# Mid-term Review of FOPRISA (Formative Process Research on Integration in Southern Africa)

Stein Sundstøl Eriksen and Garth le Pere

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# Report

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(Formative Process Research on Integration in Southern Africa)

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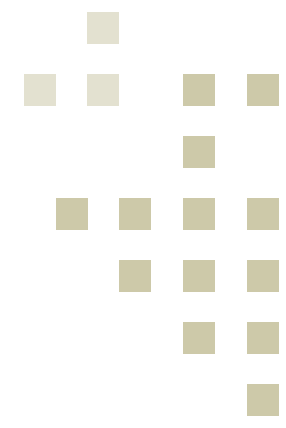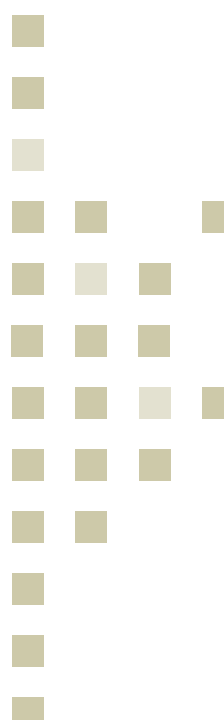
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# Executive summary

## Background

1. This mid-term review provides an evaluation of the programme, 'Formative Process Research on Regional Integration in Southern Africa' (FOPRISA). The purpose of the review is to assess FOPRISA's achievements, the experience it has gained and lessons learnt since its establishment two years ago. The programme is the result of an agreement between the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Botswana Institute of Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) to strengthen the capacity of the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) secretariat in policy development, implementation and coordination.

2. BIDPA houses FOPRISA and is the main coordinating and administrative agency. Other participating institutions include the Christian Michelsen Institute, Norway; the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa; the University of Botswana; the Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit; and the Economic and Social Research Foundation, Tanzania.

3. The FOPRISA programme has four components: *research* with a focus on democratic development; politics, defence and security cooperation; regional trade and the international trade system; and regional economic harmonisation, finance and investment; *monitoring* progress towards regional integration; *capacity building* in research and policy advice on regional integration; and *supporting activities* to disseminate research results, develop a website, provide 'on-demand' policy papers, and organise regional conferences.

## The concept of formative process research

4. This is an approach where researchers, over time, study the planning, implementation and impact of specific programmes and institutional mechanisms in an organisation, prospects for reform of these and related processes that can be put in place, with the aim of making appropriate interventions and providing policy advice which improve the efficacy of such programmes and mechanisms.

5. The inherent logic of formative process research is to improve the performance and policy outcomes of the organisation based on the imperatives of ensuring that the quantity, quality and relevance of the research output are consequential the growth and development of

the organisation. Crucially, the research must lead to changes in organisational behaviour.

## The institutional context

6. FOPRISA was established to assist with and contribute to progress with SADC's complex institutional restructuring processes as well as improving the prospects for regional integration and poverty alleviation. Importantly, in this regard, SADC's 21 sectoral coordinating committees and commissions which were located in 12 member states were brought under four centrally managed directorates in order to better manage, plan and coordinate the region's integration agenda. These are trade, industry, finance and investment; infrastructure and services; food, agriculture, and natural resources; and social and human development and special programmes. A de facto fifth directorate handles matters relating to an Organ for Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. The general activities of the directorates are informed by two broad programmes: the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO).

7. A further challenge to SADC's integration agenda is a decision by heads of state in October 2006 to accelerate integration on the basis of the following objectives: to establish a free trade area by 2008; a customs union by 2010; a common market by 2015; and monetary union by 2016.

8. The scope and depth of SADC's reforms and the achievement of its integration mandate gave rise to the need to establish a more effective and efficient secretariat. However, while the formal processes of restructuring have been completed, the secretariat remains weak because of staffing problems, bureaucratic and administrative inefficiencies, and lack of policy and managerial capacity. These shortcomings and obstacles have had a direct impact on FOPRISA's ability to carry out its objectives.

## The FOPRISA structure

9. The management of FOPRISA is made up of a Steering Committee, a Secretariat, core and participating institutions and an annual conference provides a platform for the exchange of research findings. The Steering Committee meets twice a year and is generally responsible for the strategic management and oversight of the programme; while the Secretariat is responsible for day-to-day operational matters, the organisation of meetings, implementing the decisions of the Steering Committee, and coordinating research results.

## Progress in relation to goals and objectives

10. The first year of the programme (2005–06) was devoted to putting in place an organisational structure and constituting research teams. In the second year (2006–07), there was significant momentum and progress in commencing with research activities according to the four thematic clusters but progress across the teams has been uneven. The monitoring exercise also took off. Activities resulted in two publications and an annual conference, whose proceedings will be published as an edited volume. Three 'on-demand' policy papers were produced for the SADC secretariat, all of which have been well received although their actual impact on policy remains an open question. However, not much progress was registered with the capacity building component because of the personnel deficits in the secretariat already referred to.

11. Access to and communication with SADC officials remain overriding concerns and according to the FOPRISA Annual Activity Report: 'Interactions… were inadequate, irregular and uneven.' This perhaps accounts for the limitations of FOPRISA's influence on SADC policies and it is in this context that the 'formative' aspect of the programme has experienced its biggest problems and this will continue to be a key challenge in its success or otherwise. This has a direct impact on the relevance of FOPRISA's research, around which there is some ambivalence in the secretariat. These constraints apply in equal measure to the other components of the programme (monitoring, capacity building and supporting activities).

12. The programme has been successful in establishing a regional network of researchers and research institutions by providing a platform for their participation and cooperation. The network has the strong virtue of bringing together researchers from different academic and professional backgrounds from different countries. However, the challenge of building the capacity and identifying junior researchers still needs to be adequately addressed.

## Conclusion and recommendations

13. The problematic working relationship between the FOPRISA programme and the SADC secretariat remains a major impediment to its success as defined by its goals and objectives. FOPRISA is alive to the challenge and how this is addressed on both sides will determine the prospects of success of the 'formative process research' dimension in the future. This presents FOPRISA management with an opportunity to devise strategies to be more proactive in establishing bases and modalities for more regular interaction with relevant officials in the secretariat.

14. Increased efforts should be made to ensure that research undertaken by FOPRISA is considered relevant by SADC.

15. More emphasis should be placed on presenting and packaging research in a manner that SADC policy makers and officials find useful.

16. Increasing effort should be devoted to recruiting and training more young and promising researchers in the remaining period.

17. More resources should be allocated to communication and outreach and should include regular meetings, seminars, project presentations, newsletters, etc..

18. The research teams' annual work plans should be shared with relevant SADC units, officials and directorates.

19. There should be greater focus on capacity building activities.

# 1    Background

On May 1 2005, The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Botswana Institute of Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) signed an agreement to carry out formative process research on regional integration in Southern Africa with the main aim of strengthening the SADC secretariat's capacity in policy development, implementation and co-ordination.

The programme, entitled 'Formative Process Research on Regional Integration in Southern Africa' (FORPISA) was allocated a budget of NOK 14.900.000, and will be carried out over a period of four years (2005–2009).

The goal of the programme, as stated in the agreement, is 'to advance regional integration process through appropriate and relevant policy research and analysis'.

The objectives of the programme are

1. To contribute to sound policies for the region's development through engagement in research that will assist SADC in implementing its priority policies and programmes, of which poverty alleviation is an overriding concern.

2. To build a strong regional policy research network whose outcome would be greater understanding of integration policy and implementation issues, by enhancing research skills and analytical capacities in participating research institutes and in the SADC structures.

The content of the programme was elaborated during a planning process that incorporated the participating research institutions, SADC and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A key event in the planning of the programme was a preparatory workshop held at Grand Palm Hotel in Gaborone on 28–29 July 2003. Among the participants at this workshop were the Executive Secretary of SADC and its head of Strategic Planning and Research.

In the workshop, four research concept papers were presented and deliberated upon. The concept papers focused on four research teams: Developmental democracy; Politics, defence and security; Regional trade and the international trading system; Economic harmonisation, finance and investment. Two additional papers focused on monitoring of SADC and the role of International Cooperating Partners (ICPs). On the basis of the deliberations on the concept papers, the programme's key themes were identified.

The contracting partners in the programme are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and BIDPA. BIDPA was nominated to be the coordinating agency. Christian Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen, Norway is the main research partner outside of BIDPA. Other participating research institutions are:

–    University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
–    University of Botswana

– Namibia Economic Policy Research Unit
– Economic and Social Research Foundation, Tanzania

The FOPRISA programme has four components:

a) Research
b) Monitoring
c) Capacity building
d) Supporting activities (dissemination, website, on-demand policy papers)

## 1. Research

Four main research themes are included in the programme:

– Democratic Development
– Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation
– Regional Trade and International Trade System
– Economic Harmonisation, Finance and Investment

## 2. Monitoring

The programme also has two monitoring projects:

1. Monitoring of the Southern African Development Community, which aims at providing information about the progress of regional integration.
2. Monitoring the International Cooperating Partners (ICPs)

## 3. Capacity building

The capacity building component of FOPRISA aims to build capacities in research and policy advice on regional cooperation and integration. Capacity building will be aimed at to levels:

– the participating research institutions
– the SADC Secretariat( The intention is to assist SADC officials to Kundertake their own policy research and analysis with FOPRISA assisting with internships, lectures, seminars and training workshops.)

## 4. Supporting activities

Finally, four types of supporting activities are included in the programme:

1. Dissemination of research results
2. Website development and maintenance
3. On-demand policy papers
4. Regional research conferences

# II    The scope of this review

Since the establishment of the programme, this mid-term review is the first exercise of its kind in providing an assessment of its progress thus far. The purpose of this review is to summarise the achievements, experience gained and the lessons learned during the first two years of the FOPRISA programme.

The review team, consisting of Garth le Pere from the Institute for Global Dialogue, South Africa and Stein Sundstøl Eriksen from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, will, based on written documentation and interviews with selected stakeholders, assess the achievements, relevance, impact and constraints of the programme, including how realistic its objectives are.

The team undertook the review in August – September 2007. Data collection took place in South Africa and Botswana in the period 13–24 August. Another trip to Botswana was made by Garth le Pere from 13–14 September, with the express purpose of conducting further interviews with officials in the SADC Secretariat. It must be noted that, despite repeated attempts and mainly due to their busy travel schedules, not all the intended interviews with officials took place. Even efforts at telephone interviews did not materialise. The official view presented here, therefore, is necessarily partial, based as it is on interviews with only three representatives in the secretariat. Preliminary findings were presented to the MFA in Pretoria on August 24, and the report was finalised during the following weeks. The report presents the main findings and recommendations of the review team. The views and assessments of the team do not necessarily coincide with those of the MFA, SADC, the FOPRISA research team or the FOPRISA Secretariat.

The overall objective of the review is to evaluate progress and results so far and to assess whether and to what extent the programme's goals and objectives can be expected to be achieved. The more specific objectives of this review are stated in the terms of reference (ToR), which are attached.

The rest of this report is organised as follows: First, we briefly discuss the concept of formative process research, and the criteria by which it can be assessed. Second, we describe the institutional context within which the programme operates. Specifically, we summarise the current state of SADC – its structure, functions and the constraints it is faced with. Third, we describe the FOPRISA programme, its different components and its organisation and management.

Next, we summarise the activities that have taken place under the programme during the two years since its inception. On the basis of this, we assess the progress that has been made. This assessment is split into two sections. The first section assesses the overall progress that has been made in relation to the stated objectives. The second section reviews the specific issues that are pointed out in the ToR. Finally, we summarise our findings and make some recommendations about future directions of the programme.

# III The concept of formative process research

Formative process research is a relatively recent methodological innovation taken up by NORAD and other donors. It can be described as a form of research in which researchers study the planning, implementation and impact of specific programmes, reform projects and processes over a relatively long period and importantly, design and formulate appropriate interventions which may contribute to their progress and successful outcomes. It can be separated from regular research, on the one hand and from evaluations, on the other.

In contrast to regular research, the main aim of formative process research is to provide data and input for organisational learning and improved policy literacy. It is, therefore, inherently applied and policy-oriented in character, and seeks to help stakeholders improve the performance of an organisation or a project through regular communication between researchers and actors within the concerned project or organisation. Consequently, one of its main features is that it is based on continuous dialogue between researchers and the unit(s) which constitute the object(s) of the research.

On the other hand, it is distinguished from evaluations by the fact that it follows and tracks the development and internal dynamics of a given project or organisation over a relatively long period of time – usually several years. Moreover, the feedback provided to the organisation is based on in-depth studies of organisational processes and by the context in which the organisation operates.

It follows from this that the criteria by which we can assess the performance of a formative process research programme are dual. First, it must be assessed in terms of its research output. In principle, this would include factors such as the quality and quantity of the research undertaken in the programme and the relevance of the research in relation to the project or organisation studied.

Second, it must be assessed in terms of its achievements in helping to improve the performance and policy outcomes of the organisation studied. In order to succeed at this level, the research undertaken in the programme must be successful in terms of the quantity, quality and relevance of the research output. However, while this is necessary, it is not sufficient. In addition, the research must lead to changes in organisational behaviour. This, in turn, requires that:

- the research is demand driven and oriented and that there is constant dialogue between researchers and beneficiaries in order to define research goals, strategies and outputs;
- research results are communicated and disseminated to the beneficiaries;

  – research findings are communicated in a form which makes them
    relevant, accessible and applicable for the beneficiaries; and
  – beneficiaries are interested in and capable of acting upon the advice
    and recommendations contained in the research.

While the first three of these points depend on the strategies and choices of
the research programme, the last is largely outside the control of the pro-
gramme itself. Instead, it depends on the nature of the organisation studied
and on the institutional environment within which it is located.

Obstacles to success can occur at any of these levels. First, the research
undertaken in the programme could be insufficient in terms of quality, quan-
tity and relevance to be of use for the beneficiaries. Second, the communica-
tion of research results to the beneficiaries could be insufficient, either be-
cause the results are not communicated widely enough or because they have
a form which make them difficult to use. Third, the beneficiaries may not
use the research. This could be either because they lack the capacity to fol-
low up on research recommendations or because there is a lack of interest in
the organisation or because the political-institutional context of the institu-
tion makes it practically impossible to change policies on the basis of find-
ings and recommendations from the research programme.

# IV Institutional context: The state of SADC

The motivation, focus and relevance of establishing FOPRISA have largely been a result of SADC's institutional restructuring and how formative process research could enrich and assist this process. At its March 2001 summit, the heads of state agreed to make far-reaching and radical changes to SADC's governing structure at both regional and national levels.

The most consequential changes concerned the structural elements and operational methods of the secretariat itself. Most critically, the 21 sectoral coordinating committees and commissions located in 12 SADC members states ceased to exist, and were rationalised into four functionally-focused directorates in Gaborone. These are a) trade, industry, finance and investment; b) infrastructure and services; c) food, agriculture and natural resources; and d) social and human development and special programmes. The directorates and secretariat's activities are concentrated on and devoted to facilitating regional integration and the mobilisation of resources. Their remit also includes policy development, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, harmonisation and coordination of regional policies and programmes. In this regard they are also supposed to assist member states, which in terms of the new differentiated and subsidiary division of labour, would become the implementing agents of these SADC programmes and policies. As such each member state, has established a national SADC committee and contact point. In addition to the four directorates, there is also a de facto fifth political directorate that handles matters relating to politics, peace and security management on the basis of a mandate for the Organ for Politics, Defence and security Cooperation (OPDSC).

The general activities and a scope of work of the directorates have been shaped and are underpinned by the establishment of two broad programmatic agendas: the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP); and the Strategic Plan for the Organ (SIPO). The RISDP is the socio-economic blueprint for development and the main instrument for achieving development benchmarks in two priority areas. The first are 'cross-sectoral intervention areas' aimed at poverty eradication and alleviation, and the fight against HIV/Aids. The second priority area concerns those dealing with sectoral cooperation and integration. Included here are trade liberalisation and economic development, sustainable food security, and human and social development. The priority areas have been further disaggregated into implementation frameworks which contain identified benchmarks and achievement indicators over the short-term (one year), medium-term (five years), and long-term (fifteen years). Critically, these time frames are further elaborated in terms of an imperative for the secretariat to develop detailed business plans and budgets for each priority intervention over the next five years.

As far as the SIPO is concerned, there is also a five-year strategic plan and an activity agenda in four key sectors: political, defence, state security and public security. Unlike the precision that has characterised defining targets in the RSDP, the SIPO is very uneven where, for example, the political sector is broad and general compared to the defence and public sectors which contain more operational detail and explicit indicators. A major advance in the SIPO agenda has been the establishment of a regional peacekeeping force, which is based on the African Union's guidelines and its protocol on the Peace and Security Council. This brigade, called the SADC Standby Force Brigade, was unveiled at the most recent summit in Lusaka.

A further challenge to SADC's integration agenda is a decision by heads of state at an extraordinary summit held in South Africa in October 2006 to accelerate trade and economic liberalisation on the basis of an ambitious set of milestones. These are to establish a free trade area by 2008; a customs union by 2010; a common market by 2015; and monetary union by 2016.

The scope and depth of institutional reforms were meant to establish more effective and efficient institutional machinery, capable of providing stronger leadership, ensuring a more regionally focussed programme of action and closing the gap between policies and implementation. However, while the formal processes of consolidating the secretariat and redesigning the directorates have been largely completed, the secretariat remains weak and struggles to keep abreast of driving the heady (and often unrealistic) integration agenda agreed to by the political principals. This is primarily because of staffing and personnel problems, bureaucratic and administrative inefficiencies, and extremely weak capacity to meet the targets and goals embedded in the RISDP and SIPO.

For purposes of this review, these operational deficiencies and shortcomings have had a direct impact on the efficacy of FOPRISA initiatives, especially in the formative process research area. Politically, the logic of the restructuring process presupposes that SADC's governing structures would have supra-national decision-making powers and authority, with enforcement capability to guide and oversee implementation of programmes and policies. Sadly, this is not the case and the situation has been compounded by structural and political deficits that afflict SADC national committees. While improvements have been registered, complaints also persist that there is a lack of transparency and poor communication in how the secretariat operates, and there are not effective participatory mechanisms in place for stronger engagement with civil society and the private sector. This is the context that has compromised FOPRISA's ability in achieving its main objective under the formative process aspect of its work.

# V   The FOPRISA programme

As mentioned above, the FOPRISA programme has four components:

   i. Research
  ii. Monitoring
 iii. Capacity building
 iv. Supporting activities (dissemination, website, on-demand policy papers)

In the following, a brief description is given of each of the components.

## Research

In the contract, research under the programme was divided into two themes according to the thrust of SADC's agenda:

a) Democracy, politics and security; and
b) Building economic integration in Southern Africa.

Each of these two themes has, in turn, been subdivided in two. Thus, as it stands now, the research component of the programme is made up of four research themes:

1. Democratic development
2. Politics, defence and security
3. Regional trade and the relations to the international trade system
4. Economic harmonisation, finance and investment

### Theme 1: Democratic development
Coordinator: Bertha Osei-Hwedie, University of Botswana

*Description*
The objective of this research theme is to explore the notion of developmental democracy in Southern Africa. Developmental democracy is understood as consisting of three interrelated policy processes: a) the improvement of living standards; b) enhancing people's (political) choices; and c) participation and overall security.
Research under this component seeks to analyse the potential role of SADC in promoting developmental democracy along four dimensions:

a) analysis of the role of SADC in terms of harmonising (and enforcing) norms and standards of the electoral process within the region;
b) analysis of the progress SADC is making in terms of poverty reduction;

c)    analysis of the participatory aspects of democratic development in the region and the role of civil society; and

d)    analysis of state capacity for effective promotion of development.

Each of these dimensions is covered by one research project.

a)    Research on the first dimension aims to assess the extent to which SADC policies and practices facilitate or impede progress in terms of harmonising norms and standards of electoral conduct in its member states. Focus will be placed on the role of the SADC Secretariat, the Organ of Politics, Defence and Security as well as independent entities such as the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC. The focus is on regional institutions.

b)    The objective of the second sub-project is to determine the relationship between poverty and the consolidation of democracy. The principal question is whether democracy can endure in circumstances of perpetual or deepening poverty. Taking the first Millenium Development Goal to halve the number of people living in absolute poverty by 2015 as the baseline, the project will assess the policy documents that SADC member states have formulated towards that end. It asks to what extent SADC policies facilitate or impede progress in poverty reduction, and will include a close scrutiny of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan.

c)    The third sub-project will focus on civil society, and will examine attempts to enhance human security in the region. It is based on the assumption that the intergovernmental organisation and individual member states cannot serve all the needs and requirements for enhancing human security and that actors in civil society have equally important roles to play in achieving it. Its focus is therefore on the current and potential role of civil society in realising human security in the region.

d)    The fourth sub-project focuses on state capacity. It will examine the impact that weak states have on the process of regional integration, and the effect that their lack of capacity has on stability in and on the developmental prospects of the region. It will then examine SADC and national policy options and interventions that might strengthen individual state's capacity to facilitate regional integration and implement development policies for poverty reduction. Further, it will examine the strength of SADC institutions to establish whether it has the necessary capacity to ensure that policy formulation and implementation are carried through coherently and effectively.

**Theme 2: Politics, defence and security cooperation**
Coordinator: Anthoni van Niewkerk, University of Witwatersrand

The main objective of this research theme is to examine key important lessons relating to the evolution of SADCs cooperative security agenda. It will include examination of the nature and extent of defence cooperation and co-ordination, the policy framework and implementation of collective security and mutual defence and peace support operations within the region. Three sub-projects are included under this theme:

a)     promotion of regional coordination and cooperation on security and defence matters;
b)     collective security, mutual defence and enforcement action; and
c)     development of peace-keeping capacity.

*a)   Promotion of regional coordination and cooperation on security and defence matters*
The objective of this project will be to assess and evaluate the extent and nature of SADC security and defence cooperation and coordination and to make recommendations as to approaches, policy frameworks and institutional and training arrangements that might enhance such cooperation.

*b)   Collective security, mutual defence and enforcement action*
This sub-project will seek to develop a policy framework for collective security and mutual defence, and to make proposals regarding the nature of enforcement action and under what circumstances it should be taken.

*c)   Development of peace-keeping capacity*
This component will produce a comprehensive analysis and implementation plan for all aspects of peace support operations in SADC, through a series of targeted research projects.

## Theme 3: Regional trade and its relations to the international trade system
Coordinator: Arne Wiig, Christian Michelsen Institute

The main objective of the research under this theme is to enhance the capacity of institutions in SADC to formulate, negotiate and implement trade policy reforms that will reduce poverty and promote sustainable economic growth. There are two sub-projects under this theme:

a)     analysis of national trade policies; and
b)     linkages between trade policies and poverty reduction.

*a)   Analysis of national trade policies*
This project aims to increase familiarity with modern trade theory, empirical trade analysis and the global trading system among individual economists and in key institutions. Research issues to be covered in the project will include the importance of non-tariff barriers, including license and permit distribution, structure, exemptions and rebates, revenue and export taxation as-

pects as well as the possibilities of designing policies to assist poor people during the transition.

*b)   Linkages between trade policy and poverty reduction.*
The project will analyse links between trade policy and poverty reduction in order to increase the understanding of trade-poverty linkages. Its focus will be on poor people's participation in the production process and on their expenditure patterns. It will analyse the macro-economic and labour market impacts of trade liberalisation measures, and use data from household income and expenditure surveys to identify the expenditure patterns of the poor, particularly in so far as they relate to tradable and exported goods or services. Finally, it will analyse the effects on the poor of changes in prices of important consumption goods and in production and expenditure patterns, to assess changes in income poverty levels.

**Theme 4: Economic harmonisation, finance and investment**
Coordinator: Dennis Rweyemamu, Economic and Social Research Foundation, Tanzania

Under this theme, the programme will provide data and analysis for organisational learning and improvement of SADC's performance as a promoter of economic growth and poverty reduction. There are three components under this theme:

a)    collection of data and analysis of SADC's convergence programmes and reports required from participating countries;
b)    analysis of the growth prospects through cross-border investment within SADC; and
c)    analysis of regional financial integration and cooperation, including efforts to strengthen national banking systems and harmonising regulations.

*a)   Collection of data and analysis of SADC's convergence programmes and reports required from participating countries*
This project will review macro-economic policy harmonisation in the SADC region in terms of policy frameworks, institutional arrangements and approaches. It will compile medium term macro-economic projections from SADC countries, such as those found in medium term plans and PRSP frameworks.

*b)   SADC integration efforts and cross-border investments*
This project will evaluate linkages between SADC regional integration efforts and cross-border investment (CBI). It will analyse the character of barriers for CBI and thus increase the level of reliable policy information to improve policy making and implementation. The following issues may be included: legal and administrative frameworks for investment, other policies which influence investment, special rules implying discrimination of FDI

from outside the region, regional investment trends and possible scenarios for investment patterns in the region.

*c)  Financial integration for investment in the SADC region*
This project will review financial institutions in the region and their activities in relation to investment flows and aim to make recommendations as to approaches, policy frameworks and institutional arrangements that SADC may promote in order to become a catalyst for promoting intra-regional investment flows for economic development and poverty reduction

## Monitoring

The monitoring component of FOPRISA will involve tracking developments within SADC as well as the international cooperating partners. It will have two components:

1.    Monitoring of SADC
2.    Monitoring of International Cooperating Partners

### 1. Monitoring SADC

The monitoring of SADC component aims to assist SADC, specifically the Department of Strategic Planning, by providing regular and systematic information on the progress of regional integration and in particular on the restructuring of SADC. It also aims to assist the other components of FOPRISA with inputs to their research.

### 2. Monitoring International cooperating partners (ICPs)

This component will focus on monitoring the relationships and cooperation of the international cooperating partners with the SADC countries, ICP policies, strategies and their effectiveness. It will assist SADC by providing regular and systematic information on donor activities in the field of regional integration in Southern Africa and in particular in the restructuring of SADC.

## Capacity building

The capacity building component of FOPRISA aims to build capacities in research and policy advice on regional cooperation and integration. Capacity building will be aimed at two levels:

1.    the participating research institutions
2.    the SADC Secretariat

For the participating research institutions, capacity building will result as a spin-off from the research activities. For the SADC Secretariat, the programme will:

a)      collect and analyse relevant data, and make data and analyses available for the Secretariat; and

b)      train department staff through internships or training courses, and provide support for institutional capacity building, especially related to the secretariat's capacity to utilise research and policy advice.

## Supporting activities

Four types of supporting activities are included in the programme:

1.   dissemination of research results;
2.   website development and maintenance;
3.   on-demand policy papers; and
4.   regional research conferences.

## Programme management

The management of FOPRISA consists of a Steering Committee, a Secretariat, Core and participating institutions and the Annual conference.

### The Steering Committee

The members of the Steering Committee consist of the Secretariat (BIDPA), Christian Michelsen Institute, the SADC Secretariat, the Southern African Defence and Security Management (SADSEM) network and the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF). The Steering Committee meets twice every year.

The functions of the Steering Committee are:

–   *Decision-making*. The Committee is the supreme decisions-making body of the programme. It decides on the programme's overall policy through consensus, including the adoption of research themes, approval of research proposals for funding, acceptance of research reports, selection of referees and collaborating institutions.

–   *Interfacing*. The Committee provides the arena for interactions among the policy research institutes, academics and the SADC Secretariat.

–   *Identifying policy gaps and bottlenecks*. Responsibilities include investigating and putting onto the research agenda institutional weaknesses and research areas that need addressing.

–   *Planning*. Engaging in determining priorities and forecasting trends in policy research.

–   *Guidance*. Providing overall direction of the research effort and advice on research priorities as well as actual conduct of the research process.

- *Quality control*. Ensuring that best practices, international standards of research analysis and dissemination of research output are maintained.

- *Approval of research projects*. All research projects will be formally approved for funding by the Committee.

- *Approval of Secretariat budgets and receipt of audited accounts*

- *Monitoring, evaluation and reporting*. Progress reports and assessments of research activities are the responsibility of the Committee. This also includes approval of the annual report of the Secretariat.


**The FOPRISA Secretariat**

The programme secretariat is composed of the FOPRISA Programme Coordinator, a FOPRISA-SADC Research Fellow and a BIDPA-employed Programme Assistant. The secretariat, which is based at BIDPA in Gaborone, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the programme. The Coordinator allocates two days per week to overseeing FOPRISA's work programme, the Programme Assistant assists as and when necessary, while the FOPRISA – SADC Research Fellow is a full-time employee. It must be noted that, considering the labour-intensive demands of the programme as detailed below, this small staff complement is expected to undertake a wide range of administrative and management responsibilities to ensure its smooth functioning; their industry and commitment must, therefore, be recognised and acknowledged.

The main function of the secretariat is to service the steering committee, the annual conference and the participating institutions. Its activities include the following:

- the day-to-day administration of the affairs of FOPRISA, including communication and liaison amongst all the stakeholders;
- implementation of Steering Committee decisions, resolutions and guidelines;
- coordination and vetting of project proposals;
- organisation of the Annual Conference;
- organisation of steering committee meetings;
- budgeting, financial planning for implementation of approved projects and for the functioning of the entire programme;
- monitoring and checking on the progress of research and implementation of other programme components;
- reporting and compiling an annual report for consideration by the steering committee;
- coordination of the publication of research results;
- dissemination of research reports and other outputs;
- advertising of research grant opportunities and FOPRISA events;
- website development to support dissemination and advertising efforts.

To carry out these tasks, the Secretariat has been allocated 1,5 positions (a Programme Coordinator and a Research Fellow. In addition, it has been able to draw upon the infrastructure of BIDPA for accounting and other administrative tasks as and when required.

# VI Description of programme progress

After the approval of the programme, a programme steering committee was established, and held its first meeting on 27 May 2005. Its first tasks were to define the framework, procedures and guidelines for the implementation of the programme.

During the first year of the programme (2005–2006), the organisational infrastructure (notably, the secretariat) was established at BIDPA. Moreover, the research teams were built up and the research proposals were updated and revised. Efforts were also made to establish working relations with the SADC secretariat.

As stated in the first Annual Report, the start-up of the programme was rather slow, with delays experienced both in the revision of research projects, consultations with SADC and actual commencement of research activities.

During the second year of the programme (2006–2007) there was a significant pick-up of activities in the programme. All the four research programmes and the monitoring of SADC were started. Two publications were issued during the year, and an annual conference was held, in which papers from the programme were presented. Proceedings from the conference in the form of an edited volume will be published soon. In addition, three on-demand policy papers have been produced for the SADC secretariat. Moreover, a website was established and a mailing list was compiled. However, the component of the programme seeking to enhance the capacity of the SADC Secretariat has not yet started.

In assessing the progress of the programme, this section describes the activities and outputs on each of the components of the programme so far, both in terms of their internal organisation and in terms of the relationship between the programme itself on the one hand and other stakeholders on the other (SADC, MFA).

## Research

### Theme 1. Democratic development

Because of internal organisational challenges, start-up of this programme was somewhat delayed. Once a new division of responsibilities was established, activities under the theme picked up considerably.

In the programme's first year of operation, research under this theme focused on sub-project 1a) *Norms and standards of the electoral process within the region*. Five papers were presented from this sub-project at the FOPRISA annual conference in November 2006

- the evolution of international norms and standards of electoral processes (Dorothy Mpabanga and Lise Rakner);

- electoral management bodies in SADC: An examination of Botswana, Namibia and South Africa (David Sebudubudu);

- regional election bodies and Southern African integration (Zibani Maudeni);

- the application of electoral norms and standards in SADC (Mpho Molomo); and

- electoral norms and standards in SADC: A synthesis (Balefi Tsie and Jonathan Mayuyuka Kaunda)

During the programme's second year, the team concentrated on project 1b) *Poverty alleviation and developmental democracy*. Work on this project has started. A draft conceptual paper has been produced, and fieldwork has commenced. Under this project, the team aims to produce the following reports:

- poverty alleviation policies and strategies in SADC countries;

- institutional capacity and implementation of poverty alleviation policies and strategies in SADC;

- international assistance for poverty alleviation; and

- policy briefs on poverty alleviation in SADC

Findings from research during the second year of the programme will be presented at the upcoming FOPRISA Annual conference which will take place in Durban, South Africa from 27–28 November 2007.

Work has not yet started on the last two sub-projects under this theme (*The role of civil society* and *state capacity),* which are scheduled for the last two years of the programme.

### Theme 2: Politics, defence and security cooperation

Despite efforts made, the research team under this theme had initial problems with institutional contact and consultation with the SADC Secretariat, which led to a rescheduling of their work programme. The team initially focused on sub-project 2a) *Promotion of regional coordination and cooperation in security and defence matters*. Under this project, six papers were presented at the FOPRISA Annual Conference 2006:

- key challenges for SADC security cooperation (Gavin Cawthra);

- organisational dimensions of security cooperation in SADC (Anthoni van Nieuwkerk);

– military dimensions of security cooperation in SADC (Paulino Macaringue);

– public safety dimensions of regional security in SADC (Joao Paulo Borges Coelho);

– justice dimensions of security cooperation in SADC (Asani EA Omari);

– promotion of regional coordination and cooperation on security and defence matters: A synthesis (Bizeck Jube Phiri and Andre du Pisani)

During the second year of the programme, the team focused on project 2b) *Collective security, mutual defence and enforcement.* After consultations with the SADC Secretariat, the title of this sub-project has been changed to *Collective security and mutual defence.* Research on this project is underway, and the team has agreed on themes, methodology and division of labour. Drafts are expected by the end of August 2007, and papers will be presented at the FOPRISA Annual conference.

Four papers are expected:

– a conceptual paper on collaborative security and mutual defence;

– a paper with recommendations to assist SADC in the development of a policy framework for collaborative security and mutual defence;

– a paper with proposals on the nature of enforcement action and under what circumstances it should take place; and

– a policy brief on collaborative security and mutual defence.

**Theme 3: Regional trade and the international trade system**
Due to change in this theme's leadership and illness in the research team, research under only started in mid-2006. However, the team managed to revise the proposal and was able to produce three papers for the FOPRISA Annual Conference:

– trade liberalisation and poverty: challenges for SADC (Line Tondel Seim and Arne Wiig);

– SADC trade integration: the challenge from economic partnership agreements (Christopher Stevens and Jane Stevens); and

– country-wide review of the implementation of the SADC trade protocol (Johnson Maiketso and Khutsafalo Sekolokwane ).
Subsequently, the team has started work on the sub-project on linkages between trade and poverty reduction. It has started to map the poverty structure

across sectors within SADC countries, based on official household surveys. Two research outputs and a seminar are expected from this sub-project:

–    a paper on trade policy and poverty reduction: preliminary assessments;

–    a paper on the impact of trade liberalisation on producers in some selected sectors;

–    a joint seminar of the trade research team and SADC (TIFI).

Findings from research during the second year of the programme will be presented at the upcoming FOPRISA Annual conference.

### Theme 4 Economic harmonisation, finance and investment

During the first year of the programme, this research team concentrated on project 4a) *Macro-economic convergence in the SADC region*. One paper from this project was presented at the annual conference:

–    macro-economic convergence policy in SADC: prospects and challenges (Joseph Kweka, Dennis Rweyemamu, Eliab Luvanda, Jan Isaksen, Samuel Wangwe).

During the second year, the team focused on project 4b) *SADC integration efforts and cross-border investment*. As of May 2007, the team has finalised the research design and is working on the literature and documentation review. Data collection was planned for May and June 2007. Two papers will be prepared under the project, and presented during the Annual Conference:

–    an evaluation of investment harmonisation policies and their efficacy in enhancing intra SADC investment flows within the context of cross-border investment; and

–    a paper on recommendations on advancing SADC integration through cross border investment.

### Summary of research progress

While all four thematic groups are active, progress has been uneven. The Democracy team was slow to start, but is now on track, and works quite well. The Defence and Security team is also doing well, in spite of some difficulties experienced in developing its relations with the relevant unit in the Secretariat.

The two teams on trade integration and macro-economic convergence, however, have experienced more difficulties. Key team members have left the programme, and it has proved difficult to find replacements. Naturally, this has hampered progress in a very important area of the SADC integration agenda.

**On-demand policy papers**

Four such papers were produced during 2006–7:

–   The status of regional integration in SADC (Chinyamata Chipeta);

–   Issues for consideration and decision by the Extraordinary summit (Chinyimata Chipeta); and

–   SADC Annual Economic Review 2007 (Happy Siphambe and A Akinkugbe); and

–   Report on the economic situation in Zimbabwe and recommendations to the SADC Executive Secretary (Haidari Amani, Chinyamata Chipeta and Angelo Mondlane).

This activity has perhaps been the most successful in terms of influencing SADC. The first paper formed a part of Executive Secretary's input into the SADC Summit in August 2006, while the second was a contribution to the deliberations of the SADC's Extraordinary Summit in October 2006. The third paper is expected to form part of the information for the August 2007 SADC summit.

While it still remains an open question whether SADC's actual policies are influenced by these papers, the fact that they have been requested and presented at SADC summits indicates that the programme has succeeded in getting access to SADC decision makers and in communicating findings. However, we note that these papers have been commissioned to researchers outside the FOPRISA research teams (although two of them – Chipeta and Siphambe – participate in a broader network of researchers linked to FOPRISA).

The SADC Secretariat is expected to request more papers during 2007–8.

**Monitoring projects**

Monitoring activities which started during the first year of the programme have resulted in two publications:

–   SADC and the donors: ideals and practices from Gaborone to Paris and back (Elling Tjønneland); and

–   Monitoring economic integration in SADC 2005 (Dirk Hansohm and Rehabeam Shilimela).

Two monitoring reports will be published on the basis of monitoring activities undertaken during 2006–7.

–   Monitoring regional integration in SADC (Rehabeam Shilimela ). A draft report was due to be submitted in July 2007; and

–    Monitoring the international cooperating partners (Elling Tjønneland) A report is under preparation and will focus on updating the monitoring report prepared last year, which assesses SADC-ICP relations. It will focus on the SADC Directorates and their relations with the emerging thematic groups, and on the challenges to regional integration posed by China's engagement in Southern Africa.

## Supporting activities

### Capacity building of SADC

This component has been slow to get started. The main reasons are the capacity constraints faced by the SADC secretariat, partly as a result of the restructuring process the organisation has gone through in recent years but crucially, also in filling important positions in the secretariat.

The aim now is to commence programme activities under this component in 2007–8. The fact that SADC itself has recently completed an assessment of its capacity building needs may indicate that the prospects of making progress on this component could be better than they have been so far, but the obstacles remain severe.

### Capacity building of participating research institutions

Capacity building of the research institutions is achieved as a by-product of research activities, especially for the junior researchers involved in the programme

### Other supporting activities

These include:

–    publications;

–    developing a strategy for their dissemination;

–    website maintenance;

–    maintaining a mailing list;

–    organising external conferences and workshops; and

–    programme management (with regard to improving internal systems and procedures.)

# VII Progress in relation to goal and objectives

In this section, we will assess the overall progress of the programme in relation to its stated objectives. However, we find it difficult to assess the programme's progress towards its overall goal 'to advance the regional integration process through appropriate and relevant policy research and analysis'. (This can be contrasted with, for example, the Development Finance Resource Centre, which was set up under SADC's auspices, with a specific mandate to mobilise and coordinate development finance and to develop a regional network of finance institutions.)

While we will summarise its success in producing relevant policy research, we find it impossible to assess whether the programme has, through the production of this research, contributed to advancing the regional integration process. We consider this goal to be both overly ambitious and too vague to permit such an assessment.

## Objective 1

*To contribute to sound policies for the region's development through engagement in research that will assist SADC in implementing its priority policies and programmes, of which poverty alleviation is an overriding concern.*

Research activities in the programme are progressing fairly well. Overall, in spite of delays, change of personnel and some difficulties reported in relations with the SADC secretariat, progress in the research component of the programme has been reasonably good. All projects are well underway, and several publications have been produced under each theme.

Although research under the programme has been presented to and discussed with SADC secretariat, and some consultations have been held, the programme has experienced difficulties in its relations with the SADC Secretariat. It has proved difficult to get access to SADC officials, and the SADC secretariat has severe capacity constraints. Thus, as stated in the programme Annual Activity Report: 'Interactions of FOPRISA researchers and Secretariat with SADC were inadequate, irregular and uneven.' The difficult question is what, if anything, FOPRISA can do to address this problem. We return to this question in the conclusion

This has meant that results of the programme's research activities in terms of influence on SADC policies have been limited. In other words, it is still questionable whether the programme has succeeded in being 'formative' and in inducing research based 'action learning'. A stated earlier, one of the criteria of success for formative process research is that researchers are able to communicate with stakeholders, both in terms of ensuring that the research is considered relevant and useful by the stakeholders and in terms of

facilitating and influencing policies and decision-making. In this respect, it remains an open question whether FOPRISA has achieved its objective.

These constraints also apply to the other components of the programme (monitoring, capacity building and supporting activities). In the case of capacity building of the SADC Secretariat, activities have not even started.

The FOPRISA activity which has had most success in terms of getting access to SADC has been the on-demand policy papers. These are produced in response to specific requests from the SADC secretariat, and they have been used by SADC as input into the summits in 2006 and 2007. The fact that FOPRISA has been requested by SADC to produce these papers shows that FOPRISA has been recognised and acknowledged as a resource by SADC. However, these papers have been commissioned to researchers outside the FOPRISA research teams. According to the coordinator, this was done because the FOPRISA teams did not have the relevant expertise. This means that the influence on SADC achieved through these papers is not directly related to the research programme as such, and therefore cannot be considered as a direct output of the research undertaken in the programme. We note, however, the response of FOPRISA to this point. Their explanation is that: 'Not all members of the research network are engaged in research teams.' Those who are asked to contribute from the network '…are senior professors who by virtue of their status are given a review and supervisory role; they guide, and may only be called upon to do the projects that demand a high level of seniority, such as the on-demand policy papers thaat we have done so far'.

In itself, the lack of tangible results in having an impact on SADC cannot be used to pass a definite or conclusive judgment on the success of the programme. There are several reasons for this. First, assessing impacts of activities of this kind is always difficult and in the short-term, involves a subjective element. Impact of research typically takes a long time, and there are always numerous other factors that have an impact on the policies and capacities of an institution like SADC.

Second, given that the programme has only been active for two years, and that programme activities only picked up during the second year, any definitive judgement of the programme's impact would be premature, and cannot be more than an assessment of the likelihood and potential of such impact.

Nevertheless, the problems experienced in building relations with SADC give cause for concern, and indicate that unless the problems are addressed, the prospect of achieving the programme's objective 1, namely, to 'contribute to sound policies for the region's development', are not good.

At this point, we may note that, in retrospect, the programme's objective in this regard may appear as somewhat unrealistic or overly ambitious. We also note that in the planning of the project, no serious assessment appears to have been made of the realism of this objective and of the SADC secretariat's ability to utilise inputs from the programme. While the appropriation document mentions SADC's limited capacity as a possible risk faced by the programme, this is not followed up by an analysis of how great this risk would be, and of the realism of achieving the programme's objective given these constraints.

## Objective 2

*To build a strong regional policy research network whose outcome would be greater understanding of integration policy and implementation issues, by enhancing research skills and analytical capacities in participating research institutes and in the SADC structures.*

Performance in relation to this objective can be divided in two:

 i.    to what extent the programme has contributed to the establishment of a strong regional research network; and

 ii.   to what extent the programme has contributed to building or strengthening research capacity of researchers participating in the programme, given their different professional and academic backgrounds.

The programme's most obvious success is the establishment of a regional research network. FOPRISA has undoubtedly provided a platform which has enabled researchers from different countries in the region (and from Norway) to cooperate. The network incorporates researchers from different disciplines and from several countries in the region working on issues related to SADC and regional integration (with researchers from Botswana and South Africa playing the most important role).

In terms of building research capacity through training of junior researchers, the programme has been less successful. Most of the researchers involved in the programme are senior staff from different research institutions. While this may ensure that the quality of research output is high, it also means that the programme has not contributed significantly to building new research capacity among young and less experienced researchers.

In spite of the latter weakness, however, we conclude that the programme has been reasonably successful in relation to this objective.

# VIII Assessment of programme progress

This section of the review will address the specific issues stated in the ToR.

We proceed by addressing the specific issues outlined in section 4 of the ToR. On the basis of this, we try to make an assessment of the current status of the programme, and its progress in relation to its stated goals and objectives.

(Point 4.1 in the ToR concern the overall progress of the programme. This has been covered in the previous section.)

## 1. Factors that have occurred since the inception of the programme

The main factor that has occurred – or rather not occurred – in the period of the programme's inception, has been the absence of the envisaged improvement of SADC effectiveness after the major process of reorganisation that took place in 2001–2003. It was hoped that the reorganisation process would lead to enhanced capacity and effectiveness, but unfortunately, these hopes have not been realised.

While these aspects of the programme's environment create challenges and difficulties for it in terms of achieving its objective of assisting SADC in improving its performance and capacity, they also raise interesting issues, which could become topics for further research within the programme. Three aspects of SADC's environment appear to be particularly relevant:

– the evolution of the SADC secretariat (its capacity and constraints);

– the relationship between AU and SADC (and other regional organisations); and

– the relationship between SADC and its member states

Research on such topics could be valuable for two reasons. First, it could generate important knowledge about the direction SADC is going and some of the challenges it is facing in terms of defining its role between the AU, on the one hand, and national governments, on the other. Second, and with specific reference to FOPRISA, it could contribute to an understanding of the difficulties experienced by FOPRISA in establishing good working relations with the SADC secretariat. In this sense, the programme could contribute to an understanding of the causes of the constraints it faces and of the conditions that could contribute to its own success.

Such knowledge would not, of course, change or remove the obstacles faced by FOPRISA or SADC. However, it could make it possible to make a

realistic assessment of the prospects of improvement of FOPRISA perform-ance. Possibly, it could also enable the programme to realistically assess SADC interests and capacity, something which could make it easier for the programme to make plans that are both relevant and realistic.

Other changes that have occurred are more minor, such as changes in the composition and internal organisation of the research teams. While this has caused some delays in the progress of the research teams, it has not been a major constraint. However, the departure of key researchers in research teams on macro-economic convergence and trade integration needs to be addressed.

## 2. Assessment of programme management

The programme machinery is very well managed in all its different facets. The credit for this must go the Programme Coordinator who is ably assisted by the chairman of the steering committee. Steering committee meetings provide the impulse for planning and team coordination and have been very effective instruments in overall programme management. The FOPRISA secretariat is located within BIDPA offices, which provides financial and administrative services on an agency basis. This relationship, by all indica-tions, seems to be working well.

The SADC Director of Policy and Strategic Planning, Dr Angelo Mond-lane, is responsible for facilitating the interface and contact between FOPRISA and SADC structures and also sits on the steering committee. Dr Mondlane is aware of the secretariat's capacity problems and by his own admission, this has had an impact on the extent to which the SADC secre-tariat has been able to use the services of FOPRISA. This is especially the case with regard to the strategic nature of SADC's trade integration and macro-economic convergence agenda which is an area of obvious weakness in the concerned FOPRISA team and where analytical and policy research competence needs to be considerably enhanced and developed. These senti-ments were also echoed by the Director of TIFI who thought that more of an effort could be made by FOPRISA to provide policy relevant reports on the basis of more regular interaction with his office.

FOPRISA appointed a Research Fellow one year ago on the understand-ing that his time would be split between the programme and the secretariat. This has not gone according to plan for variety of reasons relating to where he should be located, how the interaction would be managed and finding appropriate office space in the secretariat.

To ensure its policy relevance and impact, the research produced by FOPRISA must be affirmed and validated by the secretariat. It is difficult to conduct sharp-end policy relevant research outside the organisation con-cerned. This remains problematic because interaction with the different di-rectorates and units is haphazard and irregular and the capacity constraints in the secretariat will remain an impediment in taking full advantage of what FOPRISA can offer.

### 3. Assistance to SADC

The programme is providing input, by disseminating research results and by producing monitoring reports and on-demand papers. However, it is not clear to what extent SADC is learning from it. According to the TIFI Director, for example, what he has seen of FOPRISA's work is interesting but not very pertinent to his concerns about trade and regional integration. As a result it is not possible to assess 'what was achieved' by the monitoring reports beyond stating that SADC expressed a view that they were valuable and were appreciated.

The programme is designed to support SADC, but it is not clear that it is succeeding in doing so. This may no be a result of the design of the programme, but due to a lack of capacity and political will in SADC. Whether these problems can be resolved by revising the programme is therefore doubtful. (See also point 4 below)

### 4. Relevance

In a project of this kind, the relevance of the programme is defined by the beneficiaries. In other words, the programme is relevant to the extent that it is seen as relevant by SADC.

Since the themes of the programme have been agreed upon by SADC, it is clear that, at a general level, the programme is seen as relevant. However, it does not necessarily follow from this that the beneficiaries find the actual research outputs relevant. The overall themes are quite broad, and they can be concretised in numerous ways.

We have found that several SADC representatives expressed the view that they did not find FOPRISA's research outputs to be relevant or useful in their work.

This reflects a lack of dialogue between the programme and the SADC secretariat in the process of operationalising the research themes and the identification of specific project outputs. In addition, it could be a result of the form in which the research has been presented, with not enough attention being paid to highlighting the policy relevance of research findings.

### 5. Effects of research activities on regional policy research network

This is the greatest success of the programme. But it should be noted that the objective was to build a <u>strong</u> network. All the researchers involved consider it to be working well. See section of progress in relation to objectives.

### 6. Effectiveness of resource use

Seen in relation to the overall goal, one can question whether the programme has been effective. The main outputs of the programme, the research publications, have had limited impact on the intended beneficiaries. Some of the reasons for this are discussed above. While the on-demand policy papers have had a definite impact, these papers are, after all, a relatively marginal

part of the programme and claiming a relatively small share of total resources.

## 7. Reporting and auditing procedures

All procedures have been followed, reflecting due diligence and the good management of the programme by BIDPA. We further note that, from what can be gathered in reviewing the Steering Committee minutes, there is proper financial and fiduciary oversight, with requisite checks and balances being adhered to. Systems and procedures are in place that ensure appropriate norms and standards in budget preparation and management and expenditure patterns conform with and are in line with budgets, with best practice being observed. Any observations beyond these would require a financial audit.

# IX Conclusion and recommendations

It is clear both from the written documentation provided to the review team (annual reports, minutes of steering committee meetings) that the problematic working relationship between the programme and the SADC Ssecretariat has been a major constraint. The review team acknowledges that this problem has been recognised by FOPRISA, and that decisions have been made that seek to address it (see, for instance, the Minutes from the 5th Steering Committee Meeting, held on 28 May 2007). Many of the following recommendations correspond to those made by the Steering Committee.

If possible, therefore, action should be taken in order to improve these working relations. The question, however, is whether it is possible for the programme to do this, which in turn will depend on how the causes of the problems are interpreted. Specifically, it depends on whether they are caused by factors within FOPRISA (lack of relevance of research, limitations in FOPRISA's dissemination strategy or a lack of good communication and dialogue between FOPRISA and the Secretariat) or by factors within SADC, on which the programme has very limited influence.

The SADC Secretariat has limited capacity, and the directorates with which FOPRISA is dealing are unable to follow up on findings and recommendations emanating from the programme. The reasons for this lack of capacity in the Secretariat have been referred to and include a shortage of personnel, lack of decision making authority in the units dealing with FOPRISA, and reluctance among member states to give the Secretariat sufficient resources and authority. The consequences of this for FOPRISA is that it has had limited success in 'assisting SADC in implementing its priority policies and programmes', as stated in objective 1 of the programme. In other words, the formative dimension of the research programme has had limited success so far.

Thus, while it seems clear that some of the problems which the programme is facing are beyond the control of FOPRISA, we also think that there is room for improvement of FOPRISA's own performance, especially in being more proactive is establishing regularised opportunities for dialogue with relevant officials in the Secretariat and in publicizing more userfriendly information.

The review team's main recommendation for the remaining period of the programme is therefore that **FOPRISA intensify the efforts to improve the dialogue with the SADC Secretariat**, and perhaps adopt more assertive strategy in its dealings with the Secretariat.

Some possible steps that could be taken include the following:

– **Increased efforts should be made to ensure that research undertaken by FOPRISA is considered relevant by SADC**. One possible way of doing this is that each year, research teams should present research proposals to the relevant unit within the SADC secretariat.

Such a meeting could help to select themes that SADC considers relevant.

–    **More emphasis should be placed on presenting and packaging research findings in a form which makes them relevant for policy makers**. For instance, for each research report prepared by FOPRISA, a policy brief should also be prepared, which summarises the main findings of the report and highlights policy implications and recommendations. Also, meetings tailormade for different target groups such as policymakers, journalists, students, etc. could be arranged, (perhaps in each SADC-country).

–    **Increased efforts should be made in the remaining period of the programme to recruit and involve more young researchers in the research projects.**

–    **More resources should be allocated within the programme to communication and outreach** (website development, regular meetings, seminars, project presentations, etc.).

–    **Efforts should be increased, by the FOPRISA secretariat, the steering committee and the research teams, to maintain a regular dialogue with the SADC Secretariat.** In particular, efforts should be made to broaden the programme's links to the Ssecretariat, by establishing regular direct contacts between the programme (both researchers and the FOPRISA secretariat) and programme staff in the relevant SADC units. This might require more flexible lines of communication between the programme and the SADC Secretariat. One possible entry point for such dialogue could be the thematic area coordination groups, which have been established in the secretariat. Our understanding is that it would not be difficult for FOPRISA to take part in these meetings.

–    **The research team's annual work plans should be disseminated to the relevant SADC units, including the thematic area coordination groups.** This would ensure that all relevant SADC staff would be aware of what FOPRISA is doing, and that they could suggest how FOPRISA research is made as relevant as possible for SADC. Plans for dissemination of research results could be planned together with the research teams.

–    **Seek to arrange a formal introduction and presentation of the programme to key actors and units within SADC**. While this has been tried earlier without success, a renewed effort should be made.

–    **Ensure that the planned capacity building activities are implemented.**

## List of persons met:

Anthoni van Nieuwkerk—SADSEM and chair of FOPRISA steering committee

Jan Isaksen—Chr Michelsen Institute and member of FOPRISA steering committee

Elling Tjønneland—Chr Michelsen Institute and ICP monitoring

Bjarte Erdal—Counselor Norway Embassy (Pretoria)

Kari Thorsen (telephonic)—Norway Embassy (Harare)

Mette Masst (telephonic)—Norway Embassy (Maputo)

Farai Zizhou—FOPRISA – SADC Research Fellow

Happy Fidzani—Executive Director, BIDPA

Bertha Osei-Hwedie—University of Botswana

Mpho Molomo—University of Botswana

Johnson Maiketso—Research Fellow, BIDPA

Noko Murangi—Director, TIFI SADC

Jonathan Kaunda—Programme Coordinator, FOPRISA

Viola Morgan—Deputy Representative, UNDP, Botswana

Helmut Mueller-Klode — GTZ Coordinator, Botswana

Sonja Kurz — Trade and Economic Policy Advisor, GTZ/SADC Secretariat, Gaborone

Angelo Mondlane — Director, Policy and Strategic Planning SADC

Gavin Cawthra — Director, SADSEM

Balefi Tsie — University of Botswana

Tracy Zinanga — Senior Officer, Development Cooperation and Resource Mobilisation, SADC

Cindy Lopes Bento — EU delegation, Botswana

## Main documents consulted

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FORPISA contract

FORPISA Activity Plans and Budgets

FORPISA Activity Reports and Progress Reports

Minutes of FOPRISA Steering Committee Meetings

Minutes of meetings between MFA and FOPRISA