WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for encoding sample adaptive offset values in a video encoding process comprising:

determining offset information for a current partition;

comparing the offset information of the current partition with offset information of one or more neighbor partitions;

coding a merge instruction in the case that the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is the same as the offset information of the current partition; and

coding one of a plurality of prediction instructions in the case that the offset information of the one or more neighbor partitions is not the same as the offset information of the current partition.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the offset information includes an offset type and offset values.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the merge instruction instructs a decoder to copy the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the merge instruction includes a merge flag and an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions with the same offset information as the current partition.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein coding one of a plurality of prediction instructions includes:

coding a first prediction instruction which instructs a decoder to derive offset information for the current partition from offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein

offset residual values are created by subtracting the offset values of the current partition from offset values of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the first prediction instruction is coded in the case that bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by send offset residual values.

8. The method of claim 2, wherein coding one of a plurality of prediction instructions includes:

coding a second prediction instruction which includes offset information for the current partition.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the second prediction instruction is coded in the case that no bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

10. The method of claim 2, wherein coding one of a plurality of prediction instructions includes:

coding a third prediction instruction which includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition.

11. An apparatus configured to encode sample adaptive offset values in a video coding process, the apparatus comprising:

a video encoder configured to:

compare offset information of a current partition with offset information of one or more neighbor partitions;

code a merge instruction in the case that the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is the same as the offset information of the current partition; and

code one of a plurality of prediction instructions in the case that the offset information of the one or more neighbor partitions is not the same as the offset information of the current partition.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the offset information includes an offset type and offset values.

13. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the merge instruction instructs a decoder to copy the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the merge instruction includes a merge flag and an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions with the same offset information as the current partition.

15. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the video encoder is further configured to code a first prediction instruction which instructs a decoder to derive offset information for the current partition from offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein offset residual values are created by subtracting the offset values of the current partition from offset values of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

17. The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the first prediction instruction is coded in the case that bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by send offset residual values.

18. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the video encoder is further configured to code a second prediction instruction which includes offset information for the current partition.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the second prediction instruction is coded in the case that no bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

20. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the video encoder is further configured to code a third prediction instruction which includes an index of one of the one or more

neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition.

21. A an apparatus for encoding sample adaptive offset values in a video encoding process comprising:

means for comparing offset information of a current partition with offset information of one or more neighbor partitions, wherein the offset information includes an offset type and offset values;

means for coding a merge instruction in the case that the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is the same as the offset information of the current partition; and

means coding one of a plurality of prediction instructions in the case that the offset information of the one or more neighbor partitions is not the same as the offset information of the current partition.

22. The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the merge instruction instructs a decoder to copy the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition, and wherein the merge instruction includes a merge flag and an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions with the same offset information as the current partition.

23. The apparatus of claim 21, further comprising:

means for coding a first prediction instruction which instructs a decoder to derive offset information for the current partition from offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions, and wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein offset residual values are created by subtracting the offset values of the current partition from offset values of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

24. The apparatus of claim 21, further comprising:

means for coding a second prediction instruction which includes offset information for the current partition, wherein the second prediction instruction is coded

in the case that no bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

25. The apparatus of claim 21, further comprising:

means coding a third prediction instruction which includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition.

26. A computer program product comprising a computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon instructions that, when executed, cause a processor of a device for encoding video data to:

compare offset information of a current partition with offset information of one or more neighbor partitions, wherein the offset information includes an offset type and offset values;

code a merge instruction in the case that the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is the same as the offset information of the current partition; and

code one of a plurality of prediction instructions in the case that the offset information of the one or more neighbor partitions is not the same as the offset information of the current partition.

27. The computer-readable medium of claim 26, wherein the merge instruction instructs a decoder to copy the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition, and wherein the merge instruction includes a merge flag and an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions with the same offset information as the current partition.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 26, further causing a processor to:

code a first prediction instruction which instructs a decoder to derive offset information for the current partition from offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions, and wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein offset

residual values are created by subtracting the offset values of the current partition from offset values of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

29. The computer-readable medium of claim 26, further causing a processor to:

code a second prediction instruction which includes offset information for the current partition, wherein the second prediction instruction is coded in the case that no bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

30. The computer-readable medium of claim 26, further causing a processor to:

code a third prediction instruction which includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition.

31. A method for decoding sample adaptive offset values in a video decoding process comprising:

receiving, for a current partition, a merge instruction or one of a plurality of prediction instructions;

copying offset information from a neighbor partition to the current partition in the case that the merge instruction is received; and

performing an offset prediction process for the current partition in the case that one of the plurality of prediction instructions is received.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the offset information includes an offset type and offset values.

33. The method of claim 31, wherein the merge instruction includes a merge flag and an index of the neighbor partition.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein a first prediction instruction is received, and wherein the offset prediction process derives offset information for the current partition from offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

35 The method of claim 34, wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein offset values for the current partition are derived by adding offset values of the one neighbor partition to the offset residual values.

36. The method of claim 32, wherein a second prediction instruction is received which includes offset information for the current partition.

37. The method of claim 32, wherein a third prediction instruction is received which includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition, wherein the offset prediction process derives offset information for the current partition by copying offset values from the one neighbor partition for the current partition and by assigning the received offset type to the current partition.

38. An apparatus configured to decode sample adaptive offset values in a video decoding process comprising:

a video decoder configured to:

receive, for a current partition, a merge instruction or one of a plurality of prediction instructions;

copy offset information from a neighbor partition to the current partition in the case that the merge instruction is received; and

perform an offset prediction process for the current partition in the case that one of the plurality of prediction instructions is received.

39. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the offset information includes an offset type and offset values.

40. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the merge instruction includes a merge flag and an index of the neighbor partition.

41. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein a first prediction instruction is received, and wherein the offset prediction process derives offset information for the current partition from offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

42. The apparatus of claim 41, wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein offset values for the current partition are derived by adding offset values of the one neighbor partition to the offset residual values.

43. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein a second prediction instruction is received which includes offset information for the current partition.

44. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein a third prediction instruction is received which includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition, wherein the offset prediction process derives offset information for the current partition by copying offset values from the one neighbor partition for the current partition and by assigning the received offset type to the current partition.

45. An apparatus configured to decode sample adaptive offset values in a video decoding process comprising:

means for receiving, for a current partition, a merge instruction or one of a plurality of prediction instructions;

means for copying offset information from a neighbor partition to the current partition in the case that the merge instruction is received; and

means for performing an offset prediction process for the current partition in the case that one of the plurality of prediction instructions is received.

46. A computer program product comprising a computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon instructions that, when executed, cause a processor of a device for decoding video data to:

receive, for a current partition, a merge instruction or one of a plurality of prediction instructions;

copy offset information from a neighbor partition to the current partition in the case that the merge instruction is received; and

perform an offset prediction process for the current partition in the case that one of the plurality of prediction instructions is received.

CLAIMS

1. A method for encoding sample adaptive offset information in a video encoding process performed by a video encoding apparatus, the method comprising:

determining sample adaptive offset information for a current partition of video data;

comparing the sample adaptive offset information of the current partition with sample adaptive offset information of one or more neighbor partitions of the video data; and

encoding a merge syntax element indicating that a video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions in the case that the offset information of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions is the same as the offset information of the current partition.

2. The method of claim **1**, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values.

3. The method of claim **1**, wherein the merge syntax element includes a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition.

4. The method of claim **1**, wherein the merge syntax element includes a plurality of syntax elements, the plurality of syntax elements comprising a merge flag and an index of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy the sample adaptive offset information for the current partition.

5. The method of claim **2**, further comprising:

encoding one of a plurality of prediction syntax elements in a case that the sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is not the same as the sample adaptive offset information of the current partition, wherein encoding one of a plurality of prediction instructions includes:

encoding a first prediction instruction which instructs the video decoder to derive the sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

6. The method of claim **5**, wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein the offset residual values are created by subtracting the offset values of the current partition from offset values of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

7. The method of claim **6**, wherein the first prediction instruction is encoded in the case that bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

8. The method of claim **2**, wherein encoding one of a plurality of prediction instructions includes:

encoding a second prediction instruction which includes sample adaptive offset information for the current partition.

9. The method of claim **8**, wherein the second prediction instruction is encoded in the case that no bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

10. The method of claim **2**, wherein encoding one of a plurality of prediction instructions includes:

encoding a third prediction instruction which includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition.

11. An apparatus configured to encode sample adaptive offset information in a video coding process, the apparatus comprising:

a memory configured to store video data

a video encoder configured to:

determine sample adaptive offset information for a current partition of the video data:

compare the sample adaptive offset information of the current partition with sample adaptive offset information of one or more neighbor partitions of the video data; and

encode a merge syntax element indicating that a video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from the sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions in the case that the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is the same as the offset information of the current partition.

12. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values.

13. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein the merge syntax element includes a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition.

14. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein the merge syntax element includes a plurality of syntax elements, the plurality of syntax elements comprising a merge flag and an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

15. The apparatus of claim **12**, wherein the video encoder is further configured to:

encode one of a plurality of prediction syntax elements in a case that the sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is not the same as the offset information of the current partition, wherein encoding one of a plurality of prediction instructions includes:

encoding a first prediction instruction which instructs the video decoder to derive sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

16. The apparatus of claim **15**, wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein the offset residual values are created by subtracting the offset values of the current partition from offset values of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

17. The apparatus of claim **16**, wherein the video encoder is configured to encode the first prediction instruction in the case that bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

18. The apparatus of claim **12**, wherein the video encoder is further configured to encode a second prediction instruction which includes sample adaptive offset information for the current partition.

19. The apparatus of claim **18**, wherein the video encoder is configured to encode the second prediction instruction in the case that no bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

20. The apparatus of claim **12**, wherein the video encoder is further configured to encode a third prediction instruction which includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition.

21. An apparatus for encoding sample adaptive offset information in a video encoding process, the apparatus comprising:

means for determining sample adaptive offset information for a current partition of video data;

means for comparing sample adaptive offset information of the current partition with sample adaptive offset information of one or more neighbor partitions, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values; and

means for encoding a merge syntax element indicating that a video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from the sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions in the case that the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is the same as the offset information of the current partition.

22. The apparatus of claim **21**, wherein the merge syntax element includes a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition.

23. The apparatus of claim **21**, further comprising:

means for encoding one of a plurality of prediction syntax elements in the case that the sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is not the same as the sample adaptive offset information of the current partition, wherein the means for encoding one of a plurality of prediction instructions includes:

means for encoding a first prediction instruction which instructs the video decoder to derive the sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions, and wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein the offset residual values are created by subtracting the offset values of the current partition from offset values of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

24. The apparatus of claim **21**, further comprising:

means for encoding a second prediction instruction which includes sample adaptive offset information for the current partition, wherein the second prediction instruction is encoded in the case that no bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

25. The apparatus of claim **21**, further comprising:

means for encoding a third prediction instruction which includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition.

26. A computer program product comprising a non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon instructions that, when executed, cause a processor of

a device for encoding video data to:

determine sample adaptive offset information for a current partition of video data;

compare the sample adaptive offset information of the current partition with sample adaptive offset information of one or more neighbor partitions of the video data; and

encode a merge syntax element indicating that a video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from the sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions in the case that the offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is the same as the offset information of the current partition.

27. The computer program product of claim **26**, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values.

28. The computer program product of claim **26**, wherein the instructions further cause a processor to:

encode one of a plurality of prediction syntax elements in the case that the sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions is not the same as the offset information of the current partition, wherein coding one of a plurality of prediction instructions includes:

encoding a first prediction instruction which instructs a decoder to derive sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions, and wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, and wherein the offset residual values are created by subtracting the

offset values of the current partition from offset values of one of the one or more neighbor partitions.

29. The computer program product of claim **26**, further causing a processor to:

encode a second prediction instruction which includes sample adaptive offset information for the current partition, wherein the second prediction instruction is encoded in the case that no bit rate efficiencies may be achieved by sending offset residual values.

30. The computer program product of claim **26**, further causing a processor to:

encode a third prediction instruction which includes an index of one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the current partition.

31. A method for decoding sample adaptive offset information in a video decoding process performed by a video decoder, the method comprising:

receiving, for a current partition of video data, a merge syntax element indicating that sample adaptive offset information for the current partition is to be copied from a neighbor partition;

copying sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from the neighbor partition in the case that the merge syntax element is received; and

performing a sample adaptive offset process for the current partition using the copied sample adaptive offset information.

32. The method of claim **31**, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values.

33. The method of claim **31**, wherein the merge syntax element includes a plurality of syntax elements, the plurality of syntax elements comprising a merge flag and an index of the neighbor partition.

34. The method of claim **32**, further comprising receiving a prediction instruction for a second partition, and deriving sample adaptive offset information for the second partition from sample adaptive offset information of one of the one or more neighbor partitions in response to the prediction instruction.

35. The method of claim **34**, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values, and wherein the prediction instruction includes an index of one of one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, the method further comprising deriving offset values of the sample adaptive offset information for the second partition by adding offset values of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions to the offset residual values.

36. The method of claim **32**, further comprising receiving a prediction instruction for a second partition, wherein the prediction instruction includes sample adaptive offset information for the second partition.

37. The method of claim **32**, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values, the method further comprising receiving a prediction instruction for a second partition, wherein the prediction instruction includes an index of one of one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the second partition, and deriving sample adaptive offset information for the second partition by copying offset values from the one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the second partition and by assigning the received offset type to the second partition.

38. An apparatus configured to decode sample adaptive offset information in a video decoding process comprising:

a memory configured to store video data;

a video decoder configured to:

receive, for a current partition of the video data, a merge syntax element indicating that sample adaptive offset information for the current partition is to be copied from a neighbor partition;

copy sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from the neighbor partition in the case that the merge syntax element is received; and

perform a sample adaptive offset process for the current partition using the copied sample adaptive offset information.

39. The apparatus of claim **38**, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values.

40. The apparatus of claim **38**, wherein the merge syntax element includes a plurality of merge syntax elements, the plurality of merge syntax elements comprising a merge flag and an index of the neighbor partition.

41. The apparatus of claim **39**, wherein the video decoder is configured to receive a first prediction instruction for a second partition, and derive sample adaptive offset information for the second partition from sample adaptive offset information of one of one or more neighbor partitions in response to the prediction instruction.

42. The apparatus of claim **41**, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values, and wherein the first prediction instruction includes an index of one of one or more neighbor partitions and offset residual values, the video decoder being configured to derive offset values of the sample adaptive offset information for the second partition by adding offset values of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions to the offset residual values.

43. The apparatus of claim **39**, wherein the video decoder is configured to receive a prediction instruction for a second partition, and wherein the prediction instruction includes sample adaptive offset information for the second partition.

44. The apparatus of claim **39**, wherein the sample adaptive offset information includes an offset type and offset values, the video decoder being configured to receive prediction instruction for a second partition, wherein the prediction instruction includes an index of one of one or more neighbor partitions from which to copy offset values and also includes an offset type for the second partition, and derive sample adaptive information for the second partition by copying offset values from the one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the second partition and by assigning the received offset type to the second partition.

45. An apparatus configured to decode sample adaptive offset information in a video decoding process, the apparatus comprising:

means for receiving, for a current partition of video data, a merge syntax element indicating that sample adaptive offset information for the current partition is to be copied from a neighbor partition;

means for copying sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from the neighbor partition in the case that the merge syntax element is received; and

means for performing a sample adaptive offset process for the current partition using the copied sample adaptive offset information.

46. A computer program product comprising a non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon instructions that, when executed, cause a processor of a device for decoding video data to:

receive, for a current partition of video data, a merge syntax element indicating that sample adaptive offset information for the current partition is to be copied from a neighbor partition;

copy sample adaptive offset information for the current partition from the neighbor partition in the case that the merge syntax element is received; and

perform a sample adaptive offset process for the current partition using the copied sample adaptive offset information.

47. The method of claim **1**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition, and wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values.

48. The method of claim **1**, further comprising obtaining the video data with a video camera.

49. The method of claim **1**, wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values, the method further comprising performing a sample adaptive offset process that comprises applying the offset values to pixels of the current partition.

50. The method of claim **49**, wherein the sample adaptive offset process comprises applying different offset values to at least some of the pixels of the current partition.

51. The method of claim **1**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises one or more syntax elements that indicate one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which the video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information.

52. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition, and wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values.

53. The apparatus of claim **11**, further comprising a camera configured to obtain the video data.

54. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values, and wherein the video encoder is configured to perform a sample adaptive offset process that comprises applying the offset values to pixels of the current partition.

55. The apparatus of claim **54**, wherein the sample adaptive offset process performed by the video encoder comprises applying different offset values to at least some of the pixels of the current partition.

56. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises one or more syntax elements that indicate one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which the video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information.

57. The apparatus of claim **21**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition, and wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values.

58. The apparatus of claim **21**, further comprising a camera configured to obtain the video data.

59. The apparatus of claim **21**, wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values, the apparatus further comprising means for performing a sample adaptive offset process that comprises applying the offset values to pixels of the current partition.

60. The apparatus of claim **59**, wherein the sample adaptive offset process comprises applying different offset values to at least some of the pixels of the current partition.

61. The apparatus of claim **21**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises one or more syntax elements that indicate one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which the video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information.

62. The computer program product of claim **26**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the one of the one or more neighbor partitions for the current partition, and wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values.

63. The computer program product of claim **26**, wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values, and the instructions further cause the processor to perform a sample adaptive offset process that comprises applying the offset values to pixels of the current partition.

64. The computer program product of claim **63**, wherein the sample adaptive offset process comprises applying different offset values to at least some of the pixels of the current partition.

65. The computer program product of claim **26**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises one or more syntax elements that indicate one of the one or more neighbor partitions from which the video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information.

66. The method of claim **31**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the neighbor partition for the current partition, and wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values.

67. The method of claim **31**, further comprising generating video from the video data and displaying the video on a display device.

68. The method of claim **31**, wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values, and wherein the sample adaptive offset process comprises applying the offset values to pixels of the current partition.

69. The method of claim **68**, wherein the sample adaptive offset process comprises applying different offset values to at least some of the pixels of the current partition.

70. The method of claim **31**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises one or more syntax elements that indicate the neighnor partition from one or more neighbor partitions from which the video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information.

71. The apparatus of claim **38**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the neighbor partition for the current partition, and wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values.

72. The apparatus of claim **38**, further comprising a display device configured to display video generated video from the video data.

73. The apparatus of claim **38**, wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values, and wherein the sample adaptive offset process comprises applying the offset values to pixels of the current partition.

74. The apparatus of claim **73**, wherein the sample adaptive offset process comprises applying different offset values to at least some of the pixels of the current partition.

75. The apparatus of claim **38**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises one or more syntax elements that indicate the neighbor partition from one or more neighbor partitions from which the video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information.

76. The apparatus of claim **45**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the neighbor partition for the current partition, and wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values.

77. The apparatus of claim **45**, further comprising means for generating video from the video data and means for displaying the video.

78. The apparatus of claim **45**, wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values, and wherein the sample adaptive offset process comprises applying the offset values to pixels of the current partition.

79. The apparatus of claim **78**, wherein applying the offset values comprises applying different offset values to at least some of the pixels of the current partition.

80. The apparatus of claim **45**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises one or more syntax elements that indicate the neighbor partition from one or more neighbor partitions from which the video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information.

81. The computer program product of claim **46**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises a merge flag that instructs the video decoder to copy the sample adaptive offset information of the neighbor partition for the current partition, and wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values.

82. The computer program product of claim **46**, further comprising instructions to cause the processor to generate video from the video data and display the video on a display device.

83. The computer program product of claim **46**, wherein the sample adaptive information comprises an offset type and offset values, and wherein the sample adaptive offset process comprises applying the offset values to pixels of the current partition.

84. The computer program product of claim **83**, wherein applying the offset values comprises applying different offset values to at least some of the pixels of the current partition.

85. The computer program product of claim **46**, wherein the merge syntax element comprises one or more syntax elements that indicate the neighbor partition from one or more neighbor partitions from which the video decoder is to copy the sample adaptive offset information.