The Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) is a membership-based association of Vice-Chancellors of public and private universities in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). SARUA enables collaborative networks and partnerships that develop the institutional and human capacity of the region’s universities in order to make a distinctive contribution to regional development and integration.

**SARUA Vision & Mission**

SARUA’s vision is to be a dynamic catalyst and responsive hub for higher education revitalisation and innovation in the SADC.

SARUA’s mission is to build and sustain a vibrant higher education community that collaborates to make a distinctive contribution to regional socio-economic development and integration through a strategic focus on capacity development for leadership and management, teaching and learning development, quality management and technology-enabled innovation in higher education.

**SARUA Strategy for 2017-2021**

The SARUA Executive Committee has adopted a three-pronged strategy for 2017-2021.

- **To be a responsive connecting hub for universities’ multiple stakeholder interests as dynamic catalyst for regional higher education initiatives.**
- **To maintain a clear focus on capacity development programmes directly relevant to the needs of SADC universities along the themes of LEADERSHIP, QUALITY and TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED INNOVATION.**
- **To implement an operating model for internal sustainability, which demonstrates value for money and contributes new revenue opportunities for members.**
SARUA priority streams

Two priority streams support SARUA in its achievement of the 2017-2021 strategy.

SARUA PRIORITY STREAM A
Strategic SADC Alignment & Partnerships

SADC member states are jointly pursuing regional strategies with the long-term vision of driving industrialisation in Southern Africa. The SARUA Exco in 2017 initiated a process of closer alignment between SADC and SARUA to ensure that universities not only become active contributors in the implementation of SADC strategies – as knowledge producers and developers of human capacity – but to build institutional capacities in the process. In 2019 SARUA will continue with this alignment process as regional convenor of higher education interests.

SARUA subscribes to the African Union's Agenda 2063 Vision and actively supports the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and in particular Goal 4 – Quality Education. SARUA is committed to promoting the important role of higher education in the achievement of the SADC region's strategic vision.

- The SADC Protocol on Education and Training defines a regional framework for maximising the effective utilisation of education resources in the region and to promote equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation through collaboration.

- The Revised RISDP 2015–2020 prioritises inter alia the implementation of a Regional Qualifications Framework, human resources skills development, matching of education with labour market demands and accelerating the development of priority sectors for industrial and infrastructure development.

- The SADC Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap 2015–2063 provides a blueprint for inclusive, long-term modernisation and economic transformation in the SADC region and is based on three interdependent and mutually supportive strategic pillars: Industrialisation, Competitiveness and Regional Integration.

In June 2017, SADC Ministers responsible for Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation recorded the following decision:

“Ministers noted that South Africa as the incoming Chair has committed to convene a regional dialogue of higher education institutions and SARUA Executive Board to strengthen the development role of higher education and innovation to support regional programmes such as the SADC Industrialisation Strategy. The dialogue will also seek to sensitise universities to affiliate to SARUA as a strategic partner and network for higher education in the region.”

SARUA PRIORITY STREAM B
Strategic Focus Areas

- Higher Education Leadership and Management Development
- Learning and Teaching Development: Curriculum Innovation & Responsiveness; Academic Professional Development
- Quality Management: Institutional Quality Management Systems; Continuing Education
- Technology-Enabled Higher Education Innovation (Higher Education in a Digital Era)

PRIORITY STREAM A
Strategic SADC Alignment & Partnerships

SARUA has noted new key opportunities and several upcoming demands on universities as a result of new higher education policies advanced by the African Union (AU) and SADC.
The decision by the responsible SADC ministers was the result of a sustained process of engagement between the SARUA Exco and SADC structures in 2017. It is widely recognised that higher education is still too fragmented across the region and the SARUA Exco has motivated that closer strategic, organisational and programme alignment between SARUA and SADC will begin to address shared challenges facing higher education institutions. The SARUA Exco will continue with these alignment activities in 2019 and will also pursue additional higher education collaboration partnerships.

Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding which will enable the operationalisation of a new alignment partnership between SARUA and the SADC Secretariat.

Continue to work closely with UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa (ROSA) to deliver on regional higher education research and capacity development projects, including the evaluation of *Sustainability Starts With Teachers* change projects.

Pursue joint opportunities with the UbuntuNet Alliance – a regional alliance of National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) in Southern and East Africa. SARUA and UbuntuNet intend to enter an MoU for capacity development programmes for the AfricaConnect Phase 3 programme, relating to Higher Education in a Digital Era, NREN establishment and design, implementation, operations, and management of networked environments. SARUA will partner with the UbuntuNet Alliance in shared advocacy on the benefits of ICT services and systems as a catalyst for innovation in Higher Education leadership, learning and teaching, research, the student experience and university administration.

Collaborate with the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) and the Southern African Learning and Teaching Universities’ Forum (SAULT), and other associations, to promote academic professional development opportunities for SARUA members.

Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Association of African Universities to promote collaboration and to recognise SARUA as the custodian of the database for the profile of higher education in the SADC.

Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Global Observatory (OBSGLOB) - a membership organisation of diverse, internationally-oriented academic and research institutions, as well as individual researchers and professionals from Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia which works to promote dialogue and synergies between governmental, academic and social sectors and to create cross-regional and truly global bridges for enhanced development in the higher education and research sectors via collaborative multi-region projects.

Pursue activities as per signed Letter of Intent to cooperate and explore areas of collaboration between the UK higher education sector and its African Development Network with Southern African higher education sectors at a regional level in support of higher education and research in both the UK and SADC.

*It is important to note that by pursuing closer regional alignment with SADC, SARUA has initiated a process of organisational transformation which may see it undergo structural changes. This is to ensure that SARUA can maintain the engagement process with SADC structures in an effort to broaden regional collaboration opportunities to all accredited universities.*
PRIORITY STREAM B
Four strategic focus areas

During 2019 SARUA will focus on the following strategic programmes as a means of establishing a range of higher education development programmes between 2019 and 2023.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA ONE
Higher Education Leadership and Management Development

PROGRAMME 1: COLLABORATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITIES (IAU)
- The IAU Leading Globally Engaged Universities Programme Target Group: VCs and DVCs
- Making the IAU LGEU programme available to SARUA members with scholarship opportunities
- Planning to host an LGEU programme in the SADC in 2020/2021

PROGRAMME 2: COLLABORATION WITH GERMAN ACADEMIC EXCHANGE – DIALOGUE FOR INNOVATIVE EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES (DIES) PROGRAMME
- DIES Training Courses:
  - International Deans’ course
  - UNILEAD: Capacity development for recently appointed managers of administrative sections
  - Proposal writing for research grants
  - Management of internationalisation (Professionalisation of International Offices)
  - DIES Dialogues: Dialogues to promote projects and initiatives on higher education reform in developing countries.

PROGRAMME 3: COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITIES SOUTH AFRICA (USAf)
- Establish a Higher Education Leadership Academy in the SADC as a longer-term initiative
- Extend capacity development opportunities under the Higher Education Leadership and Management programme to universities outside South Africa (Deans Workshops, etc)
- Joint provision of higher education leadership dialogues relevant to the SADC
The SARUA Curriculum Innovation Network (SCIN) was launched in 2017, building on a seven-year process to develop the SARUA Programme for Climate Change Capacity Development (PCCCD). The PCCCD aims to address the inter-disciplinary challenge of climate change by means of networks for collaborative research, teaching and learning and community engagement.

The SARUA Programme for Climate Change Capacity Development is a multi-year project which aims to significantly enhance the climate adaptive capacity and resilience of the SADC region through the development of a collaborative network of higher education institutions. The modular Master's programme is available in English, French and Portuguese. It includes seven modules of relevance to climate change and sustainable development in southern Africa. Three modules are core (i.e. compulsory) and four constitute elective areas of specialisation. The design of the programme is flexible so that it can be accommodated to meet specific national and institutional accreditation requirements.

In 2017, SCIN launched a fully regional Master's curriculum in climate change and sustainable development in English, French and Portuguese in December 2016. It is a first example of co-creating an open access Master's curriculum and courseware across the SADC region, informed by the stakeholders in the region, for use by SADC universities. The SCIN curriculum is available at http://www.sarua.org/?q=publications.

Sustainability Starts with Teachers is a SARUA partnership programme with UNESCO Regional Office of Southern Africa (ROSA), SWEDESD and Rhodes University. It forms part of the UNESCO international flagship Global Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and is designed to introduce ESD curriculum innovation in 60 participating Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) from nine southern African countries. During two action learning workshops in Zambia and Swaziland during 2017, a total of 88 delegates developed institutional change projects which will be driven forward in TEIs using communities of practice and with the support of the SARUA Curriculum Innovation Network.

SCIN has grown into a network of 472 active individuals – 395 from the Master's in Climate Change Curriculum project and 77 from the Sustainability Starts with Teachers project – who share an interest in curriculum innovation as a driver for change in the SADC region's universities.

During 2019, SARUA will continue with fundraising for the SARUA Programme for Climate Change Capacity Development (PCCCD) and to maintain access to the SARUA Curriculum Innovation Network (SCIN). It is also anticipated that a new phase of the Sustainability Starts With Teachers programme will be implemented.
SARUA will host a Regional Workshop on Capacity Building Needs for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education in the SADC early in 2019.

SARUA will establish interest in collaboration from Learning and Teaching communities and organisations from participating SARUA partners. This includes, but is not limited to, the Southern African Universities’ Learning and Teaching Forum (SAULT), the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) and the Centre for Higher Education, Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) which is based at Rhodes University. The consultation will identify immediate areas requiring development and implementation. This may include Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Moderation, Writing in the University, Teaching and Learning for New Academics, Evaluation of Teaching and Courses, and Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision.

Quality in all its dimensions is a recognised priority for higher education across Africa. There are multiple continental and regional initiatives underway that aim to address inter alia harmonisation of accreditation systems, external quality assurance frameworks, capacity development for internal quality assurance, developing credit transfer systems and enabling student and lecturer mobility.

In terms of this MoU:
- The two organisations will collaborate in areas of mutual interest, develop and manage joint projects, and engage together in advocacy to policy makers and regulatory bodies on Quality Management matters
- SARUA should have the primary responsibility for internal QA capacity development and SAQAN for external QA capacity development

The SADC launched the Regional Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) at the June 2017 meeting of Ministers of Higher Education and Training, Research and Innovation held in Swaziland. Quality Assurance is a vital pillar of this framework, aimed at mobility and related harmonisation issues.
Participate in the next phase of HAQAA Initiative (starting in 2019) as a Southern African representative on the Advisory Board to harmonise African Quality Assurance and Accreditation.

Continue to contribute to the African Union Commission and European Commission Tuning Africa Project for the establishment of an African Credit Transfer System.

Engage the HAQAA Initiative as the southern African representative on the Advisory Board to harmonise African Quality Assurance and Accreditation.

**PROGRAMME 2: DEVELOPMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

**Project for the Development of External and Internal Quality Assurance in the SADC**

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) has expressed an interest in initiating a Southern African programme on strengthening external and internal quality assurance capacities (via SARUA) in higher education institutions and national regulatory bodies (via SAQAN). SARUA is working with DAAD and SAQAN to follow up the October 2017 Regional Workshop on Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and External Quality Assurance (EQA) in Higher Education in Southern Africa (SADC). This workshop is part of a research process to identify the southern African needs for quality assurance capacity development, which lead to the report on the State of Play on Quality Assurance in the SADC (November 2017). SARUA will continue to collaborate with DAAD and SAQAN in the provision of a regional capacity development programme for quality assurance as part of the Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES).

**Erasmus Mundus Funded Project on Quality Assurance and ICT**

The European Commission has invited SARUA to participate in a project on Enhancing Quality Management through ICT Optimization, Supporting a consortium of universities from Eastern and Southern Africa to enhance their quality management systems and leadership through the effective use of ICT to support teaching and learning innovation, new modes of educational delivery, better systems for student tracking, more effective use of data to support decision-making, more effective “smart” university administration, and the possibilities for e-libraries.

Participating universities include:

- South Africa: University of Pretoria; University of the Western Cape
- Rwanda: University of Rwanda; Kigali Independent University; Higher Education Council (HEC)
- Mozambique: CNAQ (National Council for Quality Assurance); Eduardo Mondlane University; University of Zambeze (UNIZAMBEZE)
- Malawi: UbuntuNet; University of Malawi; Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources

The project should commence in 2019.
PROGRAMME 3: QUALITY MANAGEMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

The shared qualifications framework envisaged for the region will focus on formal qualifications for public and private universities in the Southern African Development Community. The need exists for a complementary focus on continuing education and on finding a solution for the current lack of appropriate recognition of shorter learning interventions.

For several years now, members of the Association for Short Learning Programmes in Higher Education (ASLPHE) have shared ideas on the response of universities to a fluid and often confusing regulatory environment as far as non-formal learning offerings by universities is concerned. SARUA has been approached by the group to host the work of the initiative as it has the reach to take the work into the region.

UNITAR has recognised that the objectives of the proposed activity converge with the work of the Partnership for the Green Economy (PAGE) in the area of Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) learning in the following ways (rephrased here to include universities in the SADC region):

- The establishment of a mechanism for quality assurance and accreditation of continuing education programmes has significant potential to upscale the provision of, and funding for, quality short courses for public servants on various issues (also those related to the Green Economy, which is a core focus of UNITAR);

- The quality assurance guidelines for short courses provided by HEIs in southern Africa can be aligned with the SDGs and IGE principles, and thus ensure that sustainability considerations are built into all training programmes, aiming for formal recognition through this mechanism;

- More appropriate recognition will stimulate the demand and the supply for easily accessible, quality e-learning programmes on IGE offered by HEIs, in line with the technological reality of the 4th Industrial Revolution, as well as PAGE’s approach to providing IGE learning on a global scale;

- As a global provider of short training programmes for policy makers and professionals, UNITAR has indicated that it can provide methodological and technical support for the process of setting up a self-regulating, quality assurance mechanism. On an institutional level UNITAR applies a quality assurance framework to ensure the design, methodologies and evaluation of learning events and activities is of the highest standard and is consistent across the various programmes of the institute;

- Furthermore, UNITAR makes use of international best practices in this field and makes use of a set of guidelines for organizational evaluation capacity building (the “ECB guidelines”) as an international standard that provides recognition and certification for e-learning programmes.
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 4
Technology-Enabled Higher Education Innovation
(Higher Education in a Digital Era)

The European Commission’s Digital4Development” (D4D) strategy stresses that “digitalisation can be a powerful tool to improve access and equity in education, delivery of quality learning and teaching, teacher’s professional development as well as education management, governance and administration”.

UbuntuNet has invited SARUA, and the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) to collaborate in the Africa Connect Programme (Phase 3) – a partnership between the European Commission and UbuntuNet Alliance. The project is funded by the European Union’s Directorate for Development and Cooperation (DG DEVCO) with the overall objective of contributing to the reduction of poverty, brain drain and the digital divide by unlocking the potential of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for sustainable development in Africa.

In Phase 3, the European Union is setting aside a considerable portion of the grant to work on developing the capacity of higher education institutions to use ICT to support innovation in the academic project, and across support and administrative functions. SARUA, UbuntuNet and the IUCEA will hold a project planning workshop on 20-21 November 2018. This is a vital opportunity for all SARUA member institutions to participate in projects that will equip them to make optimal use of digital technologies to support the achievement of their core mission.

STRATEGY ENABLER
Regional Profile of Higher Education in the SADC

A reliable profile of higher education in the SADC is the essential basis for intelligent higher education planning, policy development and capacity development.

There is currently no reliable and up to date regional HE database in the SADC. The aim is to develop a “living database” that captures information relevant to multiple stakeholders (students, parents, International, Continental and Regional Agencies, HE Ministries and Regulatory Bodies, HEIs, Science and Technology Ministries and Institutes, Business and Industry).

SARUA is in discussion with the African Association of Universities (AAU) and the SADC Secretariat to recognise SARUA as the official custodian of the Higher Education Profile database for the SADC. The development of this database and associated operational capacity for ongoing maintenance is an extensive multi-year project which will require considerable funding. SARUA intends to use the database of the International Association of Universities for establishing a baseline for all of its current and planned programmes and projects.
SARUA’S TRACK RECORD
2007 – 2018

SARUA has progressed through three distinct funding phases in its 11 years of existence and has achieved much in terms of Research, Governance & Leadership, Capacity Development and Curriculum Innovation. In the absence of a regional, government-support funding mechanism for SARUA, the continued sustainability of SARUA since 2013 relies primarily on the ability of SADC universities to contribute by way of a SARUA membership subscription.

SADC PROTOCOL ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING (2000)

SARUA was established in 2007 in direct response to the SADC Protocol on Education and Training, Article 7(D):

“Member States agree … to recommend to their universities: (g) to create an association of university Vice Chancellors in the Region as a forum for contributing to the development of regional policy and co-operation in university education and training and research and development.”

Research

SARUA’s research output filled a regional gap where no information was available on the size of the higher education sector, or the shared issues facing SADC universities. Themes addressed include higher education access, universities and development, regional mobility, harnessing ICTs and the impacts of climate change on the SADC region.

The Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Initiative, funded by the European Union in partnership with the African Union, has been established to support the development of a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation system at institutional, national, regional and Pan-African continental level. The Initiative is being implemented by a consortium consisting of international, regional and continental bodies. In 2016, SARUA contributed data on existing quality frameworks in Southern Africa as part of a broader continental study.

Capacity development

UNILEAD Southern Africa was presented for the first time by the University of Oldenburg, DAAD and SARUA in 2016. UNILEAD is a globally delivered short, practice orientated learning programme for young University Leaders in the field of Higher Education Management. The programme is part of the DIES programme (Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies). The methodology was strictly practice orientated and based on case studies and questions derived from participants’ job situations. UNILEAD Southern Africa was presented to 18 university managers from 8 SADC countries and the 2016 programme focused on three topics of (a) Strategic Management, (b) Project Management and (c) Financing and Investment.

The SARUA Digital Universities Programme (SDUP) introduces senior university managers to Digital Translation and Blended Learning in Universities. SARUA, in partnership with the Link Centre at the University of the Witwatersrand, introduced the programme in March 2016, with repeats held once to twice a year. In an era when economies and societies are in transition towards becoming digital economies and information societies, large institutions, such as universities, have the opportunity to design their own digital transitions and this is what the SDUP prepares them for. SARUA will evaluate this programme on the basis of feedback from participants and members as well as the project on technology-enabled higher education innovation with UbuntuNet.
SARUA’s Governance, Leadership and Management (GLM) programme offered a three-pronged set of initiatives:

1. SARUA Vice Chancellor Leadership Exchange Event series
   - ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity: New Capacity, New Opportunities (2011)
   - Investment in Higher Education: New Directions (2011);
   - Internationalisation in Higher Education – Implications for the Knowledge Project in the South (2012);
   - Building the Capacity of Higher Education to Enhance Regional Development (2012);
   - Climate Compatibility Development; Opportunities for Collaborative Research in the SADC region (2014);
   - Universities and Innovation for Inclusive Development (2015);
   - Global Trends in Technology in Higher Education; Opportunities and Challenges for African Universities (2015);

2. Executive Programme of Strategic Focus Events

3. Certificate Course in Higher Education Management (delivered in 2010 and 2012 as Programme for University Leaders in the Southern Africa Region (PULSAR))
By subscribing to SARUA membership your university is ensured of first-hand information and access to regional higher education initiatives and engagements.