

SARUA

SARUA Programme for 2020

Programme Highlights

- SARUA Re-launch: May or June 2020.
- First African Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning: 11-15 May 2020.
- Launch of Phase 2 of Harmonisation of African Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) initiative – date to be confirmed.
- Commencement of Intra-ACP Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) Programme for Climate Change – assisting SADC universities to engage in curriculum innovation, research and innovation for climate adaptation and mitigation.
- Launch of SADC Higher Education Academy: August 2020.
- Sponsorships for 15 Higher Education Leaders from SARUA member universities to attend the Talloires Network Global Leaders' Conference in September 2020, in Boston, U.S.A. – to discuss the development of a regional higher education impact framework.

1 Introduction

Over the past two years, SARUA has repositioned itself to become a vibrant regional higher education association that promotes regional impact through networking, collaboration and partnership. SARUA has identified four interrelated Strategic Focus Areas (SFAs) which will work together to enhance the capacity of higher education institutions in the SADC to engage with the significant developmental challenges that our region faces. These focus areas converge around the theme of building the capacity of a responsive and capable SADC higher education community.

Realising that networking and partnership should extend to continental and global levels, SARUA has begun to establish mutually beneficial relationships with continental and global networks, so that higher education institutions in the SADC region may participate in an authentic and informed manner in the wider debates that impact upon our region, and may benefit optimally from the advantages of international collaboration.

The SARUA 2020 programme that I present to you in this brochure provides our higher education network with a range of carefully planned opportunities for institutional and individual development. In presenting this programme to you, I realize that this is only the start of a process in which our regional institutions will collaborate to build and sustain a vibrant regional higher education network that makes a difference to our region's economic, social and cultural life.

During this initial phase of establishing the Strategic Focus Areas, SARUA will draw on a small number of experts with extensive experience to provide the necessary capacity within each focus area. This is a short-term strategy to position and capacitate SARUA. The medium-term goal is to build a broader network of experts from the SADC who will collaborate within each SFA. SARUA will study best practices in regional higher education consortia to determine how best to strengthen planning and implementation capacity within each focus area, and how to bring the management of SARUA close to its diverse membership.

I invite you to join SARUA in this important journey so that the SADC's higher education institutions may join forces around a compelling agenda for the revitalization of our region.

Martin Oosthuizen

Executive Director

2 SARUA Re-Launch: May or June 2020

SARUA will hold a re-launch event in June 2020, to introduce its revised vision, mission and strategic focus areas to the higher education community in the SADC. We will invite higher education leaders, representatives of higher education ministries and policy bodies, and representatives of regional, continental and international higher education associations, agencies and development partners to engage with SARUA's proposed strategic direction. The SARUA triennial General Meeting will be held after the event, providing an opportunity for SARUA member institutions to chart SARUA's course over the next three years.

The re-launch event will be held in Arusha.

3 Strategic Focus Area One: SADC Higher Education Academy

3.1 Establishment of a SADC Higher Education Academy

During 2020, SARUA will commence work on the establishment of a SADC Higher Education Academy. The Academy intends to create an empowering, supportive environment, in which colleagues from the SARUA network participate in highly relevant capacity development programmes, contribute to thought leadership, and collaborate in the development of policy and position papers that inform regional development and planning. The aim of the Academy is to create a vibrant network of public and private universities, that fosters participative learning, and positions the SADC region as an active participant within the global higher education arena.

The Academy will operate primarily on a virtual basis, supported by a high-quality virtual learning and collaboration environment. It will focus on:

- Thought leadership.
- Higher education leadership dialogues.
- Foresight and evidence-based planning.
- Policy analysis and advice.
- Leadership and management development.
- Teaching and learning development.
- Research development.
- Professional development in support and administrative services.

SARUA will seek ways to engage on the following two issues in all of its programmes, where applicable:

- Embedding the so-called "21st century competences" within academic and outreach programmes, as well as in the competency profile of staff of higher education institutions; and
- Developing appropriate digital skills to ensure that both students and staff are fit for their roles in higher education in the digital age.

3.2 Higher Education Academy Programme for 2020

The Higher Education Academy Programme for 2020 consists of:

- Consultation with the SARUA network around the role and focus of the Academy.
- The establishment of a steering group for the Academy.
- The preparation of a funding proposal for the Academy.
- The launch of the SADC Academy in August 2020 – with a focus on the need for higher education to respond to fundamental changes in society and the world of work, resulting to a large extent from the impact of scientific and technological advances.
- The presentation of a Deans’ capacity development course.
- The presentation of a masterclass in higher education internationalisation.

4 Strategic Focus Area Two: 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, which currently are encapsulated within the United Nations’ Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is critical that higher education institutions in SADC 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. (SARUA understands the concept of “human development” in the broad sense of the UNDP <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/what-human-development>).

During 2020, the SFA for knowledge co-production will focus on two projects:

4.1 Project 1: Development of a Contextually Relevant Framework for Higher Education Engagement/ Impact

SARUA will partner with the Talloires Network to establish a network of SARUA member universities that will work on the development of a framework for higher education engagement in the SADC. In terms of this partnership, SARUA will work with the Talloires Network to introduce and contextualise the Carnegie Engagement Classification Framework in the SADC region. The Talloires Network is an international association of institutions which aims to foster higher education civic engagement (<https://talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu/>).

As a first step in the development of the partnership, the Talloires Network is making full or partial sponsorships available to fifteen higher education leaders from the SARUA network so that they can participate in its Global Leaders’ Conference in September 2020, in Boston, U.S.A. (<https://talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu/blog/news/2019/10/02/talloires-network-leaders-conference-2020/>). The conference, which will be co-hosted by Harvard and Tufts Universities, will provide two breakout sessions for dialogue and exchange about the global community engagement classification, which has been developed and piloted by institutions in the U.S.A., Ireland, Australia

and Canada since 2015. Of crucial significance for the sustainability of this initiatives, is the conference funder's interest in providing funding support for further work on the contextualization of the Carnegie Engagement Classification Framework in the SADC and other African regions, should the higher education leadership from Africa be interested.

This is a tremendously exciting, unique opportunity for higher education leaders from the SARUA network to come together with leaders from the rest of the African continent and the world to shape a global agenda for classifying and supporting higher education impact.

4.2 Project 2: SADC Climate Change Programme

SARUA is one of four Regional Organisations (ROs) that has been invited by the SADC to participate in the Intra-ACP Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) Programme, which is funded in terms of a financing agreement between the Secretariat of the ACP Group of States ("ACP Secretariat") and the European Union (EU). (ACP = African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.) The objective of this four-year programme is to increase the capabilities of SADC Member States to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, in support of the achievement of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), Africa Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and to have their voice better heard in the international climate change negotiations.

In terms of the GCCA+ programme, SARUA will be responsible for building the capacity of SADC universities in the provision of research and education services to support climate change adaptation and mitigation. SARUA welcomes the opportunity to build its extensive SADC Climate Change Innovation Network through the GCCA+ programme. The SARUA Climate Change Network, which was established between 2012 and 2017, led to:

- 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 courseware 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 intends to:

- Update of the country-level mapping study;
- Develop the capacity of universities within the SARUA network to implement the existing master's curriculum, through a range of capacity development opportunities;
- Adapt the master's degree courseware for use in a virtual learning environment;
- Provide for the development of additional courses at the master's level to support the ability of regional actors to participate in climate change policy and negotiation;
- Develop open access courseware on climate change for use in undergraduate programmes;
- Establish a regional climate change and development (CCD) research and innovation network, on the basis of the climate change mapping study which identified seven proposed research themes. The proposed research themes are based on the input of experienced regional stakeholders and

addresses the need for multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research that can support CCD-relevant policies in the SADC region.

5 Strategic Focus Area Three: 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/>);
- Supports the objectives of the *SADC Protocol for Education and Training* (staff and student mobility, credit recognition and transfer); and also
- Recognises the need for higher education institutions to provide high-quality access to opportunities for lifelong learning.

During 2020, the SFA for Institutional Quality Management will focus on the following three projects:

5.1 Good Practice Guidelines for Continuing Education

The accelerating pace of scientific and technological advances is changing the face of learning. Higher education institutions need to provide learners with regular opportunities for upskilling and re-skilling at various stages of their careers. As a result, the provision of high-quality continuing education, which includes continuing professional development, will become an increasingly important aspect of higher education provision.

To support SARUA members in the development of their continuing education activities, SARUA has received seed funding from the *United Nations Institute for Training and Research* (UNITAR) for a project to establish a community of practice (CoP) which, as a first priority, will collaborate in the development of good practice guidelines for continuing education. While the seed funding is initially focused on the South African higher education sector, the project will be expanded to include all SADC countries. Following on this initial project, SARUA intends to establish a network of member institutions that collaborates to assure the quality of continuing education and continuing professional development courses and programmes. As part of this network, SARUA hopes to work with UNITAR to contextualise UNITAR training material relating to the SDGs within the SADC region. In this manner, the project for good practice in continuing education links up to SARUA's strategic focus area for knowledge co-production.

5.2 HAQAA Initiative Phase 2

SARUA will support the implementation of the second phase of the HAQAA (*Harmonisation of African Quality Assurance and Accreditation*) initiative in the SADC region. The HAQAA initiative is funded by the European Commission and part of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. As a strategic regional partner for the implementation of HAQAA Phase 2, SARUA will participate in the advisory board and various development committees and provide various services to contribute to the realization of the HAQAA objectives, namely:

- 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 particular, SARUA's strategic focus area on Institutional Quality Management will focus on the promotion of a quality assurance culture within higher education institutions in the SADC, working within the framework of the *African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance*, the *African Quality Rating Mechanism*, and the regional and continental Qualifications Frameworks.

5.3 Project on Quality Assurance through ICT

Various SARUA member institutions form part of a consortium of universities from Eastern and Southern Africa that will participate in the proposed project on *Enhancing Quality Management through ICT Optimization in African higher education institutions*. The aim of this project is to enhance institutional quality management with respect to:

- the effective use of ICT to support teaching and learning innovation, including new modes of educational delivery;
- to explore the use of ICT to support and enhance institutional quality management (better systems for student tracking; more effective use of data to support decision-making; etc);
- to promote the development of virtual campuses and learning environments;
- to support more effective "smart" university administration;
- To provide international training opportunities for QA and ICT related administrative staff, predicated on practice exchange and knowledge transfer between different higher education systems and institutions, within Africa and with Europe.

The project proposal is currently being submitted to the EU for funding approval in terms of the European Union's *Erasmus Plus Capacity-Building Programme*. This project has strong linkages to SARUA's fourth strategic focus area, namely the digital transformation of higher education in the SADC region.

6 Strategic Focus Area Four: Digital Transformation of Higher Education

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

During 2020, SARUA will focus on two projects:

6.1 Framework for Digital Transformation

SARUA will:

- Develop a concept document to support higher education institutions in the SADC region to engage with and/or advance their processes for digital transformation;
- Consult with its members about the concept document;

- Conduct a needs analysis to determine the needs of member institutions with respect to digital transformation;
- Establish a leadership reference group to provide guidance on this strategic focus area, with the following immediate priorities: i) Develop an appropriate approach and framework towards the support of higher education institutions in SADC on their paths of digital transformation, and ii) Develop a Plan of Action for the strategic focus area;
- Submit a funding proposal in order to secure funding to support a comprehensive programme of activities and projects to support members' institutions in their processes for digital transformation.

6.2 Capacity Development for Digital and Online Learning

- SARUA has entered into an MOU with the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) to collaborate around 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/>). In terms of this MOU, SARUA members will:
 - Be able to take up institutional membership of the OLC at heavily discounted rates,
 - Have 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 set of 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.

- SARUA will collaborate with the OLC to present the OLC Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) at the University of the Western Cape (South Africa) from 11-15 May 2020. (<https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/learn/ielol/> & <https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/learn/ielol-sarua/>). This is the first time that the OLC will present its prestigious IELOL on the African continent. SARUA received 57 applications from almost all the SADC countries to participate and has accepted 42 applications. The programme will be offered by SARUA in collaboration with the OLC at a cost of \$ 1690 compared to the cost of \$ 2900 that the OLC charges participants who attend the Institute in North America. IELOL participants work with colleagues from around the world 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.
- In addition to the substantial saving on the cost of the IELOL programme, applicants were invited to indicate on their applications whether they would need financial support. SARUA has given 15 of the 42 successful applicants a 50% discount on the programme fee (SARUA is funding the scholarships from its 2020 budget).
- Participants in the IELOL programme will be invited to establish a SARUA community of practice to collaborate on projects relating to the digital transformation of higher education.

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. For instance, it provides the basis for understanding and forecasting the supply of graduates in skills areas that are crucial for regional development, and for addressing the specialised skills required by the rapid developments in digital technology. Currently, however, the SADC has no reliable or comprehensive regional HE database in that captures information relevant to multiple stakeholders. To address this need, SARUA submitted a proposal for the development of a regional higher education database to the June 2019 meeting of the SADC Ministers for Education and Training, Science, Technology and Innovation. The meeting approved that:

SARUA develops a higher education database for the SADC in consultation with all key stakeholders in the public and private higher education sectors in the region. The development of the database should follow a phased approach. SARUA should report on progress, including the demonstration of a prototype, to the Ministers' meeting in June 2020. (Decision 26)

The development of this database is an extensive multi-year project which requires considerable funding. During 2020, SARUA will work on the first phase of the project, consisting of the design and development of a suitable technological platform for the database, as well as the capturing of an initial data-set from a limited number of countries (South Africa, Botswana and Namibia).

8 Governance

The SARUA Executive Committee will meet on the following dates:

- 5 March
- 21 May
- 13 August
- 12 November.

An important aspect of the Exco's work during 2020 will be to bring the Exco members closer to the oversight of SARUA's Strategic Focus Areas.