



SADC/CM/2/2023/5.2.3C

Recommendations for a potential regional programme in support of the implementation of the SADC Digital Transformation Strategy (SADC DTS)



Recommendations for a regional program supporting the implementation of the SADC regional digital strategy

This document proposes a list of potential **short-term studies and other initiatives that can build the foundations of a future regional program** in support of the implementation of the SADC regional digital strategy to be co-financed by EU NDICI and other funding schemes proposed by international cooperating partners and international financing institutions.

This DTS support program is composed of 23 regional studies and initiatives that are the initial building blocks of the SADC DTS implementation roadmap, fully aligned with the 7 strategic interventions described in the SADC DTS draft/blueprint shared in early October 2022.

These regional studies and initiatives could be supported or co-financed either by the EU through its different instruments, such as the NDICI regional MIP 2021-2027, by EU member states or by other technical and financial partners. Some key EU partnership instruments and a relevant World Bank program have been identified and described in the situational analysis report of July 2022. Other key potential support partners are mentioned below for each study/initiative. It is noted that it is highly recommended to involve Private Sector representatives (at investment levels but also at strategic mapping exercises level), and that the D4D Hub¹ platform provides an excellent opportunity to engage, not only with European MS / TEI flagged initiatives, but also into partnerships with the private sector, academia and CSOs.

The **recommended roadmap** for the SADC secretariat to **mobilise resources and support** for this program is to:

1. **Complete the first review process of the draft SADC DTS** with member states and validate (or amend) the proposed strategic interventions. **If the DTS priorities and strategies are amended**, then this list of studies and initiatives should also be **modified to reflect the updated priorities**.
2. Review and **validate the list of studies and initiatives proposed below** based on what was further approved ensuring that the proposals are well aligned with the latest approved SADC DTS, and that the resources and timeframe estimated are realistic to achieve the outputs.
3. Identify or **assign an “ownership”** for each study or initiative (determine who will be in charge of managing and following up on the implementation of recommendations and designs) and the **steering and coordination mechanisms**, that should also be aligned with the proposed DTS implementation institutional arrangements.
4. **Convene roundtables with the technical and financial partners** (including EU, its MS agencies, International Financial and Development Finance Institutions, technical UN agencies, multi-laterals, regional pan-African initiatives, etc) and present these studies and initiatives to assess their interest in supporting and/or co-funding them.

This fourth point (round table with technical and financial partners) should include:

- a. A **specific round table with the EU and MS agencies** to be launched in the frame of the D4D Hub - Africa branch. Also Important to involve together **with the regional EU office for SADC**, the main commission DGs (INTPA, Connect, etc), their thematic and regional desks (INTPA F5, A2) as they manage

¹ <https://d4dhub.eu/>

technical assistance facilities (TAFs) and **the SADC region EU delegations**. These meetings should also include an exercise aimed at mapping the main programs on digital collaboration between AU and EU (PRIDA programme, EGEE-ICT program, and other relevant EU-AU initiatives etc).

- b. Another round table with **larger participation would include WB, AfDB, USAID**, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency, JICA, KOICA, and other international key players active in the relevant sectors.
- c. And organise **thematic round tables for specific areas** with specialised thematic agencies and alliances such as GIGA², ITU Partner2Connect Digital Coalition, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNCTAD, UNEP, FAO, etc.

The following points are pivotal to the successful implementation of the 23 stand-alone studies and initiatives, and have to be mainstreamed through all those initiatives that will be implemented with the support of different potential partners:

- the SADC DTS provides the **strategic framework and ensures the articulation, synergies, continuity, and future impact** of all these 23 stand-alone studies and initiatives
- SADC and their MS have full **ownership and will ensure articulated implementation** of this DTS support program

² <https://giga.global/about-us/>

Potential studies and projects of the regional program in support of the implementation of the SADC DTS

Name	Objectives	Main output	Duration	Resources needed	Budget	Funding
1. SADC broadband support program design	Design a regional support program for enhancing MS national capacity to design and implement connectivity policies, and broadband plans, design and enforce the enabling regulations for broadband expansion etc.	A program is designed to support each MS to design and/or implement broadband plans, based on needs assessment including intervention methodology and a detailed support Workplan for 2-4 years with budget	4 months	Team of 3 digital policy and connectivity planning experts Field missions and consultations	300 K	F5 TAFs incl knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP
2. SADC policy and regulatory reform Program to boost private investments in regional interconnectivity of digital infrastructures	Design a regional interconnectivity promotion program (to incentivise and attract private sector investment in cross border and regional inf.) – program implementation targets, special regulations, financial facilities, and other incentives/activities TBD	Detailed recommendations and drafts of the changes needed in each MS legal and regulatory frameworks - harmonised regionally – to boost private sector investment in regional interconnectivity	4 months	Team of 3 experts (legal, regulations, telecom, and digital investment specialist) Field missions / consultations	300 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub World Bank DE4A program? EGEE-ICT Programme
3. SADC regional connectivity infrastructures feasibility study and plan	Feasibility study and action plan design for SADC regional connectivity plan by SADC MS and interconnection of IXPs CDN data infrastructures (determine if PPP, or purely public, resources used, Special Purpose/Project Vehicles or other models)	Feasibility and action plan design for SADC regional connectivity plan by SADC MS and interconnection of IXPs CDN data infrastructures , with detailed and agreed implementation modalities	6 months	Team of 2 experts on connectivity infrastructure Field study / consultations	300 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP
4. SADC affordable devices program design (smartphones and tablets)	Study and design of a regional program to ensure the availability of affordable access devices (options to be analysed: (i) reduction of import cost, (ii) manufacturing / assembling devices in the region or (iii) hybrid options)	Feasibility study and project design for the affordable device's availability , in consensus with SADC MS including implementation plan, detailed budget, etc.	8 months	Team of 3 experts (ICT device manufacturing, financial structuring, mkt) Field study / consultations	400 K	F5 TAFs incl knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP EU Private sector EIB / EFSD+

5. SADC digital models laws and regulations	Prepare templates for laws and digital regulations for SADC MS to further domesticate	Draft laws/regulations on data protection, data governance, privacy, cybersecurity, e-transactions, platform regulation, consumer protection, digital freedom, and legal instruments prohibiting harmful actions)	5 months	3 Experts (Digital legal, regulation) Stakeholders consultations	300 K	F5 TAFs incl knowledge hub PRIDA NDICI – A2 Africa RIP
6. SADC cybersecurity regional strategy and plan	Develop the regional SADC cybersecurity strategy and implementation plan	Consensual regional cybersecurity strategic action plan that will include: (1) Actions and TA to incentivise all MS to ratify multilateral regulatory agreements i.e. Malabo and Budapest conventions (strategic drafting, awareness events, workshops, etc) (2) plan based on needs for TA capacity-building for building Computer national incident response teams (CIRTs) or (CERTs) in SADC MS (3) set up regional cybersecurity governance and coordination mechanisms within SADC MS (4) Regional SADC CIRT implementation modalities (TDB in strategy), and (5) the design of the regional legal interoperability mechanism	8 months	3 Experts (in cybersecurity and legal/regulatory) Stakeholders consultations	400 K	F5 TAFs incl knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP Cyber4Dev Estonia bilateral / TEI
7. SADC digital Policy models laws and digital mainstreaming implementation playbook	Develop a digital policy and strategy planning toolkit adapted to the SADC context, for updating National Digital Agendas and mainstreaming digital into sectorial policies	Digital Policy models laws and a digital mainstreaming implementation playbook for SADC MS (including concrete roadmaps agreed upon with each MS to ensure mainstreaming digital into their sector policies of health, agriculture, education, culture, tourism, etc)	6 months	2 Experts on digital/sectorial mainstreaming Stakeholders consultations	200 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP Twining SADC and EU MS?

8. Regional advanced digital competencies and certification framework	Develop a shared regional advanced digital competencies and certification framework (data science, AI, software, sys engineers, etc)	Consensual shared advanced digital competency and certification framework, and support for implementation and adoption in each SADC MS	12 months	3 Experts in advanced digital competencies Field missions to support adoption in SADC MS.	500 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP UNESCO World bank
9. Digital Technology Entrepreneurship and Innovation training programs	Develop and make available to Sad MS regional harmonised training programs for Digital Technology Entrepreneurship and Innovation (with Public and Private Partnerships)	Model training program/curriculum that will be adapted/developed with/for each participating SADC MS	6 months	2 Experts (digital innovation and entrepreneurship) Regional consultations Field missions to support domestication / appropriation	300 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP UNESCO AEDIB.net UNCTAD
10. Boosting E-Gov and Digital Government (EDG) in the SADC region	Develop a strategic framework for improving E-Gov and Digital Government (EDG) in the SADC region	Prepare a set of models for national e/dig-gov policy, laws regulation , and implementation guidelines adapted to each SADC MS, and design collaborative regional EDG actions	6 months	3 Experts (E-Gov and Digital Gov EDG) National and regional workshops and consultations	400 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP Estonia
11. Digital literacy and skills for all	Support the MS in developing policies and action plans on digital literacy (basic to medium skills),	Design of national Plans for Digital literacy/skills for all prepared for each/all SADC MS that needs it- covering the private labor force, public sector employees, and NEET (not in employment, education or training) youth	10 months	4 Experts (digital skills plans) National consultations Field missions to support MS domestication / appropriation	800 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP ENABEL GIZ UNESCO

12. SADC Digital Competencies / Skills Framework	Establishment of the SADC Digital Competencies / Skills Framework to support MS in updating their national curricula on digital skills and increasing funding for digital literacy initiatives	Consensual digital competency framework adopted for the SADC region, based on EU's DIGICOMP	6 months	2 Experts (digital skills) Regional consultations	200 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP ENABEL GIZ UNESCO
13. Integrating digital skills into SADC MS national curricula	Technical advisory for MS updating their national curricula to include digital skills	Support the implementation and adoption of each SADC MS national competencies framework, and update their national curricula	12 months	4 Experts (digital skills and curriculum) Field missions to support MS updating curriculum	800 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP World Bank ENABEL GIZ UNESCO
14. SADC NREns support program	Strengthening of existing NREns and establishment of new ones in collaboration with the UbuntuNet Alliance	Plan and budget to support SADC National Research and Education Networks (NRENS) as a key enabler of digital innovation and adoption	4 months	2 Experts Regional consultations	200 K	F5 TAF knowledge hub NDICI – A2 Africa RIP GEANT/DG Connect
15. Boosting digital innovation in SADC	Support MS to increase domestic and external funding in digital innovation , emerging technologies and 4IR	Plans for each MS boosting its funding available for digital innovation , emerging technologies and 4IR	4 months	3 Experts (Innovation Financing) National consultations, field missions	300 K	NDICI – A2 Africa RIP EFSD+ EIB Horizon Europe

16. SADC Regional Open Access Framework	Develop a Regional Open Access Framework to support MS and universities in acquiring licenses to access the main global research journals and platforms	Regional Open Access Framework designed and adopted in SADC MS – licenses available	4 months	2 Experts (higher education and research) Stakeholders consultations	200 K	NDICI – A2 Africa RIP Horizon Europe
17. Regional SADC Open Distance Learning (ODL) programme	Support to the implementation of the Regional Open Distance Learning (ODL) Strategic Plan 2022-2030 for universities in the region to build new or improve their physical and virtual infrastructure and resources relevant for dissemination purposes	For implementation and <i>budget refer to SADC Regional Open and Distance Learning Strategic Plan 2022-2030</i>	Scope budget and expertise needed for the ODL initial phase to be discussed with SADC Social & Human Development Directorate team		TBD up to 58 M euro	NDICI – A2 Africa RIP
18. Academia-industry regional alliance for digital innovation and 4IR	Support regional academia-industry and field-focused regional events with a focus on digital innovation, emerging technologies and 4IR	Implement a series of workshops and regional events to facilitate partnership building	12 months	2 Experts (Innovation) Regional Events	800 K	F5 TAF knowledge hubD4D NDICI – A2 Africa RIP
19. National PPPs and linkages for digital innovation and 4IR	Support to universities to foster linkages and create PPPs with the private sector in the areas of digital innovation, emerging tech and 4IR	Implement TA and facilitate partnership building	4 months	4 Experts (Innovation) Field missions to support PPP building	400 K	NDICI – A2 Africa RIP
20. SADC Network of Centres of Excellence related to digital innovation	Set up a network of Centres of Excellence related to digital innovation, emerging technologies and 4IR	Implement a series of workshops and facilitate network building	12 months	3 Experts (Innovation) Regional events	800 K	NDICI – A2 Africa RIP Horizon Europe
21. 4th IR SADC mobility program	Support and increase human capital development on digital innovation, emerging tech and 4IR by increasing mobility initiatives across the region for students.	Develop and implement an intra-SADC regional scholarship program	12 months	2 Experts (Scholarships / Scholarships funding)	1500 K	NDICI – A2 Africa RIP

22. Digital Gender gap reduction regional programme	Establish a regional support programme to close the gender gap in digital skills, emerging tech and 4IR, and to encourage women-led digital entrepreneurship	Develop and implement a regional program to increase women and girls participation in the digital economy	18 months	3 Experts (digital inclusion, women digital leadership) Program implementation costs	1000 K	NDICI – A2 Africa RIP ENABEL LUXDEV
23. Digital gender in the SADC Regional Development Fund (RDF)	Set up a mechanism within the Regional Development Fund (RDF) for closing the digital gender gap in digital innovation, emerging technologies, 4IR and digital entrepreneurship	Design, approval and setting up of a mechanism to enable the use of the Regional Development Fund (RDF) for closing the gender gap in digital innovation, emerging technologies, 4IR and digital entrepreneurship	4 months	2 Experts in gender mainstreaming and digital inclusion funding	200 K	NDICI – A2 Africa RIP ENABEL LUXDEV