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**MULTINATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND OPERATIONAL CENTRE
(ECA/MULPOC) FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

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**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA DEVELOPMENT
INFORMATION SYSTEM (ESADIS) PROJECT**

I. BACKGROUND

The Eastern and Southern Africa Development Information System (ESADIS) Centre has now been in operation for four years since its official inception in February, 1993. Its operationalisation has been slowed down due to lack of adequate resources. To this end, ESADIS has been unable to meet fully its original mandate to accelerate the development of information and documentation infrastructure and related activities and the exchange of information in the member States of the Eastern and Southern African subregion with the assistance of Pan-African Development Information System (PADIS) Central Co-ordinating Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

This notwithstanding, the assistance by the Government of the Republic of Zambia in seconding staff to the ESADIS project has enabled the Centre carry out quite a number of activities during its four years of existence. The Government's support had also been complemented by ECA from its extra-budgetary resources. These efforts had enabled ESADIS to be the only Subregional Centre in operation under the aegis of PADIS.

The need to support the Centre by providing it with more resources has long been recognized.

The Seventh meeting of the Standing Committee on Standardisation and Harmonization of Information Systems in Africa held in Addis Ababa, 18-20 November, 1996 deliberated on the issue of financial assistance to ESADIS and endorsed a recommendation to this effect.

In an effort to augment the resources of the Centre, the ESADIS staff organized some training workshops and courses during

1995 and 1996, on Information Technology in order to raise some resources for the operation of the Centre. Unfortunately, the momentum could not be maintained due to lack of equipment at the Centre. The hiring of the equipment was too expensive to carry out. The training programme had since been temporarily suspended. In spite of these difficulties, ESADIS project had been able to carry out a number of activities during 1995/1996 period.

II. SOME ACHIEVEMENTS

(a) Training Workshops and Courses Organized by ESADIS

The ESADIS Centre organized a training workshop from 16-24 April, 1996 on Standardization and Harmonisation of Information and Documentation Systems based on microcomputer PADIS Methodology for document analysis and the use of CDS/ISIS. The workshop proved to be popular because it provided the Librarians and Documentalists with new methodologies for organizing their own libraries and information Centres. Equally, as an outcome of this workshop, the use of ECA/MULPOC Library by outside users has proved to be popular. The Computer Internet browsing and electronic mail services have equally proved popular amongst the users.

In 1996, ESADIS prepared Training Prospectus on the following:

- (i) Information Technology
- (ii) Library Management Courses, and
- (iii) Consultancy Services in Management Information Systems Development.

The purpose for preparing the prospectus was to inform the would be users of the type of training courses that the Centre could offer at a fee. Based on this information, a number of

requests were received, and the Centre organized the following training workshops.

- In March 1996 an Appreciation Course in various aspects of Information Technology was conducted for 7 participants from National Agriculture Information Services, MULPOC Professional Officers, UNDP and Goldman Insurance Company.
- From 16-24 April, 1996, training workshop on Harmonisation and Standardization of Working Procedures and Methods of Information Systems and Documentation based on Microcomputer PADIS Methodologies for Document Analysis was organized for 16 Documentalists/Librarians from various documentation centres in Zambia.
- In June, 1996, a workshop was conducted for 13 Economists from the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry; and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries on the use of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

In addition, the Centre provided consultancy services to the following:

- Export Board of Zambia, Netherlands Embassy, National Commission for Development Planning (NCDP) and the University of Zambia on Harmonization and Standardization of Working Procedures and Methods of Information Systems and Documentation based on Microcomputer PADIS Methodologies for Document Analysis.
- Several Government Ministries/Department and NGOs on Development and Implementation of Management Information systems.

(b) Upgrading of Skills: Training Undertaken by ESADIS Staff

The Zambian Government continued to provide human resource development support to ESADIS by affording opportunities to some of the Centre's staff members to attend short-term courses or workshops. These training programmes have enabled the staff to keep abreast with the Technological Development in the information field. The staff who benefited from Government of Zambia training support programme during the period under review were:

- The Documentalist attended: (i) Zambia Library Association workshop held at the British Council, Lusaka (28-29 June, 1996); (ii) one month library visits/attachment, studies in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1-28 October, 1996).

- The Deputy Director, attended: (i) The International Symposium on Advanced Information Technologies for Governance and Public Administration (ITGPA) Symposium held in Beijing, China (June, 1996); (ii) several in-country seminars and workshops on Management Information Systems Development.

The aim of the Symposium was as follows:

- (i) To provide participants from developing countries with opportunities to learn and exchange experience and information on the conceptual, technical and managerial skills on dimension of information system for information technology and information resources, systems for public administration and development, and management.

- (ii) To facilitate and compare development strategies and implementations of information infrastructure building and establishment of government information systems; and to explore the possibility of international co-operation in the development of information systems related to the Public Administration and Development Management; and
- (iii) To review the progress that the developing countries have made in the past decades in computerization and information systems development and identify the needs of technical assistance in information infrastructure building and the use of information technology in public administration.

The resolutions and recommendations made at the symposium were in support of ESADIS Project, and other subregional centres. The aim to:

"Encourage developing countries to utilize the services of ESADIS, WADIS, NADIS and CADIS projects in the acceleration of development of information and documentation infrastructure and related activities as well as the exchange of information in the member States of Africa with the assistance of PADIS".

The International Forum on Information Technology for Development (ITFD) Trust Fund will be established to assist in the information infrastructure building.

III. AREAS FOR FUTURE WORK AND COLLABORATION

ESADIS is currently involved in the CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME FOR ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT (CBPEM) being implemented by the government of the Republic of Zambia and the UNDP. The overall development objective of the CBPEM is to strengthen Zambia's capacity to formulate, implement and monitor its own strategies and policies in economic management for long-term sustainable development.

The aspect of CBPEM which is of interest to ESADIS Centre is one on: "Information and Data Generation" - UNDP/GRZ-ZAM/92/016 of which the Central Statistical Office (CSO) is the Government implementing agency, and which is in line with the Centre's Work Plan. The ESADIS as a co-operating agency to the project is expected to provide technical assistance as need arises.

In order to co-ordinate and implement the ESADIS and CBPEM activities and objectives in the development of the integrated Management Information System, the ESADIS Deputy Director, has been appointed Coordinator of the Technical Steering Committee.

The cooperation established so far between CBPEM, COMESA (TINET) and ESADIS can surely be strengthened further by reinforcing ESADIS in line with the projects' activities and objectives which are rather similar. Such work relationship avoids duplications in the development and implementation of costly Information Systems likely to arise by virtue of different implementing agencies. Thus, the approach should be directed towards the development of standard and Integrated Management Information Systems which are cheaper, sustainable and acceptable, to a wide range of users due to the common base rationale.

To this effect, ESADIS should seriously be supported technically and financially to permit the Centre build up the Information Technology Infrastructure and afford connectivity with CBPEM and TINET much to the advantage of the member States in the subregion.

IV. FUTURE OF ESADIS

It is imperative to note that the success of the full operationalisation of ESADIS is very much dependent on funding from member States especially during the initial stages. Such support will enable ESADIS to build up the Information Technology Infrastructure. This will eventually enable the Centre to generate its own resources for the running of its programmes.

In view of the very important role that the ESADIS can play in facilitating the exchange of information amongst the member States of Eastern and Southern African subregion; and coordinating with Information Centres in the subregion; further given that the pace of development may be even slower if the countries are not able to access information at the right time, it becomes imperative for the member States to devote some parts of their resources in supporting the Centre's activities. In this connection, ESADIS would like to appeal to the member States of our subregion to make generous contribution to the work of the Centre.

It is equally in order to record appreciation to the assistance that has been rendered by the Government of Zambia in seeing the project to get off the ground. It is our hope that other member States will follow on the footsteps of the Government of Zambia to bail the project out and to strengthen its capacity building programmes within our subregion. Information is now key to our own development. Let us enhance it.

In order for the ESADIS Centre to carry out its programme of activities, a budget estimate is attached herewith.

Budget Estimate for the Implementation of ESADIS Programme

1997

- (a) Carry out feasibility studies and advisory missions to member states and subregional Inter-Governmental Organizations regarding information technology and development data generation, storage, and access. (US\$ 36,000)
- (b) Development of Statistical Databases for the subregion. (US\$ 10,000)
- (c) Purchase of micro-computers and LANs/WANs systems equipment for use in database maintenance, electronic data communications and training of staff from participating centres in the subregion. (US\$300,000)
- File Server, 2 x 486
 - Workstation, 5 x 386/486
 - Microcomputer, 4 x 486
 - Uninterruptable Power Supply, x 6
 - Printer/Laser, x 3
 - Printer/Dot, x 2
 - Scanner, x 1
 - Modem, x 26
 - Ethernet Lan/Wan Parts
 - Network Software (Ethernet Lan/Wan)
 - Software (Operating, Systems, E-Mail, Internet DBMS, Word Processor, Presentation, Desktop, OCR Publishing, Spreadsheet, Utilities, Graphics).
- (d) Review of TINET and the member States statistical databases. (US\$ 50,000)
- (e) Establishing LAN/WAN systems for connectivity with PADIS, ESADIS/MULPOC subregional focal points COMESA, SADC and down loading of databases, Internet, and WWW and Electronic Mail Services. (US\$ 20,000)

- (f) Conduct subregional training courses for trainers in the member States in various aspects of information technology. (US\$ 50,000)
- (g) Establishment of LAN systems in member States focal points and loading of databases, Internet, WWW and Electronic Mail Services. (US\$ 60,000)
- (h) Establishing the subregion's WAN system connectivity and commissioning the Statistical Databases, Internet, WWW and Electronic mail services. (US\$ 40,000)
- (i) Advanced Training for ESADIS staff in various aspects of Information Technology. (US\$ 35,000)
- Advanced Courses in Design and Management of Databases
 - Documentation and Information Management using Information Technology
 - Project Management
 - Advanced Courses in Design, Cabling and Management of Local and Wide Area Computer Networks
 - Advanced Courses in Various Computer Applications
 - Various Workshops and Seminars

Total Full Operationalisation Costs = US\$ 601,000
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