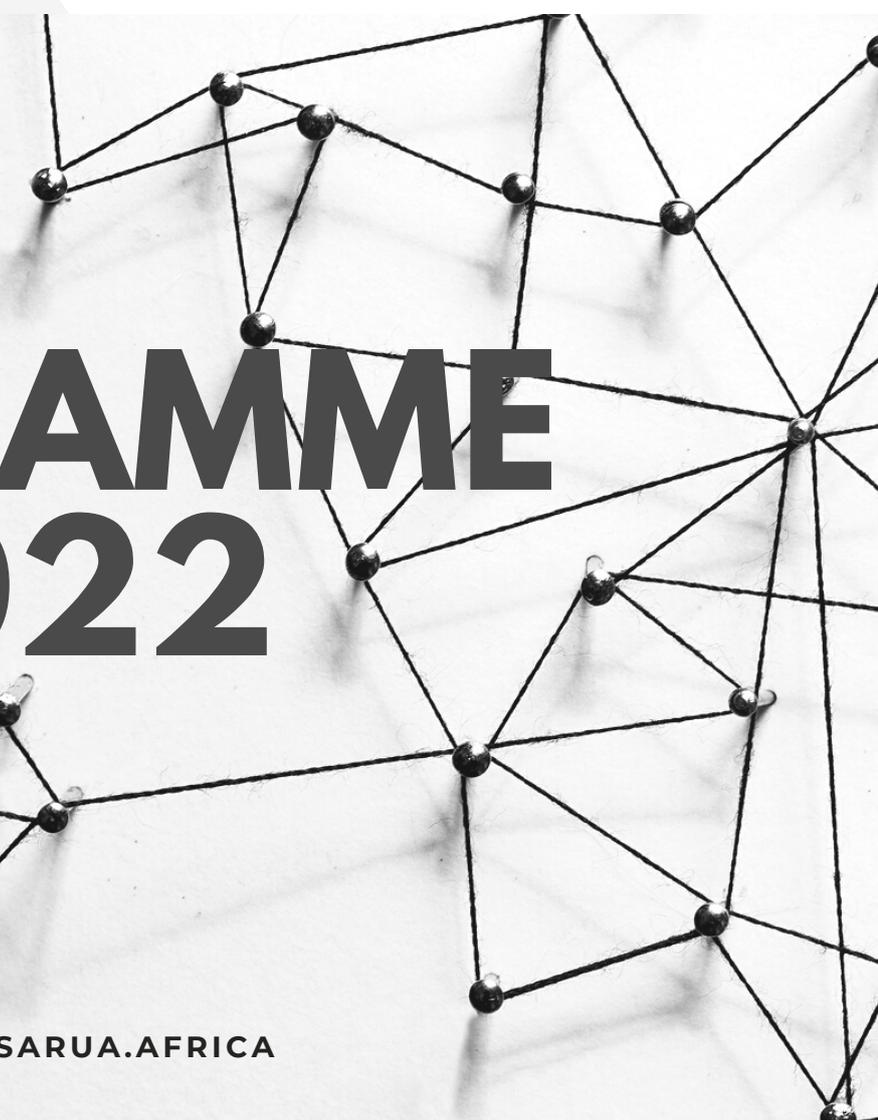




SARUA

**RE-IMAGINING HIGHER
EDUCATION IN THE SADC**



**SARUA
PROGRAMME
FOR 2022**

WWW.SARUA.AFRICA

1. FOREWORD: RE-IMAGINING HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE SADC

SARUA's vision is to be a dynamic regional hub that enhances the responsiveness and impact of the higher education sector in the SADC. The complex and compelling global and regional challenges that confront us call on the SADC higher education community to contribute to purposeful, collective, and coordinated action. Contemporary discourse and reflection on higher education refers consistently to themes such as the "engaged university", the "connected curriculum", and "socially relevant" research and innovation. These constructs invite us to consider how higher education may remain relevant in a time of rapid change and to imagine new possibilities for our core academic functions that are driven by a sense of societal purpose. They are signposts towards an opportunity for repositioning higher education within the SADC so that we may prepare our students for their professional and civic roles and realise our potential in developing a thriving and prosperous region.

Our vision and mission at SARUA are guided by the conviction that it is no longer enough for our higher education community in the SADC to focus on what it is good at. It is equally important that we develop and implement a programme of collective action that defines what we are good for.

For too long, the potential contribution of our regional higher community to regional development has been hindered by fragmentation and lack of partnership and coordination. Our lack of sense-making and engagement within a vibrant network led to siloed approaches in which valuable opportunities for collective support and capacity building are lost. In 2021 we have taken various steps to improve our stakeholder engagement system, and in 2022 you may look forward to a much-improved system that will support a range of collaborative programmes and activities.

Our annual programme for 2022 is based on our commitment to provide our members with a unique opportunity to contribute to regional development by employing a clearly defined regional programme of action within our four strategic focus areas. Our programme respects the development trajectories of our members and is designed to support each member of our network in achieving its strategic purpose. In support of our strategic focus areas, we will strengthen our regional partnerships and initiate and participate in South-North-South dialogues.

SARUA has an exciting and dynamic programme for 2022, and I look forward to working with you as we take our programme forward.

Martin Oosthuizen
Executive Director

2. SARUA AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 SARUA and the SADC

At their June 2017 meeting, the SADC Ministers for Education and Training, Research, Technology, and Innovation acknowledged SARUA's important role in regional development. They resolved that the alignment process between SARUA and the SADC should continue. Significantly, during 2021, SARUA and the SADC have concluded a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise SARUA's role as the SADC's regional higher education partner of choice. SARUA already works closely with the SADC on various projects, including the SARUA Programme on Climate Change and the study on regional value chains that SARUA undertook for the SADC during 2020. In addition, SARUA participates in various SADC Technical Committees and supports the SADC's work on developing an integrated SADC Qualifications Framework and related policies to recognise prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer.

In 2022, SARUA will continue to work with the SADC to support the achievement of the objectives of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997) as it relates to higher education and training. The focus will be on regional mobility, the quality of learning and teaching, the collaborative development of curricular resources to support formal and non-formal learning, and research and innovation that contributes to regional development.



2.2 SARUA and the OBREAL Global Observatory (OBGLOBAL)

SARUA and the OBREAL Global Observatory (OBGLOBAL) collaborate in terms of a formal Memorandum of Understanding. The 'OBREAL Global Observatory' (OBGLOBAL) is a membership organisation of diverse, internationally-oriented academic and research institutions and individual researchers and professionals from Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Its value proposition is to:

- Promote dialogue and synergies between governmental, academic, and social sectors, considering the specificities and heterogeneity of each region around the world; and
- Create cross-regional and truly global bridges for enhanced development in the higher education and research sectors, specifically via collaborative multi-regional projects.

The following are the areas of cooperation between SARUA and OBGLOBAL capacity development being accorded immediate top priority:

- Assisting SARUA to expand its contact and cooperation with international networks in the higher education and research sector around shared priorities. OBGLOBAL will support SARUA to identify new partners worldwide, with whom joint projects and policy dialogues may be organised.

OBSGLOBAL and SARUA will develop joint, collaborative projects for different funding calls and priorities. These projects should be premised around wider, global, multi-lateral cooperation and reinforce regional integration in SADC. In this regard, the two Organisations are preparing in 2022 several project applications of the European Union - Erasmus+ programme.

In 2022, OBSGLOBAL and SARUA will continue to jointly manage the HAQAA 2 project. The overarching purpose of the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance, and Accreditation Initiative (the HAQAA Initiative) is to “contribute to and support the harmonisation of higher education programmes and the creation of a revitalised, distinctive, attractive and globally competitive African higher education space, through enhanced intra-African collaboration”. Specifically, the HAQAA Initiative intends to “support the development of a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation system at institutional, national, regional and Pan-African continental level.” The Initiative consists of various elements within an overriding Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF), which is endorsed by the African Union.

It will continue to cooperate on implementing the set-up of a Policy Data Unit (PDU) for African higher education. The PDU will be conceptualised to develop a comprehensive database of the SADC Universities. In collaboration with other stakeholders in Africa, the ultimate goal of the PDU is to create an African Higher Education database.



2.3 SARUA and the Alliance for African Partnership

In 2021, SARUA and the Alliance for African Partnership (AAP) held various discussions on potential collaboration. Founded by the Michigan State University in 2016, the AAP is a consortium of ten leading African universities and a distinguished network for African research institutes committed to working in equitable partnerships to transform lives and address global challenges (<https://aap.isp.msu.edu/about1/about/>). SARUA and the AAP have agreed to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding and have identified the following indicative areas of collaboration:

- Policy on education and training, and science and technology;
- Youth entrepreneurship development: Climate change;
- The fourth industrial revolution;
- Trade and regional integration; and
- Gender, science, and technology.

Early in 2022, the AAP and SARUA will hold trilateral discussions with the Executive Secretary of the SADC on joint projects. SARUA looks forward to partnering with the AAP during 2022 and to the opportunities this partnership will present for members of our network.

3. STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA ONE: KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION

The basis of SARUA's Strategic Focus Area for Knowledge Co-Production is the growing emphasis on university engagement with its societal context. Contemporary society faces a web of interrelated opportunities and challenges relating to sustainable development, encapsulated within the United Nations' Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Higher education institutions in the SADC must collaborate to address the challenges of sustainable development at a regional level through teaching and learning, research and innovation that work in partnership with society to address the full spectrum of human development needs.

During 2022, the SFA for knowledge co-production will focus on two projects:



3.1 SARUA Programme on Climate Change

SARUA's Programme on Climate Change aims to support the capacity of higher education institutions in the SADC to support climate change mitigation and adaptation through the curriculum (formal and non-formal), research and innovation, and policy development. For 2022 to 2023, our programme will focus on the curriculum, specifically the revision of the master's degree curriculum resources that the SARUA Climate Change Network has developed. In addition, with the help of a funding grant as part of the Intra-ACP Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) Programme (ACP = African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States), SARUA will reactivate a SADC network of climate change experts to review the current curriculum and, subsequently, to engage in a curriculum re-design process.

SARUA welcomes the opportunity to build its extensive SADC Climate Change Innovation Network through the GCCA+ programme. Between 2012 and 2017, the SARUA Climate Change Network, consisting of more than 300 academics and other experts across the SADC, undertook the following activities:

- A country-level mapping study in twelve SADC countries of climate change policies, priorities, and capabilities of SADC countries (Climate Change Counts).
- The establishment of a University Delivery Consortium (UDC) comprising twenty specialists from seven universities across five countries to develop a new master's curriculum for the SADC.
- The implementation from 2017 of the open-access master's curriculum consisting of English, French and Portuguese curriculum resources, which any university in the SADC may use or adapt to strengthen existing programmes or to develop new master's programmes.

Under the auspices of the GCCA+ programme, SARUA will:

- Revise the current master's curriculum.
- Develop various short courses on climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Develop the capacity of universities within the SARUA network to implement the existing master's curriculum through a range of capacity development opportunities.
- Create a digital academic eco-system that will support collaboration, networking and curriculum design and delivery for climate change programmes.

Beyond 2022 and 2023, SARUA will extend its Programme on Climate Change in the following manner:

- Develop open access curriculum resources on climate change for use in undergraduate programmes, thereby creating a set of open-access curriculum components, which will support a learning pathway in climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Establish a regional climate change and development (CCD) research and innovation network, which will update the 2012-2014 climate change mapping study and identify themes for collaborative research and innovation activities.

Members of the SARUA network are participating in the SARUA Climate Change Steering Group, while our network members will play a leading role in the re-curriculation process. In addition, once the initial re-curriculation process has been completed, SARUA network members will have the right to form part of a special interest group that contributes to the ongoing development of the curriculum materials.

3.2 Capacity Development for the SDGs

It is commonly acknowledged that universities have a particularly important role in achieving the SDGs, and engagement with the SDGs plays a prominent role in the strategies of SADC universities. However, most of the SDGs require place-based actions, which, in turn, presuppose that universities and their staff will have the understanding and capabilities to effect such action. Therefore, there is a critical need to explore how universities may engage with their local contexts to make a practical difference in the realisation of the SDGs.

To address this challenge, SARUA will submit a funding proposal under the Erasmus Plus Programme on *Developing university capacity in the SADC for context-based local enactment of the SDGs.*

This proposed project will involve members of the SARUA network and leading European universities in a multi-year project that will conceptualise an integrated or inter-linked set of participatory approaches for knowledge co-production relating to the SDGs. Considerable attention will be paid to learning from existing approaches and programmes and to an in-depth consideration of selected case studies that map the trajectory of a specific participatory model on an SDG or a sub-component of an SDG. Apart from the universities directly involved in developing proposed participatory approaches, a wider group of universities in the SARUA network will be invited to participate in a capacity development programme linked to the research findings on participatory models. It is expected that their feedback will lead to further refinement of the approaches forthcoming from this project.

Some of the outcomes of this important project are:

- The development of a shared understanding of how participatory approaches for the local enactment of the SDGs influence the understanding of “social innovation” amongst members of the SARUA network.
- Clarification of the systemic and structural factors that impact on local enactment of the SDGs.
- Consider the extent to which digital technologies and applications can enable or amplify the nature of the participation between universities and their local contexts.
- Establish a SARUA community of practice for participatory knowledge co-production relating to the SDGs.

SARUA network members will receive a unique opportunity to co-create and sustain a programme of action that strengthens their role in the local enactment of the SDGs.

4. STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA TWO: INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

SARUA's strategic focus area for institutional quality management development:

- Links to the continental programme for the Harmonisation of African Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA - <https://haqaa.aau.org/>) (<https://haqaa2.obsglob.org/>).
- Supports the objectives of the SADC Protocol for Education and Training (staff and student mobility, credit recognition and transfer); and
- Recognises the need for higher education institutions to provide high-quality access to opportunities for lifelong learning.



4.1 HAQAA Initiative Phase 2

The objectives of the HAQAA 2 Initiative, which is funded by the European Commission as part of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, and will run from 2020 to 2022, are as follows:

- Quality assurance culture in higher education institutions is further enhanced.
- Capacities of quality assurance agencies to implement the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance are strengthened and cross-regional coordination is enhanced.
- Capacities of the AU in implementing the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) are strengthened.

In terms of SARUA's Memorandum of Understanding with OBREAL Global (<https://obsglob.org/>), SARUA facilitates the achievement of the HAQAA 2 objectives as the SADC strategic regional partner. In this capacity, SARUA participates in the HAQAA advisory board and the Technical Working Group to establish a Continental Accreditation Agency - the Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (PAQAA). To date, the TWG has identified four scenarios for establishing the PAQAA, and SARUA's representative on the TWG (Ms Bella Sattar) has played a leading role in this process.



In 2021, SARUA assisted the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in presenting a HAQAA 2 capacity development programme for thirty academic staff members from across the SADC. In addition, a further capacity development programme for members of SADC universities may be offered during 2022.

In 2022, SARUA will continue to support the HAQAA 2 Initiative and particularly engage with the SADC on how this initiative impacts the development of a regional quality assurance framework. In collaboration with the European Training Foundation, SAQA will present a training series for SADC universities in continental and regional quality assurance frameworks. This is of great importance for national quality assurance agencies, as well as for staff members who are responsible for quality management at an institutional level.

4.2 SARUA IQM Project

During 2020 and 2021, SARUA has collaborated with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to present DAAD's internationally recognised Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Programme to 30 participants from SADC universities. This 18-month programme has provided a valuable opportunity for SADC colleagues to enhance their understanding of institutional quality management. Each participant should develop a project relating to their institutional contexts. A second DAAD IQA capacity development programme will be offered to members of the SARUA network during 2023.

Building on the initial DAAD IQA programme, SARUA is conducting a comprehensive review of the State of Play of institutional quality management within the SADC during 2021 and 2022. This study aims to take the 2017 DAAD-sponsored study of the State of Play of Internal Quality Assurance in the SADC (https://static.daad.de/media/daad_de/pdfs_nicht_barrierefrei/infos-services-fuer-hochschulen/projektsteckbriefe/sadc_state_of_play_report.pdf) further by involving a more significant number of SADC universities in an analysis of their internal quality management systems.

In 2021, six focus groups were held with participants from SADC universities. The focus group report will support an extensive questionnaire survey on internal quality management systems within SADC universities during the first part of 2022. One of the key outcomes of the focus groups and questionnaire survey is to establish capacity development needs on institutional quality management amongst members of the SARUA network.

In the second half of 2022, members of the SARUA network will be invited to establish a special interest group that will use the findings of the State of Play to develop and implement a capacity development programme for internal (institutional) quality management. SARUA will submit a funding proposal to DAAD to support the work of the SARUA special interest group. In addition, SARUA will invite the Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN), with which SARUA has a Memorandum of Understanding, to contribute to the SARUA special interest group.

4.3 Good Practice Guidelines for Continuing Education

As the pace of change accelerates, the provision of high-quality continuing education, which includes continuing professional development, will become an increasingly important aspect of higher education provision. In addition, universities globally and within the SADC appreciate the importance of lifelong learning relationships. Therefore, high-quality opportunities for re-skilling and upskilling are just as important as initial opportunities for higher learning.



Between 2019 and 2021, with funding from the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), SARUA completed a project on the quality management and appropriate recognition of continuing education programmes offered by universities in South Africa. This project involved the development of good practice guidelines for continuing education through a consultative process with staff responsible for continuing education at South African universities. It also involved consultation on the guidelines with national regulatory bodies. While the terms of the grant restricted the scope of the project to South Africa, SARUA created opportunities for network members outside South Africa to contribute to the guidelines.

During 2022, SARUA will hold a webinar series on the good practice guidelines and consult with network members on ways this project may be taken forward to support their work on the quality management of continuing education.

5. STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA THREE: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The digital transformation of higher education is one of the most significant opportunities and challenges facing higher education globally. Therefore, the higher education sector in the SADC must embrace the game-changing developments relating to the digital transformation of higher education to ensure that it can play its full role in service of the SADC's developmental needs.

During 2020 and 2021, SARUA presented a range of webinars on digital transformation and the use of digital solutions, focusing on broader conceptual considerations and practical competencies in the use of digital solutions. In addition, SARUA's colloquium series in May and June 2021 created an important opportunity for SADC universities to discuss their digital transformation journeys, with a particular focus on the digital transformation of teaching and learning. The colloquium series confirmed that the digital transformation of teaching and learning is the most important challenge facing SADC universities in terms of digital transformation, and identified a common set of issues in this regard. On this basis, SARUA developed a concept note on the digital transformation of teaching and learning.

However, the colloquium series also confirmed that the digital transformation of teaching and learning should be embedded in an institution-wide programme for digital transformation. The colloquium on *Scoping the Space of Digital Transformation* was particularly important in this regard.

Alongside these opportunities for engagement, SARUA has conducted extensive research on the digital solutions that will allow it to play its networking and support role optimally as a virtual association.

During 2022, SARUA will continue to support its network members in their digital transformation processes in the following ways:

- Research and webinars on the components of digital academic environments.
- Webinars on the practical use of digital technology to support collaboration and cooperation and improve competence in using digital applications.
- The establishment of a special interest group on the digital transformation of teaching and learning.
- Publication of a SARUA position paper on the digital transformation of higher education at the end of February 2022 and launch of a consultative process relating to the position paper amongst network members.
- Establish a leadership reference group to guide this strategic focus area, with the following immediate priorities: i.) Develop an appropriate approach and framework towards supporting higher education institutions in SADC on their digital transformation paths, and ii.) Develop a Plan of Action for the strategic focus area.

- A thought leadership series on the implications of the rapid development of digital technologies for the world of work and the higher education curriculum.
- Submission of an Erasmus Plus funding proposal for an extensive multi-year project on the digital transformation of higher education, with the digital transformation of teaching and learning as its focal point. This project will involve SARUA network universities in a collaborative project with their European counterparts that will enhance the capacity of SARUA members to create digital academic eco-systems that support student success and enhance the quality of the student experience.



In addition to these activities, SARUA will continue to collaborate with the Online Learning Consortium (OLC), with which it has a Memorandum of Understanding, in the provision of capacity development opportunities for the promotion of online and e-learning. The OLC is a collaborative global community of higher education leaders and innovators dedicated to advancing quality digital teaching and learning experiences designed to reach and engage the modern learner (<https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/>). The partnership between SARUA and the OLC provides the following specific benefits to SARUA members:

- Ability to take up institutional membership of the OLC at heavily discounted rates; and
- Access to the OLC's extensive range of online capacity development programmes at significantly reduced rates while also receiving discounts on OLC conferences and publications. The OLC website provides all the necessary information on the extensive capacity development opportunities that the OLC Institute for Professional Development provides through workshops, webinars, the Mastery Series, and the Online Teaching Certificate Programme (<https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/learn/>). For many SADC universities, the OLC discounted rates for capacity development alone could add up to more than the cost of SARUA membership.



In addition, SARUA and the OLC will present the 3rd annual Global Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL). Since 2020, this unique partnership between SARUA and the OLC has played a key role in the OLC's decision to present a global IELOL programme, and during 2022 more experts from the SARUA network will be invited to contribute as facilitators in this programme. IELOL participants work with colleagues worldwide to explore and understand both the opportunities and barriers to advancing local and global online learning. Programme alumni join a growing network of online leaders in higher education focused on improving and advancing the impact of digital learning on all aspects and formats of higher education.

6. STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA FOUR: SADC HIGHER EDUCATION ACADEMY

- **SARUA acknowledges the need to create an environment that supports thought leadership, foresight, evidence-based planning, and professional development.** Therefore, during 2022, SARUA will provide the following opportunities for sense-making and leadership and management development:
- **A webinar series on the role of higher education in a rapidly changing environment:** Higher education leaders from the SARUA network and other developing and developed regions will be invited to contribute to reflection and dialogue on themes such as the role of higher education in the SADC in shaping a post-pandemic world; higher education and social innovation; the role of higher education in shaping the values that should underpin technological progress. SARUA network members will be invited to contribute themes for collective reflection.
- **The future of internationalisation within the SADC:** What is the future of internationalisation? How will the higher education community in SADC take internationalisation forward? Can internationalisation be strengthened? How will students develop the key competencies they need to thrive in a globally connected world?
- **Leadership series:** Members of the SARUA network will be invited to contribute to, and participate in, a leadership series that addresses crucial leadership challenges: Personal Mastery; Change Management; Leadership in Context; Systems Thinking; Resilience and Wellness; Creativity and Problem-Solving.

In 2022, SARUA will approach funders to provide financial support for the establishment of a SARUA higher education academy.

7. STRATEGY ENABLER: REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION PROFILE

A reliable profile of higher education in the SADC is the essential basis for intelligent higher education planning, policy development and capacity development. Unfortunately, the SADC has made little progress in developing a systematic higher education database. Various political, social, and technical gaps hinder this process. At their June 2019 meeting of the SADC Ministers for Education and Training, Science, Technology, and Innovation resolved that SARUA should develop a higher education database for the SADC in consultation with all key stakeholders in public and private higher education sectors in the region. The database development should follow a phased approach, and SARUA should report on progress regularly.

SARUA has now fully integrated this project into the continental development of a Policy Data Unit (PDU) for African higher education. The principles developed by the PDU will inform and benefit the SADC – Regional Database project.

Working under the auspices of the PDU project, SARUA has developed a prototype database for a regional higher education profile. The initial phase of the project will collect data sets from the following five countries: Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. This initial phase will identify data collection and the capacity requirements that need to be addressed in developing a regional higher education database.

The prototype will be demonstrated to all the relevant regional stakeholders, and once it has been finalised, it will be used to develop a SADC HEMIS Data Collection Protocol (SADC HEMIS-DCP). SARUA's work on the initial development of a SADC higher education profile will contribute to the work of the PDU.

This multi-year project holds significant benefits for the SARUA network members in terms of the accessibility of a reliable SADC data-set to support their planning with respect to their regional context within the SADC. Similarly, this project constitutes a vital component of SARUA's contribution to the SADC's programme for regional development.

