The Strategic Planning and Research Unit takes the lead in the development of medium and long term strategic plans for the COMESA Organisation. It has the responsibility of aligning regional programmes to ensure that they contribute to the attainment of the vision and mission of the organisation. In doing so, the SPR Unit assists the Management and Policy Organs in developing and monitoring activities related to the implementation of the strategic plan including oversight on budget development, resources planning, an emphasis on cross-divisional works and the development and use of outcome measures.

The SPR Unit also provides planning support to the Secretary General’s Office on emerging issues and critical strategic regional issues or initiatives.

**Main functions of the Unit**

- Conducts and consolidates long range strategic plans
  - Prepares medium to long range studies as well as develops the overall logic in preparation of long term strategic plans
  - Monitors and periodically evaluates strategic plans in order to create a proactive capacity for COMESA
- Evaluates and advises on the impact, effectiveness and relevance of activities undertaken by various units and divisions in the Secretariat
- Undertakes research on emerging issues and/or develops cooperation among research institutes.

**Current Activities**

As a result of the activities indicated above, a draft MTSP was developed and presented for discussion at the Final MTSP Workshop held in May 2010. The Workshop was attended by representatives of the public and private sector from the COMESA region as well as COMESA Institutions. The draft MTSP includes a results framework outlining six strategic areas as follows;

- Removing barriers to factor mobility
- Building Capacity for Global Competitiveness
- Addressing Supply Side Constraints related to Infrastructure
- Peace and Security
- Cross Cutting Issues including: Gender and Social Development, Climate Change, Knowledge Based Society, Cooperation and Partnership and Aid for Trade
In addition to the Results Framework, the Strategy outlines the finalized indicators which will be used to monitor and evaluate the performance of the MTSP. The Indicators were developed (at Fringilla & Chisamba Taskforce Retreats) as a request by the Member States to the Secretariat during the May main Workshop which were later forwarded to the Member States for comments before finalization.

In addition to the above activities, National Consultative Workshops were held in several Member States to receive views as input into the development of a Strategy that will enhance the implementation of council decisions at national level in all the member states.

The process of implementation and monitoring the COMESA 2011-2015 MTSP will therefore be a continuous process as the document will be a living and dynamic guide to ensure that the priorities identified remain relevant, sharply focused and results oriented for the greater mandate of COMESA.

**Priorities identified for the 2011-2015 COMESA Planning Cycle.**

- **The COMESA Core Integration Agenda** – Focusing on the removal of barriers to factor mobility, improvement of market access and the creation of an open trade, investment and production space.

- **Productive Capacity for Global Competitiveness** - To enhance competitiveness and build regional productive capacity and technological capability.

- **Infrastructure Development** – Focusing on Infrastructure relevant to the reduction of supply side constraints to improve market access and enhance productive capacity in the region.

- **Cross-Cutting Issues including Gender and Social Development, Climate Change, Statistics, Peace and Security, Knowledge based capacity and human capital** - Focusing on issues that support the achievement of the broader integration agenda.
- **Cooperation and Partnership** – Focusing on strengthening cooperation and partnership with the development partners.

- **Institutional Development** – Focusing on enhancing the capacity of the Secretariat as a facilitator and coordinator of COMESA’s regional integration agenda.

The SPR Unit prepares **country profiles** for its 19 member States. The Country Profiles aim to highlight the progress towards regional integration at country level. The profiles provide a snapshot of the member States in areas including overall economic prospects, trade development, investments and infrastructure development.