



PRESS RELEASE

SADC will host the Putting Mobile Phone Data (MPD) to Work for Statistics SADC Regional Workshop with support from the World Bank Group in Johannesburg, South Africa from 19th – 22nd May 2025

18th May 2025, Gaborone, Botswana: The Southern African Development Community (SADC), with support from the World Bank Group (WBG), will host a Regional Workshop on Mobile Phone Data (MPD) in Johannesburg, Gauteng, Republic of South Africa from 19 - 22 May 2025. The workshop is part of the implementation of the SADC Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) and the SADC Big Data Framework and is designed to support initiatives that leverage data collected through MPD for official statistical purposes.

The workshop aims to equip SADC Member States with the knowledge and practical skills necessary to integrate MPDs into their national data systems. Participants will engage in technical training and group activities to learn how MPD can effectively be used for policy applications and to generate high-resolution statistics for policy development. The workshop will also address the integration of MPD into policy frameworks governing regional statistics and specific implementation plans.

MPD encompasses data collected through mobile phone usage, access, ownership, and mobile network data, with a focus on subscriber location. This data is valuable for applications such as measuring human mobility, generating population statistics, transport, tourism, migration, social protection, public health, poverty reduction and aiding disaster response efforts.

The use of MPD aligns with the SADC DTS, which seeks to accelerate the adoption of digital technologies by SADC Member States. By digitally empowering citizens, businesses, and institutions, the SADC DTS aims to maximize the socio-economic and political impact of digital technologies in support of SADC's regional integration development agenda.

As part of the SADC ICT Observatory, MPDs serve as a critical intelligence tool for strategic planning, providing reliable and up-to-date ICT indicators, measurements, benchmarking as well as reports.

The SADC MPD workshop also seeks to enable Member States to establish governance and institutional frameworks for utilising data from alternative and innovative sources,

including Big Data. This will involve developing specific guidelines for data use, allowing national statistical systems to meet increasing data demands for monitoring and measuring progress on development agendas. With the support of the World Bank Group, activities related to mainstreaming MPD pipelines into the statistical operations of National Statistics Offices (NSOs) are planned to be rolled out through the Regional Statistics Project.

The workshop will be attended by government officials from the ICT sector, ICT National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs), NSOs, and Mobile Network Operators (MNOs), SADC ICT Implementing Agencies, as well as representatives from implementing partners including the World Bank Group, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) and the World Bank's Global Data Facility – Mobile Phone Data Programme (Partnership includes WBG institutional partners from Development Economics, Poverty, and Digital Transformation, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and Government of Spain).

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SADC in Brief

SADC is an organisation of 16 Member States established in 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) and later, in August, 1992 transformed into the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The mission of SADC is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation and integration, good governance and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy. Member States are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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