Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) Officer - Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

Primary Purpose of the Job

The MERL Officer will be responsible for the overall SRHR Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning Framework for all stakeholders including Member-States' progress towards achieving targets under the SRHR strategy through the SRHR Scorecard and other relevant SADC SRHR/HIV programming, including the coordination, harmonisation and quality assurance of data collection processes to support evidence-based reporting

Scope of Work

Goal and Purpose

The MERL Officer will be based in the Directorate of Social and Human Development, with direct reporting to the Programme Coordinator: SRHR and work closely with the SADC M&E unit. The MERL Officer will collaborate within the team as well as with strategic partners of the Directorate for Social and Human Development to collect, analyse and report on progress towards the targets in the SADC SRHR Strategy.

Guided by the four core strategic pillars, the MERL Officer will assist Member States to track progress towards the outcomes of the SADC SRHR strategy and the SRHR-related targets of SDGs 3 (Health and Wellbeing and 5 (Gender Equality and empowerment), and any other SDG targets that may be identified. The MERL Officer will work with Member States to prioritise the establishment and strengthening of integrated multi-sectoral national monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems to gather the evidence to strengthen policy, programming, resourcing and service delivery.

The MERL Officer will be responsible for:

Convening and coordinating MERL at Member-State level in collaboration with the 2gether4SRHR MERL specialist, particularly to:

- Lead the monitoring and evaluation process at Member-State level for the biennial tracking of progress under the SADC SRHR Scorecard, including the development of progress reports, oversight of programme evaluations from Member States, and promote usage of national data to document and disseminate promising and emerging practices
- Ensures that Member-States and partners including CSOs, academic and research institutions and other international organisations can confidently use

results-based learning approaches to report on progress against the indicators in the SADC SRHR Scorecard

- Lead implementation of the existing MERL framework at SADC Secretariat level for use at Member-State level to report consistently and effectively against quantitative and qualitative indicators in the SADC SRHR Scorecard
- Facilitate continuous reflection and the capturing of lessons learned from projects and programme implementation and ensure that risks are properly monitored and mitigated.
- Works with the Finance Officer to track the use of programme resources against programme outcomes.
- Develop project and program progress reports, ensuring alignment of different regional SRHR and related project and program interventions (including those of partner organisations) to the SADC SRHR Strategy 2019-2030 as well as to HIV/GBV and related strategies, project and programs.
- Lead project and programme evaluations including mid-term and at end of projects and programme to ensure optimal use of findings for improved programme design.
- Ensure alignment of Member States SRHR interventions to the attainment of the SRHR strategy and international commitments.

Ensuring facilitation of knowledge building and knowledge sharing to achieve harmonisation and quality assurance for monitoring, evaluation and capture for learning, especially to:

- Ensure the delivery of quality results-based MERL reports and consistent reporting across Member States against the indicators in the SADC SRHR Scorecard and inform programme implementation.
- Collate, document and disseminate promising and best practices using results-based MERL. This must include ensuring that these case studies are captured and easily accessible through SADC Secretariat platforms, with an emphasis on the Secretariat's website as the capstone regional platform for sharing data, analysis and reporting, and supporting adaptation, replication and scale of promising and best practices.
- Collaborates in the establishment and inauguration of a regional knowledge-sharing network to monitor trends, shape and accelerate the response to emerging issues.
- Develop and inform a regional SRHR research agenda that prioritizes evidence generation on the Demographic Dividend, with a focus on capturing data that demonstrates the return on investment of SRHR in broader developmental outcomes.

Aligning MERL with the SADC SRHR Strategy and Scorecard and the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), including to:

- Ensure harmony, quality assurance and completeness in reporting against indicators to populate the SADC SRHR scorecard and reporting to SADC policy organs and other stakeholders.
- Oversee and provide guidance for integrating different SRHR multisectoral regional and national monitoring and evaluation systems, testing and ensuring

their responsiveness to common SADC SRHR results and the attainment of regional, continental and global policy and program commitments.

Providing technical capacity building support to Member States on MERL for SRHR, particularly to:

- Provide technical and advisory guidance and capacity building to conduct regional and national program evaluations, gather and use national data to inform program interventions, strategies, policies and legislations, and to analyse and present data that links SRHR progress to indicators of socio-economic development, peace, and security.
- Facilitate the provision of high-level technical support to Member States and other stakeholders to integrate population and demographic data modelling and planning tools and techniques into strategic information and national and regional planning frameworks and inform long-term SRHR programming and resource allocation.
- Collaborate with the Communication and Partnerships portfolio and other sectoral programs to clearly communicate and advocate for the prioritisation of SRHR as a catalyst for socio-economic development, in SADC, and the urgency for investing in SRHR-young people and other key social issues for regional and national development efforts to harness the demographic dividend in SADC.

Qualifications and Experience

Education

Advanced university degree (master's level) in social science, statistics, development studies demography, economics, public administration or any other related field, to preferably include credits in the principles and practice of monitoring and evaluation

Knowledge and Experience

- Seven (7) years professional progressive work experience in monitoring and evaluation, project management, social research, etc., with proven experience working on SRHR or related health/development programs, and familiarity with SADC Secretariat or similar regional body procedures.
- Strong track record in establishing, validating and maintaining MERL frameworks, managing project evaluations, with a proven ability to produce demonstrable results.
- Strong knowledge of monitoring and evaluation, in particular results-based management and reporting.
- Extensive experience in developing data collection tools, conducting data analysis with statistical software, and building the capacity of national-level M&E staff. Demonstrated experience/familiarity with population and demographic data modelling and planning tools and techniques in developing contexts is essential.
- Experience in undertaking mid-term reviews and end of project evaluations an added advantage.

- Experience in the use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies and programmes to document programme results.
- Experience in developing and facilitating participatory, competency-based trainings
- Experience in using computers and office software packages, and with web-based management systems

Languages

Fluency in English; knowledge of French or Portuguese desirable.

Functional Competencies

- Generate, manage and promote use of knowledge and information
- Provide a technical support system
- Strengthen programmatic capacity
- Encourage improvements in programmatic quality results

Core Competencies

- Results oriented
- Accountability for self and others
- Strategic and analytical thinking
- Collaborative, self-starting and highly motivated
- Systemic thinking and flexibility to accommodate multisectoral and integration perspectives