



**African**  
**Regional Partnership**  
for Sustainability and SDG Reporting

23 June 2022

## **African Regional Partnership sustainability and SDG reporting (ARP)**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OPERATING PROCEDURES**

#### **PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT**

*The Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures is a document that outlines the objectives and terms of cooperation among the Members of the Regional Partnership. The document has been drafted by the Executive Committee of the Partnership which polled members through an online survey conducted between March and April 2022.*

#### **I. Background**

1. The African Regional Partnership (ARP) was launched during the Development Account 11<sup>th</sup> Tranche Regional Workshop in Africa organized by UNCTAD from 24 to 28 January 2022. The African Regional Partnership has been established to support member organizations in their efforts toward the implementation of international standards, codes, and best practices to promote harmonization and improvement of quality of enterprise reporting to facilitate financial stability, international and domestic investment, and social and economic progress. The ARP achieves these objectives by facilitating the exchange of views and best practices on issues related to both financial and sustainability/SDG reporting.

#### **II. Objectives of the Partnership**

2. The ARP shall act as a bridge between national and international institutions for Sustainability Reporting, carrying the voice of its African countries. Furthermore, the Partnership shall promote mutual support among African countries in their efforts to achieve the development of national strategies and policies to:
  - a) establish and/or strengthen the national infrastructure to prepare high-quality sustainability reports by companies;
  - b) increase the number of high-quality sustainability reports by companies;
  - c) measure the contribution of the private sector to the implementation of the SDGs; and
  - d) promote sustainable enterprise development.

### **III. Mechanism of operation**

#### **3.1 Generic terms**

3.1.1 An electronic platform is created for the Partnership to:

- a) Keep track of the Partnership's activities and meetings;
- b) Follow announcements and schedule of the upcoming events;
- c) Enable continuous communication between members;
- d) Provide access to useful resources;
- e) Allow members to initiate discussions;
- f) Share achievements and tools that may be useful to other countries in the region etc.

3.1.2 The Partnership shall organize from 3 to 4 meetings in virtual format every year, where members and external speakers are invited to share best practices or the latest trends related to sustainability reporting.

3.1.3 One country shall act as Chair of the Partnership and the Chair shall rotate every 2 years. In this manner, different countries shall have an opportunity to oversee the coordination of the Partnership.

3.1.4 The virtual meetings as contemplated in 3.2 above, shall be convened by the Chair.

3.1.5 A database of members' contacts shall be developed and maintained to establish communication.

3.1.6 The Partnership shall promote benchmarking activities between actors, give advice, and position itself as a force of proposal of national strategies for dissemination and adoption of reporting methodologies.

3.1.7 The Partnership shall promote harmonization in the region by sharing case studies and peer-reviewed experiences to address national challenges, alongside tools to optimize national infrastructure and mitigate risks that could hinder the economy.

3.1.8 Working groups can be established from time to time to work on specific issues upon request. The working group shall largely consist of ARP members but may include outside individuals who can add value to the group's deliberations invited with the approval of the Chair. The Chair of the working group shall be an ARP member and shall report back to the ARP on the outcomes of the working group.

3.1.9 To lower the costs of meetings, and to facilitate the participation of all members, meetings shall always be in virtual format.

3.1.10 If a member wishes to host the meeting in presential form, he or she shall do so at his or her expense, and shall arrange a virtual streaming, accessible by all members

#### **3.2 Joining the Partnership**

3.2.1. National entities interested in joining the Regional Partnership are requested to communicate to

the Partnership's Executive Committee and the Partnership's Secretariat in writing.

3.2.2. The letter contemplated in 3.2.1 above, shall include:

- a) the name of the organization;
- b) the name and contact details of a focal point;
- c) the following statement:

*“We [entity's name and country] wish to join the *Regional Partnership for the promotion of sustainability and SDG reporting in Africa*. We designate [focal point's name] as a focal point for direct communication between us and the ARP. We subscribe to the objective of the Partnership to improve enterprise sustainability reporting through mutual support, dialogue and sharing of experience among regional peers.”*

d) signature by a senior representative and be addressed to the Partnership's Executive Committee.

3.2.3. Member organizations can nominate an alternate focal point within the organization.

3.2.4 4. Members shall renew their membership every 3 years.

### **3.3. Types of entities that can join the Partnership**

3.3.1.. Every country can be represented by 5 national entities from the following list: the regulator of companies (i.e. listed companies, public interested entities (including the financial sector) or SMEs), the local financial reporting standard setter, the entity responsible for sustainability reports, the government entity in charge of the implementation of the SDGs, the professional accountancy association, auditing organizations, stock exchanges and academia.

3.3.2.. The Partnership is not open to private companies or individuals.

3.3.3. International organizations, and regional leaders in sustainability reporting, can join as friends of the Partnership.

### **3.4. Terms of resignation and conduct**

3.4.1. A member may voluntarily resign from the Partnership, if he or she is of the view that, he or she is incapacitated to continue their participation in the Partnership.

3.4.2. A member may be encouraged to resign from the Partnership, in the event of, amongst other reasons, he or she is known to have committed an act of corruption or criminal offence, subject to a judgment handed down in this regard.

3.4.3. Otherwise, a member shall be removed from the Partnership in the event of death or disappearance.

3.4.4.. The Partnership shall prescribe the procedure for resignation as follows:

- a) A member who resigns must submit a notice in the prescribed manner as below, stating —

- (i) the intention to resign from the Partnership;
  - (ii) reasons for such resignation;
  - (iii) set the date on which the resignations shall take effect; and
- (b) state in the said notice, that all the affected stakeholders have been notified about the intended resignation.

#### **IV. Composition and Management of the Executive Committee**

##### **4.1. Roles**

- 4.1.1 The Executive Committee (EC), composed of the Chair and the Vice-Chairs, shall organize the work of the Partnership, arrange the meetings and seek to attract new members from the region.
- 4.1.2 The EC shall coordinate the overall work and mission of the Partnership.
- 4.1.3 The Chair shall moderate the Executive Committee meetings and shall propose the future activities of the Partnership, as well as guide on the topics to be addressed, based on the consultation of the Partnership members during the meetings and through online consultations.
- 4.1.4 The Vice-Chairs shall support the work of the Chair and act on behalf of the Chair when he/she is not available.
- 4.1.5 The Chair shall moderate the Partnership's meetings. In the event the Chair is not able to moderate a meeting, he/she shall designate one of the Vice-Chairs for this role.
- 4.1.6 The Secretariat shall support the organization of the Partnership's Meeting provided for, in 3(a) and 4 above.
- 4.1.7 Upon agreement by Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall coincide with the Partnership Secretariat.
- 4.1.8 The main mission of the Secretariat is to provide support to the operational work of the Partnership Executive Committee shall include, but shall not be limited to -
  - a) Organize and participate in the meeting of the Executive Committee, keep records of the agreed conclusions and key decisions;
  - b) Support the preparation of the agenda for the upcoming meetings, distribute invitations to the members;
  - c) Process voting procedures and aggregate results via circulating interactive surveys/polls;
  - d) Perform as a coordination focal point for the Group members (assigning new members/ executing resignations etc.); and
  - e) Prepare meeting reports, as well as aggregate and store all useful resources and materials on the Partnership online platform.

##### **4.2. Election Procedure**

- 4.2.1 Members shall indicate their availability/willingness to become Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Partnership.

- 4.2.2 There shall be at least one Vice-Chair. The role can be also shared between two co-Vice-Chairs.
- 4.2.3 The Chair and Vice-Chairs shall be of different sub-regions to ensure geographical representativity.
- 4.2.4 The duration of the post of Chair and Vice-Chair shall last 2 years.
- 4.2.5 The voting can be done through an online survey circulated among all members. The results of the Survey shall be publicly available to all members.
- 4.2.6 The Quorum shall be the majority (51%) of all members. In the case of a single candidate, the vote may be done through silent voting during a meeting that is attended by the majority of members.
- 4.2.7 If no members would like to be nominated as the Chair of the Partnership, the existing Chair shall ask individual members to propose their candidacy to become Chairs or nominate themselves.
- 4.2.8 If the Chair resigns from its role, members shall promote a Vice-Chair to act as a Chair until the end of its original mandate.

## **V. Funding and Costs**

- 5.1 The Partnership may need to have a budget to meet occasional expenses.
- 5.2 The Partnership may need to identify external funding sources.
- 5.3 To lower the costs of meetings, and to facilitate the participation of all members, it is recommended to hold meetings in a virtual format.
- 5.4 In the event a member country wishes to host the meeting in physical form, it shall do so at his or her arrangement and expense, accessible by all members.

## **VI. Logo**

- 6.1 The following logos shall be used in the official communications by the Partnership's Executive Committee and Secretariat. Members may include them without modifications in their website and public material.
- 6.2 The logo shall only be displayed to promote the activities of the Partnership and to show the affiliation of the member organization.



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## **VII. Intellectual Property**

- 7.1 The intellectual property and copyright on any work undertaken in the ARP's name belong to ARP.
- 7.2 The ARP shall grant the right of use to the work, provided that an acknowledgement is given and this right of use shall not be unreasonably withheld.

## **VIII. Amendments to the terms of reference**

- 8.1 This document shall be reviewed once in 2 years by the ARP's Executive Committee and amended where necessary.