

## Review of the European Union's cooperation with SADC from 2013-19

NIRAS delivers independent assessment of EU past and current cooperation with SADC, setting out key learnings for future programming.

**#8**  
Decent work and economic growth

**#9**  
Industry, innovation and infrastructure

**#17**  
Partnerships for the goals



Gaborone, Botswana. © Justine Hubane



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Committed to regional economic cooperation, integration and development, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) encompasses 16 member states from Southern Africa with the common aim of improving people's living standards through collective self-reliance. The economic community achieves this by pooling of resources and ensuring a high degree of harmonisation and rationalisation across the region.

The European Union has been a long-term cooperating partner of SADC in the regional integration process, and EU cooperation with SADC aims to advance SADC's regional integration agenda. EU's key instrument for planning its support to SADC is the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) under the 10th and 11th European Development Funds (EDF).

From March to September 2020, NIRAS was contracted to conduct an evaluation with the objective to provide an overall assessment of the EU's cooperation strategy and delivery in the SADC region between 2013 and 2019. The geographical scope included all 16 Member States of SADC.

### A forward-looking evaluation with a focus on results and the strategic level

The evaluation focused on achievements, the quality, and the results of the EU cooperation with SADC in the context of an evolving cooperation policy with an increasing emphasis on result-oriented approaches and the contribution towards the implementation of the MDGs and SDGs. The evaluation served accountability, decision making, communication, learning, and management purposes.

Specifically, the evaluation provided an understanding of the performance of the EU's cooperation with SADC, its enabling factors, and those hampering a proper delivery of results and impact in order to inform

the planning of the future EU cooperation with SADC. By complementing and building upon results of the strategic regional evaluation of the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region (SA-EA-IO) from 2008 to 2015, the evaluation focused in more details on specific aspects pertaining to SADC.

### The evaluation resulted in:

- An overall independent assessment of the EU's past and current cooperation with SADC for relevant external cooperation services of the EU and the wider public;
- Quantification of results and identification of success stories in order to raise awareness about EU-SADC regional cooperation and the benefits of regional cooperation;
- Identification of key lessons and forwarding of recommendations on how to improve current and inform future choices in the context of the new programming cycle (2021-2027).

During the evaluation, the five standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria were applied, namely: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. NIRAS further elaborated the effectiveness criterion by examining i) effectiveness in result delivery and ii) effectiveness of processes. In addition, the evaluation assessed two EU-specific evaluation criteria, including the coherence of the EU-SADC cooperation itself with the EU strategy for the SA-EA-IO region, and with other EU policies and Member State Actions, in particular Germany. The coherence of the EU cooperation interventions with SADC Member states at the national level was also assessed.

### A digital methodology to tackle COVID19

The assignment was initially planned to take place in Gaborone, Botswana, with field visits to six SADC countries as well as a mission to Brussels to meet with the DEVCO HQ. Due to COVID19 travel restricti-

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**Client**  
The Delegation of the European Union to Botswana (EUD)

**Location**  
Southern Africa

**Contract value**  
€ 167,779

**Duration**  
March 2020 - September 2020



Dar es Salaam, Tanzania © Patricia Hokororo

## Project scope

The evaluation developed an understanding of the cause and effect links between: inputs and activities, and outputs, outcomes and impacts. It assessed whether strategic choices, processes and delivery mechanisms have been conducive to achieving regional co-operation goals. Finally, it drew up conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned to inform the EU's and SADC's new programming cycles beyond 2020. It furthermore identified good "programmes/projects case-studies" in terms of achievement of results, indicating the key factors in the success.

From March 2020 and onwards, the entire approach and methodology of the review was revised during the inception phase to comprise a fully home-based data collection and evaluation exercise. All research activities and instruments were thus digital and field missions were replaced with online meetings, while two surveys were included to allow broad participation of stakeholder groups in this evaluation exercise.

Through an innovative and adaptive approach in a context marked by the COVID19 outbreak, NIRAS conducted primary data collection in all SADC countries remotely. Data was collected across institutions, civil society, the private sector, academia as well as cooperation organisations. The survey was sent

to more than 400 respondents and the response rate was unexpectedly high and surpassed the amount of the responses that could have been expected on a field mission.

Availability of stakeholders for online interviews and surveys was ensured by using a variety of platforms for online meetings and by widely distributing the stakeholder survey, in order to guarantee that views from across all member states and all stakeholder groups were collected. Moreover, as access to documents by officers of EU, EUD and SADC was limited due to the pandemic and the related restrictions, the evaluators collected documents directly from the responsible officers at EUD and SADC and from the SADC website.

**#5**  
Gender  
equality

**#7**  
Affordable and  
clean energy

**#16**  
Peace, justice  
and strong  
institutions