

The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa



**Methodology Workshop on Consolidating Democratic
Governance in the SADC Region**

Workshop Proceedings Report

SADC Regional Workshop 7th November 2003
Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa

With the support of the Finland Embassy, Johannesburg South Africa and
SIDA-SAREC, Harare, Zimbabwe

1.0. Introduction

1.1. The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) organised and hosted a methodology workshop for its regional project entitled "Consolidating Democratic Governance in the SADC Region", at Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa on the 7th November 2003. The Workshop brought together a number of regional experts in the field of democratic governance from the SADC region and beyond. The timeliness and relevance of this project is beyond doubt; the SADC region has experienced a momentous democratic transition since the early 1990s and it is abundantly evident that some review of progress made and challenges that lie ahead is required. If it is accepted that some form of transition has happened in the SADC region, then one of the major policy challenges that face the region is precisely how this momentum is kept and in the process democratic consolidation takes place. This study is bound to complement other similar exercises especially reviews of ten years of democracy in South Africa and Mozambique. It is also worthy of note that the next two years will witness a hype of political activity in the SADC region that is relevant to this study; five SADC states will hold their general elections in 2004 (namely Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa) while in 2005 four more SADC states will hold their general elections (namely Angola, Mauritius, Tanzania and Zimbabwe).

1.2. The workshop participants included representatives from Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These representatives are responsible for undertaking and coordinating the study in their respective countries under the guidance of the Director of Research at EISA, Dr. Khabele Matlosa, who is the regional coordinator for the programme. Furthermore, Prof. Jørgen Elklit of Denmark, an EISA Board Member, attended the Workshop as a renowned authority in the field and an EISA Board member.

1.3. The workshop provided a valuable forum for critical thinking on how best to implement this important regional programme on democratic consolidation taking cue from other similar initiatives in different parts of the world as well as previous or on-going work in this area in the SADC region itself. Participants at the workshop emphasised the need to learn and complement other research initiatives in the field of democratic governance in the SADC region and beyond. Participants were able to clarify conceptual ambiguities around the notion of democratic consolidation, share experiences and techniques on the appropriate methodology for implementing the research programme over the next three years.

2.0. Workshop Objective

2.1. The democratisation process in Africa to date has been extremely important in re-orienting African political systems away from authoritarian rule towards multiparty and competitive political governance, in particular by jettisoning military dictatorship and thus deliberately steering politics away from bullets (coercion and sanctions) towards ballots (consensus and persuasion). The Southern Africa region has not been an exception to this general positive political trend in Africa. In fact, by all indications, Southern Africa is doing quite well relative to other parts of the African continent in respect of the nurturing of democracy.

2.2. Presently, there is little or scattered information available on the state of democracy in the region. Hence the need for an objective and independent analysis of the state of democratic governance in each of the states that have undergone democratic transition. It is against this background that EISA has proposed to advance the process of democratic consolidation through research, policy advocacy, information exchange and lobby and advocacy among practitioners, scholars and civil society organisations involved directly or indirectly in the governance process in the SADC region. The principal objectives of the workshop were to:

- Critically interrogate the conceptual contour and depth of the project;
- Discuss the scope and coverage of the project;
- Agree on appropriate methodology to be adopted in assessing the state of democracy in the SADC region; and
- Endorse the requisite research instrument to be used in gathering and analysing the data.

3.0. Welcome and Introduction to the Workshop

The Executive Director of EISA, Mr. Denis Kadima, welcomed the participants and introduced the project. In his speech, he highlighted the critical importance of understanding what the SADC region needs to do in order to improve democratic governance. He informed participants that EISA has a profound interest in the unfolding process of democratic governance in the SADC region, hence its major regional meeting of the same week on “Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation in the SADC Region”, which had just ended. On face-value, it might seem overly ambitious for us to embark on this project just after ten years of multiparty democracy in the region, for the immediate question then is how do we expect democratic consolidation in such a short space of time. However, it is crucial for think tanks within the region to start interrogating the need to take the countries of the region forward in fostering democratic governance. It was noted that methodologies are diverse in governance research, hence the need for the workshop participants to come up with an agreeable methodological framework for implementing the project. Based on EISA’s experience in conducting similar projects on electoral process in the region, it will be crucial that research findings emanating from the project are published regularly and timeously without necessarily waiting until the end of the project.

4.0. Workshop Proceedings

Ms Nomboniso Gasa, Gender Policy Analyst from South Africa, facilitated the entire workshop.

4.1. Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Director of Research, Publications and Information Department at EISA and the regional project coordinator provided a general introduction of the project. This session revisited the objective of the research programme with specific focus on conceptualising the content of investigation within a dynamic process of democratic evolution. It was emphasized that the critical entry-point for any research enterprise that seeks to assess the state of democratic governance within the region should be the recognition that the entire African continent has made tremendous strides towards an embrace and institutionalization of multi-party democratic governance.

4.2. Accordingly, the conceptual focus of the study is to discover the complex dynamics that mark the continuum between transition and consolidation in terms of progress and problems relating to democratic governance. Having undertaken such a situational analysis, then it would be useful to explore prospects for sustainable democratic governance in each of the SADC member states. Put somewhat differently in question format; (a) Have SADC member states undergone democratic transition anyway? (b) Are SADC member states then beginning to consolidate democratic governance? (c) Or has the transition remained an ephemeral phenomenon that is reversible? (d) What elements of the democratic process paint a bright prospect for consolidation? And (e) What aspects of the democratic process suggest possible negative reversals of democracy? This research questions a fundamental dilemma: Challenges facing the SADC member-states towards consolidating democratic governance on one hand and the danger of complacency following recent positive political developments in the region which could lead to new forms of authoritarianism or in fact a reversal to old forms of authoritarianism. Thus, a situational analysis of the state of democracy in each one of the SADC member states is a useful guide or barometer to gather scientific evidence and make informed judgment on whether or not democratic governance is consolidating or there are possibilities or reversals or relapse into new forms of authoritarian rule behind the façade of democratic rhetoric as it were.

4.3. The recent volume entitled *The Compendium of Elections in Southern Africa* compiled by Tom Lodge, Denis Kadima and David Pottie and published by EISA in 2002 deals more with the transition without uncovering the path to democratic consolidation. This volume provides a valuable stock of information regarding democratic governance in the SADC region and the centrality of elections in the process. This project represents a follow-up to that earlier work by EISA and moves the debate forward by investigating the intricacies of the current democratic moment with a view to discover whether or not political gains achieved thus far are consolidating. This project aims to provide a detailed analytical coverage and scope along eight thematic areas namely (1) socio-

economic development; (2) government and non-state public institutions; (3) civil society, political participation and representation; (4) women and men in governance; (5) constitutional and legal framework for governance; (6) conflict and conflict management; (7) media and governance; and (8) international dimensions of governance.

4.4. The research programme will be implemented by EISA in collaboration with regional partners through a three-pronged approach:

- Comparative analysis
- Case study approach; and
- Policy dialogue

All these three methods of research will complement each other in that comparative analysis will be enriched more by case studies and the results of both comparative studies and case studies will be shared and discussed through both national and regional policy dialogue arrangements organized by EISA. Regional comparative studies will cover the following variables or indicators of this study: (a) Security and governance; (b) Economic Governance; (c) Media and Governance; (d) leadership and Governance; and (e) Constitutionalism and governance. These five indicators are chosen for a broader regional comparative analysis given their strategic significance to the governance project in the SADC region.

4.5. It is for these reasons that EISA has chosen to profile these five aspects or indicators of democratic culture and practice on a more regional and comparative basis. The rest of the other indicators would be given a case study spotlight and not so much because they are unimportant or insignificant in their own right, but rather because specific country experiences would illuminate the distinctiveness and similarities of governance arrangements in these areas in the selected countries under spotlight. Policy dialogue will form a prominent feature of all the studies in both comparative and case study methodologies. Policy dialogue would involve focus group discussions, workshops, seminars, roundtables and conferences. A common questionnaire will be developed to guide the case studies and separate questionnaires would also be developed to guide the regional comparative studies.

5.0. General Discussion

5.1. It was generally accepted by all participants that democracy and consolidation is a continuous process. Neither democracy nor its consolidation can ever become a complete and finished process; for both are always in a state of flux and thus ever evolving. There is a consensus within the region that transition (at least in terms of method of government alternance) has been achieved all the SADC member states bar three namely Angola, Swaziland and DRC. Countries like Mauritius and Botswana are on the path of consolidation but where they are on the trajectory is exactly not clear because there still serious challenges of alternation within these democracies. Is it adequate to say that a system is consolidated without alternation? More so in Botswana than in Mauritius, to be sure. It is widely accepted that the SADC region has undergone a democratic transition away from authoritarian rule of the past marked, in the main, by one-person rule, one-party rule and even military juntas of the 1960s-80s towards embracing and institutionalising some form of multiparty democratic governance of sorts. Undergoing a democratic transition is surely one thing, while institutionalizing democratic culture and practice is quite another. The region still faces a plethora of democratic deficits that still need serious attention if democratic consolidation is to occur and endure.

5.2. The main value of casting the discussion in terms of transition and continuing to consolidation is to remind ourselves that we are actually talking about a process and this process is the democratisation process. Therefore, the issue becomes what sort of analytical tools do we need to study an evolving and unfolding process. It is thus imperative that three (3) main research procedures are employed in this situational analysis namely: (a) explanation of the continuum between transition and consolidation in each country; (b) description of progress, prospects and problems of the democracy project; and (c) analysis evidence that emerges from the research by way of findings from desk research, interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). Thus both the case study and comparative approaches will serve us well in this regard. Both will help us explain why country A is in a much more advanced stage of that process, and why country B is in a much more difficult position, and why in fact there has been stagnation and even reversal in other countries. It also raises the issue of the need to be sensitive to the fact that the region certainly is not homogenous and there is need for sensitivity of the non-homogenous nature of the experiences in those various countries.

5.3. A fairly robust opinion was canvassed around the need to think outside the narrow confinement of the liberal notion of democratic consolidation. For instance, the research should deliberately steer away from traditional approaches that confine democratic discourses merely to such formal institutions and actors including parliament, political parties, opposition parties and government. Much as these are crucial and would form part of the debate in the project, we intend to transcend traditional approaches by interrogating the

multivariate roles and influences of the citizens through, inter alia, social movements, in the democratic process. Concepts of democratic consolidation must ensure that different political realities are adequately reflected. Notion of transition should not be circumscribed to the notion of consolidated democracy. The research project should be designed to explain what is going on in the region by asking basic research questions formulated as questions about causes and effects, and contextualised within Southern African political, economic, social, cultural context much as lessons of experience could still be drawn from other parts of the world. It is important, if this project is going to contribute to our understanding of what is going on in the region, that we address our minds to these kinds of questions.

5.4. The key sets of research questions would interrogate the notion of transition within SADC with particular focus on democratisation. Following from previous study conducted by EISA, the first set of research questions that this project is going to explore revolves around whether or not the transition has taken place, and what type of transition? The second segment of questions would run somewhat like this, in what ways can we argue that democracy is consolidating? The answer to that, will come from the analysis of the eight thematic areas proposed for this study. Now the third set of questions revolves around scenario-building or some kind of futuristic research and exploration. It is a kind of scenarios on the basis of evidence unveiled through our studies in terms of whether or not there's consolidation, what do we see as the future of democracy within a particular country or even within the whole SADC region. So, these three sets of questions are proposed as a framework in terms of, couching the research questions. Although EISA have not been specific, because it is still going through a process of conceptualisation and clarification, the participants need to agree on whether or not there is necessity for a common instrument and the kinds of questions that have to get into each of the components. Most importantly, the questionnaires must be standardised to allow for comparison across the countries.

5.5. The listing of the eight thematic areas is not merely an arbitrary shopping list. Those eight things are not put there arbitrarily. It was based on systematic thinking in terms of how EISA had attempted to define consolidation in the concept paper. The main value of casting the discussion in terms of transition and consolidation is that "transition and consolidation" is a process. Hence, the need to explain what is happening within that process and the differences that exist within countries in the SADC region. At the same time be sensitive to the different experience within countries.

5.6. The project should not take on a very descriptive approach to research, yet being analytical and explanatory in its thrust. It should focus at providing explanation on why differences between the various countries exist. For instance what would account for the different democratisation experiences in Swaziland and in Botswana? But also the research must answer some complex questions why there are some similarities between some countries. Once again, this is why both case study and comparative approaches come in handy for this exercise. It

is very clear that we are aiming at comparative, regional analysis, which will allow us to conclude that there is a certain connection, and that some factors are more interesting and more important than others in understanding what is going on in the region.

5.7. The research should focus on explaining the contribution of political institutions and civil society (e.g. Trade unions, NGOs, CBOs, Human Rights Institutions, Professional Bodies etc.) to democratisation in the region. In Mozambique, political institutions are more an obstacle to democratisation than civil society. Civil society groups often contribute more to consolidation of democracy.

5.8. The research should interface with other studies conducted regionally and internationally such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and IDEA Democracy Assessment project which covers some aspects of economic governance. The UNECA study is a major governance project in Africa that has given adequate attention to economic governance. It is the most recent and comprehensive study on monitoring progress towards governance underway in various African countries including few selected SADC states. The value of this research lies in the approach on economic governance because there is little research conducted on a comparative regional basis on economic governance.

5.9. Undoubtedly, media is one important indicator of whether or not a robust democratic governance regime is consolidating or not. Freedom of expression and transparency of rule is judged by, among others, a thriving and vibrant media unhindered by centralised state control and hegemony of ruling parties. This study will complement effort made by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in this field of governance research in the SADC region by investigating the political economy of the media – ownership of the media, and its relationship to power as well as the development of community media. Other thematic areas suggested by the participants include: governance and human security, constitutionalism, technology and democratic governance, and SADC as a regional integration block will be considered as a cross cutting theme.

5.10. Research for research's sake is an exercise in futility. All research endeavours ought to aim at concrete outcomes in terms of influencing or changing behaviour and policy perspectives as part of positive transformation of society. Thus, social science research in general and governance research in particular should not be undertaken merely for pure academic purposes alone in abstract fashion using high-flying jargon incomprehensible to both policy makers and the ordinary people in Africa. Yes, granted, this does not in anyway suggest that a theoretical engagement in governance research should be abandoned, but rather that this should be done in such a manner that it does not detract the research enterprise is not devoid of social relevance and responsiveness. Neither does this suggest that high quality scientific rigor in governance research needs to be scaled down, but rather that scientific research ought to be complemented by actual development orientation and

policy relevance of the research process and its specific outcomes. In essence, therefore, the research process, methods used to undertake the research enterprise and the outcome of such research are as good as its utility by policy makers and communities alike in bettering their lives in today's globalizing world. Much as research is all about knowledge creation, it is also about positive social change.

5.11. One way of approaching the methodological issue is to combine all the countries in the region into different groups – reflect on the commonalities and differences at the same time controlling for the differences within particular groups. The participants further expressed the need to investigate the extent and come to an understanding of what is unfolding in the region and how it relates to democratisation.

5.12. The question of the recipients of the research output was also highlighted as a critical issue to be considered by the project. It is agreed that who the audience are will affect the whole methodology employed by different researchers in this project. It was agreed that different publication formats will be used in dissemination the research output, which will be targeted to different target groups in the region.

6.0. Conclusion and Way Forward

6.1. The workshop paved the way into implementing an assessment of democratic governance through series of socio, politico and economic determinants in the SADC region. The study will be about (a) describing, (b) explaining and (c) analysing the state of democracy in the SADC region such that it includes rigorous situational analysis premised on comparative and case study approaches. Three main research procedures will be employed namely:

- Desk research;
- Interviews; and
- Focus group discussions.

The study will also take into account other studies going on in the field and find a strategic way to address other pertinent issues as gender, constitutionalism and security.

The following practical way forward was enumerated by the EISA Executive Director, Mr. Denis Kadima:

- Following from the workshop, additional funds will be raised by EISA to facilitate uninterrupted implementation of the project within a realistic time frame in order to ensure a periodical publication of project output;
- EISA to constitute an International Advisory Team, which will facilitate comparative analysis;
- EISA to re-work the concept paper as well as refine further the methodology.

7.0 Attachments

7.1 List of Participants

<p>Dr Gloria Somolekae Kellogg Foundation Botswana Tel: 09267 3928729 Fax: 09267 713 06892 Email: somolekg@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Dr Khabele Matlosa Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) Tel: 0927 11 482 5495 Fax: 0927 11 482 6163 Email: Khabele@eisa.org.za</p>
<p>Mr. Rafiq Hajat Institute for Policy Interaction Malawi Tel: 09265 167 4946 Email: ipj@africa-online.net</p>	<p>Mr. Amedee Darga Straconsultant Mauritius Tel: 09230 210 7177 Email: straconsult@intnet.mu</p>
<p>Dr Luis Brito CEDE Mozambique Tel: 09258 1 313 590 Fax: 09258 1 309 061</p>	<p>Dr Joshua Mzizi University of Swaziland Swaziland Tel: 092685 185108/4011 Fax: 09268 5185276 Email: joshzizi@uniswacc.uniswa.sz</p>
<p>Dr Chris Landsberg Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) Johannesburg, South Africa Tel: 0927 11 642 9820 Fax: 0927 11 643 4654 Email: chris@cps.org.za</p>	<p>Ms Nomboniso Gasa African Nationalist Congress (ANC) Johannesburg, South Africa Tel 0927 83 451 9321 Fax: 0927 11 487 0305</p>
<p>Mr Kondwani Chirambo Institute for Democracy South Africa (IDASA) Email: kondwani@idasa.org.za</p>	<p>Dr Jotham Momba University of Zambia Email: jmomba@hss.unza.zm</p>
<p>Prof. Lloyd Sachikonye University of Zimbabwe Zimbabwe Tel: 092634 330 211 Fax: 09263 4 333 345 Email: sachi@zol.co.zw</p>	<p>Prof. Jørgen Elklit Aarhus University Copenhagen, Denmark Tel: 0945 894 21133 Fax: 0945 861 39839 Email: elklit@ps.au.dk</p>
<p>Mr Denis Kadima Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) Tel: 0927 11 482 5495 Fax: 0927 11 482 6163 Email: Kadima@eisa.org.za</p>	<p>Mr Wole Olaleye Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) Tel: 0927 11 482 5495 Fax: 0927 11 482 6163 Email: wole@eisa.org.za</p>
<p>Ms. Shumbana Karume Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) Tel: 0927 11 482 5495 Fax: 0927 11 482 6163 Email: Shumbana@eisa.org.za</p>	<p>Mr Sydney Letsholo Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) Tel: 0927 11 482 5495 Fax: 0927 11 482 6163 Email: Sydney@eisa.org.za</p>
<p>Ms Nkgakong Mokonyane Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) Tel: 0927 11 482 5495 Fax: 0927 11 482 6163 Email: nkgakong@eisa.org.za</p>	

7.2 Programme



Workshop Programme

Consolidating Democratic Governance in the SADC Region

Indaba Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa
Friday, 7th November 2003

08h30-09h00	Registration
09h00-09h15	Welcome Remarks Mr. Denis Kadima, Executive Director, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, South Africa
09h15-09h30	Introduction to the Workshop and Expected Outcomes Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Senior Advisor-Research, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa , South Africa
09h30-10h00	Introductions by Participants and their Expectations
10h00-10h15 Tea	
Session One: Introduction to the Project and its Significance	
Facilitator:	Ms Nomboniso Gasa, Gender Policy Analyst, South Africa
10h15-10h45	Introduction to the Democratic Consolidation Study Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Senior Advisor, Research, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
10h45-11h45	General Discussion

Session Two: Methodological Frameworks for the Project

Facilitator: Ms Nomboniso Gasa, Gender Analyst, South Africa

11h45-12h00 Research Methods and Instruments
Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Senior Advisor-Research, EISA

12h00-12h30 General Discussion

12h30-13h00 Way Forward and Official Closure
Mr. Denis Kadima, Executive Director, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, South Africa.

13h00-14h00 Lunch

Free Afternoon

Workshop Rapporteur

Wole Olaleye - Research Fellow, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa

Workshop Coordinating Team

Khabele Matlosa - Senior Advisor, Research, EISA

Claude Kabemba - Programme Manager, EISA

Shumbana Karume - Research Fellow, EISA

Wole Olaleye - Research Fellow, EISA

Sydney Letsholo - Research Assistant, EISA

Nkgakong Mokonyane – Administrative Assistant, Research, EISA