

SOUTHERN AND EASTERN AFRICA POLICY RESEARCH NETWORK (SEAPREN)



Secretaria

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From The Coordinators' Desk



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This Newsletter is to introduce to you the Southern and Eastern African Policy Research Network (SEAPREN). The mission of the network is to promote sound economic policy among Southern and East African countries by comparative research. Through joint activities the network members aim to learn from each other, in both research and administration.

What is the rationale of this network? Today's world is changing and globalising rapidly. This brings both opportunities for rapid development and the danger of marginalisation. Most African countries have not benefited from these processes to the same extent as have other regions.

Globalisation and regional integration raise the demand for economic policy analysis to reach out

beyond borders and to address international and regional issues. As SADC, EAC, COMESA and other regional bodies grow in importance, the demand is increasing for research that addresses regional issues. Policy research institutions in the region have increased their capacity and relevance. They are now contributing substantially to national policy making in an increasing number of countries. However, when it comes to regional and international issues, governments and other clients generally depend on foreign rather than local policy advice. This is because of the limited ability of policy research institutes in the region to address these new issues. Their capacity to conduct larger regional studies is often limited, and regional networks that could facilitate linkages are missing. Networks that focus on specific areas, such as trade, poverty, agriculture and natural resources, have started to emerge. Nevertheless, regional co-operation between research institutions has remained sporadic in both content and intensity, with no formalised strategy and structure.

Thus, as the world in general and the region in particular grow together, opportunities for national institutes to pool resources are arising. The flexible network type of co-operation, rather than one of formal co-operation or the establishment of regional institutes, is appropriate, as the demand for research varies in terms of content and coverage. Networks make optimal use of the various resources available and adapt them to demand as it arises. This logic is particularly relevant in Southern and Eastern Africa, with its scarcity of economic research capacity.

In view of these factors, research institutes from Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia founded the Southern and Eastern Africa Policy Research Network (SEAPREN) in November 1999, with the official launch in February 2000. A Kenyan institute joined the network in 2001.

The network is driven by a Secretariat, which is currently housed at the Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU). The responsibility of the

Secretariat is to ensure that the network is managed effectively and efficiently, and is properly resourced at all times.

Our network really took off this year with the seed funding provided by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). This Newsletter, to appear four times a year, aims to provide information about the Network and related research issues of a regional nature to the member institutes and beyond. We hope that it will be of interest to you.

Dirk Hansohm
SEAPREN Coordinator

Rosa Endjala
Assistant Coordinator

Network Members

The network consists of the following institutes:

- Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA), Gaborone (Botswana) www.bidpa.bw
- Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU), University of Cape Town, Cape Town (South Africa) www.uct.ac.za/depts/dpru
- Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), Kampala (Uganda) www.eprc.or.ug
- Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) www.esrf.or.tz
- Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), Lusaka (Zambia)
- Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR), Nairobi (Kenya) www.ipar.or.ke
- Namibian Economic Policy Research Unit (NEPRU), Windhoek (Namibia) www.nepru.org.na

Over time, the network intends to admit new members from other countries in the region.

Network Meeting August 2002

Directors and contact persons of the member institutes met in Windhoek on 15-16 August 2002, in order to finalise the funding application for Phase 1 of SEAPREN. The meeting deliberated on aspects relating to the co-ordination of the network, capacity building for institute management as well as collaborative research within the network.



Delegates at the SEAPREN Meeting Windhoek

IDRC awards research grant to SEAPREN

SEAPREN Secretariat Co-ordinator Dirk Hansohm signed the agreement on 20 January 2003 in Windhoek in the presence of Elias T. Ayuk, Senior Programme Specialist at the Secretariat for Institutional Support for Economic Research in Africa (SISERA).

The network has received support from SISERA from its inception. Launched in February 2000 in Cape Town, the network received funds from SISERA to finance a number of meetings.

According to this agreement, IDRC presented SEAPREN with a seed grant of US\$ 250,000 through SISERA, to cover the first two years. The funds are mainly for the purpose of undertaking policy-relevant research in the Southern and Eastern regions of Africa. The Secretariat is in the process of soliciting additional funding for the network.

The agreement constitutes a major achievement for the SEAPREN network, as it facilitates collaborative policy-relevant research in the sub-continent and increases the prospects for strengthening regional policy research institutes.



Elias Ayuk (left), Dirk Hansohm (right)

Research Project Proposals

It is envisaged that the network will be able to undertake at least two research projects per year. Such projects will be of a comparative nature (covering at least 3 countries), and will be of high policy relevance to the region.

Currently the network has the following indicative research themes:

- Regional and International Trade
- Poverty and Poverty Alleviation
- Governance and Development
- Economic Growth and Industrial Development

Research proposals in these areas are under preparation.

Portrait of a member Institute

Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA), Gaborone

The Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA) is an independent trust set up by a Presidential Decree. It commenced operations in 1995 as a non-governmental policy research institution. BIDPA's main focuses are Policy Analysis and Capacity Building. BIDPA is funded partly by its own contract research and consultancy revenue (40%), and partly by grants from the African Capacity Building Foundation (30%) and Botswana Government (30%). The Norwegian Government (NORAD) also funded BIDPA in its starting phase. The Board of Trustees has ex officio members from the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, the Office of the President, the University of Botswana, the Bank of Botswana and the Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry and Manpower (BOCCIM). BIDPA's trust deed sets out the objectives and functions of the institute, which include the following: to promote and conduct research, analysis and publication on development policy issues of relevance to Botswana and the Southern African region; to monitor the performance of the Botswana economy and the management of public policy implementation; to offer advice and consultancy services; to provide technical and financial assistance; to assist in the professional training and public education of Botswana citizens in matters relating to policy analysis; to present or publish, as the case may be, the outcome of its policy analysis, orally or in writing, to individuals, organisations or the public at large.

The staff consists of the Executive Director and five Senior Research Fellows in the areas of Econometrics / Finance, Microeconomics/Enterprises and Statistics. In addition there are two Research Fellows and eleven Assistant Research Fellows. BIDPA has its own Information Systems

Manager, two specialist library staff members and five Finance and Administration staff.

For further information: BIDPA, Millennium Park, Plot 134, Kgale View, NEAR GAME CITY, Private Bag BR-29, Gaborone, Botswana, Tel. 267 3971750, Fax 267 3971748,

Website: <http://www.bidpa.bw>

Email: nhfidzani@bidpa.bw

Interesting publications on the region

Dirk Hansohm, Christian Peters-Berries, Willie Breytenbach, Trudi Hartzenberg, Wolfgang Maier, Peter Meyns (Eds), 2002, Monitoring Regional Integration in Southern Africa Yearbook, Vol. 2, Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan, ISBN 99916-0-420-0, N\$ 45,-

African policy makers set a high priority on regional integration. However, many of the schemes aimed at achieving this have failed or are stagnant. As other regions show – the EU for example – it takes decades for a region to grow together. Against this background, the yearbook - now in its second volume - aims to monitor the progress of integration in Southern Africa.

It looks at various dimensions, both economic and political. After following the development of the major macro-economic indicators, this volume examines specifically the progress in trade, competition policy, foreign direct investment, and the options concerning intra-regional exchange-rate policies. In the political area, the book follows developments in 'good governance', democracy, security and NEPAD. Lastly, the book provides two country cases: Zimbabwe and Malawi. On Zimbabwe, the book analyses the impact of its crises on the region. Malawi is used as an example for dealing with the issue of land reform.

The book can be ordered at Gamsberg Macmillan Publishers, P.O. Box 22830, Windhoek, Namibia, Fax +264-61-233538, e-mail gmp@iafrica.com.na.

Review copies are available at the NEPRU library, P.O. Box 40710, Windhoek, Namibia, Fax +264-61-277501, e-mail library@nepru.org.na.



Portrait of a cooperating institution

Secretariat for Institutional Support for Economic Research in Africa (SISERA): Building institutional capacity of African economic research institutions

SISERA was created in July 1997 by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The SISERA programme delivery strategy is based on three main components: the provision of financial support, technical support, and increasing the capacity of African economic research centres to break their relative isolation through networking.

Since 1997, SISERA has mobilised resources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Netherlands (DGIS), the European Union, IDRC (Canada), Ministère des Affaires Etrangères – France (MAE), the United States Agency for International Development - USA (USAID) and the World Bank Institute – USA (WBI).

The founding principle of SISERA is to help African countries to successfully tackle their economic challenges. To achieve this, they need a corps of elite economists whose research output will serve to inform and influence economic policymakers and enhance civil society's debate on policy options.

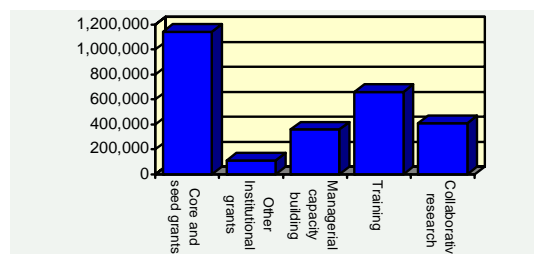
SISERA's programme delivery mechanisms include:

- Institutional support: financial and technical support to institutions and training workshops.
- Managerial capacity building: bi-annual institution meeting, training workshops for managers of centres and regular visits to centres.
- Networking of centres: SEAPREN and one network in West and Central Africa (WECAPREN) - West and Central Africa Policy

Research Network and capacity utilisation through the Strategic Analysis for Growth and Access (SAGA) research competition.

- Linking up researchers and end-users: dissemination of research outputs and collaborative research activities.

Program allocations from 1997 to 2002 in Canadian Dollars (CAD)



About twenty Economic Research Institutes throughout Sub-Saharan Africa are collaborating with SISERA.

For further information:

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Tel. (221) 864 00 00, Fax. (221) 825 32 55,

Website: <http://www.idrc/sisera>

Email: cdafe@idrc.org.sn

Stop press

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) is likely to grant a considerable amount to promote cooperation between SEAPREN and the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen. This support will be extended over a 3 year period and devoted to the areas of research and institution building.

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