

**Strengthening statistical capacity-building
in support of progress towards the Internationally
Agreed Development Goals in the Southern African
Development Community (SADC) region**

United Nations Statistics Division

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Executive Summary

Project Title:	Strengthening capacity in support of progress towards the Internationally Agreed Development Goals in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.
Duration:	4 years (2006-2009)
Location:	Member countries of SADC: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
Executing Agency:	The project will be executed by the United Nations Statistics Division/DESA.
Co-operating Agencies:	SADC Secretariat, and in association with the Division of Sustainable Development/DESA and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).
National Counterpart Institutions:	National Statistical Offices
Funding from Development Account:	US\$ 950,000
Approval by the General Assembly:	The overall goal of the project is to strengthen national statistical systems in the SADC region to enable them to meet their statistical needs and to improve the availability and quality of data required to develop and compile the indicators to monitor internationally agreed Goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Through the use of information and communications technology, the project will also promote inter-regional cooperation among the countries of the region in the field of statistics and will establish a platform for communication and data exchange. The project will also strengthen the statistical capacity of the SADC Secretariat, with the aim of promoting regional statistical coordination. The substantive focus of the programme lies in the areas of development, production and analysis of development indicators, including the MDG indicators; methods of data collection: censuses, vital statistics systems, household surveys and how these impact on the final monitoring capacity of countries; organization of the integrated statistical systems and user-producer relations; and use of ICT. Advisory services, study tour programmes and a series of sub-regional events (expert groups and training workshops) will constitute the core activities under this project framework.

1. Background and relationship to MDGs and the Medium Term Plans

1.1 Background

1. SADC is a regional group of fourteen countries¹, founded in 1980. Its mission is to promote cooperation and economic integration in all fields of economic activity, particularly industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial matters, social and cultural issues among the Member States. In 2003 the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) was approved by SADC Heads of State and Government, as the key policy framework for the operationalisation of the SADC Common Agenda and the attainment of deeper and broader levels of economic integration and social development in the region². The RISDP recognizes a number of intervention areas for regional cooperation and integration over the next 15 years. This project is therefore designed to improve the availability and reliability of basic data required for development planning in the SADC region, with special emphasis on data requirements for the monitoring of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

2. Statistics are an important tool in the policy-making processes of countries and regional organizations. They are needed for assessing the current development situation, setting objectives and targets for the future as well as measuring progress and development. However, a substantial gap still exists between the demand for information and the ability of most countries in the SADC region to routinely supply it. Strengthening national statistical capacity is therefore necessary to enable SADC member countries to satisfy their own and international data needs in support of informed policy formulation and decision-making. Most countries still need international support to strengthen statistical capacity building and to make progress in the development of relevant statistics and indicators. The project is aimed at facilitating subsequent networking among sub-regions through interactive sharing and management of knowledge. Furthermore, the project will strengthen links between producers and users of statistics.

3. The project will be executed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Statistics Division of the SADC secretariat and in association with DESA's Sustainable Development Division and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

1.2 Relationship to MDGs and the programme budget

4. In its resolution A/RES/55/162, the General Assembly "reiterates the call to assess, on a regular basis, progress towards implementing the Millennium Declaration". In its resolution A/RES/56/95, the General Assembly "requests the Secretary-General to prepare, drawing upon the road map (...) an annual report and a comprehensive report every five years on progress achieved by the United Nations system and Member States towards implementing the Millennium

¹ Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

² http://www.sadcreview.com/special_features/frfeatures.htm

Declaration (...)". As a follow-up to the decisions of the General Assembly, the United Nations Secretariat and other international agencies have identified indicators for the monitoring of the implementation of the development goals and targets set out in the Declaration. In line with EC-ESA's recommendation that the 5th tranche of the Development Account should be "Supporting progress towards the internationally agreed development goals, through knowledge-management, networking and partnerships", this project is then proposed.

5. The proposal is consistent with the scope and priorities of the strategic frameworks for the period 2006-2007, under Department of Economic and Social Affairs subprogrammes 4 (Sustainable development) and 5 (Statistics); ECA subprogramme 1 (facilitating economic and social policy). The project will then continue on 2008 until its completion in 2009, developing a framework to institutionalize the activities of the project and ensure their continuity after the project phases out in the end of this period.

6. The project builds upon lessons learned from four statistical development projects implemented by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division in the Caribbean Community, Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), UNESCWA and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) regions.

2. Problem Analysis

2.1 Users analysis

7. National statistical systems in countries of the SADC region are still under developed due to institutional and technical barriers. Statistical coordination at national level needs major improvement. In most countries in the region, statistical laws are not yet well established or not always implemented. There is a need to raise awareness among policy makers on the importance of reliable and timely statistical data for national policies and for the need to commit resources for the development of statistical systems.

8. Statistical activities such as surveys and censuses are commonly not implemented as planned due to lack of financial resources or, in some cases, due to late release of allocated funds. One of the main reasons for the financial problems identified in the countries of the SADC region is that National Statistical Offices (NSOs) rely mainly on government funding which fluctuates according to other government priorities. Yet, it should be noted that statistical data and information are public goods and should be provided as such. Building capacity on household surveys methods and strengthening vital statistics is also imperative for the improvement of statistics in the region, yielding to the calculation of better development indicators, including for the monitoring of the MDGs.

9. National Statistical Systems, in particular National Statistical Offices, present a need for more technical capacity for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data from surveys, population censuses and administrative sources, especially in the areas of health statistics and labour statistics.

10. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) offers a wide range of new possibilities for NSOs to develop efficiently and also to meet some of their financial needs. However, the resource constraints hinder the development of new technical skills, thus preventing NSOs to exploit the full potentials of ICT. The new information technology has also brought new concerns regarding the management of information technology environment and this requires highly specialized skills that are not commonly found in these countries. It is expected that the proposed project will help reduce such problems and facilitate the establishment of a network of experts in the region through which countries will share and gain experience on the use of ICT to improve efficiency of staff through better information management and for their core functions such as data compilation and data dissemination.

11. The SADC Secretariat needs to be strengthened in its statistical capacity, so as to ensure the feasibility and continuity of the project activities after the project phases out. This is envisaged under this project, where training and active participation will be extended to the SADC Secretariat.

12. Users of official statistics, such as universities and research institutes, could be involved in training, including as local resource persons to some of the meetings, so as to promote sustainable capacity building.

2.2 Objective analysis

13. The project will attempt to tackle the problems highlighted above first from its root by raising awareness among policy makers on the importance of reliable and timely statistics, train countries in statistical organization and management with the particular aim to provide them with marketing tools necessary to attract funding from government and other sources as well as generate revenues from statistical product. The project will also foster the use of Internet-based applications in statistical production at all stages of the statistical activity, including a broader dissemination of statistical products and possibly will increase revenue to support statistical budget.

14. By promoting the use of common methodologies and classifications, the project will improve the availability of standardized and comparable information in the region for policy making and programming. In addition, the project will, as a by product, strengthen the statistical capacity of the SADC secretariat in promoting regional statistical coordination in the region and responding to member States statistical needs.

3. Project objective, expected accomplishments and strategy

3.1 Objective

15. The project objective is to strengthen the capacity of countries and relevant regional institutions in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, namely the SADC Secretariat, for the production and analysis, on a regular basis, of benchmark statistics required for national development planning and for the monitoring of the progress of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

3.2 Expected accomplishments

16. The project's specific and measurable expected accomplishments will include:
- (a) Improved organization of the statistical systems and user-producers relations, including strengthened communication and coordination among countries and between the NSOs and the Statistics Division of SADC Secretariat, resulting in quality, timely and relevant data on indicators of all internationally agreed development goals, including the MDG indicators;
 - (b) Adoption of international statistical methods and standards for knowledge management in relation to the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals.

3.3 Overall Strategy

17. The project will focus on enhancing and strengthening the institutional and professional expertise within the region to routinely produce and use statistical data for comparable development measurements, conduct national and sub-regional development analysis for policy planning, and contribute to the preparation of the MDG reports by providing solid statistical data for the MDG indicators and for their follow-up.

Furthermore, the project will upgrade technology to create a platform for communication, data exchange and dissemination in print and electronic media. Information technology will thus be used as a means for maintaining linkages among countries in the region, and the Statistics Division of SADC Secretariat, and for the dissemination of statistical information and results between producers and users of statistics, including regional experts and decision makers.

18. The overall strategy of the project also focuses on using and strengthening local expertise and making it available to all countries of the region through the network established, the project will reinforce existing south/south networks and create opportunities for experts to learn from their peers in order to diminish isolation of NSOs.

3.4 Specific activities of the project

19. The expected accomplishments will be achieved through implementation of the activities listed below, comprising workshops, an expert group meeting, study tours and direct assistance through advisory services by experts in the relevant areas from UNSD and ECA, and by general temporary assistant staff and consultants. The activities were designed, at this stage, based on desk research, lessons learnt from previous similar projects and UNSD's regular dialogue with national statisticians in the region.

3.4.1 (a) Workshops and seminars

20. Six training workshops and seminars for staff of national statistical offices to improve the technical capability of countries in methods of data collection, data analysis, reporting and

dissemination, with special emphasis on specific areas of need in the region; and on organization of the statistical systems and user-producer relations.

21. The workshops will be focused on (1) Statistical organisation and user-producer relations, (2) Household Survey methods, (3) Population Censuses, (4) Household Surveys with a focus on health statistics, (5) Vital statistics, and (6) Energy statistics, respectively.

22. The workshop with a focus on energy statistics shall be organised by UNSD in collaboration with the Division for Sustainable Development.

3.4.2 (b) Meetings

23. A working group meeting will be convened by UNSD, in collaboration with SADC Secretariat, on the harmonization of development indicators to exchange country experiences, develop common methodologies and classifications for the collection of data. The working group meeting will provide a forum for a dialogue among the countries of the region to identify common policy priority areas.

24. To ensure sustainability of the Project activities, three meetings of the Steering Committee, consisting of the Heads of the National Statistical Offices of the 14 countries of the SADC region, will conduct an initial, a mid-course and a final assessment of the Project and draft a framework and plan to institutionalize the activities of the project in the SADC Secretariat.

3.4.3 (c) Enhancing Information and Communication Technology

25. There is a need for connectivity within national statistics offices and among the statistics units to enable networking of experts in the different fields of statistics. Networking using ICT will promote sharing of information among experts in their respective fields, access to information on web sites, and exchange of statistical reports. To this end, the capacity of statistics offices needs to be strengthened not only in the substantive fields but also in information technology.

3.4.4 (d) Study tours

26. The project aims to draw on the strengths and achievements of the countries in the region through study tours. Intra-regional study tours, e.g. between ECOWAS and SADC, will be arranged to create opportunities for some of the staff from statistically less developed countries to learn from their peers best practices and share experience with others in the region. Study tours are also intended to give exposure to statisticians from developing countries at international statistical fora to enable them derive from their training, the knowledge and professional competence which will enable them to participate more actively in the statistical development of their countries.

3.4.5 (e) Advisory services

27. Advisory services will be provided in the field of collection and dissemination of statistics and use and maintenance of technology by experts from the Statistics Division and ECA, and, if

required, by consultants. Preference will be given to sub-regional experts when available. In addition the project will be evaluated by an independent professional evaluator.

4. Project monitoring and evaluation

28. The Implementation of the project will be monitored and evaluated using the indicators set out in the logical framework as described in Annex 1. The Steering Committee will monitor the implementation of the project activities. It will meet three times throughout the project, with SADC Secretariat and UNSD, to review and assess the progress of the project. UNSD, in collaboration with the SADC Secretariat, will prepare self-evaluation reports based on work-in-progress reports and a final evaluation mission. In addition the project will be evaluated by an independent professional evaluator.

29. The following will be some of the indicators that will serve to monitor and evaluate the project progress.

- (a) Increased volume of official statistical data for tracking progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals used by statistical systems, the public and the media;
- (b) (i) Increased number of national statistical offices using common statistical definitions and methodologies;
- (ii) Increased number of national statistical offices providing indicators of improved quality for policy-oriented research and analysis;

5. External factors and risks

30. The success of the project is contingent on the full commitments of SADC Secretariat and the member countries. Commitments will be ensured through the Steering Committee; however other external factors could delay or disrupt the implementation of the project. Some of the external factors, which could be anticipated at this stage are:

- i. the activities on national statistical coordination are contingent on the cooperation of several statistics producing line ministries and institutions;
- ii. the success of the project is contingent to the proper assimilation of the techniques by the trainees and their increasingly significant use in activities of their regular work programme;
- iii. turnover of trained national staff could pose serious challenge to NSOs and the project activities, hence retention of well-trained staff is one of the major challenges facing African NSOs;
- iv. competing technical cooperation activities may lead to possible duplication and extra burden on NSO;
- v. political resistance may hamper improvement of organization of the statistical systems and user-producers relations;
- vi. development of common methodologies and classifications for the collection of data and common statistical priorities and, in particular, with specific reference to poverty

- statistics and the MDGs indicators;
- vii. resistance of countries to adopt new standards for the following reasons: (a) it might require new training and have financial implications; and (b) it could lead to non-comparability of statistical series.
 - viii. financial constraints could limit or delay improvement in IT infrastructure;
 - ix. security situation could disrupt the project implementation.

6. Implementation Arrangements

31. The project will be executed by UNSD in collaboration with the Statistics Division of SADC Secretariat and in association with the Sustainable Development Division/DESA and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other specialized agencies will also be associated with the implementation of selected programme activities.

32. The Steering Committee would be expected, in collaboration with SADC Secretariat, to develop a framework to institutionalize the activities of the project and ensure its continuity after the project phases out at the end of 2009. The proposed project has been formulated to also take advantages of synergies with ongoing technical cooperation activities in the region. UNSD has initiated dialogue with other organisations to complement each other's efforts in the region. It will also use existing channels to inform others, such as PARIS21, on project activities and implementation progress.

7. Summary budget (US\$)

Object class	Object Description	Allotment
604	Consultants	75,000
604	Ad hoc expert group meeting	52,000
621	Workshops and training	442,000
608	Travel	190,000
612	Contractual services	31,000
618	General operating expenses	80,000
605	General temporary assistance	80,000
Total		950,000

Annex 1: Logical Framework

<i>Intervention logic</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Source of verification</i>	<i>Risks/ Assumptions</i>
<p>Objective:</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of countries in the SADC region for the production and analysis, on a regular basis, of benchmark statistics required for national policy planning and for development and monitoring of the progress of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.</p>			
<p>EA1</p> <p>Improved organization of statistical systems and user-producer relationships, resulting in quality, timely and relevant data on the Millennium Development Goals</p>	<p>Increased volume of official statistical data for tracking progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals used by statistical systems, the public and the media</p>	<p>National and international MDG progress reports and international database</p> <p>National Human Development Reports</p> <p>Other statistical and analytical reports</p> <p>Communications and data exchanges between SADC Secretariat and the NSOs</p>	<p>Political resistance</p> <p>Competing technical cooperation activities leading to possible duplication and extra burden on NSO, and competing priorities may not allow key staff of NSOs to attend study tour programmes</p> <p>Staff turnover</p> <p>Financial constraints could limit or delay improvement/update IT infrastructure, and communications breakdown in some of the member countries could hinder regional integration and information exchange</p>
<p><i>1. Main activities</i></p> <p>1.1 Workshop on statistical organization and management</p> <p>1.2 Enhancing Information and Communication Technology</p> <p>1.3 Study tours</p> <p>1.4 Coordination for the development of statistics in the region</p>			

<p>EA2</p> <p>Adoption of international statistical methods and standards for knowledge management in relation to the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals</p>	<p>(i) Increased number of national statistical offices using common statistical definitions and methodologies</p> <p>(ii) Increased number of national statistical offices providing indicators of improved quality for policy-oriented research and analysis</p>	<p>MDGs progress reports</p> <p>International Human Development Report</p>	<p>Resistance by countries to adopt new standards for the following reasons:</p> <p>(a) it might require new training and have financial implications</p> <p>(b) it could lead to non-comparability of statistical series</p> <p>See also risks for EA1</p>
<p><i>2. Main activities</i></p> <p>2.1 Expert group meeting on harmonization of indicators in the region with special focus on the indicators used in major conference follow-up and the MDGs</p> <p>2.2 Workshop on household surveys and measurement of labour force with focus on informal economy</p> <p>2.3 Workshop on statistical development and Population Censuses in countries in recovery</p> <p>2.4 Workshop on Household Surveys with a focus on health statistics</p> <p>2.5 Workshop on vital statistics</p> <p>2.6 Workshop on energy statistics</p> <p>2.7 Enhancing Information and Communication Technology</p> <p>2.8 Study Tours</p>			

Annex 2: Result based work plan

Expected accomplishment (EA)	Main activity	Timeframe by output/activity			
		2006	2007	2008	2009
EA 1: Improved organization of statistical systems and user-producer relationships, resulting in quality, timely and relevant data on the Millennium Development Goals	A1.1 Workshop on statistical organization and management	x			
	A1.2 Enhancing ICT		x	x	x
	A1.3 Study Tours		x	x	
	A1.4 Contributing to the coordination of statistical activities at sub-regional and regional level	x	x	x	x
EA 2: Adoption of international statistical methods and standards for knowledge management in relation to the Millennium Development Goals and internationally agreed development goals	A2.1 Expert group meeting on harmonization of indicators in the region with special focus on the indicators used in major conferences follow-up and the MDGs		x		
	A2.2 Workshop on household surveys and measurement of labour force with focus on informal economy		x		
	A2.3 Workshop on statistical development and Population Censuses in countries in recovery		x		
	A2.4 Workshop on Household Surveys with a focus on health statistics			x	
	A2.5 Workshop on vital statistics		x		
	A2.6 Workshop on energy statistics		x		
	A2.7 Enhancing ICT		x	x	x
	A2.8 Study Tours		x	x	x