

Formative Process Research on Integration in Southern Africa
Research for Regional Integration and Development

FOPRISA is a collaborative research process in which several Southern African policy research institutes and universities, the Chr. Michelsen Institute of Norway and the SADC Secretariat are participating. It commenced on 01 May 2005 and will run for four years, up to 30 April 2009.

Founding Member Institutions (participants in the preparatory workshop held in July 2003)

- Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) (Coordinator / Secretariat)
- Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI), Norway
- Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Tanzania
- Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), South Africa
- Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU)
- Southern African Defence and Security Management (SADSEM) network
- Southern African Institute for Economic Research (SAIER), Malawi
- University of Botswana (UB)
- University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa
- University of Zambia (UNZA)
- Zimconsult, Zimbabwe

Formative Research: Objectives and Activities

The overarching objective of the programme is to provide data and analysis inputs that can assist SADC in its efforts to advance regional co-operation and integration in Southern Africa. This will be done through the formative process research, whose primary aim is to provide data and analysis for organisational learning, for example, for the improvement of SADC's operational approaches, procedures and performance.

FOPRISA Goal

To advance the regional integration process in SADC through appropriate policy research, analysis and advice.

FOPRISA Objectives

- To assist SADC, through research, monitoring, advice and capacity building, in attaining its objectives of regional co-operation, integration and development, as outlined in the *SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP)*; *SADC Secretariat RISDP Implementation Framework*; *Business Plan for the SADC Directorates and Units*; and *SADC Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (SIPO)*, protocols and other policy statements
- To contribute to sound policies for the region's development, by assisting SADC in implementing its priority policies and measures of which poverty reduction is an overriding concern
- To build a strong regional policy research network, with research activities aimed at improving the understanding of integration policy and implementation issues by enhancing research skills and analytical capacities in participating research institutes, as well as in the SADC structures

FOPRISA's Focus

FOPRISA's research issues are identified in terms of (i) their regional importance, (ii) feasibility (cost and practicality of implementation), (iii) SADC's perceived interest and/or need and (iv) relevance to the regional integration process. Individual research projects are formulated in consultations involving the researchers and the SADC Secretariat.

The FOPRISA programme has three major components:

- Research: economic and political dimensions of regional integration
- Monitoring: progress of SADC integration; ICP relations with SADC
- Related/support activities: capacity building; networking; conferences; publications and dissemination; management

Research

Carefully selected topics for in-depth research on SADC's prioritised areas and policy implementation, with the hope that it will be valuable to SADC in its policy formulation and implementation endeavours. Such research will identify and highlight areas (or operations) where established procedures and activities may have to be changed or modified in order to close possible gaps between goals and performance. To ensure implementation and maximum returns from this exercise, stakeholders' priorities, needs and interests will guide the selection of the research topics. It therefore stands to reason that there will be constant and continuous dialogue with, and feedback of results, to the stakeholders, especially the SADC Secretariat.

The research activities will be methodologically sound and systematic, and capable of providing useful data and analysis for SADC's policy-formulating and programme staff. Furthermore, the topics have to be 'researchable', i.e., treated systematically by means of scientific methods. Moreover, the research component presupposes commitment on the part of the participating researchers and, and feasibility in terms of academic approach, adequacy of funding, and manpower availability. The research output is, therefore, expected to be of high quality for these objectives to be achieved and judged against established scientific criteria.

The selected topics are supposed to shed light on the dynamics between SADC institutions and the member states, and relate to SADC's policy areas where processes of operationalisation and/or implementation have started. It is also proposed that the various research projects must be able to provide insights into two dimensions:

- The comparative advantage of SADC in carrying out specific action relative to national and sub-national domains, i.e., application of the subsidiary principle.
- The impact of these SADC policies and actions on poverty reduction.

The selection of the initial research projects was done at a preparatory workshop that was conducted in July 2003 but is an ongoing process that is done in close co-operation with SADC, and covers two broad themes:

- Democratisation, development, peace, security and conflict management.
- Economic policies and integration.

The envisaged outputs from the various research projects will include papers and briefing documents geared to the relevant SADC institutions, and some findings may also be presented in the periodic monitoring reports discussed below. The programme is also, organisationally and financially, set up with a capacity to produce policy studies and briefs at short notice (on demand from SADC). In addition, the outputs from the research projects will take the form of academic papers prepared for publication in international and regional journals. A monograph or anthology bringing together the findings from the sub-projects is envisaged as a completion report.

Research themes

- **Democracy, politics and security:** Focus is on peace, security, democracy and political governance; development of peacekeeping capacity; and state capacity, particularly with regard to policy effectiveness in poverty reduction and attaining regional development objectives.

- **Building economic integration in Southern Africa:** This theme covers analysis of national trade policies; linkages between trade policy and poverty reduction; macro-economic convergence in the SADC region; SADC integration efforts and cross-border investments; financial integration for investment in the SADC region.
- **On-demand Policy Papers:** output from short-term consultancies by members of the research network. They will engage in specific assignments and/or policy advice as required by the SADC Secretariat and/or its related organs.

Monitoring

This component seeks to address the institutional reform of SADC, the relations between member states, stakeholders and SADC institutions, and donor policies. The component has two projects; one focusing on SADC and the other on International Co-operating Partners (ICPs). Periodic reports containing factual information and brief assessments will be produced. These reports will contain special sections on particular themes or aspects. They will assess the organisation and activities of SADC's institutions, especially the Secretariat, and the approach to SADC and the regional venture by individual SADC member states. The ongoing monitoring will – in view of the challenges facing the region and SADC's integration project – assume a particularly important function in the programme. It will not only feed data into the research component, but will also provide useful data for the Secretariat, the national committees in the member states, donors and other stakeholders. The research components discussed above will provide summarised findings that the monitoring component will draw upon. This information will also be made available through a dedicated web-site.

Monitoring Activities

- **Monitoring SADC:** This involves tracking the progress of restructuring and creation of institutions, inter-country relationships, obstacles and progress towards integration.
- **Monitoring the International Cooperating Partners (ICPs):** Focus is on the relationships of the international cooperating partners with SADC; dependence of SADC on the ICPs; and the effectiveness of donor policies and activities in promoting regional cooperation.

Capacity-building

Through monitoring and research activities, the programme also hopes to achieve achieving a third objective: to build capacities in research and policy research, analysis and advice on regional co-operation and integration in Southern Africa. For the participating research institutions, capacity building will result largely as a spin-off from the research activities. The programme is considered an important vehicle for maintaining, expanding and strengthening the competence to undertake policy research, analysis and advisory services on such issues.

More challenging is the enhancing of SADC's own capacity to handle policy research. Through its unit of Policy and Strategic Planning, the Secretariat needs to establish its capacity for policy research and analysis and develop the following desirable characteristics:

- Capacity to collect and analyse data.
- Capacity to interpret, package, produce reports and disseminate data and information.
- The SADC Secretariat's ability to engage member states and other key stakeholders in policy dialogue.
- The ability to re-define policy and corresponding strategies in the light of lessons, experiences and the changing environment.
- Appropriate staff capacity with the requisite skills.

The research programme aims to assist in this endeavour by collecting and analysing relevant data and by making them available to the Secretariat. However, assistance to capacity-building is expected to move beyond this programme's limited output, to include training of Department staff through internships or training courses, providing support to institutional capacity-building, especially related to the Secretariat's research and policy capacity, as well as interfacing or networking with research institutions and researchers in the SADC region.

Beyond SADC's need for added capacity to handle policy research, the proposed programme may, in the course of its research, identify bottlenecks and capacity gaps, and uncover institutional weaknesses that require addressing. Such findings will serve as a basis for the elaboration of capacity-building projects to be hived off to other institutions and donors who are better placed to deal with them.

Capacity Building Activities

- **Internships and training courses** aimed at building research and policy analysis capacity both inside and outside the SADC Secretariat. For the participating research institutions, capacity building will largely be a spin-off from the research activities.

Supporting Activities

- **Research conferences, publications and dissemination** of research results (including the development and maintenance of the website).
- **Management** consists of two structures:

Steering Committee: decides on overall policy for FOPRISA operations, adopts research themes, approves research proposals for funding, accepts research reports and selects referees. It also provides an arena for interactions amongst the policy research institutions, academics and SADC Secretariat.

FOPRISA Secretariat is the overall manager and coordinator of the research programme and service the Steering Committee and the annual conferences.

Expected Outputs from the Programme

- Development of research concepts and themes
- Research reports that provide a better understanding of regional political and economic dynamics
- Publication of research results
- Development of policy research skills
- Improved quality of policy advice
- Progress reports on regional integration and cooperation
- Evaluation reports on the effectiveness of cooperation between the SADC and ICPs
- Internships and training programmes to address policy research and analysis skills gaps

Expected Impacts

- Sound policies for the region's economic and political development
- Contribution to sound economic policy environment for SADC Secretariat
- Increased influence of SADC policies in individual member countries of Southern Africa
- **Indicators:**
 1. Increased effectiveness of regional, and member government policies
 2. Increased welfare (poverty reduction) associated with policy changes
 3. Degree of reduction of policy issues as constraints to economic and political development
 4. Increased effectiveness of member government policies