# Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCP)
# Functioning and Working Arrangements

November 2020

## I. Institutional Context

Following its 2020 Operational Activities Segment, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted resolution E/RES/2020/23 in July 2020, endorsed in General Assembly Resolution 74/297, which, inter alia:

1. *Requests the Secretary-General to conduct and rely on, in the course of the implementation process, transparent and inclusive UN consultations with all countries concerned at all levels… through further deliberations of the ECOSOC, with input from existing processes within RECs and other UN regional assets*
2. *Requests the longer-term reprofiling and restructuring of the regional assets of the UN to be addressed on a region-by-region basis and in accordance with the region's specific needs and priorities*
3. *Reaffirms that the regional repositioning be conducted with the support of RECs, Specialized Agencies, Funds, Programmes, and regional DCO Offices while preserving and reaffirming their respective roles and mandates*
4. *Looks forward to further deliberations in the ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment, and requests the Secretary-General to continue regular follow-up, monitoring and reporting, including to ECOSOC.*

In conjunction with the roadmap for the implementation of the regional review, this note outlines the common roles, responsibilities and core functions of the Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs) to ensure consistency across regions, while allowing for flexibility to consider regional specificities. The working arrangement document will be complemented by region-specific Terms of Reference and an organigramme for each RCP Secretariat, to be prepared by each region under the coordination of the RCP Vice-Chairs and agreed by the Chair.. [*The upcoming Regional Management Accountability Framework will also reflect and align to relevant aspects of the Working Arrangements*].

The RCPs will coordinate effective region-by-region implementation of the Secretary-General's five transformative areas for reprofiling and positioning the regional assets of the United Nations under the overall strategic guidance of the DSG/RCP Chair.

## II. Regions and countries covered by the RCPs

The RCPs are established at the regional level in five regions:

- Africa
- Asia and the Pacific

- Arab States
- Europe and Central Asia
- Latin America and The Caribbean

It is recognized that various UNDS entities have different regional and country cluster arrangements. Some countries are also part of the membership of two Regional Economic Commissions. Representation in more than one region will be accommodated.

## III.    Roles and functions of the RCPs

The RCPs are the main internal, UN -wide collaboration platform for sustainable development at the regional level. The platforms provide strategic direction and decision-making for regional activities in support of regional, sub-regional, transboundary or common issues and priorities. RCPs will not implement operational activities nor will they function as platforms for intergovernmental deliberations.

The overall objective of the RCPs is to provide a light and agile UNDS internal, demand-driven and results-oriented collaboration platform merging and replacing the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) and the Regional UNSDG. The RCPs will ensure coordination, collaboration and the best use of UN expertise and assets across UNDS entities at the regional level. The RCPs will bring together leadership, accountability and clarity to UNDS system-wide goals, activities and results in the regions and amplify UN country teams' support at country level in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the SDGs.The RCPs will also  help operationalize priorities and issues set out by the UN Sustainable Development Group in each region, as relevant, and report back to the UN Sustainable Development Group on results achieved, key issues and bottlenecks that require further consideration by the UNSDG.

The RCPs will be focused on the following 12 key functions as set out by the Internal Review Team on the regional review[1], coordinated by the Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Reforms:

1. Foster collaboration on sustainable development across UN development system entities operating at the regional and sub-regional levels, including by promoting and facilitating time-bound issue-based coalitions to respond to regional, sub-regional or cross-border or common development issues.
2. Promote joint actions to address gaps in SDG implementation, including those identified through the regional forums on sustainable development and the High-Level Political Forum.
3. Discuss major regional strategic developments and issues, pathways to addressing them and align regional and global agendas accordingly.
4. Promote regional coherence with the policies agreed by CEB's High-Level Committee on Programs (HLCP), the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and the UN Sustainable Development Group.
5. Promote interagency joint actions, strategies, coalitions, and exchange of staff and expertise across entities, in support of regional integration and collaboration, regional and sub-regional initiatives and programmes, and transboundary and common issues.
6. Foster interagency cooperation and collaboration on sustainable development to ensure or improve implementation of internationally and regionally agreed frameworks, norms and standards.

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[1] The IRT originally defined 13 key functions, however, the UNCT performance appraisal will be enacted with a dedicated mechanism that is formally outside of the RCP structure. However, it is expected that results of performance appraisals will be brought to an RCP meeting annually for information.

7.  Promote coherent regional policy dialogues and responses to challenges related to SDG achievement (regional public goods, agreements, norms, visions and strategies as well as common policy positions).
8.  Facilitate demand-driven integrated policy advice, normative support and technical capacity to regional and sub-regional organizations, Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs), including the Common Country Analysis (CCA), the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and align and strengthen entities Country Programme Documents or Strategic Notes as relevant.
9.  Promote a region-by-region change management process that will seek to consolidate existing capacities for data and statistics, as well as other relevant analytical functions that may be currently duplicative.
10. Coordinate and transparently share policy-relevant tools and knowledge products.
11. Facilitate development of regional common back office plans and effective and efficient management at the regional level, on the basis of the global project document, but with maximum flexibility to reflect regional specificities and progress made in the regions.
12. Provide criteria and guidelines to prepare the Regional UNDS System-Wide Results Report, which will be prepared and presented by each region.

The agreed RCP functions are underpinned by the following principles:

-   Joint ownership and functional leadership;
-   cost-neutrality,  through repurposing of funds and existing staffing capacities[2];
-   a focus on UN internal mechanisms;
-   a clear delineation of RCP functions from entity mandates;
-   non-programme implementation and
-   UNDS system-wide collaboration to support Member States.

It is envisaged that the functions and principles underpinning the RCP will reinforce the UN's regional value-proposition and reaffirm the delivery of Agenda 2030 at country level.

With respect to resources, the first principle is to find capacity within the UN regional entities. However, in responding to Member States' needs, funds may be mobilized and deployed as appropriate to secure an effective and responsive United Nations. Any resource mobilization efforts will be coordinated by the Joint Secretariat of the RCP. Mobilization efforts can include, as deemed relevant by the RCP Secretariat, engagement of the IBCs.


## IV.    Working arrangements


*Chair and Vice-Chairs*

In each region, the RCP will be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General/ RCP Chair, with the Executive Secretaries of the respective regional commissions and the UNDP regional directors as vice-chairs.

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[2] The core functions of the RCP are performed drawing on existing resources and staff capacities available in the region. Substantive initiatives by the RCP or its IBCs may require additional funding, which would be resourced through XB funding.

RCP Vice-Chairs, under the overall oversight and strategic direction of the RCP Chair, are accountable, inter alia, for coordinating effective region-by-region implementation of the Secretary-General's five transformative areas and report to the RCP/UNSDG Chair on progress:

(a) Creation of United Nations regional collaborative platforms that would absorb existing duplicative coordination mechanisms and foster collaboration on sustainable development among United Nations development system entities operating at the regional level;

(b) Establishment of strong knowledge management hubs in each region by pooling policy expertise currently scattered across various entities;

(c) Enhanced transparency and results-based management at the regional level, including through annual reporting on United Nations system-wide results at the regional level in support of the 2030 Agenda;

(d) Launch of a region-by-region change management process to consolidate existing capacities with regard to data and statistics;

(e) Identification of administrative services that could be provided more efficiently to regional offices through common back offices (e.g. human resources, procurement and common premises), similar to efforts that have been made at the country level..

*Frequency of RCP meetings*

An annual meeting chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General/RCP Chair will take place back-to-back with the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, which remain the intergovernmental platforms for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. Other meetings led by the Vice-Chairs will be held as needed.

A meeting calendar will be agreed by the Vice-chairs, in consultation with the RCP members, by the annual RCP meeting. Ad-hoc meetings (in person or via video/audio connection) will be called as needed.

*Joint RCP Secretariat*

The secretariat of the RCPs will be provided by the regional offices of DCO, the regional economic commissions and UNDP, under the overall direction of the RCP chair and the two vice-chairs of the platforms. The joint secretariat will provide the necessary substantive and logistical support for regional collaborative platform functions, drawing on their strong expertise and operational capacities. At the global level, the Development Coordination Office will provide the main support for the chair in organizing the annual planning meetings of the platforms, at which the agenda for the year is established and the progress made over the previous year is reviewed – working closely with the joint RCP Secretariat in the respective region. The joint RCP Secretariat will also provide support to the two vice-chairs throughout the years.

Coordination and interaction with Resident Coordinators and UNCTs will continue to be channeled through the DCO Regional Directors.

The core functions of the joint RCP Secretariat are:

- The RCP Joint Secretariat will develop the annual RCP workplan, in line with the common global workplan template, for endorsement by the two vice-chairs, following consultation with RCP members.
- The RCP Joint Secretariat will ensure effective communication across the RCP membership.
- The RCP Joint Secretariat will provide substantive and logistical support to the preparation for, conduct of and follow-up to RCP meetings.
- The RCP Joint Secretariat will maintain records of RCP proceedings and support the preparation of the UN System-Wide Report.


Terms of reference and an organigram of the RCP Secretariat will be prepared by each region under the coordination of the Vice-Chairs, for approval by the Chair. The ToR and the organigram will reflect both regional diversity and remain within the functional parameters outlined in this document. The Deliverables of the RCP will be defined in the RCP annual workplan.

*Issue-based coalitions (IBCs) and interagency mechanisms*

The work of the RCPs will be guided by the mandates of the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC. It will respond to country-demands (including as conveyed by RCs/UNCTs and will help to operationalise CEB and UNSDG policy and operational decisions that have regional ramifications. The work of the RCPs bewill also be informed by region-specific time-bound Issue-Based Coalitions (IBCs).

Issue-Based coalitions
The work of the regional UNSDG and the RCM will be absorbed into the RCP, bringing together the existing expertise of the regional UNDS entities to advance work at the regional level on cross border, sub-regional, regional issues and areas of common interest. In all regions, IBCs will be demand-driven and respond to specific needs and priorities of countries or demands from respective UNCTs, and address critical regional development issues within agreed global and regional norms and policy frameworks. Time-bound Issue-Based Coalitions will reflect the varying policy priorities in each region. IBCs will operate according to an annual workplan and report to the RCP on progress made against their deliverables. RCP Vice-Chairs will be responsible for overall monitoring of the work of the IBCs and other mechanisms established under the RCP, in consultation with the respective Co-Chairs and leads who are responsible for the day-to-day work. The IBC workplans will be approved by the Vice-Chairs after consultation with RCP members within the overall guidance from the RCP Chair.

Other Interagency mechanisms
Each RCP will also identify relevant existing interagency mechanisms (e.g. task teams, working groups etc.) at regional level to oversee and drive implementation of:
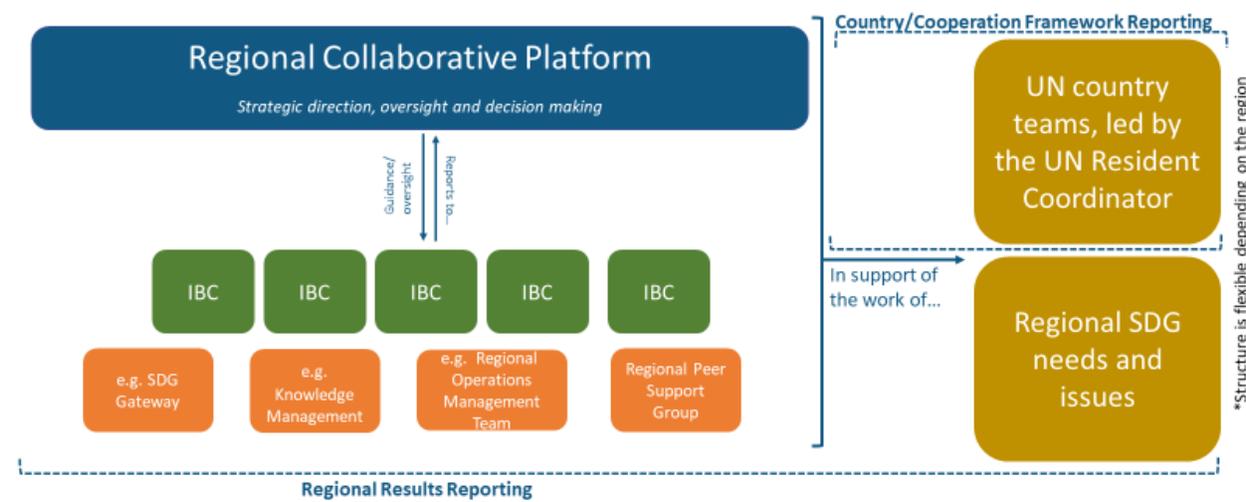
- Knowledge Management hubs: Hubs in each region that pool policy expertise by, or across, sectors to better identify and gain access to available regional assets to respond in real time to national needs and priorities;
- Transparency and Results-Based Management at regional level, including through annual reporting on United Nations system-wide results at the regional level in support of SDG
- Gateways that consolidate statistics capacities, serve as one-stop-shops for data on the Sustainable Development Goals and help to disseminate data consistently at the global and regional levels.

- Regional-level business operation strategies, supported by Regional Operations Management Teams;

Each RCP will reactivate a Regional Peer Support Group (PSG) to be chaired by the DCO Regional Director, which will play a critical role in quality assurance of UNSDCFs and CCAs.[3]

Each RCP Joint Secretariat, under the guidance of the Vice-Chairs, will provide a region-specific mapping of IBCs and interagency mechanisms operating under the RCP for information and approval by the Chair. An example is included below.

**Proposed regional architecture of the United Nations development system[4]**



*System-wide evaluation will be put in place, and the chart will be updated accordingly at that time.

## V.    RCP Work Planning and Reporting

Annual work plans of RCPs and their sub-mechanisms are developed on a region-by-region basis, using a common work plan template to be shared by DCO New York in consultation with EOSG, and building on the work that has already been carried out in some regions.

RCP work plans will be prepared by the RCP joint secretariat under the leadership of the Vice-chairs and reviewed and approved by the Chair

RCP work plans shall contain expected results, deliverables, budgets and lead entities. Each RCP shall submit, through the vice-chairs, mid-year progress updates to the RCP Chair and report against its deliverables at the annual RCP planning meeting. The RCPs are responsible for quality control on the results reporting, which will feed into the Secretary-General's annual report on the implementation of the QCPR.

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[3] The TOR of the PSG are being reviewed by the UNSDG Programme Task Team and will be updated to reflect the link to the RCP.
[4] This graph is drawn from the Secretary-General's 2020 report on the QCPR (p. 46) and has been slightly adapted.

RCP Vice-Chairs, under the overall guidance of the RCP Chair, are accountable for results regarding effective region-by-region implementation of the Secretary-General's five transformative areas and shall report to the RCP Chair on progress.

The RCP membership will define the individual and collective responsibilities, work plan and results of their respective RCP. All RCP members are mutually accountable for implementation and delivering shared results of agreed RCP work plans.

The Vice-Chairs of the RCPs and the DCO Regional Directors will include their RCP role and related goals in their individual performance compacts. The RCPs are also responsible for the report on regional system-wide results that is presented annually to each Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, and which will inform reports submitted to the Economic and Social Council at the global level.

## VI.    RCP Membership

RCPs are composed of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Economic and Social Commissions, Regional Directors (or equivalent) of UN development system entities and the Regional Directors of the Development Coordination Office.

The regional chapter of the Management and Accountability Framework will be developed to capture the relationships within and across the RCPs and ensure consistency with its country and global-level components.

The Vice-Chairs designate Vice-Chairs a.i. in their absence, for conducting RCP business. Membership is represented at the Regional Director (or equivalent) level. If an entity's Regional Director is not available, the entity would be represented at the Deputy Regional Director level.

All RCP members are accountable for adhering to their obligations under the regional Management and Accountability Framework[5].

## VII. Exchange between RCPs

Exchanges between RCPs of different regions, allowing for dialogue on best practices/lessons learned/challenges, will be held starting in 2021.

## VII.    Coordination of RCPs with UN entities outside of UNDS and Regional and Sub-regional Organisations

RCPs will ensure region-specific/relevant coordination with UN entities outside of the UN development system and with Regional and Sub-regional Organisations as relevant (for example, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG), UN-AU collaboration in Africa, etc.)

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[5] The regional MAF will be developed in consultation with all entities of the UNDS. It will also reflect the provisions of the present Working Arrangements.

## IX. Interactions with Member States

The RCPs do not constitute platforms for intergovernmental deliberations. However, in line with the Secretary-General's commitment to ensuring a transparent and consultative implementation process of the regional review, briefings and information sessions may be organized throughout the year at the initiative of the RCP Chair, the RCP Vice-Chairs and/or at the request of Member States. Updates on the roll out of the regional review will also be provided to the ECOSOC/OAS yearly, as part of the existing Secretary-General report on QCPR implementation.