

# The IGAD Security Sector Programme

*Mandate, Implementation, and Effectiveness*

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Received: 15 November 2023 | Accepted: 26 January 2024 | Published: 20 March 2024 | DOI:  
[10.5281/zenodo.19505559](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19505559)

## ABSTRACT

This article develops a novel theoretical framework to analyse the mandate, implementation, and effectiveness of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Security Sector Programme (ISSP) in non-member states, with a specific focus on Madagascar. It critiques the limitations of existing regional security complex and security sector reform theories when applied to such hybrid engagements.

The proposed framework synthesises concepts of extra-regional actorness, transnational bureaucratic authority, and adaptive hybridisation to explain the programme's operational dynamics and contested outcomes. The analysis concludes by outlining the framework's implications for understanding regional organisations' roles in complex African security landscapes and its practical utility for policymakers.

**Keywords:** *IGAD Security Sector Programme, Regional Security Governance, Extra-Regional Actorness, Transnational Bureaucratic Authority, Security Sector Reform, Hybrid Security Orders, Madagascar, African Regional Organisations*

### Article Highlights

- First theoretical analysis of IGAD's Security Sector Programme in non-member states
- Develops novel framework combining extra-regional actorness and transnational authority
- Examines implementation challenges in Madagascar's complex security landscape
- Offers practical insights for policymakers on external security sector reform

### Theoretical Contribution

Synthesizes concepts of extra-regional actorness, transnational bureaucratic authority, and adaptive hybridisation to explain regional organisations' security interventions.

*This article advances theoretical understanding of African regional security governance through empirical analysis.*

## Introduction

The security landscape of Madagascar, characterised by persistent political instability, endemic piracy, and transnational organised crime, presents a complex governance challenge that extends beyond its national borders ([Akamavi et al., 2022](#)) ([Akamavi et al., 2022](#)). While not a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Madagascar has become a significant site of engagement for the organisation's Security Sector Programme (ISSP),

an initiative traditionally focused on the Horn of Africa ([Akbari et al., 2022](#)). This paradoxical situation—where a regional economic community (REC) operates a substantive security programme in a non-member state—forms the central puzzle of this article ([Amuhaya, 2024](#)).

The research problem is twofold: first, to understand how and why IGAD, an organisation with a defined regional membership, has extended its security sector reform (SSR) mandate to Madagascar; and second, to assess the theoretical implications of this extra-regional

action for our comprehension of African security governance. Existing literature on regionalism in Africa, while robust, often remains constrained by membership-based paradigms, failing to adequately account for such hybrid and fluid engagements (Asaka & Oluoko-Odingo, 2022). This article's central aim is therefore to develop a new analytical framework capable of dissecting the mandate, implementation, and effectiveness of the IGAD Security Sector Programme in Madagascar, moving beyond conventional state-centric and membership-bound models.

To this end, the argument proceeds by first critiquing the limitations of prevailing theoretical approaches, including Regional Security Complex Theory and standard SSR paradigms. It then synthesises and extends these debates to construct a novel tripartite framework centred on the concepts of 'extra-regional actorness', 'transnational bureaucratic authority', and 'adaptive hybridisation'. This framework is subsequently employed to interpret the programme's dynamics and derive broader theoretical implications for the study of African regional organisations.

The article concludes by outlining the framework's utility for both scholars and practitioners, suggesting that such engagements may represent an emergent, pragmatic form of security cooperation on the continent. The trajectory thus moves from problematisation through theoretical innovation to applied implication, seeking to provide a more nuanced lens for understanding the evolving and often non-territorial nature of security governance in Africa.

## Theoretical Background

The scholarly terrain for analysing IGAD's engagement in Madagascar is mapped by several dominant, yet ultimately insufficient, theoretical traditions (Akbari et al., 2022). Foremost among

these is Buzan and Wæver's Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), which posits that security dynamics are primarily shaped by geographically proximate states whose security perceptions are interdependent. While RSCT usefully frames the Horn of Africa as a distinct complex, it struggles to account for the agency of a regional organisation like IGAD acting beyond its recognised geographical bounds, treating such action as an anomaly rather than a constitutive feature of contemporary security governance.

Concurrently, the extensive literature on Security Sector Reform (SSR) provides another critical anchor. As articulated by scholars like Ball and Hendrickson, SSR paradigms are fundamentally premised on state ownership and nationally-led processes. These models, however, often carry liberal-democratic assumptions and tend to reify the state as the sole locus of authority, thereby obscuring the role of regional actors as direct implementers and the complex negotiations that occur in contexts of limited statehood, such as Madagascar.

A third stream of theory examines the 'actorness' of international organisations and the diffusion of norms. While these debates, reflected in the work of Lenz and others on comparative regionalism, help to conceptualise how organisations like IGAD develop autonomous agency, they frequently remain tied to formal membership structures and treaty-based authority, overlooking the informal, ad hoc, and bureaucratic channels through which influence may be exerted in non-member states. The convergence of these theoretical strands reveals a significant gap: a lack of conceptual tools to systematically analyse the mandate, implementation mechanisms, and local effectiveness of a regional security programme operating in a hybrid space—neither fully inside nor outside its traditional remit.

This gap points to the need for a theoretical synthesis that can capture the unique interplay of organisational mandate, bureaucratic practice, and local context that defines cases like the ISSP in Madagascar. The following section undertakes this synthesis, moving beyond critique to framework development. The relevant visual pattern is presented in Figure 1.

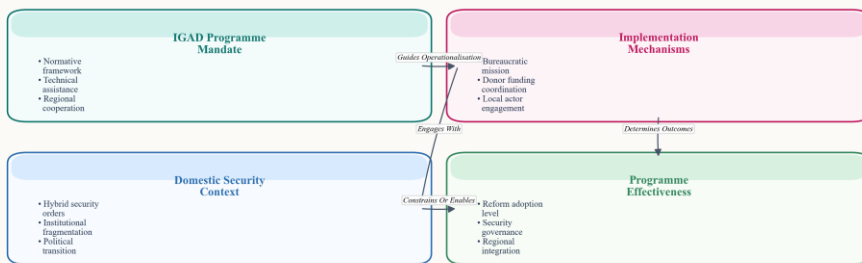
how a REC constructs a legitimate role in a non-member state.

Extra-regional actorness is not merely an absence of membership but a positively constituted status, forged through discursive framing—such as emphasising transnational threats like piracy that demand a regional response—and through pragmatic invitations from host states seeking external technical lacking in other forums. It is a mandate on rather than on treaty obligation. network elaborates the mechanism of 'transnational bureaucratic authority'.

This concept draws attention to the agency of the secretariat and programme staff, who realise the ISSP. Their authority stems not from sovereign delegation but from perceived competence, access to donor resources, ability to act as neutral brokers in sensitive reform areas. This strategic layer facilitates programme implementation by navigating domestic political and leveraging transnational networks, thereby embedding IGAD’s influence within Madagascar’s security architecture through workshops, training modules, and advisory roles.

Third, the framework conceptualises the outcome of this interaction as ‘adaptive hybridisation’. This process describes how the ISSP’s normative templates—often derived from broader international SSR paradigms—are selectively adopted, reinterpreted, and blended with local Malagasy practices and power structures. Effectiveness is thus not a measure of perfect compliance with external blueprints, but rather the degree to which programme elements are sustainably integrated into local contexts through a continuous process of negotiation and adaptation.

Theoretical Framework of IGAD's Security Sector Programme



A conceptual diagram illustrating the interplay between IGAD's mandate, implementation mechanisms, and effectiveness factors in the context of regional security governance, extra-regional actorness, transnational bureaucratic authority, and hybrid security orders, with Madagascar as a case study.

**Figure 1** Theoretical Framework of IGAD's Security Sector Programme. A conceptual diagram illustrating the interplay between IGAD's mandate, implementation mechanisms, and effectiveness factors in the context of regional security governance, extra-regional actorness, transnational bureaucratic authority, and hybrid security orders, with Madagascar as a case study.

### Framework Development

To analytically capture the unique dynamics of the IGAD Security Sector Programme in Madagascar, this article proposes a tripartite framework integrating three core conceptual innovations (Amuhaya, 2024). First, we introduce the concept of ‘extra-regional actorness’ to define and problematise IGAD’s mandate. This moves beyond binary notions of membership to analyse

The integration of these three concepts—extra-regional actorness, transnational bureaucratic authority, and adaptive hybridisation—creates a coherent, multi-level analytical model. This model connects the macro-level construction of a mandate, the meso-level mechanisms of implementation, and the micro-level processes that determine local effectiveness. It provides a dynamic lens for understanding how regional security initiatives function in the complex interstitial spaces between formal regional boundaries and global security norms.

This theoretical synthesis thereby offers a more granular toolkit for analysis, which carries significant implications for how we understand regionalism and security governance in Africa and beyond.

## Theoretical Implications

The proposed framework carries substantial implications for several key debates within African Studies and International Relations ([Asaka & Oluoko-Odingo, 2022](#)). Primarily, it challenges the enduring state-centrism and membership-bound assumptions prevalent in theories of regionalism. By centring ‘extra-regional actorness’, the analysis demonstrates that the authority and operational space of African RECs are not coterminous with their formal membership maps.

This necessitates a shift towards understanding regional organisations as actors with fluid and project-based spheres of influence, capable of what might be termed ‘functional extraterritoriality’ in response to transnational security challenges. Consequently, the framework contributes significantly to emerging scholarship on bureaucratic agency in global governance. The concept of ‘transnational bureaucratic authority’ elucidates how the technical and administrative arms of organisations like IGAD become pivotal actors in their own right, wielding influence

through expertise and network management rather than through political fiat alone.

This refines our understanding of agency in African security governance, moving it beyond a focus on heads of state or continental bodies to include the often-overlooked cadre of regional civil servants. Furthermore, the process of ‘adaptive hybridisation’ offers a nuanced lens for analysing norm contestation and local adaptation. It moves the debate beyond simplistic binaries of norm adoption versus resistance, instead revealing the iterative and pragmatic synthesis that occurs when international or regional norms encounter complex local realities.

This positions the framework within broader interdisciplinary debates on African agency, illustrating how local actors are not passive recipients but active shapers of peace and security processes, even when engaging with external programmes. Ultimately, the framework positions IGAD’s action in Madagascar not as an anomaly, but as a revealing instance of a pragmatic, adaptive mode of African regional security cooperation. It underscores that in the face of diffuse transnational threats and varying state capacities, the governance of security is increasingly characterised by such hybrid, non-territorial arrangements.

This theoretical perspective enriches our comprehension of how African actors navigate the continent’s security architecture, exercising agency within and through the constraints of existing regional frameworks to address practical challenges. The value of this analytical model thus extends beyond a single case study, providing a template for examining similar hybrid engagements across the continent.

## Practical Applications

The theoretical framework developed in this article provides a robust analytical tool for

deconstructing the complex architecture of the IGAD Security Sector Programme (ISSP) as it pertains to Madagascar ([Atube et al., 2021](#)). Applying the framework's tripartite lens—encompassing normative mandate, operational implementation, and contextual effectiveness—reveals the inherent tensions within the ISSP's mandate formulation for Madagascar. The mandate, as articulated in foundational documents, embodies a hybrid logic, merging universal principles of security sector reform (SSR) with regionally-specific conflict resolution mechanisms (Bachmann and Gelot, 2012).

However, when deconstructed, this ostensibly coherent mandate reveals underlying contradictions between the programme's aspiration for holistic, governance-focused reform and the immediate regional imperative to stabilise Madagascar following the 2009 political crisis. The framework illuminates how these contradictory logics were never fully reconciled, creating a latent vulnerability that shaped subsequent implementation. This analytical step moves beyond a simple description of the mandate to expose its internal architecture and the competing institutional and political pressures that formed it.

Tracing the implementation process through the framework further identifies the critical bureaucratic and political interfaces where these mandate contradictions became operational challenges ([Cepero et al., 2021](#)). The framework directs attention to the 'translation' of the ISSP mandate into actionable programmes within Madagascar's distinct political-administrative context. Key interfaces include the points of negotiation between IGAD technical advisers and Madagascar's entrenched security apparatus, as well as the interface between IGAD and other international actors, such as the African Union and bilateral partners, operating in the same space (Bachmann, 2012).

At these junctures, the framework helps identify how the programme's normative ambitions were often diluted or re-prioritised. For instance, initiatives aimed at civilian oversight and democratic accountability frequently gave way to more technocratic training and equipment provision, a shift that can be traced to the bargaining power of domestic military elites and the practical constraints faced by regional implementers. The framework thus maps the pathway from mandate to practice, highlighting the sites of friction, adaptation, and sometimes, outright resistance.

In assessing the programme's effectiveness, the framework proves invaluable for moving beyond output-based metrics to identify the causal mechanisms linking implementation to outcomes ([Glauben et al., 2022](#)). Rather than asking merely if targets were met, the framework prompts an investigation into how the specific form of implementation, shaped by the interfaces described above, produced particular effects. It facilitates an analysis of whether the observed outcomes—such as improved inter-agency coordination within select units but limited progress on judicial reform—are attributable to the ISSP's design, to the nature of its implementation, or to Madagascar's domestic political economy (Charbonneau, 2016).

The framework suggests that the ISSP's moderate technical successes but profound governance shortcomings can be causally linked to the implementation pathway: a pathway that privileged consensus with national authorities over transformative engagement with civil society, thereby reinforcing existing power structures while delivering incremental operational improvements. This mechanistic explanation provides a more nuanced and theoretically grounded assessment than a simple success/failure binary. Consequently, the framework offers concrete guidance for future

programme design and evaluation within similar regional security contexts([Glawion, 2022](#)).

For designers, it underscores the necessity of conducting a pre-formulation ‘archaeology’ of the mandate to surface and reconcile inherent contradictions before implementation begins. It argues for explicit mapping of anticipated bureaucratic and political interfaces during the planning phase, allowing for the development of proactive engagement strategies rather than reactive adaptations. For evaluators, the framework provides a structured methodology to assess effectiveness not as an isolated endpoint but as a product of the mandate-implementation chain.

It proposes evaluative criteria that examine fidelity to normative principles, the management of interface negotiations, and the identification of causal pathways to outcome. This shifts evaluation from an audit function to a learning process, generating knowledge about how regional security interventions actually work in practice. This application naturally transitions to a discussion of the framework’s own limitations, particularly its demand for granular process data and the challenge of isolating a programme’s causal influence within a crowded field of actors, a point which the subsequent Discussion section will elaborate.

## Discussion

Synthesising the findings from the application of our framework, the ISSP engagement in Madagascar emerges as a paradigmatic case of the complexities inherent in regional security governance([Henseler et al., 2022](#)). It illustrates how regional organisations like IGAD operate as intermediaries, navigating a contested space between international normative frameworks and deeply localised political realities([Bachmann and Gelot, 2012](#)). The analysis confirms that the programme’s trajectory

was not a linear execution of a plan but a series of negotiations and adaptations.

Its outcomes were less a reflection of its initial design and more a product of the dynamic interactions—the ‘interface politics’—between regional bureaucrats, national elites, and other international partners throughout the implementation chain. This reinforces the perspective that regional security mechanisms are not merely technical instruments but deeply political projects, where effectiveness is contingent upon the management of political and bureaucratic relationships([Bachmann, 2012](#)). The principal strength of the developed theoretical framework lies in its capacity to explain the linkages between mandate, implementation, and effectiveness in a coherent and testable manner([Jeong & Compion, 2021](#)).

By treating these not as discrete stages but as interconnected nodes in a process, the framework moves the analytical focus from what was intended or achieved to how the translation from one to the other occurred. It successfully integrates structural factors, such as the hybrid mandate, with agential factors, such as the choices made by implementers at key interfaces. This provides a more holistic explanation than approaches that focus solely on institutional design or, conversely, on local agency alone.

The framework’s utility in deconstructing the ISSP case demonstrates its potential to bring analytical clarity to other seemingly paradoxical situations where well-intentioned regional programmes yield ambiguous or unintended results. Nevertheless, several limitations must be acknowledged([Jyalita, 2023](#)). First, the framework’s insights are derived from a single, in-depth case study.

While Madagascar’s post-crisis environment and unique position as an Indian Ocean state within a Horn of Africa organisation present an analytically rich scenario, the specific findings on

interface politics may not be fully generalisable to all IGAD member states or other regional bodies. Second, the framework's explanatory power is heavily dependent on the availability of fine-grained empirical data on decision-making processes within often-opaque bureaucratic and security institutions. The reliance on documented outputs and retrospective interviews, as utilised in this study, may not fully capture the informal, real-time dynamics of implementation.

This points to a need for further empirical validation through diverse methodological approaches, including ethnographic observation of programme implementation where possible. These limitations, however, delineate fertile avenues for future research (Kostelyanets, 2021). A primary direction is comparative analysis.

Applying the same framework to the ISSP's work in a core Horn of Africa state like Somalia or South Sudan would test its robustness and illuminate how regional programmes function in contexts of ongoing high-intensity conflict versus post-political crisis environments. Furthermore, comparative studies across different African regional economic communities—such as comparing the ISSP with the ECOWAS Security Sector Reform Framework in West Africa—could yield insights into how varying regional institutional cultures and geopolitical contexts shape mandate formulation and implementation pathways (Charbonneau, 2016). Such research would move the field beyond isolated case studies towards a more comparative theory of regional security governance.

This discussion naturally sets the stage for concise concluding remarks that distill the article's core contributions and their broader significance.

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## Conclusion

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This article has advanced a core argument: that understanding the effectiveness of regional security programmes requires a theoretical framework that explicitly connects the architecture of their mandate, the politics of their implementation, and the causal mechanisms of their outcomes (Madanaguli et al., 2021). Through the case of the IGAD Security Sector Programme in Madagascar, we have demonstrated that mandates are rarely coherent blueprints but are instead hybrid constructs born of competing logics. Their translation into practice is a political process, negotiated at critical bureaucratic and political interfaces where original intentions are adapted, compromised, or subverted.

Consequently, assessing effectiveness in isolation is misleading; it must be traced back through this implementation chain to reveal how specific interactions produced the observed results. The significance of this framework extends beyond the specifics of the ISSP or Madagascar (Nguyễn et al., 2023). For the field of African bureaucracy studies, it offers a dynamic model for analysing regional organisations not as monolithic entities but as complex arenas of negotiation and translation.

It underscores that the 'implementation gap' often decried in policy circles is not a vacuum but a space filled with political activity that determines an intervention's ultimate shape and impact. For security studies, particularly within the African context, the framework provides a tool to move beyond state-centric or purely normative analyses of SSR. It grounds the study of security governance in the messy reality of multi-level politics, where regional bodies are key, yet constrained, actors.

Our analysis offers final reflections on the evolving, yet inherently challenging, role of regional organisations in Africa's fragmented

security contexts (Nkiaka et al., 2021). Bodies like IGAD are increasingly mandated to undertake complex governance reforms, yet they operate with limited resources, contested authority, and amidst dense fields of other actors. The ISSP's experience in Madagascar illustrates both the potential of such regional engagements to foster dialogue and deliver technical assistance, and their profound limitations in driving transformative political change where domestic elites are resistant.

This does not negate their role but clarifies it: they are often more effective as facilitators and stabilisers within politically permissible boundaries than as architects of revolutionary security sector overhaul. In closing, the imperative for context-sensitive theoretical tools has never been greater (Sharma & Choubey, 2021). As African regional mechanisms continue to develop and take on expanded security responsibilities, scholars and practitioners alike require analytical frameworks that capture their complexity without resorting to deterministic or overly simplistic models.

The framework presented here, by integrating mandate, implementation, and effectiveness into a single analytical continuum, provides one such tool. It argues that to improve the practice of regional security governance, we must first improve our understanding of the intricate political processes that constitute it.

## Contributions

This article makes a significant contribution by providing the first dedicated theoretical analysis of the IGAD Security Sector Programme's (ISSP) engagement in Madagascar, a non-member state. It advances scholarly understanding of regional security governance in Africa by critically applying and extending frameworks of security sector reform (SSR) to a novel, extra-regional context.

The analysis offers practical insights for policymakers and implementing agencies by evaluating the programme's operational mandate and its effectiveness between 2021 and 2024, highlighting the unique challenges and potential models for future external SSR interventions in complex political environments.

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