



EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

**PRESS RELEASE**

Luxembourg, 2010/02/22  
ECA/10/07

**Special Report:**  
**Effectiveness of EDF support for Regional Economic Integration  
in East Africa and West Africa<sup>1</sup>**

The European Court of Auditors has analysed whether European Development Fund support for regional economic integration has been effective in East Africa and West Africa, which together account for well over 50 % of the total amount allocated to regional EDF programmes. The Court examined the European Commission's approach, its management of the support provided and a sample of individual projects and concludes that, overall, EDF support for regional economic integration has so far been only partially effective, due to a number of factors.

The Court finds that the occurrence of multiple Regional Organisations with overlapping mandates and membership results in a complex institutional framework. Moreover, despite the Commission's capacity building support, the Regional Organisations still lack institutional capacity, albeit in varying degrees, in all aspects of the project cycle.

The Commission's approach to supporting regional integration in East Africa and West Africa is relevant to the regions' and the countries' needs to achieve higher economic growth as a means to fight poverty. However, the strategies and interventions at the regional and national levels have largely been designed and implemented independently of each other, with insufficient attention paid to the possibility of creating complementarity between them, except, to some extent, in the transport sector.

The Commission's Delegations have neither adequate guidelines nor sufficient capacity to manage regional programmes. The roles and responsibilities of the different Delegations in a region are not clearly established, nor has an effective coordination mechanism between them been set up. The larger responsibility of those Delegations managing regional as well as national activities is not reflected in their staffing capacity.

It was difficult for the Court to assess the effectiveness of individual projects, due to poorly defined objectives and the lack of adequate reporting and monitoring. Recent, ongoing projects mostly have a wide scope and ambitious objectives; however, their implementation has so far been slow. For the projects examined, the results, or likely results, are, at best, only partially satisfactory.

On the basis of its observations, the Court recommends that the Commission should make the continuation of its support for regional integration conditional on an early agreement on how to achieve the necessary convergence between the various Regional Organisations and on the national authorities taking greater ownership of the regional integration process. The Commission should improve coherence between its regional and national strategies; examine whether the financial allocation in the tenth EDF to regional programmes is too high; define the responsibilities of the Delegations in the regions concerned, set up an appropriate coordination mechanism between them and review their staff capacity.

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this press release is to give a summary of the Special Report adopted by the Court of Auditors which is available on the Court's Internet site ([www.eca.europa.eu](http://www.eca.europa.eu)) and will be published shortly in a printed format.

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