The 2005-2007 Work Plan

The SWAC has continued to take inspiration from the WALTPS study, carried out in the beginning of the 1990s, by trying to apply both a retrospective and prospective approach to all of its work based on lessons learned. The Cooperation Agreement between ECOWAS and the SWAC, signed at end-2006, provided this retro-prospective vision coupled with a joint approach for the development of a medium- and long-term vision for West Africa. At the centre of all of the SWAC’s activities are the dynamics of change, theirs risks and opportunities as well as strategic thinking on the region’s future. During 2005-2007, these activities were deepened through the various aspects of the chapters of the Atlas of Regional Integration in West Africa. They are based on strategic thinking on the socio-political issues, conflict resolution, food security, and agriculture. West Africa has been evolving since the countries in the region gained independence. Up to now much effort has been made to face the demographic, socio-economic and political challenges although there are still considerable challenges to be addressed in the future: capacity of States and the region to respond to the demographic evolution, to more equally and transparently distribute the benefits of economic growth, for all actors to increasingly participate in societal management, to better manage natural resources as well as their relationship to a growing number of external partners, etc. Regional integration and cooperation can help meet these challenges.

The Medium- and Long-term Development Perspectives Unit aims to support this process through a better understanding of the changes taking place in West Africa and through the mobilisation of West African actors around the regional challenges up to 2025. Several questions structure the consultation, analysis and debate process that the SWAC aims to lead:

- Where is West Africa coming from? What is its position today?
- What are the desirable and possible futures for the region?
- What are the new partnerships to establish for a better future for the region?
- How should ECOWAS’ role evolve within the regional, continental and global context and in its complementarity with other regional, continental and international organisations?

These questions will be linked to the pivotal question that the SWAC intends to put at the top of its concerns on the development agenda of the region: *Where and how will the 430 million West Africans live in 2020?*
While the SWAC does not have the human nor material resources to carry out prospective work full time, it intends to better highlight the dynamics of change and building for the future, through its perception of West Africa, in order to assist decision-making and promote defining and implementing regional cooperation strategies.

Even though the private sector and competitiveness were set out as components of the 2005-2007 Work Plan, at the request of member States and partners other issues were at the end given more priority such as policy coherence, migratory movements, the younger generation’s place in society, the role of “new” civil society actors, the environment and sustainable development prospects as well as the impact of climate change on development cooperation policies. Following the Cooperation Agreement between ECOWAS and the SWAC, the work on the joint Report on Resources for Development in West Africa has become, along with the Atlas, an essential provider of the “embodied” prospective vision.

Results expected and achieved

1. Contribution to a Better Understanding of the Medium- and Long-term Development Perspectives

a) The Production of an Analytical Review of Retrospective and Prospective Studies At the beginning of 2005, the Unit carried out prospective strategic thinking on West Africa. Firstly, it established a review of retrospective and prospective analyses of the region. This review aimed to identify analysis topics on which strategic thinking, consultation and more in-depth debate should help West African actors develop appropriate regional development strategies. Achievements: The review of retrospective and prospective studies was quickly carried out. A summary was presented during the ECOWAS 30th anniversary celebration in Abuja in May 2005 in order to feed into strategic thinking at the Symposium on Development Perspectives of West Africa.

b) Strategic Orientation Document on the Regional Development Perspectives for the New ECOWAS Commissioners The ECOWAS Executive Secretariat carried out a reform of its institutions which resulted in the creation in January 2007 of the ECOWAS Commission. As a demonstration of the commitment to an active and productive partnership between ECOWAS and the SWAC, the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat asked the SWAC for its support in the development of a strategic thinking document which would be made available to the seven new Commissioners before they assumed their responsibilities in 2007. The Commission used this document as a basis with which to undertake an internal strategic thinking process and strategic planning Achievements: This document, which is based on the results of debates and analyses carried out by the SWAC over the last years, was issued as a working document at the end of 2006. Impacts: From these analytical tools, the SWAC contributes to developing a regional perception of the dynamics of change in West Africa which ECOWAS has included in its 2007-2010 Strategic Plan.

c) Joint ECOWAS- SWAC Annual Report on West Africa At the beginning of 2005, the SWAC envisaged producing with ECOWAS an Annual Report on West Africa as from 2006. The formal commitment was decided and validated at the signing of the Cooperation Framework with ECOWAS in November 2006. Achievements: The SWAC began production of this Annual Report only at the beginning 2007 coinciding with the arrival of the new Head of Unit. Increased cooperation with ECOWAS is developing progressively.
2. **The West Africa 2007 Report** will highlight in particular resources for development. It shall be issued at the beginning of 2008. The Joint Report will be composed of three parts:

- The first part will provide a history of West Africa as well as the geography, economy and geo-political issues of the region. It will also set out an over view of the situation based on development, political construction and institutional macro-indicators. It will present intersecting views through an analysis of journal articles of the North and South around certain topics such as: food security; peace, democracy, governance and security; globalisation, trade and geo-policy; migration;

- The second part will be devoted to resources for development through a retro-prospective analysis on natural capital, cultural, social and human capital as well as economic, financial and physical capital;

- The third part will provide medium- and long-term development perspectives. Are the resources used with a view towards sustainable development and taking into account regional integration? How to capitalise on these resources to face the challenges of tomorrow?

This will be a type of synthesis of the two preceding chapters. It will also allow personalities from the social, economic and cultural arena to express their views freely on the “virtuous triangle” of resources for development (natural capital, social, cultural, human capital, economic, financial and physical capital).

**Expected impacts:** The Report could become a working tool for ECOWAS and the SWAC so as to enable the SWAC to build its prospective approach around topics developed in this Annual Report as well as those developed in the Atlas.

3. **Contribution to Debates, Exchanges of Information and Mobilisation of Actors**

The Unit’s aim is to promote exchanges of strategic thinking based on the future of the region in order to help regional actors develop responses to face the medium- and long-term challenges in West Africa. (a) The Abuja Symposium As a first step in the exchange of views and debates with regional actors, the SWAC and ECOWAS organised a Symposium (panel) in May 2005, to commemorate ECOWAS 30th anniversary, on the topic, “Regional Development Perspectives, Regional Integration and the Evolution of ECOWAS’ Role”. Achievement: This Symposium, which brought together a panel representative of West African civil society, charted a path of strategic thinking on the region’s future.

**Impacts:** These achievements have greatly influenced the SWAC’s work on agriculture, regional integration and the promotion of peace and security. (b) The Ouagadougou Panel The SPG meeting held in Ouagadougou in June 2006 coincided with the SWAC’s 30th anniversary. The SWAC organised a second panel on the Medium and Long-Term Development Perspectives for West Africa. Achievements: Panel participants (public authorities, West African civil society including private sector organisations and regional, continental and international institutions working in the region) shared their analyses on the region’s future with SPG members and other participants. Impacts: These discussions enabled participants to recognise the need to work on development perspectives and better integrate this aspect into their work programmes. They also fostered the strengthening of SWAC partnerships with key organisations working in the region. Again, the need to raise analytical topics in order to launch more systematic prospective work was not taken into account.
Partnerships

Given the role that ECOWAS plays in the region to better anticipate future challenges through its Strategic Planning Unit, it is one of the Unit’s key partners. The SWAC participated along with ECOWAS in the organisation of ECOWAS’ 30th anniversary celebration and supported the various endeavours to develop a regional dynamic and prospective vision of the region. Concerning the Joint Report on West Africa, the Editorial Committee, co-Chaired by Commissioner Bamba and the SWAC Director, is responsible for the finalisation of the Report’s chapters. The publication of the Review of the retrospective studies, the summary record of the Abuja Symposium and the Report for the Commissioners have certainly contributed to the recognition of this regional dynamic vision. The co-production and publication of this Annual Report on “West Africa 2007 and Resources for Development”, in 2008 requiring a strengthened partnership in the future, will certainly reinforce this approach. This Report could indeed be a window and flagship communications product for the ECOWAS/SWAC partnership.

Other strategic and formal partnerships will be forged within the framework of the production of future annual reports and with regard to other activities to be developed with AfDB, the CILSS, UEMOA and UNECA.

Communications

The MLTDP Unit has not developed a specific approach to communications; this being both a reflection of the cross-cutting nature of strategic thinking on the future within the SWAC and the consequences of the Head of Unit’s late arrival. However, the finalisation of the West Africa 2007 Report is underway and supports strategic thinking on the ambitious communications approach around this SWAC flagship product.

Analyses and Comments

While the Unit’s work contributed to guiding initiatives implemented by the SWAC and its partners, the lack of human and financial resources also delayed production of the SWAC/ECOWAS joint Annual Report on West Africa. Furthermore, the Unit played an important role in the production of the Atlas (see item 2.3.4) as well as in the work on aquaculture and fisheries policies (see item 2.2.3). Finally, the Unit has contributed to strengthening the ECOWAS-SWAC partnership through the work on the Annual Report on West Africa.