Regional ODL Policy Development and Strategic Planning

To facilitate harmonisation of education and training through ODL in the SADC region, the SADC Capacity Building Project has developed a Regional ODL Policy Framework to guide Member States in the development of national ODL policies. Key regional policy documents that have been approved which was approved in June 2012.

To operationalize the Regional ODL Policy Framework, a Regional ODL Strategic Plan has been developed.

National ODL Policy Development in the SADC Region.

The Region has made strides in developing national ODL Policies as mandated by the SADC Protocol on Education and Training article 9A (2). To date the following five (5) Member States have been supported by the SADC ODL Project to develop their national ODL policies aligned to the Regional ODL Policy Framework:

- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

The ODL Project implementation started in 2008 and several regional policy frameworks have been approved by SADC Ministers of Education and Training to facilitate ODL provision in the SADC region. The Project focuses on secondary, teacher, TVET and High education.

Further, a number of capacity building activities have been implemented and others are on going.

The direct beneficiaries of this Project are seven Member States namely; Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Project has come up with quarterly SADC Newsletter which is intended to create awareness on ODL activities that are being implemented in the SADC region with a view to increasing access to education and training. This will enhance visibility as well as marketability of ODL across the region.

It is anticipated that Member States will take advantage of this platform to create awareness on their ODL initiatives in the area of policy development, ICT, gender mainstreaming in ODL initiatives, research, M and E and other interesting activities. It is through sharing of information, success stories and best practices that SADC Member States can learn and encourage each other in an effort to foster regional integration through development of well trained, educated and skilled human resources.

The Editor therefore welcomes you all to participate in this forum through contribution of articles from your institutions and Member States.
Important Highlights
SADC Secretariat established two centres of Specialization to facilitate capacity building in Open and Distance Learning.

- Centre of Specialization for Teacher Education at Open University of Tanzania
- Centre of Specialization for Secondary Education—Malawi College of Distance Education in Malawi.

SADC Secretariat launched Knowledge Management System at Open University of Tanzania which has a back up at Malawi College of Distance Education.

Visit the website for more information
http://sadckms.out.ac.tz or http://41.93.35.13/kms/.

The SADC Centre for Distance Education has been formally recognised as a SADC institution through the principle of subsidiarity.

SADC Secretariat through the Capacity Building Project facilitates National ODL Policy Development in selected SADC Member States.

SADC Centre for Distance Education complements the SADC ODL Project by supporting other SADC (ADB) Member States to develop National ODL Policies.

The SADC ODL Newsletter will be produced quarterly as per the schedule below:

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<th>Month</th>
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<td>April</td>
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SADC Secretariat signs Memorandum of Understanding with two Centres

SADC ODL Knowledge Management System has been Launched

The SADC ODL Knowledge Management System (KMS) at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) which hosts the SADC Centre of Specialisation (CoS) for Teacher Education. The IP address of the KMS is http://sadckms.out.ac.tz or http://41.93.35.13/kms. The purpose of the KMS is to enhance information sharing in the SADC region as well as to promote knowledge creation, collaboration and networking.

SADC ODL Knowledge Management System has been launched in October 2012 at the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) which hosts the SADC Centre of Specialisation (CoS) for Teacher Education. The IP address of the KMS is http://sadckms.out.ac.tz or http://41.93.35.13/kms. The purpose of the KMS is to enhance information sharing in the SADC region as well as to promote knowledge creation, collaboration and networking.

Centres of Specialisation
Guided by the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training article 7E, Member States have agreed to establish Centres of Specialisation (CoS) in the region at existing institutions to offer regional programmes. The purpose of CoS is to build capacity of regional training institutions to offer education and training programmes in critical and specialised areas with a view to increasing stock of trained personnel in the region. In view of this, the SADC Capacity Building in ODL Project has facilitated the establishment of two Centres of Specialisation for secondary and teacher education at Malawi College of Distance Education in Malawi and Open University of Tanzania, in Tanzania respectively.

Through the signed MoU, the SADC Secretariat through its SADC Capacity Building in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Project funded by the African Development Bank has pledged to support the capacity building of Open University of Tanzania (OUT) and Malawi College of Distance Education (MCDE) in networking, office equipment and furniture, ICT equipment for training, bandwidth, tuition fees, bus and standby generator and other related costs.

The support will enable the Centre of Specialisation in Teacher Education and Secondary Education to training ODL practitioners in short term training courses designed to close competency gaps in the ODL personnel with a view to ensuring quality development, deployment and delivery of ODL across the region. The Centre of Specialisation will also offer training at diploma and masters degree levels in ODL to ODL practitioners in the region.

This initiative is in accordance with the SADC Protocol on Education and Training, which is a blueprint for education and training in SADC Member States. The cooperation between SADC and the two centres (OUT and MCDE) shall include, but not limited to:

- Facilitation of joint ODL curriculum development and programme delivery with other universities/institutions
- Provision of both short-term and long-term training for the development of ODL professionals, technical and research skills in relation to Teacher Education and secondary education.
- Provision of specialized training in priority areas as stipulated in their respective policy documents and mandates.

SADC Open and Distance Learning Newsletter—April to June 2013
Gender Mainstreaming in Open and Distance Learning Programmes

The SADC Capacity Building in Open and Distance Learning Project is an exemplar Project in mainstreaming gender in its activities. One major breakthrough has been the development of the Regional Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for Open and Distance Learning which was approved in 2009. The Regional Strategy guides the gender mainstreaming processes in ODL programmes at regional and national levels.

Some of the key activities that have been implemented from this Regional Strategy are as follows:
- Development of Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines for ODL programmes
- Development of a Gender Mainstreaming Training Manual
- Training of ODL practitioners as Training of Trainers in Gender Mainstreaming
- Development of a Regional Gender Module for ODL institutions which will be finalised in October, 2013.

Domestication of the Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for Open and Distance Learning

The SADC Secretariat conducted training for Trainers for all the ADF Member States. The purpose of the training was to orient member states on the regional framework with a view to domesticating key indicators that have to be tracked by Member States.

The major outcome of this Training was Action Plans for domesticating the Regional M and E Framework at national levels.

Angola embarks on National ODL Advocacy campaigns

In an effort to promote development and utilisation of open and distance learning in the SADC region, the SADC Secretariat developed the Regional ODL Information, Communication and Education Strategy to guide awareness campaigns on ODL in the SADC region.

Angola conducted a National ODL awareness campaign that drew participants from a wider stakeholders group in April, 2013. The advocacy campaigns create awareness on the utilisation and benefits of open and distance learning.
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