

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in the global system: origins, goals and implementation mechanisms

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Abstract.

The purpose of the article is to analyse the history of the establishment, objectives, and implementation mechanisms of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), examining its conceptual foundations, key programmes (CAADP, PIDA, APRM), and the assessment of its practical effectiveness in the context of contemporary global and regional challenges. The methodological framework is based on the principles of systemic, institutional, and comparative analysis, which makes it possible to trace the interrelationship between NEPAD's objectives and the mechanisms of their practical implementation, as well as to assess the initiative's actual impact on the development of the African continent. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the comprehensive combination of historical analysis with an evaluation of NEPAD's contemporary mechanisms as an instrument of Africa's global integration. For the first time, the interconnection between the political, economic, and social dimensions of the programme is systematised; the key implementation challenges are identified; and the role of NEPAD in the development of governance practices, infrastructure, and the socio-economic progress of the continent is emphasised. The conclusions demonstrate that NEPAD represents an important continental development instrument aimed at enhancing economic stability, integrating African countries into the global economy, and strengthening political cooperation. The programme ensures the coordination of major strategic initiatives such as CAADP, PIDA, and APRM, thereby enabling a comprehensive approach to development challenges and the implementation of socio-economic reforms. At the same time, the effectiveness of NEPAD is constrained by a number of factors, including insufficient financial resources, inadequate coordination between international and African partners, and political instability in certain member states. These factors slow the achievement of the programme's strategic objectives and pose significant challenges to its sustainable development in a dynamic global and regional environment. Despite these difficulties, NEPAD demonstrates considerable potential in promoting Africa's long-term development and fostering effective international partnerships.

Keywords: NEPAD; African Union; infrastructure projects; CAADP; PIDA; APRM; regional integration; Agenda 2063; sustainable development.

Нове партнерство для розвитку Африки (NEPAD) у глобальній системі: історія створення, цілі та механізми реалізації

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Анотація.

Мета статті: проаналізувати історію створення, цілі та механізми реалізації Нового партнерства для розвитку Африки (NEPAD), розглянувши його концептуальні засади, ключові програми (CAADP, PIDA, APRM) та оцінку ефективності практичної реалізації у контексті сучасних глобальних і регіональних викликів. **Методологічну основу** становлять принципи системного, інституційного та порівняльного аналізу, що дозволяє простежити взаємозв'язок цілей NEPAD із механізмами їх практичного впровадження та оцінити реальний вплив ініціативи на розвиток африканського континенту. **Наукова новизна** полягає у комплексному поєднанні історичного аналізу та оцінки сучасних механізмів NEPAD як інструменту глобальної інтеграції Африки. Вперше систематизовано взаємозв'язок політичних, економічних та соціальних аспектів програми, виділено ключові проблеми реалізації та підкреслено роль NEPAD у розвитку управлінських практик, інфраструктури та соціально-економічного прогресу континенту. **Висновки.** Дослідження показує, що NEPAD є важливим континентальним інструментом розвитку Африки, спрямованим на підвищення економічної стабільності, інтеграцію країн континенту у глобальну економіку та зміцнення політичної співпраці. Програма забезпечує координацію ключових стратегічних ініціатив, таких як CAADP, PIDA та APRM, що дозволяє комплексно підходити до проблем розвитку та реалізації соціально-економічних реформ. Водночас ефективність NEPAD обмежується низкою проблем, серед яких нестача фінансових ресурсів, недостатня координація між міжнародними та африканськими партнерами, а також політична нестабільність у деяких країнах-членах. Ці фактори уповільнюють реалізацію стратегічних цілей програми і створюють значні виклики для її сталого розвитку у динамічному глобальному та регіональному середовищі. Незважаючи на наявні труднощі, NEPAD демонструє значний потенціал у сприянні довгостроковому розвитку Африки та формуванні ефективного міжнародного партнерства.

Ключові слова: NEPAD; Африканський Союз; інфраструктурні проєкти; CAADP; PIDA; APRM; регіональна інтеграція; Agenda 2063; сталий розвиток.

Problem Statement. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, African states faced the need to develop a new model of development capable of overcoming chronic poverty, structural underdevelopment, and political fragmentation that had constrained the continent's socio-economic progress for decades. In response to these challenges, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was established in 2001 as an economic programme of the African Union (AU). The initiative was designed to accelerate cooperation and integration among African countries by reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, integrating Africa into the global economy, and promoting women's empowerment.

The establishment of NEPAD reflected the aspiration of African governments to move away from external dependency toward a development model based on internal responsibility, regional coordination, and partnership with global development institutions. The relevance of this study stems from the fact that NEPAD has become a key instrument of long-term development planning in Africa and serves as a foundation for the implementation of many contemporary continental priorities, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063.

Analysis of Sources and Recent Research. In foreign historiography, NEPAD is generally regarded as a key initiative of the African Union aimed at shaping an indigenous model of the continent's development in the context of globalization. Considerable scholarly attention has been devoted to analysing its conceptual foundations, ideological framework, and its role in the formation of an African development model.

Thus, S. O. Hamad and M. M. Kitigwa (Hamad, Kitigwa, 2016) examine NEPAD within the context of the emergence of the idea of the «African Renaissance», emphasizing the initiative's aspiration to offer an Afrocentric alternative to traditional donor-dependent development models. The authors highlight the novelty of NEPAD as a political project while also drawing attention to the contradictions between its declared objectives and the practical realities of their implementation. A similar critical perspective is presented in the analytical article by M. S. Yusuf, M. A. Salihu, and P. L. Oyigebe (Yusuf, Salihu, Oyigebe, 2025), which provides a comprehensive overview of the history, objectives, and key challenges of NEPAD, with particular emphasis on the functioning of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the impact of structural constraints on the effectiveness of the initiative.

An important strand of historiography consists of studies focusing on the political-economic and institutional dimensions of NEPAD. In this context, I. Taylor (Taylor, 2010) analyses NEPAD through the prism of relations between Africa and the European Union, emphasizing the persistence of asymmetric interaction patterns and the continued influence of external actors on continental development strategies. This approach is complemented by the research of E. O. Ijeoma (Ijeoma, 2007), devoted to the evaluation of NEPAD projects and programmes, which highlights problems related to monitoring and evaluation (M&E), institutional weaknesses, and the uneven results of implementation.

In contemporary foreign historiography, the issue of the creation and implementation of NEPAD is also examined within the broader context of the search for new development models for Africa and the reform of governance systems across the continent. P. Chabal (Chabal, 2002) argues that the initiative represented an attempt by African leaders to combine the principles of good governance, economic reforms, and the integration of the continent into the global economy. At the same time, A. de Waal (de Waal, 2002) and I. Taylor (Taylor, 2002) emphasize the controversial nature of the programme: on the one hand, it created a new framework for Africa's partnership with international institutions, while on the other it raised doubts about the effectiveness of its implementation mechanisms and its actual capacity to transform the political and economic situation on the continent.

A critical assessment of the prospects of NEPAD is also presented in A. Beresford's review of I. Taylor's work (Beresford, 2008), which argues that the initiative may be regarded as an important political project of African modernization, although its practical outcomes remain ambiguous. Taken together, these studies make it possible to view NEPAD as a complex and controversial stage in the evolution of Africa's continental development policy, combining innovative ideas with significant structural limitations.

In Ukrainian historiography, the issue of NEPAD has not become the subject of specialized research; however, it is addressed fragmentarily in works on international relations and through the prism of integration processes on the African continent. Among these are the studies of S. Andrushchenko (Andrushchenko, 2005), V. Hura (Hura, 2014), S. Hutsalo (Hutsalo, 2005), M. Kravchenko (Kravchenko, 2019, 2020, 2022), and K. O. Yurchenko (Yurchenko, 2006, 2007), among others. In general, Ukrainian research remains predominantly descriptive and analytical in nature and does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of NEPAD mechanisms, which underscores the need for further scholarly investigation.

The aim of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the objectives of NEPAD, the main directions of their implementation, and the contemporary challenges affecting the effectiveness of the initiative within the framework of the African Union.

The Results of the Research. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was launched at the beginning of the twenty-first century as a strategic response by African states to a range of socio-economic, political, and geopolitical challenges. At that time, Africa faced prolonged economic stagnation, low levels of investment, weak institutional and governance structures, and a strong dependence on external assistance and donor programmes, which often failed to correspond to the continent's development needs (Hamad & Kitigwa, 2016). NEPAD was officially adopted as a strategic development framework for Africa at the 37th session of the Assembly of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia, where African leaders endorsed a common strategy aimed at accelerating economic growth, reducing poverty, and strengthening Africa's role in global politics and the world economy (United Nations, 2010, pp. 1–2; UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2001, pp. 1–4).

Researchers note that NEPAD emerged from the consolidation of several African initiatives, including the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP), the preparation of

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which involved significant contributions from representatives of South Africa. The programme envisaged transforming Africa into a continent capable of attracting international investment. Particular emphasis was placed on commitments by African leaders to uphold democracy and human rights and to implement economic reforms. The plan received support at the G8 summit in Genoa in the summer of 2001 (Background on..., p. 2).

Another initiative, the Omega Plan, proposed by Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, prioritized social programmes and infrastructure development. It also emphasized the responsibility of developed countries to increase their assistance to Africa, partly on the grounds of their historical "colonial" responsibility toward the continent (Kravchenko, 2022, p. 248).

At that stage, these initiatives existed as separate projects and lacked coordination at the continental level. As a result of negotiations between Senegal and South Africa in early June 2001, the two plans were merged into a single framework. Conceptually, NEPAD reflected the aspiration of African leaders to assume greater responsibility for the continent's development by combining the principles of economic growth, good governance, and regional integration (Yusuf et al., 2025, p. 27).

NEPAD was officially presented in 2001 during a meeting of African states in Côte d'Ivoire and was soon institutionalized within the framework of the African Union (AU). Its establishment envisaged the creation of a framework for cooperation between African governments and international partners, including the European Union, the United Nations, and international financial institutions (Taylor, 2010, p. 53). Scholarly studies emphasize that NEPAD pursued not only economic but also political objectives, as it sought to strengthen political stability, promote democracy, and improve the effectiveness of governance across the continent (Hamad & Kitigwa, 2016, p. 67; Yusuf et al., 2025, p. 26).

The principal objectives of NEPAD were declared to be the eradication of extreme poverty, sustainable economic development, the integration of Africa into the global economy, the increase of investment flows, and the acceleration of regional integration (African Development Bank, n.d.; UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2001, pp. 5–7). The programme also emphasized the importance of strengthening good governance, democracy, human rights, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts as essential preconditions for sustainable development and investment attractiveness (United Nations, 2010, p. 2). Among the key instruments intended to support these objectives was the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), a voluntary system for assessing member states' policies with regard to standards of governance and transparency (Africa Renewal, 2024, p. 3).

The APRM mechanisms enabled the evaluation of member states according to criteria such as political stability, governance effectiveness, respect for human rights, and economic policy performance (Ijeoma, 2007, p. 67). In practice, however, researchers note that the mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation remained partly declarative, and the impact of the APRM on actual political and economic changes was limited (Taylor, 2010, p. 60). At the same time, NEPAD actively relied on partnerships with international financial institutions and the European Union to attract investment, which also created a degree of dependence on external actors (Yusuf et al., 2025, p. 28).

Research indicates that the implementation of these objectives varied significantly across countries. In particular, the impact of NEPAD on economic growth, women's education, and foreign trade proved uneven and largely depended on local conditions and the institutional capacity of national governments (Ngwakwe & Awunyo-Vitor, 2025, pp. 158–159).

NEPAD also aimed to mobilize both domestic and external resources, promote the development of infrastructure, the agro-industrial sector, human capital, science and technology, and create sustainable conditions for trade and private investment (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2001, pp. 12–14; Africa Renewal, 2024, p. 2). These objectives were underpinned by the principles of African leadership, partnership, and accountability, which, according to the programme's conceptual documents, were intended to address the historical challenges of dependency and the shortcomings of traditional donor assistance (United Nations, 2010, pp. 1–3).

From its inception, NEPAD was positioned not merely as a technical development document but as a political framework designed to reshape Africa's relations with the international community on a partnership basis. It was grounded in the principle that African leaders should take the initiative in addressing poverty and structural constraints, while the international community should support this process rather than dictate development conditions (Africa Renewal, 2024, pp. 1–2; UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2001, pp. 2–3).

Organizationally, NEPAD constituted a fully autonomous structure. Its Implementation Committee, elected on the basis of equal geographic representation from African sub-regions, included the five founding countries of the «New Partnership» – Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa – as well as Tunisia, Mali, Cameroon, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Rwanda, Botswana, and Mozambique. Representatives of the presidents of the five founding countries also formed a Steering Committee, whose primary task was to create the

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conditions for developing concrete operational projects and to oversee the NEPAD Secretariat (Background on..., p. 4).

To facilitate NEPAD's implementation, the Minimum Integration Programme was adopted in 2009. This programme served as a tool to unify existing regional integration initiatives and strengthen economic linkages among African countries. It comprised eleven priority investment areas, including infrastructure; energy; agriculture; the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people; science and technology; and the social sector (Kravchenko, 2019, pp. 44–45).

In the industrial sector, for instance, the programme supported the development of legal frameworks for industrial policy within each regional integration body. In agriculture, it promoted the harmonization of regional food security programmes, exchange of best practices, and the establishment of dedicated agricultural development funds within each regional bloc.

Within NEPAD, the practical implementation of its strategic objectives is driven by flagship programmes such as CAADP, PIDA, and APRM, which address the core areas of socio-economic transformation on the continent. The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), endorsed under the auspices of the African Union at the Maputo Summit (Mozambique) in 2003, was established as a primary strategic initiative to transform the agricultural sector, increase agricultural productivity, reduce hunger and poverty, and stimulate economic growth through agriculture. The CAADP framework set targets of achieving an annual agricultural productivity growth of at least 6 % and increasing public expenditure on agriculture to at least 10% of national budgets (African Union, 2003, p. 2). Subsequent CAADP documents shifted the focus towards agro-industrialization, value chain development, integration of smallholder farms into market mechanisms, and enhancing the resilience of agricultural production to climate change (UNECA, 2017).

At the same time, the realisation of Africa's agricultural potential under NEPAD is contingent upon addressing deep-seated infrastructural constraints, which led to the development of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). Endorsed by the African Union in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, this initiative aims to establish an integrated continental infrastructure network across transport, energy, information and communication technologies, and transboundary water management (African Union, 2012). PIDA explicitly highlights the need to overcome the infrastructure deficit that impedes the competitiveness of African economies and to create conditions for stronger linkages between sub-regional markets, thereby facilitating accelerated regional integration and job creation through the development of transport networks and energy systems (African Union, 2012, pp. 3–7).

Within PIDA, a set of priority projects was identified to reduce trade costs, deepen regional integration, and lay the groundwork for sustainable economic growth. In the scholarly literature, PIDA is frequently regarded as a key instrument for operationalising NEPAD's objectives, as infrastructure constitutes the foundation for functioning common markets and the development of intra-African trade (Foster & Briceño-Garmendia, 2010, p. 128).

A central component of NEPAD's institutional architecture is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), established in 2003 as a voluntary peer review system enabling African Union member states to assess their political, economic, and social policies across four thematic areas: democracy and political governance; economic governance and management; corporate governance; and broad-based sustainable socio-economic development (African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), 2003). APRM was launched in Abuja (Nigeria) on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding and a Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic, and Corporate Governance, which set standards and assessment criteria for government policies aimed at strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing transparency, and improving accountability (APRM Base Document, AU/NEPAD, 2003, pp. 1–5; APRM Organisation and Processes, AU/NEPAD, 2003, pp. 1–12). Through APRM, states conduct self-assessments, develop national action plans, and subject them to continental review, facilitating the dissemination of best practices and enhancing governance quality in line with Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (African Peer Review Mechanism, 2025, para. 2). Scholars often describe APRM as an innovative «soft compulsion» mechanism for the Global South, which, although not legally binding, exerts political and reputational pressure on participating states to adhere to standards of democratic governance and responsible management (Hope, 2005; Herbert & Gruzd, 2008).

Thus, in synergy, CAADP, PIDA, and APRM reflect the multidimensional character of NEPAD as a continental strategy, combining economic development, infrastructural transformation, and institutional reform as foundational prerequisites for sustainable development in Africa.

A logical continuation of the NEPAD initiative—which laid the institutional and programmatic foundations for Africa's socio-economic development—was the formulation of a more comprehensive long-term strategy for continental development. The temporal limitations of NEPAD, its dependence on external financing, and the need for a clearer vision of Africa's future necessitated a shift from individual programmes and sectoral reforms to a unified strategic document. In 2013, Agenda 2063

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was adopted as the African Union's long-term strategic vision, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the OAU/AU. Agenda 2063 builds upon the conceptual foundations and practical experience of NEPAD.

Where NEPAD primarily focused on addressing underdevelopment through economic reforms, infrastructure development, and engagement with international partners, Agenda 2063 expands this approach by offering a holistic model for the continent's political, socio-economic, and cultural development over a fifty-year horizon. The document consolidates the key priorities of previous AU initiatives and NEPAD – sustainable economic development, integration of African economies, and strengthening democratic governance and peace – while emphasizing internal sources of growth, regional integration, and the accountability of African states for development outcomes. In this way, Agenda 2063 is not an alternative to NEPAD but represents a strategic evolution of the initiative, consolidating its achievements and providing a long-term framework for Africa's continued modernisation.

Over more than two decades of NEPAD's implementation, which in 2018 was transformed into the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) (AUDA-NEPAD Annual Report, 2019), notable achievements have been recorded, particularly in the fields of infrastructure and regional integration. For instance, the NEPAD-IPPF special fund supported the preparation of 113 regional infrastructure projects in energy, transport, ICT, and water supply, and helped mobilize over USD 13 billion in investments for their implementation. Approximately half of the prepared projects reached financial closure and proceeded to the construction or operational phase, demonstrating NEPAD's tangible contribution to the development of transnational corridors and the enhancement of economic interdependence (NEPAD-IPPF marks 20 years).

At the same time, the PIDA Priority Action Plan I infrastructure initiatives, implemented under NEPAD and covering 409 projects across 54 African countries, exhibited a low completion rate: as of the relevant period, only 41 projects—about 10 % of the total—had been fully completed (PIDA PAP 1). This modest share of completed initiatives reflects not so much the inefficiency of the programme as the objective complexity, capital intensity, and long timelines inherent in implementing large-scale transnational infrastructure projects at the continental level.

Beyond infrastructure, AUDA-NEPAD has also contributed to the health sector. Inter-state disease surveillance systems were established in the SADC region, over 2,500 health professionals were trained in the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis and other occupational diseases, and centres were established to combat malaria and other diseases that claim hundreds of thousands of lives annually across the continent (AUDA-NEPAD, Progress made in Focus Areas).

Despite its ambitious objectives, NEPAD continues to face numerous implementation challenges. Scholars highlight structural barriers, uneven programme impact across different countries, and a gap between the declared principles of «African ownership» and practical reliance on donor resources (Hamad & Kitigwa, 2016, p. 71; Ngwakwe & Awunyo-Vitor, 2025, p. 159). Moreover, assessments of APRM effectiveness indicate that peer review mechanisms function unevenly across levels and require reinforcement within national institutions (Ijeoma, 2007, p. 74). Nevertheless, NEPAD remains the central framework for Africa's continental development strategy, providing the foundation for further initiatives aimed at economic integration, improved governance, and social progress.

The impact of NEPAD on Africa's development is evident across economic, infrastructural, political, and social dimensions. Economically, the initiative facilitated the establishment of regional economic corridors, modernisation of key sectors, and the attraction of foreign investment. Through NEPAD's support, more than 100 regional infrastructure projects in transport, energy, and ICT were prepared, strengthening inter-state economic interdependence and trade flows (African Development Bank, 2025). In infrastructure, the PIDA Priority Action Plan encompassed hundreds of projects in 54 countries, laying the groundwork for long-term economic integration, improved access to energy, water, and transport, and creating effective mechanisms for planning and coordinating large-scale initiatives (OECD, 2025). Politically and socially, NEPAD contributed to promoting standards of good governance, strengthening democracy and regional security, and supporting health and education systems, thereby enhancing the continent's human capital (AUDA-NEPAD, 2020).

In sum, NEPAD has played a systemic role in Africa's modernization by establishing mechanisms for planning, financing, and coordinating development, which have provided the foundation for subsequent strategies, notably Agenda 2063, and remain essential for achieving sustainable growth and continental integration.

Conclusions. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) represents a pivotal phase in the transformation of Africa's continental development policy, aimed at overcoming structural underdevelopment and integrating the continent into the global economy. The initiative combined the principle of African states' internal ownership with the development of strategic partnerships with international institutions, laying the foundation for long-term socio-economic planning. The

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implementation of CAADP, PIDA, and APRM programmes has demonstrated their substantial potential in agricultural development, infrastructural integration, and governance enhancement, while also revealing challenges of uneven effectiveness due to financial, institutional, and security constraints. The transition to AUDA-NEPAD offers opportunities to adapt the initiative's instruments to new global challenges and strengthen development coordination. NEPAD's future relevance will depend on the ability of member states to achieve sustainable domestic transformations and effectively implement the priorities outlined in Agenda 2063.

The findings of this study may serve as a basis for further scholarly analysis, as well as for practical recommendations regarding the continued development of NEPAD and Africa's global policy.

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