



**African Peer Review  
Mechanism**

## **The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM): Africa's Innovative Thinking on Governance**

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## 1. Introduction

Africa entered the new millennium with optimism and a commonly derived and broadly supported roadmap of how to overcome the development challenges of the last decades that were exacerbated by a range of factors including conflict, institutional decay, leadership and managerial deficit, endemic corruption and economic mismanagement. Africa's agenda for renewal and overcoming these development deficits includes advancing the basic values of democratization and good governance which together constitute the key requirements for sustainable development.

In recognition of the imperatives of good governance for development, the Sixth Summit of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), held in March 2003 in Abuja, Nigeria, adopted the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The Mechanism, which is turning out to be the most innovative aspect of NEPAD, is an instrument voluntarily acceded to by member states of the African Union (AU) as a self-monitoring initiative for good governance.

The mandate of the APRM is to ensure that the policies and practices of participating countries conform to the values, principles, codes and standards enshrined in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. This commonly agreed-to instrument for self-monitoring has at its epicentre the dissemination of best practices and the rectification of underlying deficiencies in governance and socio-economic development processes among AU member states. The framework is aimed at encouraging and building responsible leadership through a self-assessment process, constructive peer dialogue and the sharing of information and common experiences in order to reinforce successful and exemplary practices among African countries.

The APRM is open to all AU member states. Accession entails undertaking to submit to periodic peer reviews and to facilitate such reviews. It includes commitment to implementing the National Programme of Action (NPOA) arising from the peer review, and operationalising the agreed parameters for good governance across the four thematic areas namely: Democracy and political governance, Economic governance and management, Corporate governance and Socio-economic development.

Without doubt, the APRM has the potential to:

- Hold all leaders and stakeholders accountable;
- Make all forms and levels of government transparent;
- Seek collective, sustainable and equitable solutions to common problems;
- Launch the process of the evolution, rebirth and modernization of Africa's indigenous mode of governance;
- Put into motion a strategic re-orientation (Renaissance) towards the validation of universal as well as African values; and
- Accelerate the process of intra-Africa technical cooperation through popularising best practices identified in each of the country reviewed.

This treatise presents a succinct account of the APRM experience so far, including its broad achievements, challenges and future plans.

## 2. Progress so far and future roll -out programme

26 countries have so far voluntarily acceded to the APRM (Figure A1). These are: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The

membership of the APRM currently represents 652.7 million - an equivalent of 74 per cent of the total African population.

Since its inception in 2003, the APRM Panel has launched reviews in 13 countries<sup>1</sup> and fielded country review missions to five countries: Ghana (April 2005), Rwanda (April 2005), Kenya (October 2005), South Africa (July 2006) and Algeria (December 2006). So far, peer review at the level of heads of state have been conducted in three of these countries- Ghana (January 2006), and Rwanda and Kenya (June 2006). The reports of Algeria and South Africa are nearing completion and will be presented at the APR Forum in July 2007.

In response to concerns about the slow progress of the APRM, the activities of the APRM are being focused increasingly on country processes and reviews. The 2007 work plan of the APRM envisages that the following activities will be executed:

- 5 Advance Missions:** Angola, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Sao Tome & Principe, and Gabon;
- 6 Follow-up Missions:** Burkina Faso Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Tanzania;
- 6 Country Support Missions:** Egypt, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Zambia;
- 4 Country Review Missions:** Benin, Mozambique, Nigeria and Uganda; and
- 3 Post-Review Missions:** Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya.

In addition to the foregoing activities to advance the country processes, the 2007 work plan also prioritises the implementation of certain activities critical for the successful implementation of the APRM.

These include:

- i. Revision of the Questionnaire and other base documents<sup>2</sup>;
- ii. Fine-tuning the APRM methodology;
- iii. The establishment of appropriate monitoring and evaluation frameworks;
- iv. Facilitating peer learning workshops; and
- v. Improving APRM institutions and processes.

In the main, these activities have been generated from the recommendations of the Sixth Africa Governance Forum (AGF-VI), which was held in Kigali, Rwanda in May 2006.

The APR Panel is also preparing for a major Heads of State Conference on selected overarching issues in Africa. The APR Forum had requested that a workshop of this nature be organised specifically on the management of diversity and similar issues that have emerged from the country reviews including land management and corruption. The APR Forum has also requested Rwanda to share its experience in restorative justice - the case of the Gacaca courts.

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<sup>1</sup> These are: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

<sup>2</sup> The bulk of the work will go into streamlining the repetitions identified so far, as well as paying close attention to the missing issues generic to the governance question in Africa. A retreat has been proposed for this work, which will bring together our strategic partners, other cooperating partners and the academia.

### 3. Key Challenges

As is apparent in the emerging experiences in the countries implementing the APRM, along with the opportunities it presents, several challenges exist. A number of partners and participating countries consider the process to be too long, from prolonged support missions to the finalisation of the Country Review Report. Naturally, the APRM trajectory is lengthy because of the extensive process of planning and consultations among multiple stakeholders. While this is crucial for the credibility and success of the APRM, there is need to simplify and improve upon the methodology and the duration.

More significantly, as an agent of change and not an end in itself, the APRM's biggest challenge is that countries are able to muster the resources and capacity required to implement the recommendations and the national programmes of action emanating from it and monitor progress of achievement. As the completed reviews have shown, the end of the APRM should mark the beginning of efforts required to face up squarely to the post-APRM implementation challenges. To this end, partnership support both from within and outside Africa is absolutely critical. The true test of the APRM is ultimately its ability to transform visions into visible improvements in the country's political and economic governance, poverty situation, trade competitiveness, and indeed the millennium development goals.

As might be expected, the implementation of APRM so far did not proceed hitch-free. It has been fraught with a number of challenges, ranging from financial, capacity, procedural, operational and political challenges both at the national and continental levels. This is understandable, given that the concept of political peer review is a unique one, and there was no model or rule to draw upon in any part of the world. Peer review is a process of peer learning. The APR process particularly is a fledgling, nascent and evolving one, and since no standard had been established, it would remain a continuous learning process.

It is obvious that as more countries submit themselves to peer review, these challenges would need to be remedied.

Perhaps the major challenges confronting the continental APRM are how to advance the APRM process, focusing on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the APRM instruments (e.g. Memorandum of Understanding, questionnaires, standards, criteria, and methodologies that are used); and how best to structure post-review follow-up, including monitoring and evaluation.

Aside from broader concerns surrounding the APRM, there are countless country-specific challenges especially at the national level that the APRM have been grappling with. The slow pace in completing the review cycle, from developing the country's self-assessment report to the peer review by the heads of state has been particularly problematic. For example, Ghana and Rwanda each spent ten months between the Country Support Mission (CSM) and the Country Review Mission (CRM); while Kenya took fourteen months and South Africa eight months. These are countries that have succeeded in putting themselves on the fast track. However, there are eight countries that have received CSMs, some as far back as 2004, but have not reached the review stage to date. The remaining 12 countries have yet to establish APRM national structures - a prerequisite for the Panel fielding a CSM, which is the first step in the review process.

In this regard, participating countries need to accelerate the pace of setting up their respective APRM national structures and speed up the self-assessment process. Signing up to the APRM should translate into showing real commitment in forging ahead at many levels. It is also vital to maintain the political will to sustain the process. If the APRM is to

be credible and effective, it will need to be transparent and engage all the stakeholders in each country.

A number of post review challenges are also emerging. These include inadequate financial, human and institutional capacities to implement effectively the national programmes of action (NPOA); and the difficulties in harmonizing the NPOA with existing national processes and agenda.

#### **4. Funding**

At the continental level, the APRM is funded primarily by participating African Member States. As at 31 December 2006, the total financial contributions received from Member States stood at US\$ 8.8 million, representing 62 per cent of the total contributions since the inception of the APRM (Table A1).

Bilateral and multilateral development partners have contributed the balance of 38 per cent. The non-African (development partner) contributions, as shown in Table A2, came from the Governments of Canada, Spain and UK and the UNDP. The contribution in kind of the strategic partners of the APRM - the African Development Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) must also be acknowledged. They have been funding their participation in the APRM Support and Review Missions.

Contributions to the APRM are either directed through the APRM operating account operated by the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA)-the institution that currently hosts the NEPAD and APRM Secretariats-or the UNDP-APRM Trust Fund.

In order to provide for the participation of the international community, a basket account has been created - the APRM Trust Fund. The Trust Fund which is situated in the UNDP became operational in 2005. It is managed in a way that will clearly respect the principle of the African ownership of the APRM and its processes in conformity with the guiding principle that the APRM should be African-owned and free from manipulation.

However, in addition to contributions through the Trust Fund and the DBSA Account, the African Development Bank and the German Government through the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, GTZ - South Africa, have since inception of the APRM been rendering logistic support to the Secretariat as well as undertaking the payment of salaries of some staff members at some stage. Together with the UNDP and other bilateral donors, they have actively supported APRM member countries to execute the self-assessment process and implement the resultant National Programme of Action emanating from the exercise including its monitoring and evaluation.

Adequate funding is fundamental to the sustainability and independence of the process. By fulfilling their financial obligations to the APRM, participating countries are consolidating and taking full ownership of the process.

For the year 2007, the APRM activities are earmarked to cost a projected total of US\$ 7.1 million (Table A5). The funding surplus which accrued at the end of 2006 amounted to US\$2.48 Million (Table A3). Given the 2007 budget of US\$7.1 million, a funding deficit of \$4.6 million arises which is yet to be covered by contributions for the year.

In order to be able to carry out the 2007 work plan and subsequent work programmes, member countries and partners should endeavour to make major contributions to the APRM.

The international community can support the process by making contributions through the APRM Trust Fund without jeopardizing a number of essential factors and principles underpinning its effectiveness. These include: national ownership and leadership by the participating country; inclusiveness and broad-based participation; accountability; technical competence; credibility; and freedom from manipulation.

## **5. Lessons learnt**

### ***Continental APRM***

The APRM is a unique African instrument that is trail-blazing and has great potential as a tool to promote and strengthen good governance in Africa. It is African in origin, African inspired and African owned. The experiences emerging out of the APRM implementation process are very encouraging indeed. It is clear that the process has been empowering in ways that were not envisaged when it started. The interactive and broad inclusiveness of the process has spawned and strengthened a culture of political dialogue in member countries. The preparedness of African governments to engage the civil society and deliberate on national challenges of governance and attempt a framework for addressing them is profoundly significant and should be consolidated. Likewise, the willingness to let outsiders examine national findings and express a view on how a country is governed is equally a new experience that should be encouraged.

The APRM provides real opportunities to strengthen the institutions and systems of governance in the continent. It is making it possible for countries to benchmark good governance in Africa on shared African and international norms and standards as well as for citizens to participate in the evaluation of how they are governed. Through the APRM, African countries are able to learn from each other and deepen African solidarity. Capacity is being developed and partnerships within and with external partners are being created, facilitating greater advocacy for the APRM and showcasing Africa's innovative thinking in governance. Indeed, the APRM has contributed to a refocus of world attention on Africa. Yet with the attention comes the expectation for the mechanism to deliver and demonstrate that Africa is serious about tackling the governance challenges that stand as obstacles to its development.

### ***Countries that have completed the process and ongoing***

The experience accumulated indicates that the APRM is having a positive and beneficial impact in the countries reviewed to date. There is now enhanced understanding among the various national stakeholders in their endeavour to find common solutions to their development problems.

However, the real challenge for African countries undergoing the process is how to institutionalize the national dialogue and consultation processes around key governance issues engendered by the APRM and implement the project and programmes identified in the National Programmes of Action, including mainstreaming these plans with other national development processes.

### ***What the world can learn from the APRM***

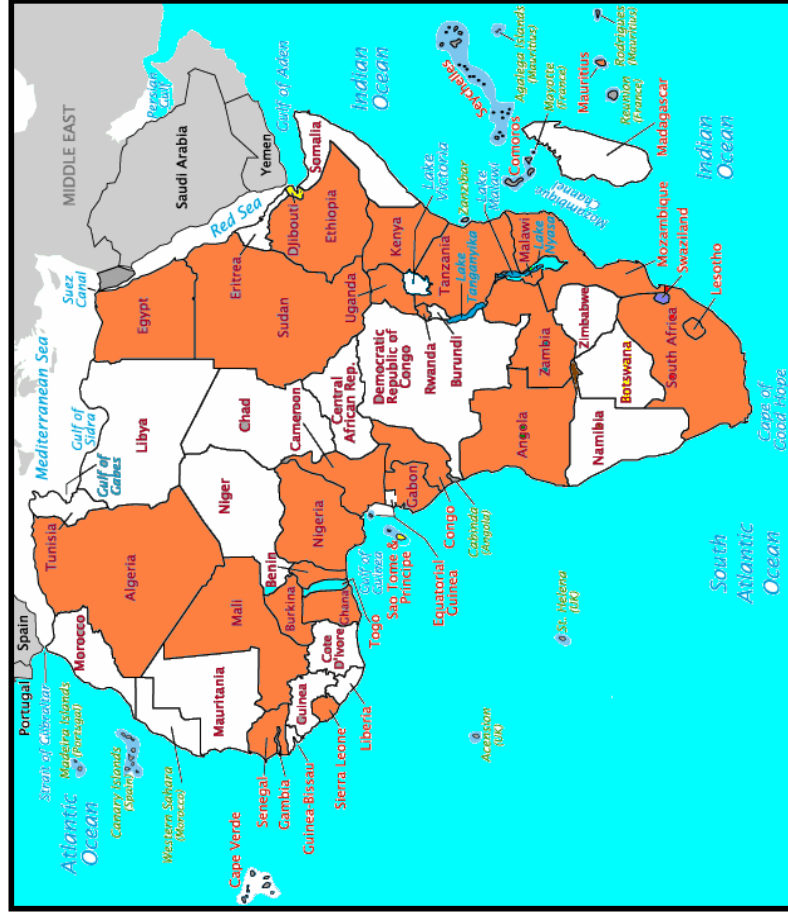
With the APRM, Africa is showcasing Africa's innovative thinking in governance. It reflects a uniquely fundamental shift in Pan African thought in its attempt to formalise an early warning mechanism to avert political and economic crises in Africa. It advances the acceptance of the African Union and of the tentative and limited modification of the

notion of sovereignty in Africa. It is Africa's strategic and systematic framework for reversing the development lacuna between Africa and the rest of the world.

A comparison with the other peer reviews instituted worldwide including the OECD which invented the modern peer review process indicates that the APRM is unprecedented and unique both in its scope and breadth, with the review process extending to all levels of government, parliament and the judiciary as well as the private sector and civil society. Logistically, APRM requires the involvement of thousands of people in assessments that cover virtually all aspects of national governance. And politically, it is unprecedented for incumbent governments to permit civil society and foreign experts a chance to write a definitive critique of national performance. But it remains an unprecedented chance to change the dynamics of politics, to rebuild trust and inject fresh thinking into national plans and governance systems.

The interest generated by the process around the world and in Africa has been tremendous. There is now a concrete demonstration of African countries' commitment to addressing governance issues forcefully. As the most important innovative component of NEPAD, it conveys an unequivocal message of hope to all the peoples of Africa.

APPENDICES  
**FIGURE A1: APRM'S GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> Source: APRM Secretariat, Midrand.



**Table A1: CUMMULATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS BY PARTICIPATING AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO APRM 2004-2006 (US\$)**

#	COUNTRY	COUNTRY TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	APRM TRUST FUND	2004 DBSA	2004 APRM TRUST FUND	2005 DBSA	2005 APRM TRUST FUND	2006 DBSA	2006 APRM TRUST FUND	TOTAL DBSA	TOTAL APRM TRUST FUND	OVERALL TOTAL
1	Algeria	1,500,000		500,000			1,000,000			500,000	1,000,000	1,500,000
2	Angola											
3	Benin											
4	Botswana	100,000						100,000		100,000		100,000
5	Burkina Faso	100,000		100,000						100,000		100,000
6	Cameroon											
7	Congo	100,000						100,000		100,000		100,000
8	Egypt	1,100,000		1,100,000						1,100,000		1,100,000
9	Ethiopia											
10	Gabon	200,000				200,000				200,000		200,000
11	Ghana	100,000				100,000				100,000		100,000
12	Kenya	100,000		100,000						100,000		100,000
13	Lesotho	150,000					150,000				150,000	150,000
14	Libya	100,000				100,000				100,000		100,000
15	Malawi											
16	Mali	100,000		100,000						100,000		100,000
17	Mauritius											
18	Mozambique	300,000		100,000		100,000		100,000		300,000		300,000
19	Nigeria	1,250,000		250,000		1,000,000				1,250,000		1,250,000
20	Rwanda	300,000		100,000		100,000		100,000		300,000		300,000
21	Senegal	197,821		100,000					97,821	100,000	97,821	197,821
22	Sierra Leone											
23	South Africa	3,146,914		813,815		1,578,097		755,002		3,146,914		3,146,914
24	Tanzania											
25	Uganda											
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,844,735</b>		<b>3,263,815</b>		<b>3,178,097</b>	<b>1,150,000</b>	<b>1,155,002</b>	<b>97,821</b>	<b>7,596,914</b>	<b>1,247,821</b>	<b>8,844,735</b>

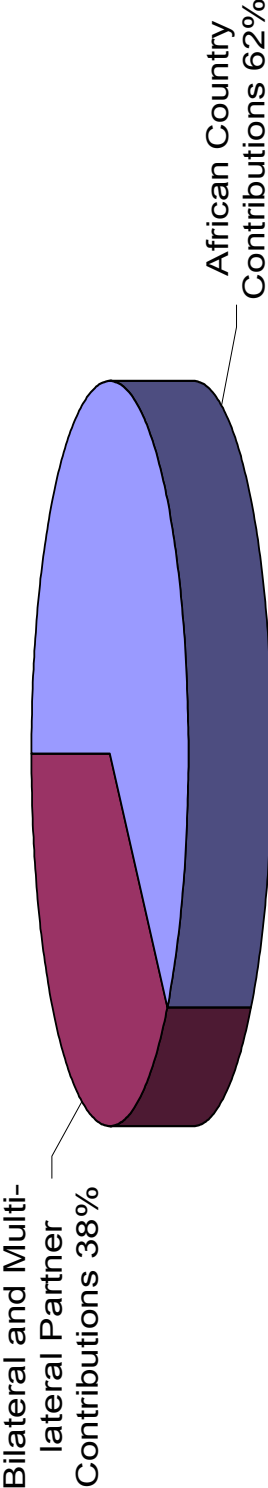
**Table A2: NON-AFRICAN CONTRIBUTIONS (US\$)**

COUNTRY	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	Pre-March 2003		2004		2005		2006		TOTAL	TOTAL	OVERALL
		DBSA	APRM TRUST FUND	DBSA	APRM TRUST FUND	DBSA	APRM TRUST FUND	DBSA	APRM TRUST FUND			
Canada	570,000	-	-	-	570,000	-	-	-	-	-	570,000	570,000
Spain	150,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	150,000	-	-	150,000	150,000
UNDP	2,700,000	-	-	-	-	-	2,700,000	-	-	-	2,700,000	2,700,000
DIFD (UK)	2,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	2,000,000	-	-	-	2,000,000	2,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,420,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>570,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,700,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,420,000</b>	<b>5,420,000</b>

**Table A3: CONSOLIDATED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE  
STATEMENT, AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2006 (US\$)**

<b>INCOME</b>	
African Country Contributions 2006	1,252,823
Bilateral and Multi-lateral Partner Contributions	150,000
	<b>1,402,823</b>
Contributions received before 2006 for 2006 activities	6,137,467
	<b>6,137,467</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>7,540,290</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
<i>APRM SUPPORT PROGRAMME LINE ITEM BY ACTIVITIES (US\$)</i>	
APR Panel Operations	505,460
APR Secretariat	1,866,269
Country Preparations and Participation	649,254
APR Country Reviews	1,595,577
Networking and Sharing of Experience	424,042
Technical Oversight and Monitoring	17,124
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>5,057,726</b>
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>2,482,564</b>

**Figure A2: APRM FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS**



**Table A5: APRM SUPPORT PROGRAMME LINE ITEM BUDGET BY ACTIVITIES  
1 JANUARY 2007 TO 31 DECEMBER 2007 (US\$)**

ITEMS	<u>BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2007 US\$</u>
<b>1. Effective APR Panel Operations</b>	
Honoraria and emoluments for assistants	54,600
Meetings	223,490
Travel	30,400
Reporting	12,500
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>320,990</b>
<b>2. Effective APR Secretariat</b>	
Salaries and emoluments	2,478,930
Office	216,000
Services	380,000
Miscellaneous	-
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3,074,930</b>
<b>3. Effective Country Preparations and Participation</b>	
Missions	416,771
Consultants	124,800
Publication	12,000
Support to countries	203,081
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>756,652</b>
<b>4. Effective APR Country Reviews</b>	
Review Visits	1,332,791
Workshops	380,200
Consultants	810,400
Publication	100,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2,623,391</b>
<b>5. Forum, networking and sharing of experience</b>	
Workshops and forum	169,900
Consultants	16,500
Reporting	36,000
Travel	37,800
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>260,200</b>
<b>6. Technical Oversight and monitoring</b>	
Travel	30,000
Meetings	36,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>66,000</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7,102,163</b>