



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2026–2029

CARIBBEAN

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FOREWORD

Today, technological developments and the globalization of trade continue to reshape economies and societies worldwide. As a result, the activities and characteristics of the postal sector have changed profoundly, along with the expectations of society and businesses with regard to postal services. In this evolving environment, our role in facilitating communication across borders is more relevant than ever. Governments must provide the necessary enabling environment and ensure that universal postal services are maintained. In parallel, postal operators around the world must adapt to these shifts and meet the evolving demands through structural reforms, innovative services and continuous modernization.

Supporting our member countries in building resilient and future-ready postal services is central to the UPU's mandate. In this regard, the regional development plan (RDP) constitutes a key document, translating our shared priorities into concrete support at regional level. During the Abidjan cycle, we significantly strengthened our field presence, including doubling the number of regional offices. This demonstrates the high priority we continue to place on development cooperation.

This RDP reflects detailed analyses of the region's current situation and the lessons we learned from the Abidjan cycle. It provides both an overview of the global and regional postal environment, together with a targeted set of development cooperation actions tailored to the needs of the region for the 2026-2029 cycle. I believe that it will serve as a guiding reference for implementing development cooperation in line with the discussions held at the Dubai Congress on regionalization.

As the United Nations specialized agency responsible for postal services, we work closely with our regional partners to identify priorities for development cooperation activities and initiatives. This RDP is therefore the result of an inclusive regional dialogue between us and our stakeholders. Despite present challenges, significant opportunities arise from the continued growth of cross-border e-commerce and trade. By leveraging their extensive networks and trusted reputation, designated postal operators are well placed to support governments in advancing national policy objectives.

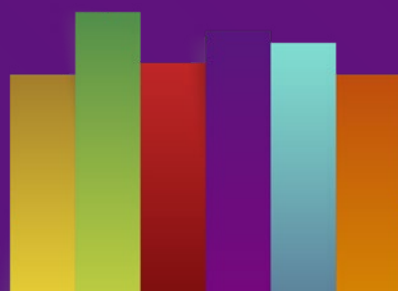
I look forward to strengthening our close cooperation with regional partners as we work together with our 192 member countries to maximize the impact of their socio-economic development efforts and deliver tangible benefits to citizens and businesses across the region.

MASAHIKO METOKI

Director General of the UPU International Bureau

CHAPTER 1

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE POSTAL SECTOR



GLOBAL TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

The global postal sector is undergoing a profound transformation. Although the world economy grew at an average annual rate of 3.38% between 1996 and 2023, in terms of gross domestic product adjusted for purchasing power parity (GDP PPP), the postal sector recorded slower growth of 2.28% in real revenue. This divergence, commonly referred to as “postal decoupling”, reflects both the structural challenges and the potential of the sector amid digital disruption and evolving customer needs.

Despite the decline in traditional letter mail, the sector has shown resilience through the expansion of e-commerce, logistics and financial services. In 2023, for the first time, global revenue from parcels and logistics (32.5%) surpassed that from letter post (32.4%), marking a pivotal shift in the sector’s economic profile.

Structural shift in the sector

Postal operators are rapidly transitioning from traditional, letter-dominant service models to integrated networks that encompass parcel logistics, digital services, financial inclusion and public service delivery. This transformation is driven by the need to remain relevant in the digital economy and to respond to the evolving expectations of citizens and businesses. However, the pace and depth of transformation vary greatly across regions. New business models, investment in digital infrastructure, the reskilling of the postal workforce and the establishment of agile regulatory frameworks are essential prerequisites for success.

Diverging regional dynamics

The trajectory of postal sector development differs markedly between regions, revealing disparities that must be addressed through targeted cooperation:

AFRICA is a prime example of postal decoupling: while GDP has climbed steadily over the past 20 years, postal revenue has shrunk by 2.53% per year on average. Key constraints include underinvestment in infrastructure, low mail and parcel volumes, patchy regulation, and slow uptake of electronic advance data (EAD) and digital standards. In many countries, universal service obligations (USOs) are still to be defined, and access to international funding remains limited;

ARAB COUNTRIES have shown robust growth in postal revenue, outpacing GDP growth, largely owing to the rapid uptake of financial services and government-backed modernization programmes. Nonetheless, the Arab region faces challenges in addressing cross-border operational fragmentation and in harmonizing regulations for postal and digital services;

the **ASIA-PACIFIC** region has emerged as a global leader in postal innovation. The region boasts strong growth in e-commerce logistics, digital payment systems and postal financial services. However, the pace of growth is uneven, with countries in the region still facing infrastructure and policy bottlenecks that limit last-mile delivery and digital inclusion;

the **CARIBBEAN** has recorded modest economic growth, but postal revenue remains low owing to small market size and high operational costs. Regulatory inconsistency, low digital uptake and limited Post–Customs integration constrain development. There is an increasing need for targeted capacity building and climate-resilient digital transformation efforts;

the **EUROPE AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS)** region shows relatively high levels of service reliability and resilience. However, it faces strong competition, with customer-centric innovation and both exogenous and endogenous regulation among the main challenges. Demographic shifts and labour shortages also pose structural issues for the sustainability of national postal operators;

LATIN AMERICA displays moderate economic growth, but postal revenue lags behind. Outdated and fragmented regulatory frameworks, uneven digital adoption and limited investment capacity hinder progress. Demand is rising for capacity building and more coordinated digital transformation strategies.

These divergences underscore the need for tailored intervention, strong regional coordination and continued alignment of UPU-led actions with national strategies.

Climate, resilience and inclusion

Across all regions, the increase in climate-related disasters, geopolitical tension and pandemics has exposed the vulnerability of postal supply chains. The need to mainstream disaster risk management (DRM), business continuity planning and climate resilience into postal development has become imperative. In parallel, the postal network continues to serve as vital infrastructure for social inclusion, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Postal operators are uniquely positioned to deliver essential services such as social payments, e-government services, digital identification and financial access – reinforcing their role as enablers for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2022–2025 CYCLE

Under the Abidjan Postal Strategy, the UPU achieved significant progress:

By the end of the cycle, the majority of planned development cooperation activities had been completed across all regions, reflecting sustained delivery under the Abidjan Business Plan;

Implementation of the UPU's broader strategic priorities advanced consistently across the Council of Administration (CA) and Postal Operations Council (POC) work programmes, as reflected in the progress reports presented during the cycle;

Development cooperation was strengthened through regionalization, with expanded field presence and broadened partnerships with restricted unions and donors, in line with Congress mandates.

Key lessons from this cycle include the importance of strong regional engagement, flexible and diversified funding, and enhanced cross-cutting coordination within the UPU and with member countries – particularly through increased field presence, harmonized project management and improved collaboration with restricted unions.

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION FOR 2026–2029

The Dubai Business Plan translates the UPU's long-term vision into 38 domain work proposals (DWP), structured around three strategic goals:



GOAL 1

GOAL 1: LEVERAGE THE SINGLE POSTAL TERRITORY THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE RULES-BASED SYSTEM;



GOAL 2

GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN THE GLOBAL POSTAL ECOSYSTEM THROUGH INNOVATION FOR FACILITATING COMMUNICATION AND TRADE;



GOAL 3

GOAL 3: ENABLE POSTAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ENHANCED COOPERATION AND REGIONALIZATION.

Among these, the importance of goal 3 is underscored by the fact that it requires the largest share of projected resources, at 133.58 million CHF over the 2026–2029 cycle. This highlights the Union's commitment to ensuring that no member country is left behind.

A core pillar of this commitment is the deepening of regionalization, which now serves not only as a delivery mechanism but as a strategic approach in its own right. Regionalization is no longer limited to field implementation; it is being positioned as a means of co-creation, empowerment and resilience building. Through enhanced regional presence – including the expansion of regional offices, the deployment of field experts, and closer engagement with restricted unions and local stakeholders – the UPU aims to tailor solutions more precisely to the unique needs of each region.

Key proposals such as DWP 27 (Development and cooperation – regionalization and projects), DWP 101 (Development and cooperation – emergency assistance) and DWP 205 (Development and cooperation – regionalization) support this approach by:

elevating regional offices into centres for technical assistance, policy dialogue and resource mobilization;

ensuring that regional strategies are shaped with – and not just for – member countries;

strengthening alignment between regional priorities and global goals, particularly in areas such as digital transformation, financial inclusion, logistics development and regulatory modernization.

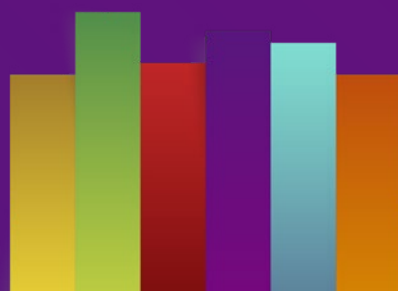
In this way, regionalization is both a structural lever and a political message: development must be regionalized, inclusive and responsive. It reinforces the idea that no solution is truly global unless it is regionally relevant.

This renewed emphasis on region-specific delivery models, combined with the results-based approach of the DWPs through key performance indicators (KPIs), sets the foundation for a more agile, equitable and accountable UPU that is prepared to support its members in navigating uncertainty, embracing innovation and achieving sustainable postal development.

The regional development plan (RDP) for the 2026–2029 cycle will be defined by its responsiveness to regional needs, its emphasis on resilience and sustainability, and its integration with the Dubai Business Plan and the UN SDGs. Chapter 2 will present a detailed regional analysis to guide priority setting and cooperation modalities tailored to each region.

CHAPTER 2

REGIONAL POSTAL SECTOR ANALYSIS



OVERVIEW OF THE POSTAL SECTOR IN THE CARIBBEAN

The postal sector in the Caribbean remains a critical component of economic and social infrastructure, supporting connectivity, inclusion and public-service delivery across a region largely composed of small island developing states (SIDS). The Caribbean comprises 24 UPU member countries, as well as several non-UPU jurisdictions and dependent overseas territories (DOTs) that form an integral part of the wider regional postal ecosystem.

These postal actors present diverse realities. While some designated operators (DOs) are advancing digital transformation and service diversification, others continue to face structural constraints linked to limited resources, ageing infrastructure and high exposure to external shocks. Although non-UPU member countries, DOTs operate DOs and contribute significantly to postal exchanges, regional connectivity and service continuity. They are recognized as associate SIDS members and remain active participants in Caribbean regional cooperation mechanisms, including within the Caribbean Postal Union (CPU) and other platforms. Acknowledging their role is therefore essential to capturing the full operational, institutional and geographic dynamics of the Caribbean postal sector.

Consistent with global trends outlined in the UPU Strategy 2026–2029 (Dubai cycle), the region continues to face structural pressures such as declining mail volumes, intensifying competition, revenue erosion linked to postal decoupling, and the urgent need to modernize both operational and digital foundations. These challenges weigh heavily on small island states where geographic fragmentation, limited airlift and high operational costs create additional logistical and financial constraints.

At the same time, the Caribbean's pronounced vulnerability to climate-related natural disasters, such as hurricanes, flooding and sea-level rises, exacerbates operational risks and heightens financial strain on DOs. Strengthening climate resilience is therefore essential for safeguarding service continuity, protecting critical infrastructure, and ensuring that the Post can support communities before, during and after crises.

Equally important is the advancement of gender equality across the postal workforce and leadership structures. Promoting women's participation strengthens institutional capacity, supports more inclusive and equitable development, and enhances the sector's ability to respond effectively to the evolving needs of Caribbean societies.

Despite these disparities, DOs continue to function as essential connectors for citizens, businesses, governments and diaspora communities. For many remote islands and rural communities, the Post ensures indispensable logistics, communication and financial services, enabling participation in local, regional and global markets. The sector's relevance increased significantly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, as Posts maintained essential service continuity and accelerated modernization efforts, particularly in digitalization and e-commerce readiness.

In recent years, notable progress has been observed in electronic data exchange, customs–postal integration, operational reliability and the adoption of digital tools. Countries such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten, and Grenada have demonstrated significant advancements in automation, parcel processing and the development of digital or financial services. However, persistent challenges – including constrained investment capacity, governance fragmentation, technological gaps and heightened climate risk – continue to limit the full development potential of the Caribbean postal ecosystem.

The region therefore reflects a dual dynamic: steady progress in modernization among several DOs, combined with enduring structural vulnerabilities that disproportionately affect smaller and less-resourced island states.

POSTAL DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE (2IPD INSIGHTS)

The latest Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD) assessment shows a mixed performance across Caribbean countries, reflecting both incremental progress and significant development gaps. The regional averages – 44.0 for reliability, 31.9 for reach, 8.9 for relevance, and 37.3 for resilience – highlight uneven performance across the four dimensions of postal development.

Reliability has improved in several countries, particularly Jamaica, Grenada, Belize, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, where investments in operational processes, transportation systems and quality-of-service controls have created more predictable mail flows. However, many small island DOs continue to struggle with limited resources, fragmented transportation chains and higher exposure to service interruptions, leading to lower reliability indicators.

Reach, representing integration into global mail and parcel networks, varies significantly. Larger or more established DOs, such as Jamaica Post, Trinidad and Tobago Postal Corporation (TTPC) and Barbados Postal

Service (BPS), have stronger international connectivity and more mature customs interfaces. Smaller island Posts face delays linked to high transportation costs, irregular airlift, manual customs clearance procedures and limited track-and-trace capabilities.

Relevance, the weakest dimension in the region, reflects limited service diversification and slower development of digital, e-commerce and financial products. Only a small number of DOs, such as those of Dominica and Grenada, have shown early progress. Expanding digital postal services and e-commerce-oriented business models remains a strategic priority to ensure sector sustainability.

Resilience is relatively higher, with Barbados, Belize and Guyana showing stronger capacity to sustain operations during disruptions. However, resilience remains uneven given the region's acute exposure to hurricanes, flooding and other natural hazards. Strengthening business continuity frameworks and infrastructure resilience is therefore essential.

These results confirm that the Caribbean postal sector is advancing, but remains constrained by systemic challenges requiring coordinated investment, regional cooperation and strengthened field presence. Moreover, performance is directly affected by external factors such as the impact of de minimis thresholds applied by the United States of America and other international regulatory requirements, which influence operational efficiency, cost structures and the competitiveness of e-commerce logistics in the region.

STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

While progress has been achieved, the Caribbean postal sector continues to face a number of structural and institutional challenges that limit modernization and equitable development:

Fragmented governance and limited inter-institutional coordination:

Postal policies are often not fully integrated into national digital, trade or logistics strategies. Coordination between ministries, regulators and DOs is inconsistent, leading to fragmented policy environments and delays in modernization.

Limited institutional and technical

capacity: Many DOs, particularly in smaller islands, lack sufficiently skilled staff, modern operational systems or specialized expertise to manage modernization projects effectively.

Financial constraints and dependence

on external support: Postal reform is chronically underfunded, with DOs relying heavily on UPU support, donor funding and regional partners. Limited revenue-generating capacity and lack of cost-compensation mechanisms for universal service increase financial pressure.

Customs and border integration

gaps: Weak coordination with customs authorities – including lengthy clearance processes, lack of harmonization across islands, and limited use of electronic advance data (EAD) – hinders cross-border efficiency and limits e-commerce growth.

Obsolete postal regulatory

frameworks: In many countries, existing legal frameworks are heterogeneous and outdated. Some markets maintain state monopolies without cost-compensation mechanisms for universal service, while others, though liberalized, lack a modern regulatory environment that incentivizes investment, innovation and the full integration of digital and financial services into the postal network.

Growing digital divide and cybersecurity vulnerabilities:

Disparities between advanced and less resourced DOs are widening. Many Posts lack core IT infrastructure, secure data systems or interoperable platforms. Cybersecurity governance frameworks remain underdeveloped across most DOs.

High exposure to climate and environmental risks: As one of the world's most disaster-prone regions, the Caribbean experiences recurrent hurricanes, storms and floods. These cause frequent disruptions to postal buildings, transport networks and supply chains, heightening the need for resilience planning and climate-smart investments.

Addressing these challenges will require strengthened governance, enhanced project-management capacity, targeted digital investments, improved customs–postal coordination and sustained UPU regional presence.

KEY DIMENSIONS

INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOGISTICS

Urban infrastructure is relatively advanced in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados, while many smaller islands continue to face access gaps, high transportation costs and limited last-mile connectivity. Mobile post offices and community-based postal access models are emerging to fill coverage gaps.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

EAD implementation has expanded significantly, though interoperability and system standardization require improvement. DOs, such as Jamaica Post, TTPOST and BPS, have more advanced digital platforms, but many countries require substantial IT connectivity support to strengthen their core ICT systems and cybersecurity resilience.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Postal networks continue to support financial inclusion through remittances, bill payments and government-to-person transactions. However, expansion is constrained by regulatory barriers and limited integration with financial ecosystems.

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Regulations vary widely across territories. Some maintain traditional monopoly models, while others pursue liberalization without mechanisms to fund universal service. Regulatory harmonization remains a long-term need.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Owing to the ageing workforce together with the added impact of staff transfers, capacity development both in terms of training and re-training remains a significant challenge. Capacity building through targeted workshops, distance training and e-learning, as well as on-site consultancies, has helped address gaps. Significant upskilling, however, remains an ongoing gap.

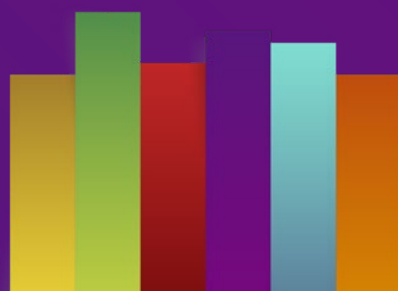
SOCIO-ECONOMIC ROLE OF THE POSTAL SECTOR

The Caribbean postal sector contributes directly to national development by supporting e-commerce, trade facilitation and government service delivery. Postal networks enable micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to access global markets and provide essential public services to remote and vulnerable populations. Posts also play a central role in financial inclusion, disaster-response logistics and maintaining communication during crises.

These contributions align strongly with the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs): 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (reduced inequalities) and 13 (climate action). Enhancing the developmental role of postal networks will be central during the 2026–2029 cycle.

CHAPTER 3

EVALUATION OF REGIONAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION



EVALUATION OF REGIONAL PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The 2022–2025 cycle strengthened the UPU’s development cooperation presence in the Caribbean through improved field coordination, enhanced monitoring and deeper engagement with national authorities. Field missions, technical assessments and capacity-building initiatives played a pivotal role in consolidating institutional and operational capabilities throughout the region.

Despite fiscal constraints and acute climate-related vulnerabilities, DOs demonstrated strong commitment to modernization and regional integration. The UPU’s proximity-based model, implemented through regional expert offices in Saint Lucia and Barbados, served as a central coordination mechanism, ensuring alignment between global strategic priorities and national needs.

Throughout the cycle, Caribbean DOs focused on post-pandemic recovery, acceleration of digital transformation, strengthening of operational frameworks, and reinforcement of institutional governance. The extensive regional programme of workshops, missions and cross-country exchanges fostered stronger ownership of modernization processes and laid the foundation for deeper regionalization during the 2026–2029 cycle.

These dynamics in the Caribbean reflect the broader global postal transformation agenda highlighted in the Dubai cycle framework, which calls for renewed focus on operational fundamentals, digital innovation and enhanced inter-institutional collaboration to sustain the relevance of the postal sector.

Implementation of the regional development plan for the Caribbean 2022–2025

The implementation of the regional development plan (RDP) for the Caribbean advanced significantly due to strong field presence and targeted technical support provided by the UPU regional offices.

Several strategic achievements were particularly significant, in the following areas:

Operational modernization and digital transformation: significant progress was made in EAD expansion, customs–postal integration and deployment of the Integrated Postal Reform and Development Plan (IPDP), contributing to improved operational efficiency and interoperability.

Financial inclusion and service diversification: several countries modernized their remittance services and carried out digital payment pilots and financial-service upgrades, helping broaden access for underserved communities and supporting national inclusion strategies.

Disaster-risk management and resilience strengthening: many DOs adopted updated business continuity plans and participated in UPU disaster risk management (DRM) certification exercises, reinforcing preparedness and response capacity in one of the world’s most climate-vulnerable regions.

Institutional capacity development: Trainpost courses, regional workshops and targeted expert missions strengthened managerial, technical and digital competencies across DOs.

Security enhancement: mail security assessments and certification missions improved compliance with international standards and strengthened resilience against operational risks.

Operational readiness for e-commerce: on-site missions helped DOs optimize mail flows, streamline last-mile delivery, and improve e-commerce logistics.

Collectively, these achievements demonstrate the effectiveness of proximity-based cooperation and highlight the importance of consistent, high-quality field support for the Caribbean region. Thus, the experience of the 2022–2025 cycle reaffirmed that proximity and coordination are decisive factors for achieving sustainable results. The regional expert network has become an indispensable part of the UPU's operational structure, ensuring effective communication with national stakeholders and the coherent implementation of projects.

At the same time, implementation highlighted the need to further consolidate the regionalization framework by clarifying mandates, harmonizing operational practices, and ensuring that regional experts benefit from consistent professional conditions and adequate technical support. This will be critical to sustain institutional continuity and operational efficiency during the 2026–2029 cycle.

Challenges and lessons learned

The implementation of the 2022–2025 RDP confirmed the relevance of the UPU's regional cooperation model but also revealed the following structural challenges that will require attention during the next cycle:

Governance and coordination remain uneven across DOs, regulators and ministries, limiting policy coherence;

Regional expert operations require more standardized roles, consistent support mechanisms and enhanced technical resources;

High-level dialogue platforms, such as ministerial conferences, CPU meetings and postal leaders forums, need harmonized methodologies, stronger analytical inputs and systematic follow-up mechanisms;

Funding constraints continue to impede implementation, underscoring the need for diversified resource mobilization and stronger national investment;

The ongoing need for capacity building within DOs, regulators and ministries to keep abreast of UPU changes and other environmental advancements.

A key lesson from this cycle is that institutional stability, strengthened regional presence and coherent coordination frameworks are essential for sustained progress. Deepening regionalization, improving governance structures and expanding partnerships will be crucial for Caribbean postal development during the 2026–2029 cycle.

Regional cooperation and partnerships

The Caribbean region benefited significantly from strengthened regional cooperation during the 2022–2025 cycle. The UPU, working closely with the CPU, supported a unified regional agenda and ensured the alignment of national priorities with global development frameworks. Joint technical activities, such as workshops, assessments, security missions, resilience initiatives and capacity-building events, helped harmonize modernization efforts across DOs.

The UPU International Bureau (IB) in Switzerland also maintained close engagement with embassies and permanent missions. Moreover, the engagement of national institutions, supporting the organization of activities and strengthening dialogue with authorities, increased and raised the visibility of UPU initiatives at the governmental level.

Collaboration with customs administrations, United Nations agencies, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the International Air Transport Association (IATA), financial institutions and regional bodies expanded the region's technical and institutional capacity. These partnerships improved operational readiness, reinforced policy coherence and contributed to a stronger, more integrated postal ecosystem. Therefore, partnerships with wider postal sector players (WPSPs) – including express operators, fintechs and e-commerce platforms – are increasingly seen as opportunities for innovation rather than threats.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The RDP for the Caribbean is fully aligned with the UPU Strategy 2026–2029 (Dubai cycle), endorsed through Congress resolution C 16/2025. The three overarching goals of the global framework provide the structural orientation for this RDP, ensuring consistency between global objectives and Caribbean-specific needs, including the realities of SIDS and highly vulnerable island economies.

Global opportunities identified through consultations with stakeholders, such as AI adoption, green logistics, digital financial inclusion, expanded partnerships with WPSPs and e-commerce integration, reinforce the strategic direction adopted in this plan and will guide its implementation during the 2026–2029 cycle.

Consultations with governments, regulators and regional partners identified the following strategic priorities for the new cycle:

Accelerating digital transformation and innovation, modernizing operations and promoting service diversification, and expanding postal contributions to e-government and digital finance inclusion;

Strengthening resilience, sustainability and regional cooperation mechanisms; and

Raising the profile of capacity development as an enabling cross-cutting function.

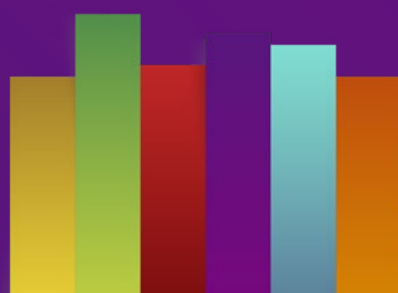
In addition to these strategic pillars, the next cycle will also reinforce several operational areas essential to strengthening implementation. These include the expansion of hybrid (virtual and field-based) training models in EAD; progress in analytical accounting through South–South and triangular cooperation; and the application of both full and streamlined IPDPs to support modernization processes. Crucially, enhanced support will be directed towards modernizing national postal legal frameworks to underpin digitalization initiatives and business portfolio development, and

strengthening engagement with governmental and regulatory authorities to facilitate project adoption. The cycle will further encourage broader uptake of DRM certification across the region and support the development of AI-driven applications tailored to postal operations, improving efficiency, innovation and resilience.

The 2026–2029 cycle will be guided by proximity, accountability and results-based management, fully aligned with the Dubai Business Plan and the development cooperation policy. Strengthening field presence, deepening cooperation with the CPU and regional partners, and consolidating institutional resilience will be central to advancing an inclusive and modern postal sector in the Caribbean.

Through these initiatives, the UPU and its member countries reaffirm their shared commitment to advancing an innovative, inclusive and sustainable postal sector that contributes to economic growth, trade facilitation and social development across the Caribbean. This new cycle will mark a decisive step towards consolidating the UPU's regional presence, strengthening partnerships with governments and international organizations, and ensuring that the Caribbean postal network continues to serve as a cornerstone of inclusive and resilient development.

CHAPTER 4
**DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION
FRAMEWORK FOR
2026–2029**



DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY

Building on the achievements and lessons learned from the 2022–2025 cycle, the UPU development cooperation policy for 2026–2029 introduces a renewed and results-based approach, structured around three main development areas:

regionalization and field presence;

development cooperation projects with an emphasis on South–South and triangular cooperation; and

DRM and emergency assistance.

This new framework reinforces the UPU’s proximity to member countries, enhances coordination with regional and subregional institutions, and promotes efficient delivery of technical cooperation through regional offices and experts. It also emphasizes results-based management (RBM) and measurable outcomes, in line with the UPU Strategy 2026–2029.

The regional priorities for the Caribbean contribute directly to the strategic outcomes and indicators established under the Dubai cycle, particularly in the areas of resilience, digital inclusion, regional cooperation and strengthened supply chain performance. The alignment with the global goals ensures that Caribbean DOs benefit from a coherent, forward-looking framework that addresses both global and region-specific challenges.

The 2026–2029 framework seeks to strengthen the UPU’s role as a trusted partner for governments, regulators and DOs in the Caribbean region, helping them to modernize the sector, bridge development gaps, and ensure that postal networks continue to serve as catalysts for inclusive and sustainable growth.

REGIONAL OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY ALIGNMENT

Strategic links with the regional development agenda

The RDP for the Caribbean 2026–2029 and the priorities established by the UPU for the 2026–2029 cycle are fully aligned with the UPU Strategy and the development cooperation policy for 2026–2029, which together define the global framework for the Union’s action and aim to create a modern, inclusive and resilient postal ecosystem that drives innovation, facilitates trade and supports sustainable growth.

The UPU Strategy 2026–2029 is structured around three main goals and one enabling outcome, which serve as the cornerstone for UPU cooperation activities worldwide. These goals provide a clear framework for the regional priorities defined in this plan, ensuring coherence between global objectives and the specific needs of the Caribbean.



GOAL 1: LEVERAGE THE SINGLE POSTAL TERRITORY THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE RULES-BASED SYSTEM

seeks to strengthen the global postal network through enhanced reliability, connectivity and modernized regulatory frameworks. In the Caribbean, this goal supports trade facilitation, customs integration and cross-border e-commerce, while encouraging the development of regional postal hubs and improvement of quality of service. It also promotes the harmonization of national postal policies and regulatory frameworks to foster economic integration across the region.



GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN THE GLOBAL POSTAL ECOSYSTEM THROUGH INNOVATION FOR FACILITATING COMMUNICATION AND TRADE

focuses on digital transformation, financial inclusion and service diversification. It promotes the use of emerging technologies, integration of postal networks

into national digital and financial ecosystems, and support for MSMEs through postal logistics and e-commerce solutions. For the Caribbean, this goal is key to promoting digital inclusion and leveraging the postal network as a vehicle for economic empowerment and social cohesion.



GOAL 3

GOAL 3: ENABLE POSTAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ENHANCED COOPERATION AND REGIONALIZATION

constitutes the cornerstone of this RDP. It aims to reinforce technical assistance, capacity building and regional cooperation, ensuring that no country is left behind. It further emphasizes resource mobilization, South–South and triangular cooperation, and integration of sustainability and resilience principles into postal development strategies. In the Caribbean, this goal will be implemented through close collaboration with the restricted union and regional and subregional organizations, as well as through the enhanced role of the UPU Regional Office in Barbados and Saint Lucia to support countries with targeted technical assistance and project coordination.

Priority areas and key performance indicators

The Caribbean RDP translates the global goals into three priority areas of intervention aligned with the Dubai Business Plan. Each area is linked to specific deliverables and targets that will be monitored throughout the cycle. The implementation of these areas will contribute to the DWP 27 deliverables on capacity development (DWP27 D05), project implementation (DWP27 D06–D18) and resilience (DWP27 D19–D23), ensuring that the Caribbean benefits from the global cooperation framework established by the Dubai Business Plan.

AREA 1 REGIONALIZATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND FIELD PRESENCE

The objective is to strengthen the regionalization process by reinforcing the UPU’s field presence and cooperation with regional partners to ensure tailored support to member countries.

Expected outcomes

A stronger and more effective regional presence of the UPU, ensuring proximity and responsiveness to member countries’ needs.

Enhanced coordination and synergies with regional and subregional organizations for joint project delivery.

Increased institutional capacity of the regional office and national stakeholders to plan, manage and monitor postal development initiatives.

Broader inclusion of SIDS and LLDCs through targeted assistance and equitable participation in cooperation activities.

Indicative indicators

Number of regional partnerships and MoUs signed.

Volume of mobilized extrabudgetary resources.

Number of countries supported through IPDPs and field missions.

AREA 2

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROJECTS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The objective is to implement targeted projects to reduce postal development gaps through digital transformation, financial inclusion and South–South cooperation.

Expected outcomes

A more efficient, reliable and integrated regional postal network supporting e-commerce and trade facilitation.

Expanded digital and financial inclusion, leveraging the postal network as an entry point for accessible and affordable services.

Strengthened institutional and human capacity through targeted training, knowledge exchange and South–South cooperation.

Improved operational performance and innovation culture across DOs.

Indicative indicators

Average improvement in 2IPD scores (reliability and reach).

Number of countries offering postal financial services or digital platforms.

Number of regional and interregional capacity-building activities implemented.

AREA 3

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

The objective is to enhance the resilience and preparedness of the postal sector to respond to natural disasters and crises, ensuring service continuity and sustainability.

Expected outcomes

Institutionalized DRM frameworks within national postal policies and IPDPs.

Improved regional and inter-institutional coordination for emergency response and crisis management.

Increased access to technical and financial assistance through the UPU Emergency and Solidarity Fund (ESF).

Mainstreamed environmental sustainability and climate action in postal operations.

Indicative indicators

Number of DOs with active business continuity or DRM plans.

Number of countries benefiting from UPU emergency or resilience support.

Number of DOs implementing environmental or climate-smart initiatives.

COOPERATION METHODS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Cooperation modalities

Implementation of this plan will be based on an integrated cooperation model combining institutional partnerships, regional coordination and resource mobilization. In line with DWP 27, regionalization will be pursued through the strengthening of regional offices as implementation, coordination and collaboration hubs, enhanced flexibility in field operations, and the establishment of regional centres. These centres will foster specialization, promote harmonization of methods, and reinforce the UPU's proximity-based support model across SIDS and wider Caribbean territories.

Cooperation methods will continue to prioritize strategic partnerships with governments, regulators, DOs, restricted unions and international organizations, ensuring that activities reflect regional priorities and generate tangible impact.

Under the guidance of the Development and Cooperation Directorate (DCDEV), the UPU's regional programmes will serve as a single-entry point for all technical cooperation activities. Regional offices will support the coordination with restricted unions, national authorities and development partners to ensure alignment with regional priorities and efficient delivery.

The UPU will promote partnership-based implementation through collaboration with restricted unions as well as with international financial institutions and United Nations agencies. Priority will be given to South–South and triangular cooperation, pooling of regional expertise, and joint delivery of capacity-building initiatives under the Trainpost and “regional expert pool” mechanisms established in DWP 27.

Resource mobilization will be embedded in project design, drawing on a mix of regular budget funds, voluntary contributions and in-kind support. The goal is to secure predictable and diversified financing while fostering ownership by member countries.

Funding strategy

In accordance with the development and cooperation policy and the Dubai Business Plan, the development cooperation activities for the 2026–2029 cycle will be financed through a diversified and complementary set of funding mechanisms, ensuring continuity and adaptability to evolving needs.

GLOBAL ALLOCATIONS AND TARGETS

For the entire 2026–2029 period, 31.18 million CHF has been allocated globally to support the implementation of DWP 27 (Development and cooperation – regionalization and projects), comprising 22.31 million CHF from the regular budget and 8.87 million CHF from voluntary contributions.

The Caribbean region will benefit from a proportional share of these global resources, with funding distributed based on the scale of its projects and alignment with regional priorities identified in this plan. Complementary financing will be sought through voluntary contributions, in-kind support and co-financing agreements with regional and international partners.

RESOURCE CHANNELS AND INSTRUMENTS

The main instruments for financing and coordination will include:

Regular budget (RB) resources: used for planning, coordination, project monitoring and delivery of small-scale capacity building.

Voluntary contributions (VCs): dedicated to project implementation in key thematic areas, such as e-commerce readiness, digital transformation, financial inclusion and DRM.

The UPU Emergency and Solidarity Fund (ESF): supported by regular and voluntary contributions, will continue to be used for rapid response in the event of natural disasters and emergencies.

Joint initiatives with restricted unions and development partners.

Private sector partnerships.

SUSTAINABILITY AND FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

The UPU will adopt an integrated results-based budgeting and monitoring system to ensure transparent and accountable use of funds.

All projects will include built-in evaluation components and follow the standardized project management framework established by the Project Management Office (PMO) and the SIGA platform. Regular financial and implementation status reports will be submitted to the Council of Administration in accordance with the DWP 27 deliverables (27D02 and 27D03).

To further strengthen sustainability, the UPU will promote the inclusion of postal sector funding within national development frameworks and budgets, encouraging governments to recognize postal modernization as a key component of digital and economic development policies.

CONCLUSION

The RDP for the Caribbean 2026–2029 sets a strategic roadmap for a modern, inclusive and resilient postal ecosystem. Through its three development areas – regionalization, cooperation and resilience – the UPU and its partners aim to bridge development gaps, foster digital and financial inclusion, and strengthen the region’s capacity to adapt to future challenges.

This plan reflects the UPU’s commitment to ensuring that no country in the Caribbean is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable and equitable postal development. It represents a renewed vision of cooperation grounded on proximity, innovation and shared responsibility, ensuring that the postal network continues to serve as a catalyst for connectivity and inclusive growth across the region.

As we enter the 2026–2029 cycle, the success of the RDP will depend on the continued commitment of governments, regulators and DOs to advance the reforms outlined. Strong political support, deeper cooperation among countries, and sustained investment in digital systems and modern operations will be essential to translating this plan into meaningful results.

By working together, increasing capacity-building skills and embracing new technologies, the Caribbean postal sector will be better equipped to deliver reliable services, stimulate economic growth, and help small islands remain resilient in an increasingly connected and climate-impacted world.

AFRICA

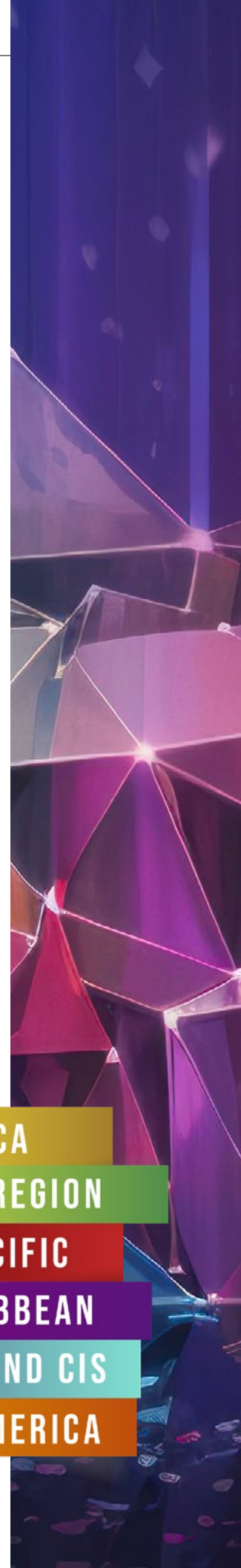
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