related to the problem of high transaction costs is the diversity of partners' management procedures and redundancy of project management requirements. The reluctance of external partners to use national procedures and mechanisms for project and programme management inflates the burden on national institutions, which have to cope with a variety of uncoordinated and often repetitive partner processes.

What can be done: Insist on partners' coordination and alignment with national management systems.

The coordination of external assistance is primarily the responsibility of the national government conducting SSR. Regular coordination with all external partners is necessary to ensure consistency in the various forms of support being provided by those partners. Besides bilateral encounters, inclusive coordination meetings gathering all external partners around the government leading SSR help to maintain adequate sharing of information and a comprehensive overview of the external assistance environment.

Moreover, the use of national procedures and systems is a requirement endorsed by the vast majority of international development actors (see Section 4.3.2). However, implementing this principle can prove challenging on the ground. West African governments should first of all set up credible management systems based on international norms, harmonised procedures with oversight and audit mechanisms, and sufficient human capacity to operationalise these systems. Ensuring the training of national staff on how to implement national procedures and communicating clearly with external partners on existing management procedures are essential steps towards building a common framework for project and programme management that is effective and country-owned.

To minimise the waste of time and resources of national administration on double-dipping procedures, it can be useful to mandate the national SSR coordination unit (within the national SSR coordination mechanism) to develop harmonised reporting templates, organise joint reviews, define standard budget procedures and design other harmonisation tools.

Box 9: Frequent shortcomings of external support to SSR

Advisably, West African governments engaging in SSR should beware of frequent and often interrelated shortcomings of external assistance to SSR, such as the following.

- **Weak understanding of the local and national context by outsiders.** International partners sometimes bypass constructive inputs from national stakeholders. Yet without continuous guidance from national stakeholders, development partners may fail to perceive cultural sensitivities, historical heritages and other context-specific features. This could lead them to design interventions that do not fit the actual needs of a particular country, institution or community, potentially with the risk of doing more harm than good. Explaining the context, the historical heritage and other background features should be a continuous activity of the host government and its national stakeholders (including civil society). It is essential to ensure that all initiatives by international partners are validated and conducted through inclusive mechanisms that involve national stakeholders in a substantial manner.

- **Tendency to replicate foreign models.** External partners sometimes tend to overlook the peculiarities associated with the local and national context in the reform process, and promote a recipe-type solution to complex governance challenges. Although policy transfer can be a useful tool for capitalising on the experience of other countries, consideration must systematically be paid to contextualising SSR actions. When it comes to SSR, one size does not fit all. If the host government wishes to examine foreign experiences in order to nurture its own national policy process, several cases should be looked into.

- **Over-technicisation of SSR**. International partners often overlook the social and political dimensions of SSR and rush into providing support in overly technocratic ways. This underestimates the fundamentally political nature of SSR, thereby failing to address critical issues of national values and vision, institutional cultures and public trust underlying the construction or consolidation of a functioning and accountable security sector. It also hinders the ability of SSR to engage with social and political actors who have a great influence on security governance, such as national leaders, members of parliament, leaders of key civilian self-defence movements and other non-state security providers, and community-based opinion leaders.

- **Narrow focus on primary security providers.** Acknowledging the broad definition of the security sector according to the AU and ECOWAS policy frameworks, development partners and recipient governments should not focus exclusively on the core defence and security institutions, but also take into account relevant civilian management and oversight actors, such as parliament, national human rights commissions and other ombuds institutions, financial oversight agencies and civil society actors.

- **Narrow focus on "train and equip" interventions.** Rebuilding an effective and accountable security sector requires more than material, infrastructure and operational training support. Although these elements are necessary, they do not qualify as SSR unless they are associated with improvements in governance structures and strengthening of ethical norms. A broader approach to SSR also requires that reform efforts should not be limited to areas such as defence, intelligence, border management, justice and probations, policing and community safety, but should address related structural challenges, such as human rights and gender equality in the security sector. Furthermore, SSR should be designed as a constituent part of wider state reform efforts, which may include tax reforms, youth employment initiatives, women's empowerment policies and other institutional processes that affect the general environment of human security.

  Note: The narrow focus on "train and equip" often leads international partners to overlook other areas of SSR intervention, such as those outlined in Section 6.

- **Lack of transparency on assistance provided.** Multiple, mismatching systems of reporting from one international partner to another make it difficult to understand how SSR-related ODA is developed and what it actually encompasses. This uncertainty affects the reliability of what some partners report as SSR-related ODA to the recipient government and to international bodies in charge of collecting development cooperation data, such as the Development Co-operation Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Unclear reporting mechanisms also increase the odds for untimely, incomplete and poorly explained reporting on external assistance. Overall, poor readability of assistance reports hinders the ability of the recipient government to monitor and manage assistance received appropriately.

- **Lack of predictability.** See Section 2.2.3.

- **Excessive limitations with technical assistance.** Some external partners tend to entrust a great deal of their technical assistance services to international experts. Although the provision of technical assistance is, in itself, a valuable way of gathering high-level expertise to support SSR, the systematic recourse to international consultants is often perceived as partner driven, non-transparent and unnecessarily expensive. To make the most of external assistance, it is recommended that the mobilisation of foreign experts should be restricted to cases where the required expertise is not available at the national level. When national expertise is not available, foreign technical assistance should have the objective of building national capacities. Arrangements should be made for sustainable skills transfer through training of national trainers, mentoring mechanisms or pairing international experts with national counterparts, for example.

4

Applying principles of effective development partnerships to SSR support

> *Generic guidelines for effective development assistance, such as those stated in the 2005 Paris Declaration, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action and the 2011 Busan Partnership document, must also apply to SSR assistance.*

When it comes to SSR, insufficient use is often made of existing international guidance for development cooperation, notably because SSR projects and programmes are not always accepted as developmental. However, recognising the linkages between security and development, various international organisations (the OECD, UN, EU, etc.) have increasingly admitted as development assistance the "soft" forms of security assistance that are aimed at strengthening both institutional efficiency and the democratic nature of security governance.[6]

SSR assistance and what is usually considered traditional development assistance do share common dynamics when it comes to partnership relations. Although SSR is a particular area of interventions that does require additional precautions, international guidance for effective development cooperation provides a basic framework that can effectively inform good partnership practices the field of SSR.

4.1. Core principles for development assistance

Drawing on lessons learnt from decades of international development cooperation, the international community has developed a set of principles aimed at improving the effectiveness of international cooperation for development. These principles are essentially captured in milestone documents, such as:

• the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005);

• the Accra Agenda for Action (2008);

• the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation Agreement (2011);

• the Report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2013).

These international initiatives provide useful guidelines on how to optimise the relevance and upscale the impact of external assistance in all areas of international cooperation. ECOWAS and its member states, along with their traditional bilateral and multilateral partners, have endorsed a number of these guidelines.

Efforts for implementing these principles must come from both sides of the partnership. On the one hand, international actors must improve the structures and coordination of their cooperation policies and practices. On the other hand, countries benefiting from external support must also improve their approaches to partner relations. In this regard, viewing external assistance relationships as a domain of mutual responsibility for improvement is critical to enable effective partnerships.

These generic principles for effective development assistance should inform the management of external assistance of SSR like any other area of governance cooperation. Accordingly, West African governments willing to engage in SSR-related cooperation should be guided by the following core principles.

- National **ownership** of reform priorities, supported by a country-led needs assessment.
- **Alignment** of external support with national policies, strategies, institutions and procedures.
- **Harmonisation** through enhanced coordination among external partners as well as with the national party, to improve the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of support provided.
- **Managing for results** with country-owned, results-oriented frameworks.
- **Mutual accountability** in all aspects of the partnership, including shared responsibility in the use of resources, achievement of reform goals and ethical accountability.

Beyond global commitments, the AU and ECOWAS have formulated specific guidelines for external support to SSR in their member states (see Box 10 for AU guidelines and Section 7.1 for ECOWAS guidelines).

Box 10: AU guidelines on external assistance to SSR

National vision and parameters for external support for SSR: External support for SSR will adhere to a nationally defined vision of security and security sector reform. Where such a vision has not yet been coherently articulated, external partners may seek to support the development of such a national vision. At the same time, national actors need to share the responsibility of ensuring that external support advances a national vision and need to be willing to (re)negotiate external assistance if it is not consistent with nationally-defined goals and objectives.

Coordination of SSR assistance: Coordination of SSR assistance is ultimately a national responsibility. When and where national authorities lack the capacity for coordination, the RECs [regional economic communities], the African Union and/or the United Nations 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: AU Policy Framework on SSR, Section B, Article 16, paras (d) and (j).

4.2. Securing national ownership

Local [or national] ownership is defined as a state in which the reform of security policies, institutions and activities is designed, managed and implemented by domestic rather than external actors. What is required is not local support for donor programmes and projects, but rather donor support for programmes and projects initiated by local actors.

Source: Leopold von Carlowitz, "Local ownership in practice: The justice system reform in Kosovo and Liberia", DCAF Occasional Paper 23 (Geneva: DCAF, 2011), p. 2.

Box 11: Quick reminder: National ownership and leadership

Experience has demonstrated the importance for West African states to take strong leadership in:

- identifying their own national governance and security needs;
- setting their own national agenda for SSRG;
- assessing their own capacity to implement this agenda;
- expressing clear areas of interest for external support as a complement to national investments;
- asserting the need for partners to use national management systems;
- setting the pace for their own reform processes (see Section 4.2.3).

For more detailed guidance see Tool 1 on political leadership and national ownership of SSR processes. **1**

4.2.1. SSR assistance must be demand driven

Asserting country ownership and leadership is indispensable to allow effectiveness of external support to SSR. Effective external support must be demand driven, not supply commanded. This means that for external support to be effective, it must respond to existing local needs and not set its own agenda. National demand constitutes the fundamental benchmark for assessing the relevance and usefulness of external assistance to SSR.

One possible way to help ensure that assistance responds to home-grown demand is to establish, as part of the procedure for entering partnerships, a requirement for:

- the source of the demand to be explicitly identified ("at the request of XYZ stakeholder...");
- the documents and national strategic planning on which the support is aligned to be explicitly outlined.

Any support initiative should be systematically validated to demonstrate its contribution to the overall vision of security promoted by the state. Formal documentation (such as memoranda of understanding or cooperation agreements) should contain official and precise terms of collaboration, clearly stating national leadership, state sovereignty and partner accountability as part of the basic prerequisite for assistance to be accepted. In all cases, it is critical that West African states enter partnerships in a selective and insightful manner.

Good practices recommend that states initiating SSR should establish as a political and procedural requirement that only demand-driven support matching a specific home-grown expression of needs is welcome. The partnership agreement should duly document the origin of the demand, as well as the alignment of the proposed response with identified national priorities.

4.2.2. Demand for SSR assistance should rely on country-led needs assessment and capacity gap analysis

The demand for external assistance should be based on national needs identified through an inclusive and comprehensive country-led assessment of security needs and of national capacity to respond to these needs. This participatory process must account for the security needs of the state, those of the population as a whole and those of specific social groups within the population, such as security needs specific to men, women, boys, girls, particular age groups, undereducated segments of the population, minorities or remote rural communities.

The analysis of existing response capacity against security needs identified through this inclusive needs assessment process will lead to a clearer overview of capacities that are missing to enable the state to respond better to relevant security challenges. By shedding light on concrete areas that require improvement, this gap analysis helps define reform priorities. It evaluates the funding needed to enable security sector institutions to fulfil their mission with the required effectiveness, which will then serve as a roadmap for external resource mobilisation. The capacity and funding needs that cannot be filled by national resources are considered to be gaps.

A capacity gap analysis for defining external assistance needs should start with the clear definition of a national vision of security through an inclusive and participatory consultation process which reaches out to a broad constituency of national stakeholders. Country-led security needs assessment should not be limited to government institutions; it should rather adopt an inclusive approach that engages with all national and local stakeholders and interlocutors. The objective is to build confidence in the reform process and foster shared ownership among a wide range of stakeholders within the security sector and local communities. National authorities organising the consultation process should partner with credible civil society organisations to achieve more inclusiveness.

This commonly shared national vision should then become the basis of political dialogue with external partners (see Section 3.1.1), in an effort to generate buy-in (see Section 3.1.3) and agree on common grounds for the provision of assistance towards realisation of nationally set goals within the framework of locally expressed needs.

4.2.3. SSR should follow national pace

There is often pressure on national authorities by international partners to speed up certain processes in order to keep up with the partners' expectations or funding cycles, which may not match national governance cycles.

Although fine-tuned progression of the reform process is important to maintain its vitality and credibility, the pace of SSR must not be imposed by programme cycles of external partners at the expense of societal or institutional buy-in within the host country. Reforms are long-term efforts, and should be

presented as such from the beginning. National authorities should be realistic in the deadlines they set for societal-level goals, and avoid unrealistic commitments that may lead to counterproductive and overly technocratic reform overloads.

At a societal level, processes such as national consultations, parliamentary capacity development and trust building are among the most critical areas that should not be rushed by external partners or any other actor. Core national funding helps to maintain state control over the pace of reforms.

At an institutional level, reforms require institutional transformations that go well beyond the sum of technocratic modifications in management procedures to encompass necessary shifts in institutional cultures and individual mentalities. Such transformations require continuous efforts over what may come close to the timespan of an entire generation.

At an activity level, the need to prioritise continuous capacity building may slow down the execution of certain tasks. For instance, external partners providing technical assistance for a policy review may be tempted to "do it themselves" in order to move faster; however, this approach will not be sustainable as it will not allow for skills transfer. Instead, it is preferable to support the development of strong national expertise through a process of collaborative working and mentoring. Since this type of approach requires more time, this should be taken into account when planning reforms.

> *SSR takes time and requires careful change management mechanisms to achieve sustainable results.*

4.3. Ensuring partner alignment with reliable country systems

The principle of alignment refers to two important commitments. The first is that partners providing assistance should base their support on nationally defined priorities, policies and strategies. The second is that external assistance should be delivered through country systems.

4.3.1. Policy alignment

Policy alignment refers to the need for external partners to tune their assistance offer to the agenda and priorities defined by national stakeholders, by virtue of the national ownership principle (see Section 4.2).

To facilitate alignment of external support to national priorities, West African governments should endeavour to develop a national security policy and/or sector-specific policy or strategy documents which articulate the priorities, strategic goals and objectives of SSR. Such documents are important references for national stakeholders and external actors to understand the national vision for security and be able to align with it. Ideally, a national security policy will provide the most comprehensive and consistent overview, from which a specific SSR strategy could be derived, while subsector strategies (e.g. defence white paper, internal security strategy, border management strategy, etc.) would feed into the overall national policy strategy on SSR.

However, developing a comprehensive national security policy framework is an extremely ambitious undertaking. As a more accessible alternative, governments of countries engaging in SSR may want to develop shorter yet clear statements of intent, with strategic goals and objectives for the specific security sector. In all cases it is important to provide an unambiguous strategic background for partners to align on.

4.3.2. System alignment

Experience in the West African region and elsewhere has proven that external partners are sometimes tempted to design and implement SSR-related projects according to their own systems and procedures. This runs contrary to the principles of effective partnerships and national leadership of SSR. Instead, programmes and projects funded by external partners should be managed according to national procedures and through national structures.

Creating the conditions for partners to align on national systems and procedures requires efforts to increase trust and credibility, notably by modernising overall national management systems and fighting corruption. West African governments willing to mobilise external assistance in support to SSR should develop reliable country systems that adhere to broadly accepted standards for transparency, especially as relates to public procurement and financial management systems. Strengthening national procedures and structures is sometimes a necessary prerequisite, which should then be properly planned for as an integral part of the external assistance agreement (see Box 12).

The credibility of country systems relies on both their effectiveness and their transparency. Independent and systematic external audits of public accounts and active parliamentary oversight of public finance management help build partner confidence in country systems.

As a general rule, national authorities should discourage the establishment of parallel implementation structures and strive for partners either to help improve national systems or to use them as they stand. In cases where partners have started using parallel management systems, urgent action should be taken to assert political commitment to the principle of alignment, demonstrate the technical reliability of national mechanisms and agree realistic integration plans.

Ensuring partner alignment on national systems increases the visibility of government in the forms and quantity of assistance being provided. This is essential to enhance the predictability and tracking of external assistance, and to ensure that external funding is fully and accurately reflected in the national budget. Ultimately, it helps improve consistency in budgetary planning and comprehensiveness in external assistance monitoring and reporting.

> **Box 12: The role of external actors in supporting the strengthening of national systems**
>
> When the weakness of national systems undermines the principle of partners' alignment, external partners should support the strengthening of these systems rather than impose their own systems.
>
> In the framework of effective partnerships that aim for long-term and structural impact, national governments may benefit from external support in strengthening their own management structures. Typically, partner support for strengthening national management systems would include institutional capacity building in such fields as:
>
> • budget cycle management;
>
> • management of public accounts and expenditure in the security sector;
>
> • financial reporting of public policy implementation relating to the security sector;
>
> • auditing of public accounts;
>
> • streamlining of procurement procedures;
>
> • support to transparency initiatives, such as plans against corruption and misappropriation of funds or assets.
>
> In Togo the EU implements a multiyear institutional support programme which includes an entire component on strengthening economic decision-making and management of public finances, alongside various budget support projects. Although this example does not apply to SSR assistance specifically, it illustrates how international partners can improve the processes of national systems while supporting the actual delivery of public services through these systems.

4.4. Encouraging harmonisation among external partners

4.4.1. Improving coordination among partners

In many cases, West African states are rightfully concerned about the fragmentation of development assistance across a multitude of funding channels and initiatives. The proliferation of assistance micro-projects inflates operating costs and pressure on national coordination mechanisms. However, competition between external partners often makes it difficult to turn wishful declarations in favour of joint planning and action into reality. The persistence of unharmonised, overlapping and duplicative assessments, reviews, audits, expert missions and consultations overburdens national administrations. Similarly, the lack of harmonisation of the review mechanisms of external partners results in multiple reporting requirements that overstretch the capacity of national bureaucracies (see also Section 3.3).

In accordance with the principle of national ownership and leadership, West African governments engaging in SSR assistance partnerships should take the lead in harmonisation of external assistance by:

• raising partners' awareness of risks associated with duplicated efforts;

• creating credible coordination mechanisms and developing effective coordination tools;

• entrusting a legitimate external partner (such as the AU, ECOWAS, UN or a respected bilateral partner, for instance) with the responsibility to coordinate all external partners;

• creating opportunities for information sharing and facilitating exchange with and among partners.

In this respect, harmonisation requires high levels of trust and communication between national stakeholders and development partners, as well as among the latter. The use of integrated SSR dashboards helps to capture the variety of external assistance initiatives in a manner synthetic enough to foster relevant synergies. See also Section 4.7 on multilevel coordination as an effective partner management tool.

4.4.2. Sharing responsibilities according to the added value of each external partner

As a way to scale up effectiveness of external support, the Accra Agenda for Action promotes the principle of specialisation in international assistance delivery. It encourages international actors to focus on a few sectors where they have a comparative advantage, in order to reduce the breadth of their intervention while increasing the odds for high-quality delivery.

Accordingly, some development partners have embarked on division of labour exercises, along the lines of their respective mandates and expertise. In the case of SSR, such sharing of tasks could result in external partners sharing responsibilities for support to particular sectoral reforms or cross-cutting projects, such as defence reform, police reform, justice reform, support to parliamentary oversight of the security sector, human rights and penal reform or gender equality in the security sector.

By conducting joint SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses to determine the areas of comparative advantage of each external partner, national administrations can effectively encourage partner specialisation as a way to enhance external assistance efficiency.

4.4.3. Building synergies

Based on the comparative advantages of each individual external partner, it is easier to identify areas of mutually reinforcing added values. This helps to create synergies that contribute to scaling up the impact of external assistance while increasing overall coherence of external support to SSR. Opportunities for synergies can be identified at all levels, from a one-off activity to a broader project or programme.

National authorities may also want to encourage development partners to use cooperation modalities designed for joint interventions, such as pooled funding or co-financing, in an effort to share responsibility best in the provision of assistance under a coherent overall umbrella.

Such modalities usually involve:
- joint analysis and identification of programme objectives;
- joint programme design and implementation planning that specify the role and responsibility of each partner;
- joint monitoring and evaluation, and joint auditing;
- joint critical reflection processes associated with monitoring and evaluation.

As such, they create momentum for harmonisation of vision and management tools. Moreover, pooled funding and procedural harmonisation reduce transaction costs and lighten the management burden on recipient governments.

4.5. Managing for results with a country-owned framework

4.5.1. Understanding performance assessment frameworks

International commitments for effective development cooperation urge both development actors and recipient countries to manage and implement their projects and programmes through performance-oriented frameworks. Such frameworks aim at facilitating the management of interventions in such a way as to produce desired results at lesser cost and following an agreed plan.

Performance assessment frameworks require the identification of agreed objectives (results that are aimed for) and the determination of relevant indicators to assess progress towards the achievement of these predetermined objectives. Results-based accountability systems monitor progress made, while results-based evaluation systems identify why programmes are succeeding or failing and what actions should be taken to improve programme results.

Using results indicators together with systems for monitoring them provides momentum to feed the results of solidly documented performance analysis into decision-making at different levels (operational, institutional and policy). In this sense, when results-based evaluation systems are linked with results-based accountability systems, they become valuable management tools.

4.5.2. Fostering an institutional culture for result-based management

In several ECOWAS member states managing for results requires a fundamental shift of institutional cultures in public administration, especially in the security sector. In many places security institutions have little experience in the use of such frameworks to inform policymaking and implementation. Consequently, creating a culture of managing for results will require long-term efforts and incremental approaches.

Despite the limited capacity of some government agencies, ECOWAS member states can generally incorporate country-owned results-oriented management frameworks into their SSRG programming. It may be useful to put in place change managements mechanisms to accompany the introduction of performance assessment routines, to minimise the risks of staff resistance to such evaluations.

4.5.3. Developing effective tools for result-based management

Country-owned management frameworks allow West African governments to organise their own reform processes and develop the most suitable tools to monitor progress within their particular national and institutional contexts. With regard to the principle of alignment, external partners should adapt their management frameworks to national tools for performance assessment, not the other way around.

Although logical frameworks or theories of change are often mentioned as the typical result-based management frameworks, these should be regarded as programmatic tools whose value depends on the robustness of the strategic planning on which the reforms rely.

Instead of considering them as superficial procedural requirements imposed by external partners, countries engaging in SSR should regard the development of such tools as an exercise, breaking down their strategic vision into operational steps that can be monitored and will therefore facilitate progress towards predetermined results. As such, this exercise offers a unique opportunity for the country engaging in SSR to tell the story of the changes it is striving for, and to organise the operational phases for turning the general strategy into reality. Moreover, logical frameworks should be seen as living documents which should evolve with the country context and strategy, continuously helping to clarify the operational route towards achieving the aims of SSR.

Considering the complexity and sensitivity of SSR, such management tools are particularly useful in clarifying the logic of actions, which helps to streamline the reform process, sequence actions in the most efficient way and lower associated costs. Ongoing monitoring should be seen as a tool for identifying possible miscalculations that may hinder project performance in the long run, in order to trigger necessary corrections while there is still time.

Because SSR entails a considerable and uncountable political dimension, the technical features of a typical logical framework may not suffice to monitor the progress of reforms. Alongside quantitative progress indicators and other fixed elements, an effective result-based management system for SSR should also capture evolutions in institutional cultures, ethical standards and other soft dimensions of reform results.

Most importantly, partner-supported interventions (activities, projects, programmes) must embrace the national framework designed to track reform progress. This is part of the need for system alignment outlined in Section 4.3.2. Partners' buy-in to the nationally set result monitoring system is necessary to harmonise reporting requirements and enabling ongoing operational and strategic consultation on the basis of consistent and shared information.

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For more information, see Tool 2 on SSR programming.

4.6. Building trust through effective mutual accountability mechanisms

4.6.1. Accountability to respective constituencies

International guidelines for effective development cooperation call on both development partners and recipient countries to be first and foremost accountable to their own constituencies. This involves accountability to their parliaments and electorates on the use and impacts of external assistance resources. External partners usually report to their mandating authorities, such as the executive boards of international organisations or the ministries of foreign affairs and finance and parliaments of countries providing resources.

National governments receiving external assistance in the conduct of an SSR process should also report to their constituencies, through both internal and external accountability mechanisms involving:

- the parliament, especially parliamentary committees for defence and security and for budget and finance;
- national independent oversight institutions, such as the national human rights commission, the national office of audits and the independent anti-corruption agency;
- local governments, including local elected officials and traditional leaders;
- civil society actors, including women's organisations, youth associations, academic research centres, transparency initiatives and the media, including at local and community levels.

To the extent possible, these national institutions and organisations should try to contact their counterparts within the partner country. Exchange between oversight institutions and organisations can improve mutual understanding and context awareness on both sides. This can help strengthen the partnership framework through a constructive diversification of channels for dialogue and political support.

4.6.2. Joint accountability to national stakeholders of the recipient country

National administrations and external partners should also jointly be accountable to the people of the country undergoing SSR with external support. Concrete ways for West African states to operationalise this exigency include:

- integrating parliamentary briefing sessions in the work plan of externally supported SSR projects and programmes;
- involving parliamentary representatives in joint reviews of externally supported projects and programmes;
- planning field visits of parliament members and civil society representatives to the premises of security institutions supported by external assistance initiatives;
- enabling and encouraging parliament to hear representatives of external partner institutions willing to support, supporting or having supported an SSR-related intervention;
- enabling parliamentary inquiry commissions and national human rights institutions to investigate allegations of human rights abuse, sexual exploitation and other gender-based violence committed by external partners;
- encouraging the development of security sector budget analysis by civil society;
- commissioning independent operational audits of programmes supported by external partners by civil society observatories or research centres;
- submitting programmes supported by external partners to independent auditing, either by renowned private firms contracted through a competitive process or by a statutory financial oversight institution such as the court of accounts or the auditor general;

- enabling independent anti-corruption agencies to oversee the delivery of assistance by external partners and the management of subsequent resources by the government;
- enabling citizen participation in external assistance oversight through public feedback initiatives that enable and encourage whistleblowing in cases of serious misconduct by staff members of external partner institutions, fraudulent financial practices of national and international actors, and misuse and waste of public resources coming from international assistance;
- facilitating public access to non-confidential reports of projects and programmes implemented with external funding, by external partners or through other forms of external assistance.

4.6.3. Reciprocal accountability

Perhaps the core of mutual accountability lies in the reciprocal accountability of external partners and national development actors towards each other. Implementing this principle requires West African countries to approach external assistance opportunities as equal-to-equal partnerships, and not as a taker-giver relationship. Although most countries in the region are familiar with reporting to external partners on the use of resources allocated through assistance programmes, the reverse movement is sometimes uneasy.

Yet it is important for national governments to design effective mechanisms aimed at holding external partners accountable for the effectiveness of the technical and funding assistance that they provide. Such mechanisms should pay consideration to factors such as:

- non-alignment of external partner programmes on national policy;
- poor use of national systems by external partners;
- fragmentation of external assistance and poor coordination among the partner community;
- unclear composition of resources reported as ODA, including overrepresentation of self-institutional costs;
- timeliness of funding disbursements according to contractual agreements;
- relevance and affordability of technical assistance provided, including any instance of overpriced expert costs.

Concrete ways of operationalising the need for reciprocal accountability include joint project reviews, ongoing sharing of information and regular joint project briefs. Where feasible with little or no extra transaction cost, national governments may wish to consider establishing an independent mutual accountability monitoring framework involving representatives of external partner institutions, national administration, civil society and the parliamentary defence and security committee, with an oversight role to ensure the credibility of mutual accountability processes. Independent observation of the mutual accountability mechanisms could also be requested from ECOWAS as a form of regional support to effective management of external assistance by member states.

Moreover, communication plays a major role in building trust with external partners. In general, maintaining good relations with external partners through open and transparent communications reduces the risk of losing partners. Explaining the context, the progress and the challenges should be elements of the information exchange. In case of shortcomings, it is better to communicate actively by explaining the nature of challenges faced and the measures taken or proposed to overcome them. Mutual trust and understanding between partners ask for open and transparent communication. Partnerships should be built and nurtured in order to be able to face difficult situations together.

Box 13: Developing a strong framework for partners' accountability

National mechanisms should hold partners accountable and demand transparency of external assistance in two main areas.

- **Ethics and behaviour.** In countries like Liberia, national stakeholders have been confronted with serious cases of misconduct by external actors implementing assistance programmes. Practices like bribery, gender-based discrimination in the allocation of jobs or contracts and sexual exploitation of members of the civilian population must not be tolerated under any form of assistance partnership.

- **Use of funds and means.** A breakdown of the utilisation of funds provided and directly expended by international partners sometimes may reveal an overrepresentation of operating costs or expensive fees for international expertise that could be mobilised at national level at lower cost. Preventing such excesses requires solid monitoring, budget analysis and project evaluation capacities.

4.7. Multilevel coordination as an effective partner management tool

Effective coordination of all actors, including external actors, is a cornerstone for effective country-led, country-owned SSR. In keeping with the principles of effective development cooperation, it is important to ensure that the contributions of the different external partners feed into a coherent framework directed towards the achievement of strategic SSR goals.

For that purpose, it is advisable to organise the coordination of partners at three levels.

- **Coordination among government actors** is necessary to ensure that the government speaks to external partners with a single and consistent voice. This responsibility can be entrusted to the national agency or mechanism responsible for coordinating the SSR process, to the government entity in responsible for coordinating partner relations or to another relevant institution.

- **Coordination among external partners** is useful to ensure that partners share information among themselves and take into consideration the contributions of others in the course of their own assistance programmes. The recipient government may ask an external partner which enjoys legitimacy among its peers to take the lead for coordinating external actors. This role is often assigned to the UN resident coordinator's office, to the in-country representation of the AU or ECOWAS, or to a particular bilateral partner with the necessary credibility and capacity.

- **Coordination of external partners by the recipient government** is necessary to ensure that all funding and actions supporting SSR, regardless of their sources, feed into the national reform agenda and are consistent with one another. It is generally the responsibility of the national coordination mechanism for SSR to oversee the consistency of external assistance with national objectives and actions. This requires institutional capacity for centralising information on partnerships and projects, and facilitating information sharing among all actors involved, both national and external.

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For more information, see Tool 2 on SSR programming.

All three forms of coordination should happen at both political and technical levels.

- **At the political level,** coordination is necessary for the consistent provision of strategic guidance.

    - **Intragovernmental coordination at the political level** is usually handled by the office of the president or prime minister, ministers or directors, depending on the government policy and complexity of the project/programme. Overall guidance and coordination of the SSR process often lie with the head of state or government, who chairs the office of national security, the national council for SSR or similar entity responsible for leading the SSR process. Involvement at this level guarantees strong political support for SSRG programmes and provides a consistent strategic vision for SSR.

- **Inter-partner coordination at the political level** usually happens between the heads of diplomatic representations and development agencies, under the leadership of the coordinator of external partners.

- **Government-partners coordination at the political level** entails communication between national authorities at high levels of leadership and institutional leaders of development partner organisations and agencies. Weak communication lines at this level can lead to increased volatility and unpredictability of external assistance. Ongoing political dialogue between national authorities and leaders of partner institutions is necessary to agree on the conditions and targets of assistance to be provided, and to maintain a common understanding thereof. Ways to sustain communication at this level include (but are not limited to) bilateral consultations, high-level meetings and exchanges of official mail.

- **At the technical level,** coordination is necessary to foster complementarity in project and programme implementation, and more generally in all forms of daily SSR work. Technical coordination also reinforces the quality of inputs from technicians to decision-makers thanks to a more comprehensive overview of SSR from a practitioner's perspective.

  - **Intragovernmental coordination at the technical level** requires information sharing between administrators and practitioners both within and among national institutions. Periodic technical meetings can provide opportunities for the different ministries to discuss ongoing reform actions, improve interagency collaboration and identify possible synergies. Building on the complementarity of different state actors involved in the SSR process, this form of coordination contributes to optimising the use of national resources, both human and financial, through a holistic and intersectoral approach to SSR. This form of coordination can be encouraged, for instance, by the creation of intersectoral working groups or operationalisation of existing ones (see Box 14).

  - **Inter-partner coordination at the technical level** relies on strong communication channels between project and programme personnel of the various partner institutions. Creating interagency clusters or taskforces may help to improve coordination at the project or programme level, especially among partners supporting the same national stakeholders or areas of reform.

  - **Government-partners coordination at the technical level** helps to ensure the effective delivery of assistance through unified channels. Setting up communities of practice or other information-, knowledge- and expertise-sharing forums can serve to foster constructive interactions between specialists and practitioners from government agencies and external partner institutions. By bringing together specialists and practitioners from different national and partner institutions, such mechanisms contribute to the circulation of information and facilitate the identification of entry points for collaboration and joint initiatives. In some cases, common training opportunities for pools of technical staff drawn from diverse national and international institutions will offer valuable opportunities to initiate interpersonal communication, with the advantage of facilitating daily collaboration thereafter. Joint needs assessments, project reviews, field visits or other project cycle management initiatives can also be organised as a way to reinforce technical coordination and create opportunities for mutual support while operationalising mutual accountability. Sharing updates on potential obstacles, delays and reporting also contributes to fostering trust and constructive collaboration at the technical level.

Making external support effective requires high levels of trust and continuous communication between the recipient government and development partners at all levels.

Partner coordination is indispensable to foster consistency in complex SSR processes and upscale the impact of external assistance. It helps to:

- **increase the credibility of the host government,** which demonstrates leadership by assumes the primary responsibility for coordination;

- **minimise the risks of redundancy,** with similar actions being undertaken in parallel by different actors;

- **minimise the risk of contradictory actions,** as a lack of communication and coordination among actors involved in the provision and management of external assistance to SSR can lead to contradicting and mutually neutralising interventions;

- **reduce operating costs through synergies,** joint interventions and appropriate sequencing that allow each actor and funding window to support the part of a broader strategy for which it is most suited;

- **make the most of each actor's added value,** through adequate sharing of responsibilities that takes into consideration the comparative advantages of external partners in support of national objectives;

- **mutualise knowledge** by exchange of information, best practice, lessons identified and use of each other's means if needed.

To the extent possible, the recipient government or implementing agency should use, strengthen and consolidate existing coordination structures rather than creating parallel structures. This reinforces the coherence of structures and ensures the sustainability of projects.

In some cases, informal coordination among individuals working directly on projects has been the most effective option. With numerous documents and correspondence flowing between the recipient government and development partners, there can easily be misunderstandings and errors. One way to mitigate this is to create informal communication lines (in addition to formal ones) between the partner institution and government agency, with the objective of improving the flow of information.

Box 14: Setting up inclusive working groups to follow up on complex interventions

Setting up thematic working group or committees often contributes to enhancing coordination, while securing an inclusive approach at the technical level. Such groups may comprise individuals from security institutions working on the projects, representatives from the parliamentary defence and security committee, representatives from the relevant government agencies and other stakeholders, including oversight bodies and a representative from the donor agency or government, as appropriate. In addition, civil society representatives should be coopted into working groups. Members of working groups should include women as well as men.

The technical coordination working group ensures timely implementation of actions contributing towards the strategic aims of SSR, in accordance with an agreed plan. Often such technical working groups act as collaborative monitoring mechanisms. The working group or committee may need to work with the budget oversight committee or budget office to ensure timeliness of fund allocation and improve the speed and predictability of funding.

As a reform management mechanism, the membership of these groups should generally be reserved to national stakeholders. However, invitations to attend particular meetings as observers and/or contributors may be extended to external partners, as relevant.

Developing an effective strategy for resource mobilisation in support of SSR

The mobilisation of external support for SSR, especially funding, requires a clearly defined strategy and harmonised approach. When engaging development partners to support SSR, ECOWAS member states should proceed cautiously and methodically. It is critical for West African states to develop a consistent partnership and resource mobilisation strategy to guide their engagement with external actors, and to put in place the necessary structures to implement this strategy.

Acknowledging the challenges that the fragmentation of external intervention poses to effective delivery of cooperation results, it is appropriate for government agencies to maintain among themselves dialogue, communication and coordination on any intention to solicit either financial or large-scale technical assistance.

Most importantly, effective mobilisation of external support should rest on high-level political dialogue clearly establishing the common goals pursued by all parties involved in the partnership. Regardless of whether they are based on good intentions, unsolicited or inaccurately monitored assistance initiatives can damage the aims of the reform while undermining national leadership and ownership.

5.1. Assigning clear mandates and responsibilities for establishing partnerships

In the absence of clearly defined mandates and procedures for requesting, negotiating and signing partnerships for such a complex process as SSR, national institutions may engage in parallel discussions with the same external actors and find themselves competing for resources or technical assistance on the basis of concurrent expressions of needs. This can undermine the overall coherence and usefulness of the support provided by outsiders, possibly with redundant or contradictory efforts. The absence of coordination among national stakeholders may further result in a dislocation of the demand for assistance and consequently increase transaction costs.

From the partners' perspective, difficulty in identifying clear interlocutors officially mandated by national authorities to lead discussions on SSR-related cooperation may deter potential partners from getting involved in the sensitive arena of SSR. The lack of a single government voice in the dialogue with external partners also tends to damage the credibility of national leadership of the SSR process, giving a perception of confusion and indecision in the national party.

To avoid these shortcomings, the designation of a particular national agency to take the lead on cooperation discussions is essential. The purpose of this leading role should be to centralise and coordinate assistance requests emanating from various national institutions, and to ensure that relevant information on upcoming, ongoing and past partnerships is adequately circulated among relevant government institutions.

Although the ministries of finance, planning or foreign affairs are often assigned the responsibility to coordinate external support relations, other structures can also be designated for that purpose, depending on the national context. Where a national SSR coordination mechanism has been set up with direct affiliation to the prime ministry or presidency, it may be, in collaboration with all relevant ministries, an appropriate actor to facilitate the consistency of the national voice in the dialogue with external partners. Most importantly, whichever structure is assigned this responsibility should:

- have the ability (mandate and capacity) to engage in high-level political discussions on the basis of clear guidelines provided by top national authorities;
- assess the consistency of proposals presented by national institutions with existing projects, and avoid redundancy and contradictory approaches;
- ensure that proposals presented to external partners are consistent with the government's priorities and in line with any nationally agreed strategies or policies.

Beyond the designation of an institutional lead for in-house coordination, it is also important to clarify assistance mobilisation procedures, which usually require the involvement of various national institutions at different stages and in different capacities.

a) The discussion on a potential area of assistance may be initiated either by the leadership of the concerned institution (such as the minister of defence, of security or of justice), or by an intersectoral institution mandated to mobilise assistance on behalf of the line ministries and based on the needs expressed by them.

b) In instances where a line ministry or government agency identifies a clear need for external assistance in a reform component, it should inform other relevant departments of its intentions and enquire about existing government interactions with this partner before proceeding to engage in discussions with the interested external partner.

c) The ministry of foreign affairs may have an important role to play as an interface between domestic institutions and external partners, and should be kept informed of any developments affecting diplomatic relations.

d) It is usually necessary to keep the ministry of planning informed of proposed projects, to allow for a strategic overview of external assistance.

e) Whenever assistance is envisioned to be financial, the ministry of finance may need to be involved to keep track of external funding, advise on appropriate fiscal management of the proposed interventions and integrate external resources in the management of the national budget. It may also be involved as the national authorising office in discussions regarding funding that will be channelled through the government's central budget.

Box 15: Risks associated with a lack of strategy on resource mobilisation

The lack of a clear process for external resource mobilisation often leads line ministries and decentralised entities to negotiate directly with potential partners. This undermines the role of the finance and foreign ministries in negotiating and managing proposals. Experience has also demonstrated that the lack of a clear policy or strategy for resource mobilisation provides an opportunity for external actors pushing an agenda of their own to manoeuvre one agency or ministry against another.

While substantial expressions of needs emanate from core security sector line ministries (defence, security, justice), involvement of the ministry of planning (or equivalent) may help to ensure intragovernmental consistency, while the ministry of foreign affairs traditionally plays an important role as interface in the conversation with external actors, and the ministry of finance takes responsibility for coordinating funding flows in a manner coherent with the national macroeconomic framework.

It is therefore advisable that these three ministries are always informed of consultations with bilateral partners undertaken by core security sector ministries or institutions.

5.2. Understanding the external assistance environment

Before actively engaging in external assistance mobilisation, it is necessary for West African governments to have a precise understanding of existing cooperation options, including who the potential partners are, what their specific areas of interests and added values consist of, and how their preferred cooperation modalities may or may not fit with national needs for SSR.

5.2.1. Identifying potential funding sources

National governments seeking to mobilise external resources in support of SSR should first of all have a clear overview of potential funding partners. Box 16 presents an indicative overview of potential partners for West African states. The mapping of potential funding sources should be conducted at the national level and updated as often as necessary.

Box 16: Who are potential external partners for SSR in West Africa?

Potential partners for SSR in West Africa include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Multilateral organisations of which the countries are members, such as the UN, the AU, ECOWAS, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the Mano River Union, l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, the Commonwealth, etc.

- International or regional financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the West African Development Bank (as a UEMOA development financing instrument), etc.

- Other multilateral organisations, such as the EU, the OECD, etc.

- Bilateral partners (states and their agencies), from either developed or emerging economies.

- International civil society actors, such as international foundations and non-governmental organisations, academic and research institutions, think-tanks, policy advisory teams, etc.

- Private security companies.

- Private sector companies and corporations (not specialised in security). The government can engage private sector companies through various means, including corporate social responsibility policies and special taxation.

Source: Ornella Moderan, "Political leadership and national ownership of security sector reform processes", in Ornella Moderan and Kossi Agokla (eds), *Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

Beyond the pool of "traditional" partners with which a country has historically been engaged, the mapping of potential partners provides momentum to explore opportunities for innovative partnerships. Expanding the pool of external partners provides access to increased funding opportunities and reduces dependency on single assistance programmes.

New partners may be identified among countries or organisations which do not have a diplomatic representation in the country but are active in international support to democratic governance, civil society participation, women's and girls' access to justice and security, community policing, human rights or other issues that offer strong entry points into SSR.

An often overlooked potential source of funding is the private sector. The private sector can be encouraged to see the benefits to the business climate if it works in partnership with governments to support and expand the capacity of law enforcement agencies to address criminality and strengthen the rule of law. The sector should also be sensitised to the benefits of developing corporate social responsibility portfolios that support projects with a strong community focus, such as those aimed at improving the access of women and girls to justice and security. Private companies can contribute to SSR by funding civil society projects, or by supporting infrastructure development and donating non-combat equipment (vehicles, communication material, etc.) to security institutions as a contribution to the professionalisation of defence and security forces.

However, considering the sensitivity and complexity of SSRG, recipient governments should be cautious of the legal and operational framework for funding agreements with the private sector. When considering a funding source, especially from the private sector, the track record and credibility of a potential partner should be duly considered to determine its acceptability to the recipient government. In most cases, it is advisable to make civil society a full part of the conversation. Most importantly, all funding should be compatible with the government's priorities and processed through transparent procedures in order to ensure accountability and minimise the risks of corruption or conflicts of interests.

5.2.2.   Mapping the profiles and interests of potential partners

International organisations and cooperation agencies of partner countries usually have a specific mandate and particular fields of interest, which also shape their areas of specialisation and delineate their fields of expertise. The priority areas for their international engagement are usually defined by their foreign policy (for bilateral partners) or mission statements (for multilateral organisations). As such, their expectations and domains of interests vary, providing different opportunities for direct or indirect support to SSR.

It is therefore important first of all to map out the profile of potential funding partners, including:

- the scope of their particular mandates;
- their history of collaboration with national institutions;
- their history of support to SSR-type initiatives in the region or globally;
- their declared and implicit areas of strategic interest;
- their funding portfolios, looking at funds available, funding windows and requirements and guidelines for accessing funding support.

Development partners offer support to programmes that align with their humanitarian concerns, strategic interests and development policy priorities. Securing a clear understanding of these features increases the chances of mobilising the right form of assistance from the right partner.

See also Box 17 on points of consideration during partner mapping.

Box 17: Points of consideration for partner mapping

Points for consideration during the partner mapping exercise include, but are not limited to, the following.

- The identification of all external actors potentially available to support overall SSR or a particular component thereof.
- The definition of specific mandates, interests and priority areas of engagement of each potential partner.
- The assessment of consistency between those partner interests and national priorities of the country requesting assistance.
- The lessons from experience of past cooperation with these partners, especially in terms of their:
  - level of understanding of the national context and receptivity to input from national stakeholders;
  - consideration for national leadership and ownership of development programmes in general and SSR in particular;
  - flexibility on partnership conditions (including operational issues like limitations of outsourcing);
  - willingness to enter partnerships on an equal-to-equal basis;
  - reliability in keeping to funding and other forms of official commitments;
  - usefulness and efficiency in the technical support they may provide along with funding.

Since each potential partner has its own methodology for analysing support allocations for SSR programmes, identifying their priorities helps to determine a win-win approach for cooperation which crosses the priority interests of both partners involved. This can help governments engaging in SSR better to assess the compatibility of their needs with partners' priorities, which affects the determination of which partner to approach on what issues.

Although sensitive underlying objectives are not always openly stated, embassies and local offices of development partners are generally able to provide information on their expectations and interests as cooperation institutions upon request from the host government. Ideally, the ministry of foreign affairs should be responsible for maintaining broad policy dialogue with external partners through the country's foreign missions. Line ministries soliciting external support should be updated on relevant developments in diplomatic relationships. In collaboration with relevant line ministries or agencies, the ministry of foreign affairs should help in identifying potential new partners.

5.2.3. Understanding funding modalities

The term "funding modalities" describes the way ODA is delivered. Different modalities are defined by the process used to transfer the funds, and how the funds are managed and disbursed. These include type and terms of finance, disbursement channels, procurement conditions, and targeting and tracking of resources allocated by the external partner.

ODA can be provided in a variety of modalities, including:

- **budget support,** where the funds are directed through the national budget, providing discretionary funding for implementation of national or sector programmes;
- **programme-based and sector-wide approaches,** where funding is provided in support of a sector or thematic strategy, with close partner coordination and a structured process for increasing use of in-country systems;

- **project support,** where funding is delivered through dedicated management structures and arrangements;
- **technical cooperation or non-financial support such as technical assistance,** where support is delivered through development partners seeking to transfer knowledge in a sustainable manner.

Numerous funding instruments can be used to operationalise each of these modalities: for example, multi-donor funding for a sector programme or stand-alone project.

West African nations may receive SSR support from international partners through:

- different types of financing (grants, loans, etc.);
- different kinds of procurement conditions (provision of cash or in-kind support in terms of material or technical skills which can be tied to specific sources of supply);
- various disbursement channels and traceability mechanisms – general budget support (GBS), sector budget support (SBS), sector programme support (SPS), stand-alone projects, pooled funding or multi-donor trust funds with or without earmarked funding.

Each of these arrangements has specific strengths and weaknesses (see Box 18 for an overview based on experiences from Ghana and Sierra Leone). Understanding the nature and implications of all available options is essential in order to decide which partnership modalities are best suited to a particular national context. While elements such as the level of democratic openness, institutional stability, national capacity to fight corruption and reliability of the public finance system will inform the preference of external partners to opt for a particular cooperation modality, the host government should also ensure that proposed options are consistent with national priorities, needs and management capacities.

Box 18: Strengths and weaknesses of particular funding instruments[7]

Type of funding instruments	Strengths	Limitations/cautions
General budget support	- Funds are channelled through the recipient country's national budget. This focuses on overall budget priorities and allows flexibility in allocation of the national budget through the sovereign budget process. - GBS increases the amount of discretionary funding available for programming through the budget, and creates incentives for partner countries to improve their planning and budgeting systems as a whole. - It is usually not earmarked, and fully embraces the national public expenditure management rules and procedures.	- GBS requires a certain level of institutional reliability and fiscal discipline, thus it may be particularly challenging in fragile contexts. - Risks include lack of transparency of funding flows due to weak budget reporting, and especially a risk of low domestic accountability. - Due to its generality, GBS is incapable of encouraging particular reforms ("fixing reforms"), unless the recipient government and its institutions are committed to policy reforms.

Sector budget support	• Funds are channelled through the recipient country's national budget, but targeting a predefined sector (e.g. defence, internal security, civilian protection, penal reform, etc.). • This option focuses on supporting a specific sector under the recipient government's leadership, using common management and reporting procedures. • The preference is to have SBS unearmarked, especially when defined within the framework of a sector-wide approach.	• SBS allocated to sector-wide programmes that include traditional security sectors like defence and intelligence (embedded in cultures of secrecy) sometimes creates problems in coordination, management and accountability.
Sector programme support	• Funds can be delivered through SBS, pooled funding or project funding. SPS often relies on a single budgetary framework, and usually supports a specific sector or thematic strategy.	• SPS is beneficial if it is in clear alignment with government priorities, if it is on budget and on plan, with predefined exit strategies, and more importantly if costs to the government for accepting such assistance are minimised.
Project support	• Individual interventions for stand-alone projects with specific objectives and implementation schedules, often within an agreed national framework. • Sometimes used to support infrastructure investments, which can be "stand-alone projects". • Can be used for specific activities in highly sensitive subsectors within the security sector, such as defence and intelligence. • Demand driven, based on needs that have been clearly identified by, or together with, the recipient government.	• Since project support budgets are individual interventions, they can run the risk of not being clearly in alignment with government priorities and existing institutions. • Recipient governments should encourage project support to be designed in a way that prioritises knowledge transfer and includes a sustainable skills transfer component. It should represent value for money (see Box 19), and be time-bound with a predefined exit strategy. • If not strategically managed, project support can cause a proliferation of several parallel units and result in high transaction costs.
Multi-donor trust funds or pooled funding (basket arrangements)	• Very useful in fragile contexts, since funds are disbursed quickly to obtain results on the ground.	• If pooled funding is not properly integrated into existing government structures, it undermines the recipient government's ownership of the intervention.

Box 19: What is value for money?

Value for money can be defined as 'achieving the best possible development outcomes over the life of an activity relative to the total cost of managing and resourcing that activity and ensuring that resources are used effectively, economically, and without waste'.[8]

Originally used by the private sector, the concept of value for money (VFM) has increasingly been used by development agencies and partner countries to frame their approach to foreign assistance allocations and account for taxpayers' contributions. For DFID, for instance, value for money is "about maximising the impact of each pound spent to improve ... people's lives".[9]

Despite sporadic references to and isolated interventions for VFM on their side, most developing countries engaged in international assistance programmes have not made sufficient use of this concept to guide their own approach to optimising the use of domestic and external resources allocated to development and governance programmes, such as SSR.

Using a VFM framework can help West African governments to assess the net worth of external assistance to SSR, taking into account not only the amount of funds mobilised and disbursed but also the transactional costs associated with these allocations and the social return they generate (through job creation and long-term institutional capacity building).

As a comprehensive approach, VFM considers the following.[10]

- **The economic use of funds allocated:** are goods and services procured at the least cost for the relevant level of quality? The principle of economic use of funds does not mean that only the cheapest options should be taken, but that the best price for the desired quality should be sought. For instance, it may be less costly to task an individual consultant with drafting an institutional policy against discrimination and sexual harassment in the police services; but the need for institutional buy-in may justify the decision to go through a more inclusive policy development process, although this would be longer and more costly.

- **The efficient use of funds allocated:** efficiency refers to the optimal use of available resources to reach agreed objectives. It checks whether the same results could have been achieved at a lesser cost. For instance, the tendency of some external partners to contract international consultants systematically despite the availability of competent national experts at lower costs questions the efficient use of funds.

- **The effective use of funds allocated:** have the funds used actually generated the expected results? Effectiveness refers to the actual implementation of agreed actions and the level of success of these actions in achieving given goals. In linking both, it considers the relevance of actions funded in the perspective of broader objectives. For instance, if funds are allocated to developing constructive civil-military relations as an outcome-level objective, VFM verifies that any activity funded under this objective brings an actual added value to its achievement.

- **The equitable use of funds allocated:** equity is closely linked to effectiveness, and considers whether the benefits of an assistance programme are distributed fairly and in such a way as to ensure the best possible social impacts. For instance, a civil society engagement initiative that did not reach women's organisations and community-based organisations may not have made the most equitable (and effective) use of funds.

5.3. Managing the external assistance environment

5.3.1. Selecting funding arrangements according to national specificities

When it comes to SSR, one size does not fit all. Any programmatic arrangements must be tailored to country specificities. This applies to funding arrangements as well. The national context will determine

feasibility and desirability of various funding options, from the point of view of both national authorities and external partners.

Different funding arrangements (such as particular support lines, disbursement mechanisms, etc.) can have different impacts in different contexts. Depending on the nature, characteristics and priorities of a country, different modalities and instruments for external funding support are regarded as less or more suitable. For example, national features such as the reliability of public financial systems and the administration's ability to fight corruption will determine the appropriateness of certain funding mechanisms.

In all cases, recipient governments should ensure that aid options are consistent with national needs, priorities and management capacities.

5.3.2. Managing partners' preferences

To negotiate the most suitable funding arrangements, it is important for West African governments to understand partners' perspectives on SSR resource allocations in the region and in their particular country. The country's context usually determines to a large extent the preference of partners for a particular type of funding instrument.

Assessing partner preferences can be challenging, because each development partner has its own methodology for analysing funding requests and assessing the national management of resources allocated for SSRG programmes. Such methodologies are not always shared among partners or with beneficiary administrations. Besides, differences in approach and perspective among funding partners add to the uncertainty on the flexibility in resource allocations and risk management, which are critical to delivering results in SSRG programmes.

Partner practices differ in crisis-afflicted societies, post-conflict settings, transitional societies and stable democracies. For example, some funding instruments will be particularly challenging in fragile and conflict-affected environments because the public financial management systems and fiscal discipline may be weak and cannot adhere to the reform incentives attached to external resource allocation. In an effort to obtain more flexible conditions, it is therefore important for recipient governments to demonstrate the reliability of national financial management and oversight mechanisms.

In other cases, funding instruments are predetermined by the external partner's internal policies for resource allocation. For instance, the European Commission encourages its services to move towards programme-based approaches jointly funded with other international contributors. The European Commission is also streamlining its interventions by focusing on a limited number of sectors per country. Through research and dialogue with ongoing and prospective partners, West African countries should document partners' policies and adjust their resource mobilisation strategies to institutional and political constraints faced by partners. This helps to focus negotiations on areas where the partners do have room for flexibility.

5.3.3. Sustaining an integrated approach by encouraging GBS over project-limited funding

West African states engaging in SSR funding partnerships should encourage external partners to shift away from individual (stand-alone) projects towards programmes or sector-based programming through GBS or similar machineries that allow more flexibility at the national level. With regard to a whole-of-government approach that helps secure the consistency of SSR interventions with other public policies, this contributes to strengthening comprehensive management of resources at the disposal of the national administration. Moreover, since GBS funding is channelled through the national budget, it also facilitates democratic accountability for the allocated funds, which parliament and public audit institutions may have easier access to overseeing.

Although most individual national agencies would prefer external assistance to target stand-alone projects because it gives them direct access to and control over the funding, a more integrated programming approach enables strategic coherence. However, this requires a change in habits and strong leadership from national authorities.

In line with their commitments on development assistance effectiveness, some international funding agencies have started moving their services from small stand-alone projects to larger programmes in line with the partner country's policy. There is also an increasing shift towards co-financing or pooled funding. This evolution is an opportunity for governments conducting an SSR process, because co-financing reduces the risk of duplication of effort.

For the country receiving external support, co-financing arrangements have the advantages of:

• reducing transactional costs and burden by harmonising reporting and other management requirements;

• extending government autonomy in allocating resources according to national priorities.

5.4. Building credibility for resource mobilisation

5.4.1. Establishing the framework for a partnership of equals

As a general rule for international cooperation, and with particular regard to the political sensitivity of SSR, agreements for external assistance should be built on mutual trust and understanding between the parties, and rely on a common set of core principles for effective partnerships. For that purpose, international commitments provide a solid general framework, which can be complemented by consistent country-specific principles.

To establish an equal relationship with external partners, national governments should approach external assistance arrangements as strategic partnership frameworks and actively engage in high-level political dialogue on the goals to be pursued. This is important in order to move away from the traditional giver-taker relationship, which induces imbalance in partner relations and undermines the credibility of national leadership. Technical programmatic discussions should only come after agreement has been reached at the political level on the nature and aims of the partnership.

The initial phase of political dialogue provides an opportunity for West African governments to state clearly their areas of interests in such a way as to spark partner alignment, while also assessing the opportunity and relevance of the partnership being considered, as not all assistance is desirable. This is a critical moment for national authorities to assert their strategic leadership of the reform process and collaboratively define the rules of the game. Ministries of foreign affairs can be instrumental in engaging and maintaining broad policy dialogue with external partners.

In an effort to build trust, national governments should set up credible systems of accountability, based on a combination of procedural harmonisation, external auditing, national auditing and oversight by the parliamentary committee of finance and public accounts. Opportunities should also be created for public oversight of public funding targeting the governance and reform of the security sector, by involving credible civil society actors.

5.4.2.   Building external assistance into a national framework for financing SSR

Instead of being a starting point of resource mobilisation, requests for external assistance should only come to complement core national funding mobilised through domestic resources in the first place. Section 17.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals recognises the need to "strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, including through international support to developing countries to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection".[11]

National governments requesting external funding to support their SSR process should aim to demonstrate credibility as reform leaders and reliable partners fully assuming the primary responsibility for SSR. For that purpose, it is essential to approach external funding as part of a broader, nationally conceived framework for financing SSR, which needs to be organised in a rational and comprehensive manner so as to ensure cost-efficiency, relevant prioritisation, transparency and accountability.

With respect to the fundamental principles of national leadership and ownership of SSR processes, external support should only come in to complement national efforts. In terms of funding, this means that external contributions are intended to complement domestic resources in general, and national budget provisions in particular. By allocating seed resources, national authorities send a strong signal of ownership of the SSR process.

For instance, committing seed resources from the national budget to preparatory activities aimed at defining reform needs and priorities (see Box 5) helps to trigger further resource mobilisation from external partners, while demonstrating national ownership of and state responsibility for security governance. It is also an effective way for West African states to take clear leadership in assessing their own needs, developing their priorities and creating the conditions for partners to buy into a nationally set security agenda. National funding of preliminary assessments demonstrates the state's awareness of the need for reform and a commitment to invest time, effort and resources into the improvement of public service delivery in the area of justice and security.

Including SSR costs in the state budget contributes to demonstrating political commitment and emphasising national leadership of and responsibility for defence and security expenditures. Considering the budget limitations faced by many West African countries, improving tax systems and encouraging domestic savings and investments can help to strengthen domestic capacity for funding SSR.

Box 20: Matching external contributions to national funding through joint project funding and counterpart financing

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

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 implies that the state and the external partner agree on a shared management system, from setting up the project to evaluating costs, determining what expertise is required, recruiting consultants, procurement procedures, monitoring and evaluation, 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 state's share 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 combine counterpart financing with management rules designed to encourage 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 methods, reporting requirements, etc.

Source: Mpako Foaleng and Amadou Mahamane Ousmane, "Security sector reform programming", in Ornella Moderan and Kossi Agokla (eds), *Toolkit for Security Sector Reform and Governance in West Africa* (Geneva: DCAF, 2015).

5.4.3. Strengthening national management capacity

National management capacity represents an important feature of credibility in negotiating external funding. External partners are usually more inclined to allocate funding to countries with a functioning administration governed by effective management and oversight procedures.

National capacity for managing external assistance depends on both institutional systems and procedures and human resources. West African governments willing to mobilise additional resources to support SSR may wish to consider how to improve institutional mechanisms affecting the management of national and external funds supporting critical governance programmes such as SSR. Interesting features to look at may include the following.

Credibility is also a matter of institutional and technical capacity.

- **In terms of institutional performance and business processes:** decision-making procedures, budget management processes, procurement processes, institutional rules and regulations, intra- and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation capacities, human resource management policy and practices, internal and external accountability mechanisms, etc.

- **In terms of human capacity and skills:** availability of national expertise in all required fields, including budgeting and finance, training and other capacity development for civil servants, mechanisms for promotion and career management aimed at retaining male and female talents, etc. Stand-alone partner projects also tend to monopolise qualified national personnel, so the government is therefore deprived of their expertise.

In many cases, conducting institutional audits or capacity needs assessments may help delineate the main areas for improvement. Depending on the case, major institutional reshuffling may be needed, whereas in other cases limited readjustments may have a disproportionate impact on the overall efficiency of a system.

5.5. Engaging with external partners

5.5.1. Developing partner-specific documentation for resource mobilisation

In some instances, external partners may approach West African governments with offers of assistance. However, in many cases the government conducting SSR should be prepared to take the initiative in approaching potential partners. Requests for support are more likely to be successful if they are consistent with the development assistance priorities of the partner and presented as win-win opportunities for collaboration.

Indeed, having an effective approach to partner relations is critical to raise the interest of potential partners. Such communication requires both a presentation of the full scope of the SSR process and a more specific demonstration of how the national SSR programme joins up with the fields of interest of each particular partner. As outlined in Section 2.3, SSR touches on a variety of interconnected governance issues in which external partners may have a special interest.

Considering that a narrow understanding of SSR may lead potential partners to exclude themselves from the external assistance discussion, this approach helps to highlight the multiple linkages between SSR and broader governance concerns. It is usually beneficial to get partners to shift away from a narrow "train and equip" understanding of SSR towards a more comprehensive approach to improving the governance of security and security institutions.

The mapping of potential partners and identification of their foreign assistance priorities should help to determine points of convergence around which to tailor partner-specific communication tools. It can be useful, for example, to derive partner-specific documentation from the generic framework of the national SSR process and programme.

Without distorting the content of the agenda or betraying national priorities, this approach consists of highlighting how the preferred areas of interest of the targeted partner converge with the SSR process as a whole. It helps identify partner-relevant entry points. Typically, these could relate to the following.

- **Promoting gender equality:** when engaging with a partner whose strategic focus is on gender equality, government authorities of the country conducting SSR may wish to explain that gender equality is an integral part of good security governance. The integration of a gender perspective in the management of security institutions is likely to improve the attractiveness of these institutions as a workplace for women, and increase the quality of security services provided to men, women, boys and girls. Government authorities may want to request assistance from this partner on specific projects (through

GBS or SBS) aimed at enhancing the access of women and girls to justice and security, developing or reviewing gender policies within law enforcement institutions or raising gender awareness in the judiciary, for instance.

- **Combating corruption:** when engaging with a partner whose strategic focus is on rolling back corruption and bribery, government authorities may emphasise that a strong component of SSR deals with improving financial governance of defence and security institutions. This helps create institutional cultures that are more resilient to corrupt practices. It can be useful to specify that SSR also addresses ethical and behavioural norms within the security sector, which are an essential aspect of the fight against corruption in the public service. Government authorities may want to request assistance from this partner on specific projects (ideally through GBS) aimed at strengthening the capacity for internal and external financial oversight, for instance. External funding channelled through GBS can also be earmarked for supporting civil society contributions to budget analysis or participation in oversight of public funds used in and by the security sector.

- **Protecting children:** when engaging with a partner who has a strong interest in supporting child protection initiatives, national authorities leading the SSR process may want to highlight that the professionalisation of defence and security institutions will help increase institutional responses to child abuse and violence. SSR also provides for the strengthening of collaborative relations between civil society and security institutions, which is critical to improve both prevention of and response to child abuse and violence.

- **Support for decentralisation and local governance:** in countries where poor, overly centralised administration of a vast territory has resulted in the emergence or intensification of threats to human, national or regional security, national authorities willing to mobilise additional resources for SSR can make a strong argument for the development of effective models for community safety and building a space for dialogue between communities and security institutions at the local level.

- **Promoting and protecting human rights:** when discussing potential assistance with a partner whose foreign assistance policy mainly focuses on human rights, national authorities may want to explain how SSR will contribute to improving respect for human rights and strengthening the rule of law in their country. It may then be useful to point out that important aspects of SSR:
  - deal with strengthening the legal framework of security governance, including through due integration of all human rights requirements;
  - reinforce security sector accountability, including as it pertains to human rights, and that specialised human rights institutions (such as national human rights commissions) and human rights organisations from civil society play an important role in democratic oversight of the security sector;
  - seek to strengthen the capacity of security and justice institutions to protect effectively the fundamental rights of the population to life, physical integrity and gender equality (which is a human right);
  - contribute to a peaceful environment that is conducive for realisation of the socio-economic rights of the people.

- **A variety of other SSR features may be of interest to point out to raise partner interest.** Emphasis can be put on the positive impacts of the national SSR programme on the transnational security environment, on parliamentary development as a democratisation priority, on the sustainability of a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process, and on many other aspects that are directly connected to the aims of SSR as a rule of law, peacebuilding and conflict-prevention tool.

Even if attention is focused on a particular aspect of the reform, it is important also to present the programme as a whole and emphasise its overall coherence in terms of coordination and expected outcomes. This helps to reassure partners about the overall robustness and sustainability of the reform framework. It also provides a strong rationale for advocating GBS rather than project-limited funding,

even if partner preference goes to a particular area of intervention.

5.5.2. Developing a proposal to request funding support

Whether the initiative for partnering comes from the potential partner or from the country conducting SSR, it should go through a procedure that requires the host administration to frame the type, content and scope of assistance that is desired. An important phase for this purpose may be the formulation of a funding request for SSRG, which often requires the development of a proposal outlining the aims, strategy and requested resources for achieving predetermined results contributing to the overall enhancement of security governance. Although this is not a systematic requirement, indicating the share of budget that is covered by domestic resources against gaps remaining to be filled with partner support often adds to the credibility and helps trigger additional funding.

Proposal drafting requires programming and technical writing skills, as well as financial management literacy. In order to ensure that cross-cutting issues of gender equality and human rights are adequately mainstreamed, specific expertise in these areas may be required.

However, developing a proposal for SSRG is a substantial undertaking that demands not only technical skills but also strategic vision, and the ability to break it down into operational planning through a programming approach. It is essential to align the proposal with the national vision of security, which may be captured in a national security policy or equivalent existing document. Proposal drafting should also be informed by a country-led assessment of the support needed.

Following the provisions of the national policy guiding external resource mobilisation for SSR, proposals supporting requests for external assistance may be drafted:

• by the government institution requesting sector-specific support (typically the ministries of defence, security or justice);

• by the SSR coordination mechanism (office for national security, coordination cell of the national steering committee for SSR, etc.) in collaboration with all relevant ministries and institutions, especially when the scope of the proposal is intersectoral;

• by the agency responsible for coordinating SSR resource mobilisation (see Section 5.1), which can be requested to centralise expressions of needs from all relevant stakeholders and formulate an integrated proposal on that basis.

Usually, for intersectoral proposals a small team is set up consisting of representatives from the different government ministries or agencies concerned to ensure that all relevant sector leads are on the same page.

For coordination reasons, government agencies seeking to mobilise external assistance should make a habit of contacting the agency mandated to coordinate resource mobilisation for SSR, outlining the proposal, explaining how it fits with relevant national and/or sector strategic plans and sharing information on any initial discussions with or expressions of interest from development partners. These contacts should occur at an early stage of project proposal development, based on an initial concept. Thenceforth, and before the proposal is actually written, the resource mobilisation coordination agency should ensure that the proposal concept fits with national priorities and policies.

Regardless of which government agency is assigned the responsibility of coordinating external resource mobilisation for SSR, all correspondence and details of any relevant discussions with development partners should be copied to appropriate ministries or government agencies, not omitting:

• the ministry of finance, which oversees the national budget and financial flows affecting public institutions;

• the ministry of foreign affairs, which is at the forefront of interactions with international actors.

5.5.3. Managing the negotiation phase and formalising agreement

External funding can be negotiated bilaterally, or through enlarged engagement with multiple partners concurrently at a round-table conference or similar forms of meetings aimed at sparking partnerships. Thanks to its diplomatic legitimacy and credibility, the ECOWAS Commission is well placed to assist member states in organising such events. The ECOWAS Commission has, in fact, in many instances provided support either by directly organising events and convening external partners on behalf of a member state, or by providing political, financial and operational support to member states willing to hold partners' meetings.

When fundraising meetings are organised with external partners, a knowledgeable negotiating team composed of skilled and experienced men and women should be appointed. The members of this team should have a strong background in finance, procurement, programme management and capacity-building strategies. If necessary, a programming, finance or procurement expert (or a small group of experts) with sufficient understanding of the proposal and SSR constraints may be contracted either to support the negotiating team or to take on the responsibility for building its negotiating capacities beforehand.

The treasury department or ministry of finance should be consulted at an early stage on any discussions concerning a loan element, i.e. any funds which the government will be required to repay in the future.

Since conditions within the security sector in particular can quickly deteriorate, it is critical for the negotiation team to make arrangements that ensure the timeliness of external assistance, and improve, to the extent possible, the speed and predictability of funding in order to facilitate programme success. In this regard, the team should negotiate for disbursements of mobilised funding assistance to be released according to agreed annual or multiyear schedules.

When both parties are satisfied with the outcome of the negotiations, the agreement should be recorded in writing in the form of a memorandum of understanding or similar documentation capturing the main terms of the agreement, which is then signed by a minister or other authorised individual on behalf of the government.

5.5.4. Distributing allocated resources

Once the proposal is approved and resources allocated, the budget office of the authorised government agency should proceed with resource distribution to the relevant departments or institutions, in line with institutional priorities and the provisions of the funding agreement. This process should be conducted with due diligence and an adequate balance of discretion and openness, allowing for democratic oversight of the use of resources mobilised on behalf of the nation.

Developing special support strategies for underfunded or overlooked areas

> *"Implementation of SSR must place an equal emphasis on the effectiveness of core security providers as well as their oversight and proper management. SSR involves not only building effective security institutions in a coherent manner, but it also involves laying down the foundations of good governance upon which they must stand. The latter remains a gap area for international support."*
>
> *Conclusions of the Africa Forum on SSR, Addis Ababa, 24–26 November 2014.*

6.1. Putting emphasis on governance reforms

As a holistic process, SSR should not only address the material needs for the development of defence and law enforcement, such as facilities, equipment and operational training of security sector personnel. SSR is also and most importantly a governance-oriented process which focuses on improving the management and governance structures that influence decision-making, service provision and accountability in the security sector.

For a successful transformation of the security sector, the focus has to transcend "hard" initiatives aimed at operational support in order to integrate "soft" aspects of SSG. This includes putting the emphasis on the observation of ethical and professional behavioural standards, on human rights, on the promotion of gender equality and on the implementation of other good governance requirements in the administration of security institutions. It also includes enabling inclusive accountability mechanisms that allow for civilian participation in security policymaking and monitoring of security service delivery.

In the absence of a holistic vision that incorporates the reinforcement of integrity, promotion of human security, protection of human rights, (re)orientation to democratic norms and good governance principles, reforms of institutional structures and strengthening of professional skills, SSR will not be transformative. Instead it may end up reinforcing a dysfunctional security architecture, with the risk of further weakening state legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

Box 21: Rebalancing funding allocation between soft and hard areas of SSR

In its thematic review of security sector reform and peacebuilding in 2012, the Peacebuilding Support Office concluded that the support efforts of the Peacebuilding Fund in "software" areas such as institutional governance or oversight were marginal in relation to the resources dedicated to "hardware" priorities such as infrastructure, training and equipment.

[For instance], according to the thematic review of security sector reform and peacebuilding, 93 per cent of the resources allocated by the Peacebuilding Fund had been directed towards infrastructure, training and equipment and operations support, whereas only 7 per cent had been allocated to general security sector reform.

In order to create basic trust between citizens and State institutions, and to begin to address social contract deficits, security institutions must improve the quality of the security services they provide to the public. This requires a clear focus on the ultimate objective of increasing people's security and safety which, in turn, necessitates an inclusive dialogue and the participation of communities and civil society organizations, including women's groups.

Source: "Securing states and societies: Strengthening the United Nations comprehensive support to security sector reform", report of the Secretary-General, 13 August 2013, paras 54 and 55.

The mobilisation of additional resources in support of SSR provides an opportunity to increase fund allocation to support soft dimensions that are usually overlooked and sectoral reform areas that are often little considered. This section suggests action points for some of the traditionally underfunded areas in SSRG, including (among others):

- intelligence reform;
- gender equality and the security sector;
- public financial management of defence and security institutions;
- accountability mechanisms such as anti-corruption and freedom of information;
- traditional/indigenous security and justice systems.

6.2. Intelligence reform

Due to the culture of secrecy in which they are embedded, intelligence services are often a blind spot of SSR. Yet civilian and military, internal and overseas intelligence services constitute an integral part of the security sector and play an important role in the state's ability to understand its strategic environment and anticipate internal and external security threats.

Among other tasks, intelligence services:

- gather and analyse information that can be critical to state and human security;
- support strategic decision-making by providing analysis in areas relevant to national and regional security;
- anticipate, monitor and give early warning of risks of crisis or imminent crisis;
- inform national security planning and defence and security operations.

In most West African states intelligence services play a critical role in the prevention of and response to internal and transnational threats such as violent extremism, terrorism and trafficking by organised crime (small arms, narcotics, human trafficking, money laundering, etc.).

> **Box 22: Why is intelligence reform important?**
>
> Intelligence reform aims at improving the effectiveness and accountability of intelligence services in the broader framework of SSR.
>
> Effectiveness: Intelligence reform contributes to improve the quality of services provided by intelligence services, fine-tuning internal management systems and optimising value for tax payers money.
>
> Oversight: Intelligence reform contributes to enhancing democratic governance of the intelligence services (including their accountability to the electorate), to uphold the rule of law, and to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of service activity.
>
> *Source:* Hans Born and Gabriel Geisler Mesevage, "Introducing intelligence oversight", in Hans Born and Aidan Wills (eds), *Overseeing Intelligence Services: A Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, 2012).

However, most SSR funding allocations fail to address intelligence reform needs. This is partly because governments initiating SSR often underestimate the importance of reforming intelligence services. They are often reluctant to include the sensitive domain of intelligence in the reform agenda, and even more reluctant to involve civilian stakeholders and external partners in any aspects of the governance of this sector.

For their part, external partners are constrained by mandates and internal guidelines that sometimes advise precaution when it comes to highly sensitive areas, such as anything related to state intelligence services. Most external partners consider support to the reform of intelligence services too risky. However, considering intelligence services as part of the security architecture of a country, supporting their effectiveness and accountability in the framework of democratic governance contributes to overall national stability and rule of law consolidation.

Although foreign offices and ministries of defence of some development partners may be interested in supporting intelligence capacities of developing countries facing security threats with potentially global implications, support for intelligence reform should not be the exclusive prerogative of military cooperation. International organisations and specialised civilian partners can also provide financial and technical assistance in:

- rethinking the institutional framework and procedures of intelligence services in light of human rights and rule of law requirements;
- strengthening capacities for parliamentary and other forms of civilian oversight of intelligence services;
- developing national security legislation (including laws, policies and strategies) that establishes a foundation upon which all the structures, regulations and mandates of the intelligence services are developed;
- developing ethical norms and standards applicable to intelligence institutions, especially relating to human rights and integrity;
- supporting the professionalisation of intelligence personnel through provision of training on ethics, human rights, gender equality, financial integrity, communication and other relevant soft skills;
- setting up or improving national and regional information-sharing systems, recognising that emerging security issues related to counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, counter-narcotics and counter-human trafficking are transnational in nature;
- enhancing financial management of intelligence services.

6.3. Gender equality in SSR

Gender equality is integral to good SSRG. It is a constituent part of each of the principles of good SSG and should consequently inform all reform strategies for the security sector. It is not only a founding principle of good governance, but also an operational requirement for effective provision of security services to all members of a given society.

- **Gender equality is a human right,** enshrined in a variety of international and regional instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. The ECOWAS policy framework for SSRG acknowledges "the obligation of Member States to apply the principles of gender equality and women's empowerment, including in SSR processes". See also Box 23.

- **Gender equality is fundamental to the rule of law:** gender-based discrimination violates the requirement for equality before the law. In contrast, equal access of women and men to justice and security bolsters effective rule of law.

- **Gender equality is a democratic principle.** A fundamental democratic principle is the equal participation of all citizens in the governance of public affairs. Applied to SSRG, this means that men and women should have equal opportunity to participate in the leadership, management and operations of security institutions at all levels. Gender equality in SSG also implies equal access for women and men to take part in external oversight by parliament, statutory oversight institutions and civil society.

- **Gender equality is fundamental to human security:** the human security framework requires placing the security needs of the people at the heart of the national security agenda. This means that security policies must take into consideration all forms of gender-based violence (including domestic violence and all forms of sexual violence) as threats to the human security of women, men, boys and girls.

- **Gender equality is essential to more representative and effective security services.** To be able to provide effective justice and security for all members of society, security institutions should strengthen their capacity to respond to a variety of vulnerabilities and security threats which affect citizens differently depending on their gender identity. Employing more women and engaging men as partners in the fight against all forms of gender-based violence help to create more representative security institutions, which increases their ability to deliver security to a diverse constituency of public service users. More gender-equal security services are more credible and legitimate in the eyes of the population.

Gender equality is not just a normative requirement; it also increases operational effectiveness in the security sector. By pursuing the aims of gender equality, the security needs of the entire population will be taken into account in a more inclusive way.

Box 23: SSRG and gender in the ECOWAS policy framework

"SSRG programmes will adhere to the principles of gender equality and women empowerment as enshrined in article 63 of the Revised ECOWAS Treaty (1993), the ECOWAS Gender Policy (2004), article 81 of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework and the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 (2010). SSRG programmes will also adhere to the principles enshrined in other relevant gender instruments of the AU, the UN and ECOWAS Member States. SSRG programming will include gender-specific activities with the aim to promote gender equality within the security sector."

Source: Draft ECOWAS Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance, Article 16(f).

However, experience has shown that in many cases external support to the integration of a gender perspective in SSRG remains driven by external actors. West African governments should take strong country leadership and ownership in promoting gender equality as a way to improve effectiveness and accountability of the security sector. This entails promoting gender equality as an integral and sine qua non part of the SSR agenda, and consequently being proactive in the mobilisation of national and external resources to support this goal.

The readiness of external partners to support gender equality initiatives in SSR is an underexploited opportunity for West African governments. Government institutions engaged in SSR programming should proactively seize this opportunity, by not only using gender terminology as a set of buzzwords but actually taking the lead in addressing grassroots and concrete expressions of gender inequality as a challenge for good security governance. Gender equality must neither remain nor continue to be considered an agenda pushed by outsiders.

Strategies for integrating the aims of gender equality in SSR include the following.

- **Mainstreaming gender in all SSR projects and programmes,** starting from the design and throughout implementation. Effective integration of a gender perspective in SSRG requires a systematic institutional approach which should be driven by national actors.

- **Dedicating specific projects to gender-related challenges,** either with a particular institutional focus or through intersectoral interventions. Such dedicated projects should, however, be designed and implemented in coherence with the overall SSR framework, rather than as isolated stand-alones.

Good practice recommends securing specific funds for gender equality in SSR programmes: earmarking funds for specific gender interventions in GBS or SBS allocations can be an effective way of ensuring that adequate funding is allocated to gender in a manner coherent with and integral to the overall SSR programme. Monitoring mechanisms should be set up at the national level to ensure that earmarked funds are directed towards activities supporting the aims of gender equality in the midst of broader projects or programmes. Even if funds are earmarked for gender, support can still be provided to gender mainstreaming by generic funding envelopes.

Project funding for gender in SSR can have the advantage of securing dedicated resources for this often overlooked dimension of SSR; however, it also bears the risk of isolating and "othering" gender interventions from the rest of SSR, especially if such projects are embedded at the ministry in charge of women's affairs. If project funding is adopted instead of GBS or SBS for certain aspects of gender in SSR, it is advisable that a ministry of the security sector is assigned the management of such projects to bolster consistency and encourage mainstreaming.

For more information see Tool 8 on integrating gender in security sector governance and reform.

6.4. Public financial management of the security sector

Many external partners funding governance aspects of SSR have the mandate to support the security sector's public financial management. However, it has been difficult to create incentives to open up areas such as defence expenditure for external review, whether by international actors or national actors like the parliament or civil society.

Off-budget transactions, especially budgets for intelligence or national defence programmes that are traditionally embedded in a deep-rooted culture of secrecy, provide an enabling environment for opaque financial management. Poorly harmonised and rationalised financial management procedures also nourish spending inefficiency, resulting in funding waste, increasing the cost of SSR and challenging reform sustainability in low- and middle-income West African countries.

In response to such challenges, SSR seeks to improve cost-effectiveness of security sector institutions while enhancing transparency in the use of public funds by security actors. External partners willing to support SSR in West African countries should not only commit funds to fill gaps in the SSR budget; they should also support the development of a reliable framework for sustainable financial management of the security sector as part of a durable reform process.

It is therefore important to include support for the development of national systems and capacities for sound public financial management in the goals of assistance partnerships. Support for security and justice expenditure review should not only focus on funding one-off reviews, but accompany sustainable capacity building of audit departments or accountability mechanisms. For financial management systems

"Good security sector governance, oversight and management, including in the area of public financial management, should be key priority areas for international support. There is a need to rebalance processes and programmes from a predominant focus on capacity building to equal prioritisation of effective, efficient and accountable use of existing and planned resources invested in reform initiatives … Security sector reform could be a significant expenditure burden to countries, which if left unchecked may crowd out other development priorities … Reforms should therefore be supported by robust public financial management laws and policy frameworks in order for them to be accountable and sustainable."

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to be fully functioning and effective, key security sector managers should have the necessary skills to understand and appreciate financial management and analysis, financial oversight and expenditure policy issues in the security sector.

For example, external support can be directed towards the following.

- Review, rationalisation and harmonisation of financial procedures and systems used by security sector institutions.

- Institutionalisation of security sector expenditure reviews.

- Developing innovative approaches and tools for transparent human resource management.

- Management and procurement (including procurement protocols and procurement control of classified items).

- Skill development for civil authorities responsible for managing and internal oversight of security sector budgeting. Key financial managers within security institutions should have the capacity to understand fully and execute resource allocation processes.

- Design and strengthening of the legal framework for financial oversight of the security sector, including clear definition of the roles and prerogatives of parliament and other statutory oversight institutions competent in budgetary and financial oversight (anti-corruption agency, office of public audits, etc.) and the role of civil society.

- Capacity building for the legislature, especially parliamentary committees on defence and security and on budget and finance. Members of parliament should have the capacity to play their role effectively in the national budget process by allocating resources to security institutions according to their mandates and national priorities. They should also be empowered, through capacity building and the development of a conducive institutional environment, to oversee the execution of funds allocated to the security sector in respect of human rights and rule of law, and in line with their mandates and the needs of the people.

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For more information see Tool 3 on good financial governance of defence and security institutions.

6.5. External oversight and accountability mechanisms

> **Box 24: Democratic control and oversight of the security sector**
>
> "The AU advises Member States to commit themselves to strengthening instruments for democratic oversight of the security sector. These oversight instruments may be country-specific whilst seeking to promote and uphold good governance principles, the rule of law, respect for the legal framework including human rights and gender equality."
>
> *Source:* AU SSR Policy Framework, Article 40.

6.5.1. Fostering accountability by supporting capacity building of external oversight stakeholders

External partners may have a tendency to overlook the importance of external oversight mechanisms as an integral part of SSR. Approaching SSR in a narrow way, they may be prompter to help core justice and security institutions improve their internal governance mechanisms than to support parliamentary capacity development for effective oversight of the security sector or civil society engagement in public oversight of the security sector, for instance.

Government agencies negotiating partnerships may also have a tendency to view SSR through a government-only lens, thus overlooking the role and needs of national stakeholders outside the executive branch of government. This tendency risks jeopardising national ownership of SSR, which goes beyond government or state ownership to include civil society, the legislature, the media, informal and traditional justice institutions, etc.

External oversight is an essential part of good SSG. It is particularly useful to fight corruption in the security sector and to hold security institutions accountable to the public for their actions.

The relationship between civil society and the security services is one of the main issues of SSR. It represents a critical link through which an inclusive, participatory security governance framework can be operationalised. The effectiveness and legitimacy of the security services will benefit from a positive relationship with citizens.

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For more information see Tool 5 on parliamentary oversight of the security sector and

Tool 6 on involving civil society in SSRG.

6.5.2. Fostering accountability by integrating anti-corruption into SSR programming

SSR seeks to build public trust in security institutions by fighting corruption in the security sector. This is, however, an often overlooked aspect of SSR, and in many cases suffers from insufficient funding and attention.

Generally, conditionalities attached to budget support play an important role in facilitating and assisting reform implementation, which includes improvements in the conditions that encourage corruption and misappropriation of funds. Such conditionalities include improvements in management of public expenditures and auditing (see Section 7.3). However, budget support cannot fight corruption unless it is backed by a strong government commitment to transparency and reform, coupled with adequate democratic oversight of the security sector.

It might prove difficult for parliament and civil society responsible for democratic oversight to analyse financial data related to security budgets. Procedures for requesting information from official sources and methodologies to analyse the data against best practice benchmarks are not always sufficiently mastered. In most cases, the media and other civil society organisations lack the resources and expertise to follow the workings of parliament and the security sector, and to simplify budget analysis for the general public.

Partner support to fight corruption in the security sector may go towards:
- reviewing, revising and drafting appropriate anti-corruption legislation;
- training oversight bodies such as a parliamentary select committee, anti-corruption agencies, civil society, media and other oversight bodies on budget analysis and investigations;
- operationalising and strengthening public complaints bodies;
- establishing and building the capacity of independent oversight bodies with the power to investigate and adjudicate complaints and conduct investigations into corruption within the security sector;
- assisting with reform of education and training, and review and revision of human resource policies and laws on recruitment, employment, wages, salaries, promotions, retirement and pension systems of all state security agencies.

6.5.3. Fostering transparency by supporting access to information

Building security institutions that are accountable before the law and the people requires a certain level of public access to security-sector-related information. However, access to information is an often overlooked area in SSR. Mobilising national and external resources in support of this aspect of the reform process requires the government, which usually holds the information, to see things from the perspective of national stakeholders involved in external oversight of the security sector. This is a counterintuitive exercise and can therefore prove highly challenging.

In 2013 22 organisations and academic centres launched new global principles on the right to information, known as the "Tshwane Principles on National Security and the Right to Information". The principles address how to ensure public access to government information without jeopardising legitimate efforts to protect people from national security threats. They were developed to provide guidance to those engaged in drafting, revising or implementing relevant laws and policies.

According to the Tshwane Principles, although a government may legitimately withhold information in narrowly defined areas, such as defence plans, weapons development and the operations of and sources used by intelligence services, and may withhold confidential information supplied by foreign governments that is linked to national security matters, the government should still be accountable for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

> *Ghana's 2006 Whistleblowers Act (Act 720) enables individuals to disclose information that relates to unlawful or other illegal conduct or corrupt practices of others, in the public interest. It also protects persons who make such disclosures from victimisation or reprisals.*

ECOWAS member states could consider reflecting these principles in their interpretation of national security law. They could seek support for:

- legislative review and revisions to incorporate the key Tshwane Principles on National Security and the Right to Information in relevant national legislation or strategy frameworks;
- training oversight bodies, such as a parliamentary select committee, civil society and other oversight bodies, on the principles of transparency and accountability under human rights and humanitarian law.

6.6. Traditional security and justice providers

In most West African countries there are traditional security and justice systems, which include local leaders such as chiefs and spiritual leaders, local courts, chiefdom police in anglophone settings, traditional transitional justice mechanisms and community vigilantes. Informal local arrangements for justice and security also include neighbourhood watch outfits, street committees and a wealth of informal dispute-resolution systems. These traditional and informal systems are often the closest justice and security providers for poor, marginal and rural communities.

However, their relations with the state institutions are sometimes problematic, especially where they are not formally recognised by the state or they directly challenge state authority. In such cases, the national government engaging in SSR may be tempted to exclude these stakeholders from the reform process. Nonetheless, they are often perceived as legitimate institutions by the local populations with which they are associated. In other cases their exclusion may not be actively sought by government, but simply the result of a narrow vision of SSR that fails to engage with informal and traditional security providers.

Acknowledging that traditional and informal justice and security systems play a central role, particularly in the resolution of disputes or contentious intra/inter-community conflicts and the preservation of community safety, SSR should address this often overlooked dimension of security governance. For West African states, improving access to justice should include informal justice institutions as important stakeholders. Their positive potential can only be effectively used if their knowledge of human rights,

accountability and rule of law is strengthened, and linked to state institutions.

Support can for instance go towards the following.

- Building or restructuring the traditional courts. For instance, ECOWAS member states may wish to draw inspiration from the Ethiopian Kebele social courts, which have been recognised as quasi-formal state organs that provide court-like decisions applying *shimglina*, a traditional mechanism of arbitration.

- Enhancing problem-solving skills of traditional leaders, community leaders and arbitrators on issues such as land disputes, as a way to discharge law enforcement and formal justice institutions from certain community-level disputes without jeopardising peace.

- Raising awareness of traditional and informal security providers on human rights and strengthening their understanding of the importance of accountability and the rule of law.

- Raising awareness of traditional and informal security providers on gender inequalities and strengthening their capacity to address gender-based violence, including domestic violence, in a manner that secures effective provision of security to women and girls.

- Educating and empowering the users of traditional justice providers to know and claim their rights, and to demand accountability.

- Building the effectiveness and integrity of traditional security and justice providers for the benefit of all citizens.

- Strengthening cross-communities or cross-traditional lesson sharing on issues pertaining to conflict resolution, crisis management, violence-reduction initiatives, etc.

7

For more information see Tool 7 on non-state justice and security providers and security sector reform.

The role of ECOWAS

ECOWAS as a regional institution continues to play a key role in providing an added layer of support to the efforts of member states.

7.1. Providing normative guidance on partner relations

As part of the draft Regional Policy Framework for SSRG in West Africa, ECOWAS provides its member states with normative guidance for "effective resource mobilization strategy and financing of SSRG programmes" (Section G). The guidance stipulates as follows.

- **Article 49:** To have a transparent, sustainable and long-term financing of SSRG programmes, Member States have the responsibility to allocate a sufficient and a proportionate part of the national budget to the security sector subject to independent and parliamentary scrutiny. They also have the responsibility to coordinate with bilateral and multilateral partners the mobilization of resources for effective SSR processes.

- **Article 51:** Member States shall put in place an effective strategy to secure funding from internal and external sources in order to sustain long-term financing for SSRG programmes. The resource mobilization strategy may include:

    a) An advocacy campaign targeted at potential internal and external donors detailing national security and justice needs and the required resources to fulfil them;

    b) Contribution from the private sector and business community beyond corporate social responsibility, in the nature of investments to promote a safe and stable environment for doing business;

    c) A monitoring mechanism for financial flows/reflows;

    d) A sound management of resources mobilized and an obligation to communicate all the results to relevant stakeholders;

    e) Regular reports and sound record keeping which would be available to the public and other stakeholders.

- **Article 53:** Member States shall assume responsibility for coordinating external support to national SSRG programmes. Where Member States do not have this capacity, external support and capacity-building assistance may be requested from the ECOWAS Commission, the African Union, the United Nations or other partners until such States have the capacity to lead.

- **Article 54:** Member States shall establish a national structure or framework for cooperation and partnerships to support the implementation of SSRG programmes. The national structure will be composed of several stakeholders such as government officials, CSOs [civil society organisations], international partners, CBOs [community-based organisations], research and academic institutions.

- **Article 55:** For post-conflict Member States with fragile State institutions, ECOWAS with the assistance of the international community and other relevant actors may take the lead in coordinating external assistance until the Member States have the capacity to lead.

- **Article 56 c:** Member States implementing SSRG programmes shall have an effective communication strategy in order to … secure more support including funding from internal and external partners.

7.2. Facilitating the effectiveness of external support to SSR

The AU Policy Framework on SSR advises that regional economic communities such as ECOWAS should "engage international partners such as the United Nations in the implementation of national SSR activities of Member States" (Article 69(e)).

The Regional Policy Framework for SSRG in West Africa provides that the ECOWAS Commission should "contribute to the resource mobilization strategy of Member States implementing SSRG programmes" (Article 64(g)). It also specifies that "when necessary, ECOWAS shall support Member States to design, implement and evaluate their SSRG programmes within the limit of available resources. ECOWAS may also seek the assistance of partners in this respect" (Article 50).

Practical recommendations therefore may include the following points.

- Strengthen the capacity of member states in SSRG programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- Provide platforms to facilitate dialogue on external funding support targeting common transnational security threats, including issues pertaining to crime, terrorism, maritime security and piracy, drug trafficking and human trafficking, among others. Several regional forums, such as the ECOWAS development partners' annual conference and thematic groups (including peace and security), ECOWAS-P3+ Partners meetings, etc., discuss such issues.

- Take part in joint assessments, fact-finding missions and monitoring and evaluation assessments on issues pertaining to external aid effectiveness for SSRG (if requested by a member state). For example, ECOWAS was part of such missions in Mali and Guinea-Bissau between 2012 and 2015.

- Provide a platform that facilitates dialogue and technical or advisory support to SSRG between ECOWAS member states and other actors across Africa and the international community.

- Convene and partake in conferences by development partners to source funding, commit resources to support SSRG and monitor progress. For example, the ECOWAS P3+ Partners donor coordination meeting and the annual ECOWAS development partners' meeting and follow-up engagement bring together ECOWAS representatives and key development partners to support peace and security initiatives. As such, they can be good opportunities to engage in discussion on external funding for particular SSRG initiatives in member states.

- Support member states in organising country-focused partner conferences or other forms of resource mobilisation meetings.

> **Box 25: Examples of ECOWAS contributions to transborder security initiatives**
>
> ECOWAS continues to extend both technical and financial support to its member states working to improve transborder security. For instance, ECOWAS extended financial support to Liberia in 2012 and 2013 to tackle insecurity at the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border in order to prevent a reversal of the peaceful and stable environment. ECOWAS also earmarked the sum of $500,000 to support implementation of the Mano River Union strategy in 2014, with the goal of establishing a joint border consultative forum for conflict prevention and early warning.

7.3. Exploring the possibility of a "dedicated wallet" under the financial division of the ECOWAS Commission Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department for SSRG support

Considering the human resource, institutional and structural challenges of the ECOWAS Commission, it would be practical to set up a "dedicated wallet" under the financial division of its Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department for SSRG support to member states. In view of the lack of dedicated funds for SSRG and human-security-related issues in particular, funds from the dedicated wallet could also be used to support transnational security threats such as cybercrime, trafficking in humans, drugs and illegal arms, terrorism, insurgency, armed violence and other forms of transnational organised crime. Internal issues which pose a threat to human security in a state and have the potential to spiral into insecurity in other states are also legitimate concerns for ECOWAS to act upon, within the limits of the Community's Treaty.

The establishment of a dedicated wallet may create unnecessary political instruments and burden the capacity of existing institutions on how to manage such a trust fund. Nonetheless, such an initiative could possibly enhance ownership and alignment of interventions to regional and national strategies on SSRG.

To pursue this, ECOWAS would need to clarify some political as well as technical issues before such a fund can be established and operationalised. In establishing a possible fund that specifically supports transnational issues on SSRG, the following key questions should be considered.

• Will there be a common understanding among member states on setting up a "dedicated wallet" for SSRG support under the financial division of the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department of the ECOWAS Commission?

• Will a "dedicated wallet" that supports transnational issues on SSRG under the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department conflict with the mandate of the Human Development and Gender Unit that deals with transborder crime?

• Will a "dedicated fund" under the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department complement and advance aid effectiveness at the national level?

• Will a "dedicated wallet" improve access to additional resources from bilateral and multilateral donors? Presently (since 2014), ECOWAS development partners in peace and security are using the implementation plan (matrix) for the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework as a rallying point for coordinating donor support. The implementation plan (which has a regional security portion but does not address SSRG specifically) is a unique document, as it articulates the priority actions of several relevant directorates. Although it is still being finalised, it makes it somewhat easier for development partners to know what gaps exist and what ECOWAS directorates are asking for.

• Will ECOWAS serve as an effective platform to access alternative funding, especially from the private sector, foundations and individual philanthropists, for an "SSRG dedicated fund"?

• Will the "dedicated fund" improve coordination by development partners, and harmonisation and alignment of aid to recipient governments' priorities?

• How can efficient, accountable, responsive and transparent management of such a "dedicated fund" be ensured?

Checklist: Effective mobilisation and management of external partnerships in support of SSR

This checklist is inspired by field experiences in many countries, including in West Africa, other parts of Africa and the Caribbean. It should be regarded as a reminder of points for consideration in order to assess and improve effectiveness in the management of external assistance to SSRG by West African governments. It does not provide an exhaustive or imperative list of actions, and should be adapted to each specific context as necessary.

1. Define the reform agenda and determine associated resource capacities and requirements

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of security needs of the state and the people, and develop a national vision of security through an inclusive process.
- Review and assess the capacity of the security sector to respond to the needs identified.
- Determine the capacity gaps which need to be addressed to enhance national capacity to respond to the security needs of the state and the people.
- Define priority areas of reform accordingly, and develop a national SSR programme.
- Develop the budget of the national SSR programme.
- Identify national funding capacity to cover the budget requirements.
- Determine the remaining gaps for which external support may be sought.

2. Develop an effective resource mobilisation strategy

- Assign clear mandates and responsibilities among government agencies for establishing partnerships, specifying the roles of key actors such as line ministries, the ministry of finance, the ministry of planning, the ministry of foreign affairs and the national SSR coordination mechanism.
- Define clear procedures for initiating discussion with prospective external partners, entering partnerships and sharing information on partnerships within the administration.
- Identify potential sources of funding (partner mapping), determine the profiles and interests of potential partners and identify entry points for negotiations based on convergence between national priorities and the interest areas of the potential partners.

- Initiate high-level political dialogue to agree on the prerequisites for a partnership (especially equal relationship, national ownership and leadership of the reform process, partner alignment on national priorities, external partners' harmonisation, results-based management and mutual accountability).

- Provide partners with a broad presentation of SSR goals, and resource mobilisation documentation that is tailored to each major prospective partner.

- Engage in negotiations and select funding arrangements according to national specificities (general budget support typically offers the most flexibility and is best adapted to the holistic nature of SSR).

- Consider the benefits of assistance offered versus transactional costs, and enter partnerships in an insightful and selective manner.

- Agree simplified and harmonised management and reporting requirements with partners.

3. Strengthen national management capacity

- Include actions aimed at improving the mobilisation of domestic resources in partnership frameworks.

- Include support to security sector financial management capacity development in partnership frameworks as necessary, including anti-corruption actions.

- Demonstrate political commitment to changes in institutional cultures, including the shift to results-oriented management of security-allocated funds.

- Strengthen and harmonise administrative and financial management frameworks within the security sector, including procurement procedures, asset management and internal oversight mechanisms.

- Create an enabling environment for oversight of the security sector budget by the parliament, especially the budget and finance committee and the defence and security committee.

- Create an enabling environment for financial oversight of the security sector by statutory public audit institutions, anti-corruption agencies and civil society.

- Set up monitoring and evaluation mechanisms aimed at ensuring relevance, effectiveness, cost-efficiency and other fundamental features of expenditures.

- Keep reporting on commitments in order to build and maintain partners' trust.

4. Develop special support strategies for overlooked reform areas

- Dedicate sufficient funding to governance reforms, and not just infrastructure development, material procurement and operational training.

- Mainstream the aims of gender equality across the entire reform process, and dedicate special funding to gender-specific interventions.

- Make provisions for intelligence reform and other neglected or sidelined sectoral reforms.

- Make provisions for long-term development and strengthening of public financial management.

- Make provisions for long-term development of internal and external oversight mechanisms, including parliament and civil society capacity building in budget analysis.

Additional Resources

African Union, *African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform* (Addis Ababa: African Union Commission, 2013) www.peaceau.org/uploads/au-policy-framework-on-security-sector-reform-ae-ssr.pdf.

Megan Bastick and Kristin Valasek (eds), *Gender & Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN-INSTRAW, 2008) www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Gender-Security-Sector-Reform-Toolkit.

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Notes

1. In this toolkit, and in line with terminology used by the ECOWAS Commission, the terms "support" and "partner" are preferred over "aid" and "donor", to reflect the increasingly nuanced partnerships between West African national actors and external partners.

2. ECOWAS, *Draft Policy Framework for Security Sector Reform and Governance* (Abuja: ECOWAS, 2015). As of the publication date of this tool, the draft ECOWAS policy for SSRG has been endorsed by technical experts representing ECOWAS member states and is pending official adoption by the heads of state and government.

3. DCAF, "Security sector governance and reform", DCAF Backgrounder (Geneva: DCAF, 2009).

4. World Bank, "Country and lending groups", http://data. worldbank.org/about/country-and-lending-groups.

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