



MEDIA ADVISORY

AU-SADC REGIONAL INTERNET EXCHANGE POINT (RIXP) AND REGIONAL INTERNET CARRIER (RIC) WORKSHOP, GRAND PALM HOTEL, 3rd - 7th FEBRUARY 2014, GABORONE, BOTSWANA

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC) will be convening a Regional workshop on Best Practices and Benefits of setting up Regional Internet Exchange Points (RIXPs) and Regional Internet Carriers (RICs) to be convened at the Grand Palm Hotel from 3rd to 7th February 2014, in Gaborone, Botswana. This workshop which is a first of a series of Regional workshops will be hosted by the Government of Botswana in conjunction with the Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) and it is being implemented as part of the African Internet Exchange System (AXIS) project. The AXIS project which is funded by the Euro-Africa Infrastructure Fund and the Government of Luxembourg has the objective of keeping Africa's Internet traffic local to the continent by providing capacity building and technical assistance to facilitate the establishment of National Internet Exchange Points (NIXPs) and RIXPs in Africa and to assist in the development of a more locally operated, more robust and economically accessible pan-African Internet and drawing on the advantages of affordability, low latency and bandwidth-saving.

To date most of Africa's Internet traffic is routed through Internet Exchange Points external to the African continent. As countries establish their own IXPs, Internet traffic will be routed locally, creating a downward pressure on costs and stimulating growth in the distribution of local Internet content. In the SADC Region most of the Member States have already set up at least One NIXP and the three Member States that had not yet set up a NIXP have advanced in the process of setting up their own NIXP with the assistance of the AXIS project. This makes the SADC Region the only Region that has accomplished this and making the Region ready to begin discussions on the setting up of the RIXP.

The NIXP as set up provides a physical infrastructure through which local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) exchange Internet traffic between their networks. The NIXP allows networks to interconnect directly, rather than through one or more third party networks, thereby reducing the portion of an ISP's traffic which must be delivered via their upstream transit providers, hence keeps local traffic local.

The workshop will attract more than 100 delegates comprising of the representatives of the 14 SADC Member States, representatives of the AUC, SADC Secretariat, and SADC Regional Implementing Agencies. This workshop will develop the minimum criteria for selecting NIXP to be supported to grow into RIXPs and the minimum criteria for selecting the ISPs that meet the definition of RICs to be considered for the mentorship and capacity building program. This SADC RIXP and RIC Workshop is the first of its kind in Africa and the first two (2) days of the workshop will focus on RICs while the last three (3) days will focus on RIXPs. The Internet Society (ISOC) has been contracted to facilitate the workshop.