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## Quality Management Initiatives in Higher Education Institutions of SADC Countries

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### Abstract

The Southern Africa Development Conference (SADC) regional protocol on education has been ratified by all the member countries. The protocol emphasizes the importance of harmonizing the regional education systems and maintaining acceptable standards at all educational levels. This harmonization cannot take place smoothly until each education system takes stock of its own activities. This calls for the implementation of quality management in these institutions of higher learning. In addition, stakeholders in higher education have called for the accountability of the institutions as well as the cost-effectiveness of the programmes offered by these institutions while ensuring quality of delivery of education. Universities and other institutions of higher learning in the region are, therefore, setting up some mechanisms for the implementation of ‘quality management’. ‘Quality auditing’ is the first step that has been suggested before the full implementation of quality management for the maintenance of high standards. Quality auditing will involve self-evaluation at institutional, faculty and departmental levels with respect to the mission, goals, objectives and activities for attaining them. The institutions of higher education in the SADC region have the potential to provide more and better training utilizing their tools and experiences. The challenge is to play a more active role and aim to gain leadership in their own field of expertise. The SADC region’s Vice Chancellors had an opportunity in March 2003, of meet in Mauritius where they approved, in principle, the setting up of the mechanism for implementing quality management within the SADC institutions of higher learning. A regional workshop will spearhead this initiative in September 2003.

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