



AMDIN REGIONAL AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE WORKSHOPS MDI ASSESSMENT INITIATIVES

BACKGROUND:

Capacity deficits in public sector employees in African countries are frequently cited as one of the key constraints in respect of implementing a strong development agenda for Africa. Attention is now turning to the MDIs as vehicles for addressing such capacity constraints. However, we know that MDIs themselves are experiencing their own constraints. These can be attributed to a complex mix of factors such as funding models; physical infrastructure; human resource limitations; dwindling intellectual culture and policy influence of MDIs; etc. etc.

AMDIN was created by African MDIs themselves in 2005 in order to strengthen their own capacities through processes of collaboration and resource sharing, and is being recognized as “the capacity developer of capacity developers” by, amongst others, the All Africa Conference of Ministers for Public/ Civil Service.

One of the most critical approaches to our capacity development efforts are peer learning and knowledge exchange between our MDIs and other critical stakeholders.

In fulfilling AMDIN’s role and facilitating capacity development for MDIs themselves, the partnership of AMDIN, ENA, Senegal and the UNDP are embarking on this very important process of organizing three regional workshops this year with the following aims in mind:

- Developing an improved understanding of the operational and policy environments of the MDIs in the respective sub-regions
- Assessing the capacity development needs of MDIs in the sub-region and determine their expectations of AMDIN
- Providing a platform for knowledge exchange and peer learning
- Mobilising MDIs in the sub-region for internal change management processes and addressing policy issues that constrains operational environments through a process of advocacy and lobbying

- Improving knowledge of MDIs of the existing and planned work/ products/ processes of AMDIN and secure buy-in / cooperation from MDIs for future participation in the activities of AMDIN
- Strengthening relations between MDIs in the sub-region
- Improving AMDIN's Dbases regarding regional experts and existing knowledge resources, e.g. curricula, teaching case studies, etc.

OUTPUTS:

- A workshop report addressing the following key aspects:
 - a sub-regional assessment report commenting on gap between expectations of the user community (governments) and reality of what can be done by the respective MDIs
 - a clear articulation of what the MDIs in the region expect from AMDIN
 - A strategy of how MDIs in the region wishes (a) to address the environmental constraints that impacts negatively on their performance and (b) take advantage of the existing strengths and opportunities
- An up to date database of MDIs; relevant experts and knowledge resources in the sub-region
- A strengthened network of regional and continental MDI's

THEME:

Developing African MDIs as Centres of Excellence for Knowledge Production and Transfer in the 21st Century

APPROACH/ METHODOLOGY:

Apart from a more formal opening session plus a few “inspirational” speaker(s) regarding change as a necessary and ongoing process; the importance of conducive policy environments for organizations to thrive in and the importance of effective African MDIs for the development of Africa, the rest of the three days is to be spent in interactive work-shopping mode, where the understanding and knowledge the participants bring to the table is of the utmost importance. This knowledge will constitute the input material which through active facilitation will be to ensure shaped that the stated outputs will be achieved.

The workshop process itself is intended to develop capacity as well as transfer and produce knowledge. It will be fundamentally deliberative.

We propose a THREE day workshop, the first day and a half which will also be attended by senior government officials who could articulate the expectations of their governments in respect of the MDIs for their country's development. Heads of MDIs from the sub-region or their assigned delegate (senior and strategic level) would be requested to be present for all three days in order to allow some time where MDIs can have some exclusive space to deal with their unique issues.

VENUE:

North and West Africa: Dakar, Senegal

Proposed dates: 5 (Thursday) – 7 (Saturday) June, 2008

East and Central Africa: Nairobi, Kenya

Proposed dates: 17 (Tuesday) – 19 (Thursday) June, 2008

Southern Africa: Maseru, Lesotho

Proposed dates: 2 (Wednesday) – 4 (Friday) July, 2008

LANGUAGES:

North and West Africa: French and English

East and Central Africa: English and French

Southern Africa: English and Portuguese

GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT SOUGHT FROM HOSTING INSTITUTIONS

- Speakers and format of programme/ roleplayers during formal opening & inspirational “key note” speakers
- Key issues to be aware of in the sub-region and to probe for specifically OR to steer clear from
- Institutions and government officials/ key individuals from across the sub-region to be invited (out of town attendees will have to be capped at around 30, with balance of 10 government officials to 20 MDIs; hosting country/ institutions could have somewhat more, but need to keep functionally intimate and watch the costs) & , current office holders, their correct titles, contact details for such, etc
- Most importantly, to mobilize such institutions and officials through personal networks of prior contacts etc to attend. (This is particularly nb for Francophone W/Africa and North Africa in totality)
- Identification of facilitators/ rapporteurs/ translators (either based @ MDIs or that we have to contract)
- Meeting venue, accommodation (special rates negotiated on the buying power of the local partners would be appreciated!) and other logistics (incl. gathering three quotes from local service providers in order to meet UNDP funding requirements.
- Social programme during 2 of the evenings (one of which ideally should, inter alia, allow for building relations with the donor community/ development partners etc. in the sub-region, for them to become familiar with the MDIs and the work of AMDIN)
- Visa application support; health requirements (& support in case of emergency)
- Ground transport arrangements & support at the airport/ customs if necessary/ possible
- Administrative support in run up and during workshops (limited – bulk to be done via Secretariat)

- Providing a general background note to visitors that can go out with the invitations re things to do during that time in the hosting city; practicalities for visitors (e.g. places to visit; climate/ clothing; customs; banking; shopping hours; markets; places for religious observation; list of embassies & contact numbers of which nationals will be present for the workshop, etc. etc)
- Etc?