



## **SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (RVAA) Programme<sup>1</sup>: Brief Overview**

### **Background**

SADC established the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) in 1999, with the purpose of keeping abreast and encouraging coordinated development in the field of vulnerability and livelihood assessments in the SADC region. The VAC system that has since evolved and includes the RVAC<sup>2</sup>, a multi-agency committee established under the SADC Secretariat's Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate (FANR) and National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs). The NVACs are established under the leadership of national governments in Member States.

In response to the southern African 'food crisis', the VAC system has, since 2002, conducted a series of on-going national assessments especially in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The main aim of these assessments has been to provide timely and reliable information regarding the food security situation and related conditions to determine appropriate short and long term emergency interventions.

Financial support has been provided by the Republic of South Africa, through the World Food Programme; the UK Government; Department for International Development and the Australian Government (DFID/AusAid) through the Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP), and the US government through USAID, Regional Centre for Southern Africa (USAID-RCSA), OFDA and FEWSNET.

### **Programme objectives and purpose**

The **Programme Overall Objective** is to contribute to the reduction in poverty in the SADC region by reducing livelihood vulnerability by operating simultaneously at three levels, through:

- (i). Enhancing national policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions through strengthening of national and regional vulnerability assessment and analysis systems;
- (ii). Strengthening the design, implementation and M&E function of SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Plan (RISDP) and business plans through building up national and regional vulnerability assessment and analysis systems; and

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<sup>1</sup> The RVAA Programme is part of the Southern African Development Community Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (SADC-FANR) directorate.

<sup>2</sup> Members of the RVAC includes: UN agencies (WFP, FAO, OCHA, UNICEF), NGOs (OXFAM, World Vision), FEWS NET.

- (iii). Supporting International Cooperating Partners (ICPs) to make informed decisions in their allocation of resources for short term and long term interventions in the region.

The **Programme purpose** is to improve regional and national policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions through strengthening of national and regional vulnerability assessments and analysis systems.

### **Support to Member States**

The RVAA programme continues to enhance national policy formulation, development programmes and emergency interventions through strengthening of national and regional vulnerability assessment and analysis systems.

The RVAA programme is assisting in strengthening national *technical capacity* in undertaking VAA work in all SADC Member States. It is also strengthen *institutional relationships* between relevant government and non-government, research and private sector organizations, and continue to assist with the formalization of vulnerability analysis groups or NVACs within government structures. It is also enhancing its own capacity and that of key stakeholders to advocate and communicate key issues around food insecurity and vulnerable livelihoods in order to ensure the utilization of information for informed decision making, policy formulation and programming, with a particular emphasis on both short- and long-term interventions.

Specific activities in support of member states include the following:

- Support to prioritized backstopping activities to consolidate VAA to including: market, chronic poverty and HIV / AIDS analyses, etc;
- Strengthening the PMUs own capacity to engage in dialogue across directorates and units within SADC Secretariat;
- Strengthening the PMUs own capacity in policy analysis and policy dialogue in support of member states;
- Establishing a SADC VAA Training and Capacity Building Programme, in collaboration with a range of technical and academic institutions, including support to African Centre for Food Security (ACFS) at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) as one of SADC Centres of Excellence (CoE) in VAA;
- Support to a ongoing mentoring and professional technical exchange system as a desirable system for on-the-job capacity building and technical strengthening
- Strengthening the capacity of NVACs through technical placements and advisory support at national and regional levels; and
- Facilitate member states collaboration with RVAC members, ICPs and academic and tertiary institutions.

## **Achievements**

Since the inception of the SADC RVAA Programme in May 2005, the programme has pursued its mandate which is to implement SADCs five year programme to strengthen vulnerability assessment and analysis in the region. The RVAA programme has achieved a number of activities and these include:

- Recognition of SADC leadership in the coordination of VAA capacity building and assessment activities in the region;
- A key facilitator on disseminating VAA information and products in various SADC regional forums;
- Support and guidance for the establishment or strengthening of NVACs in the Region;
- The establishment of a mentoring and technical exchange system that supports on-going professional development to strengthen VAA systems in the region; and
- The establishment of a regional VAA training and capacity building programme whose focus is the identification and selection of the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) African Centre for Food Security Studies (ACFS) as a SADC Centre of Excellence on VAA.