

Regional AIDS Training Network (RATN)

Strategic Plan 2004–2008

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Acronyms

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
AIC	AIDS Information Centre
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMREF	African Medical and Research Foundation
ARCAN	African Regional Capacity Building Network for HIV/AIDS Project
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
ARV	Anti-Retroviral
CAFS	Centre for African Family Studies
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CEU	Clinical Epidemiology Unit, University of Nairobi
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
EAC	East African Community
EANNASO	Eastern African Network of AIDS Service Organisations
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ESAMI	Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute
FACT	Family AIDS Caring Trust
GASD	Gender, ARV, Stigma and Discrimination
GC	General Council
GU	Genito-Urinary Centre, City of Harare
HEARD	Health Economics and HIV/AIDS Research Division
HINARI	Health Inter-Network Access to Research Initiative
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
HR	Human Resources
ICPs	International Cooperating Partners
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDM	Institute of Development Management
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IT	Information Technology
I-TECH	International Training and Education Centre of HIV
KAPC	Kenya Association of Professional Counsellors
KHI	Kigali Health Institute
KRA	Key Result Area
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MANANGA	Mananga Centre for Regional Integration and Management Development
MI	Member Institution

MIM	Malawi Institute of Management
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAC	National AIDS Commission/Council
NACC	National AIDS Control Commission/Council
NARESA	Network of AIDS Researchers in Eastern and Southern Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PCM	Partners' Consultative Meeting
PHRU	Peri-Natal HIV Research Unit, University of the Witwatersrand
PLWHA	People Living with HIV/AIDS
PMF	Performance Measurement Framework
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (of HIV)
PSG	Project Support Group
RATN	Regional AIDS Training Network
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
REPSSI	Regional Psycho-Social Support Initiative
RTMES	RATN Training Monitoring and Evaluation System
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAfAIDS	Southern African AIDS Information Dissemination Service
SANASO	Southern Africa Network of AIDS Service Organisations
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SOSMED	Centre for Social Science and Medicine
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TASO	The AIDS Support Organisation
TB	Tuberculosis
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
THETA	Traditional and Modern Health Practitioners Together Against AIDS
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TRG	Training Reference Group
TRIC	Training Reference and Information Centre
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZAN	Zimbabwe AIDS Network

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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The Regional AIDS Training Network (RATN) has been implementing its 5-year Strategic Plan (2004–2008) which was published in May 2004. RATN further developed a Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) to facilitate monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Over the plan period, RATN committed itself to focus on five Key Result Areas (KRAs) or Outcomes, namely:

- A sustainable and functioning network of training institutions in the ESA region;
- Quality training and capacity development programmes that respond to the STI/HIV/AIDS training needs of the region;
- RATN becomes recognised as an effective source of information on, and an advocate for, quality STI/HIV/AIDS training and capacity development in the ESA region;
- A robust and functioning monitoring and evaluation system and that RATN responds to findings from monitoring and programme reviews; and
- Regional economic bodies and national policies for HIV/AIDS have capacity building and human resource components.

The over-arching goal of RATN and, hence the Strategic Objectives of the plan, is to promote training and capacity development for STIs/HIV/AIDS in the Eastern and Southern African region. RATN delivers its training programmes through Member Institutions (MIs) which have recognised competence in delivering capacity development services through their training programmes. At the beginning of 2008, RATN had 25 MIs operating in ten countries in the region.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation, coming towards the end of the plan period, had five main objectives:

- to assess the progress made by RATN in meeting the goals and objectives set in its Strategic Plan (2004–2008) and in past annual plans and agreements with funding partners;
- to assess progress made by RATN (Secretariat and Member Institutions) in implementing the recommendations from the joint Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey (2005) and the Mid-Term Review (2007);
- to identify any important emerging issues in programmes and administration and provide recommendations to RATN and the donors on potential directions that should be incorporated into the next five-year Strategic Plan for the period April 2009 to March 2014;
- to identify the “value added” that RATN brings to the Eastern and Southern Africa region;
- to assess the soundness of the systems and governance structure (strategic planning, programmatic planning and implementation, financial management, human resource management) and their viability.

3. The Evaluation Process

A multi-faceted approach was used to obtain both primary and secondary data for the evaluation. This entailed (i) the review of relevant documents supplied by the Secretariat of the Network, (ii) structured interviews with key informants within the Secretariat, the MIs and other stakeholder organisations, (iii) a questionnaire distributed by email to a sample of RATN alumni, and (iv) focus group discussions with alumni of selected MI in the region. Field visits were undertaken to Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa and Zimbabwe where interviews were conducted with management, training coordinators/managers, trainers and alumni of the MIs in those countries as well as with representatives of stakeholder institutions such as NACs and CSOs.

In the analysis of the data, both primary and secondary, the overall approach was to take each Key Result Area (KRA) and match it with the strategic objectives, strategies and activities that were identified against it in the Strategic Plan. Each of these was then interrogated in order to obtain a comprehensive view of all that was done, or should have been done, in the period 2004–2008 in fulfilment of the KRA. By taking this approach, it was then possible to say:

- This is what RATN set out to do as stated in the Strategic Plan.
- These are the changes/additions that RATN made and focussed on within the scope of the PMF.
- This is what RATN achieved/did not achieve in terms of the goals and objectives in the Strategic Plan and the PMF.
- These are the constraints that hindered the attainment of objectives RATN had set for itself.

4. Findings

RATN has largely met many of the targets that it sought to achieve during the period of the Strategic Plan. Its major achievements under each Key Strategic Area are summarised below.

Establishment of a Sustainable and Functioning Network of Training Institutions (KRA 1)

- RATN has established functioning governance structures comprising a General Council that meets annually and gives policy directions, an elected Board of Directors responsible for running the organisation on behalf of its member institutions, and a Secretariat under an Executive Director

who is responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of RATN's policies and programmes.

- RATN has been able to recruit and retain Secretariat staff with the requisite skills to implement planned activities.
- It has developed and operationalised administrative and financial management systems and procedures.
- Finances are audited by external auditors annually and the reports are submitted for approval to the Board, the General Council and the donors.
- It has been able to secure funds from the three core donors (CIDA, Sida and Irish Aid) to support its operations and to retain their confidence such that they have undertaken to continue supporting the Network, subject to the outcome of this evaluation and approval of a new Strategic Plan that will take the organisation to 2014.
- Effective mechanisms have been established for management, training coordinators and trainers from the member institutions to meet and deliberate on issues of mutual interest pertaining to capacity development.
- Individual member institutions have established linkages with national and regional bodies.
- The Network has expanded from 22 MIs operating in eight countries in 2004 to 25 MIs in 10 countries as at March 2008. It has also recently expanded into Francophone East Africa with the acceptance of a Rwandan institution as a member.

Quality Training and Capacity Development Programmes (KRA 2)

- Training courses were delivered for 2,073 people, 57% of them females, in four years from 2004 to March 2008, although this is below the plan target of 3,800 in five years to March 2009.
- Training courses were organised for staff of the member institutions in order to improve their internal capacity to deliver their training programmes. Courses delivered were for staff in M&E, ICT, and resource centre management.
- Critical issues in HIV/AIDS have been mainstreamed in the training programmes, notably gender, ART, stigma and discrimination.
- The Network has developed new courses in response to emerging issues in HIV/AIDS and introduction of new training methodologies. 85% of the plan target of 20 new courses had been developed and delivered by March 2008, including courses for marginalized groups.
- 86% of the plan target of 150 courses had been delivered in four years to March 2008.

RATN Influences Policies of, and Establishes Functional Linkages with National and Regional Bodies (KRA 3 & 5)

- RATN has been participating in meetings and other fora of national and regional bodies such as NACs, EANNASO, SANASO, SADC, EAC and UNAIDS Partnership Forums.
- The RATN web-site has been re-developed and improved; visits to the web-site are monitored and reported to the Board and in the annual report.
- Training materials and other publications on HIV/AIDS held by the Resource Centre (RC) have been digitalised and uploaded onto TRIC for access through the RATN web-site and by email; the number of RC users per month has risen from a base of 75 in April 2004 to 176 in 2007/2008. However, usage per MI per month is still low, at an average of seven enquiries per MI per month.

- 80% of all enquiries to the Resource Centre are through email, in line with the work done to digitise its HIV/AIDS training materials and other publications.
- The plan target of 20% annual increase in the newsletter circulation has been exceeded and annual publication has been kept to schedule. Reader feedback has been obtained and has been positive.
- The newsletter is also available on the RATN web-site.
- The Training Reference and Information Centre (TRIC), a web-based inventory of training institutions and resource persons in HIV/AIDS in 12 countries in the region, has been developed and is now in the pilot phase.

RATN Responds to Findings of Monitoring and Programme Reviews/ A Robust M&E System is Developed (KRA 4)

- PMF has been used to monitor implementation of the Strategic Plan and status reports are presented at each meeting of the Board.
- A monitoring tool, RTMES, has been developed and, from early 2008, has been rolled out to MIs to monitor training programmes.
- Pre- and post-training evaluations are conducted and reports submitted to the RATN Secretariat.

5. Implementation of the Recommendations of the Beneficiary Survey and the MTR

The evaluation also assessed progress made by RATN towards implementing the recommendations from the Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey (2005) and the Mid-Term Review (2007). By March 2008, the Board noted that 70% of the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review had been implemented.

6. Challenges for RATN

While considerable success has been achieved, there have also been challenges and areas where RATN has not been able to meet its plan objectives. The major shortfalls were in the following areas:

- inability to diversify its income sources in order to reduce dependence on the three core donors and ensure financial sustainability;
- inability to fill the position of M&E Officer, despite recognition of the importance of the monitoring function;
- inability to reduce administrative costs to the plan target of 18%;
- inability to meet the plan targets for expansion of the Network;
- only some 50% of the MIs reported having functional linkages with national and regional HIV/AIDS bodies;
- RATN's recognition among national and regional HIV/AIDS bodies and influence on their capacity building policies remain low;
- only 55% of the target number of people had been trained by March 2008, with only one year of the plan period remaining;
- targets and activities set out in the Advocacy Strategy to enhance its visibility have not been met;
- usage of the RATN Resource Centre needs to be enhanced, although enquiries per month have gone up.

7. Key Strategic Issues for the Next Strategic Plan

The report identifies Key Strategic Issues that will have to be considered as the next Strategic Plan is prepared.

- a) *Financial Sustainability*: How can RATN achieve financial sustainability? How can RATN reduce its administrative overheads as a percentage of the budget? How can RATN benefit from its potential to provide consultancy services?
- b) *Network Expansion*: While the network should continue to expand, how should that expansion be managed – consolidation and penetration within the countries of current operations or outward to cover more countries?
- c) *Membership*: Is the current membership model still valid? Are there lessons from the emerging patterns of network participation? Can RATN afford to continue with its current practise of sponsored participation in Network activities?
- d) *Organisational Structure*: There will be need to review the Secretariat's structure so that it is better able to execute the goals and objectives that will be set for the next Strategic Plan. However, can this be achieved if such re-organisation is dependent on donor funding for proposed positions?
- e) *Training Focus*: As the largest numbers of trainees are being delivered by only a few institutions, should RATN not focus more on what brings most results while bearing in mind trends and critical issues in HIV/AIDS? Do the numbers trained on some courses justify the course development costs?
- f) *Branding of RATN Products*: Should RATN not change its business model and consider branding certain of its products and making them available to a wider spectrum of training providers outside the network?
- g) *Positioning at the Cutting Edge*: How can RATN position itself at the cutting edge of training development and delivery? What role can its members from universities and research organisations play in placing RATN at the cutting edge?
- h) *Influencing Regional Policies*: How can RATN more effectively influence policies at national and regional level?
- i) *Achieving Greater Visibility*: What strategies can be adopted to achieve greater national and regional visibility? Should RATN not use the annual gatherings to bring more publicity on itself?
- j) *Newsletter*: Is distribution as a paper copy a modality that can outlast the next Strategic Plan period?
- k) *MI Commitment to M&E*: How can all the MIs be encouraged to buy into the necessity for M&E?
- l) *Vision and Mission*: Do the current Vision and Mission remain valid for the next Strategic Plan period to 2014?

8. Key Recommendations

The evaluation report made a number of recommendations which, if accepted, would be implemented during the next Strategic Plan period to 2014. The key recommendations are summarised below.

Financial Resources and Financial Sustainability

- RATN should develop more creative mechanisms for accessing the large HIV/AIDS funds that are now available, e.g. the Global Fund, PEPFAR, Gates Foundation, and the Clinton Foundation.
- RATN should consider appointing someone at sufficiently senior level (managerial grade) either on

a full-time or part-time basis to be responsible for fund-raising and income generation, including development of the consultancy business for the organisation. The salary/fees, or part thereof, of the appointee could be linked to the amount of income that is generated on behalf of the Network.

- RATN should investigate the feasibility of establishing an Endowment Fund for the Network using capital from a one-off grant from a donor.

Organisational Structures and Human Resources

- RATN should consider realigning the organisational structure to meet the goals and objectives that will be set in the new Strategic Plan. The re-structuring should be informed by, and proceed after, the adoption of the new Strategic Plan and not before.
- There is need to review the distribution of responsibilities across departments and to match the staffing levels to departmental workloads.
- RATN should investigate the feasibility and implications of having separate conditions of service for expatriate or non-Kenyan staff.

Operational Systems and Procedures

- Administrative policies, operational systems and procedures should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they remain current and relevant to the situation on the ground.
- The Financial Accounting Manual needs to be reviewed as a matter of urgency.
- There is need for RATN to re-organise its records management systems and ensure that a proper and secure central filing system is introduced.

Governance Systems and the Constitution

- RATN needs to review its constitution, especially in respect of sections pertaining to the terms of office of Board members as well as the status of the two permanent non-voting members.
- RATN needs to develop mechanisms for ensuring that all Board decisions and resolutions are implemented as expeditiously as possible.
- RATN should investigate the feasibility of linking the annual General Council meetings with high-level seminars/conferences on topical HIV/AIDS issues and use that as a mechanism for offsetting the costs of its governance meetings.

Network Expansion and Membership Criteria

- Network expansion during the next Strategic Plan period must be premised on a new vision and mission that RATN wants to guide it over the coming years. There is therefore need for RATN to “re-vision” itself to enable it to define its priorities and strategies for the next plan period. The Network may need to think beyond the delivery of training alone.
- RATN needs to make a strategic decision between extending its geographical coverage by going into more countries against deepening its visibility within the countries where it already has a presence, or consider a combination of both approaches.
- RATN should develop mechanisms for strengthening the level of MI-to-MI interactions within individual countries in order to engender a real sense of belonging.
- RATN should review its membership criteria so that they take into account the interests, strengths and expectations of both potential and current members.

Training and Capacity Development

- RATN should examine the feasibility of identifying specific courses for which it has comparative advantage and developing these as its brand courses, thereby developing a niche market for itself within the wider field of HIV/AIDS training.
- The feasibility of selling its branded courses under license to other training institutions that are not members of the Network should be examined. Marketing these branded courses would not only increase RATN's visibility and extend its influence, but would also generate additional income.
- The Network should ensure that all its courses are reviewed on a regular basis, and at least once every two years, in order that they remain current and relevant in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- There is need to develop mechanisms to ensure that RATN keeps track of, and is regularly updated on, emerging issues in HIV/AIDS, including new findings from research and that it promptly responds by identifying the training gaps.
- MIs should provide for following up on a sample of their alumni, at least for the first six months post-training.

RATN as an Information Source Able to Influence National/Regional Bodies

- RATN should consider having a Marketing Manager whose responsibilities would include implementation of the Advocacy Strategy and engaging with national and regional bodies together with the Executive Director.
- RATN should consider organising regional conferences on topical issues pertaining to training in HIV/AIDS in order to enhance its visibility.
- RATN should consider documenting, publishing and marketing "best practices" from among its MIs and alumni.
- As part of the registration process at the start of each training course, participants should be required to complete forms providing their postal details to be forwarded to the Information and Communication Department for inclusion on the mailing list for the RATN newsletter.
- All the MIs should be urged and supported to develop web-sites. They should be urged to ensure that their web-sites have links to the RATN web-site.
- Now that the focus is on electronic communication and information dissemination, RATN should advertise the services of the Resource Centre among both the training staff in the MIs as well as among its alumni.
- The issue of "ownership" of RATN courses and certification of course participants should be resolved with the concerned MIs as expeditiously as possible and to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.

Plan and Programme Monitoring

- The practice of having status reports on the implementation of the Strategic Plan presented at each meeting of the Board has worked well and should be continued into the next plan period.
- RTMES as it is structured is quite demanding in its data requirements. RATN will need to closely monitor compliance by the MIs. In this respect, the appointment of a substantive M&E Officer is urgent.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

RATN is a network of training institutions in the countries of Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA). RATN aims to improve the quality of HIV/AIDS training in the ESA region, and to increase access to, and demand for, such training in order to strengthen human capacity to respond effectively to the pandemic. After operating as a joint project between the University of Manitoba and the University of Nairobi from 1997, RATN was formally registered as an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) in April 2003 under the Kenya Non-Governmental Organisations Coordination Act. The registration gives it the mandate to operate its Secretariat in Nairobi as it works in the Eastern and Southern Africa region.

RATN delivers its training programmes through Member Institutions (MIs) which have recognised competence in delivering capacity development services through their training programmes. As at the beginning of 2008, RATN had 25 MIs in ten countries in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The main roles and responsibilities of the member institutions (MIs) are to:

- work with the RATN Secretariat to develop, deliver, evaluate and report on regional training offered through RATN;
- participate in Expert Committee meetings, and to act as a consulting resource on training needs and opportunities in the region;
- participate in the RATN General Council, Board of Directors and other Network committees as may be created;
- participate in regional and local research initiated by RATN, e.g. evaluations, needs assessments, etc;
- act as a national level advocate for all RATN training courses, including those delivered by other MIs;
- share training expertise, resources, materials, etc with the RATN Secretariat and other MIs.

Following the appointment of a new Executive Director in September 2003 and the election of a new Board of Directors, RATN embarked on a programme of transformation and growth. In May 2004, it published its first 5-year Strategic Plan to guide its development and programmes for the period 2004–2008. The early part of the plan period was problematic for the organisation, with allegations of fraud against accounting staff culminating in a forensic audit and court proceedings against the alleged perpetrators.

1.2 The Strategic Plan, 2004–2008

In its Strategic Plan, titled “*Moving From a Project to an International NGO*”, RATN committed itself to focus on four Key Result Areas (KRAs) or Outcomes, namely

- A sustainable and functioning network of training institutions in the ESA region;
- Quality training and capacity development programmes that respond to the HIV/AIDS training needs of the region;
- RATN becomes recognised as an effective source of information on, and an advocate for, quality STI/HIV/AIDS training and capacity development in the ESA region;
- A robust and functioning monitoring and evaluation system.

1.2.1 RATN's Vision, Mission and Strategic Goal for 2004–2008

RATN's Vision is

Networking to fight and defeat HIV and AIDS.

Its Mission is

To promote training and capacity development for STIs/HIV/AIDS in the Eastern and Southern Africa region. RATN will promote and advocate for skills development and effective programmes that alleviate the impact of STIs/HIV/AIDS through its Member Institutions.

The organisation's strategic goal for the 2004–2008 plan period was stated as

...to reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and mitigate the impact of the epidemic on communities in the region. In order to achieve this goal, RATN will link the training institutions and facilitate regional collaboration in the prevention, treatment and management of STIs/HIV/AIDS. In addition, it will promote and support the development of skills training aimed at alleviating the impact of STIs/HIV/AIDS throughout the Eastern and Southern Region of Africa.

1.2.2 Operational Matrix/Results Chain for the 2004–2008 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan provided an operational matrix or results chain that showed the links between the inputs required for the implementation of the Activities under the various departments (Administration, Network Development, Training, ICT and M&E), the Strategic Objectives or Outputs, the Key Result Areas (Outcomes) and the overall Goal or Impact. Later, the development of the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) resulted in the introduction of an additional KRA, along with its Strategic Objectives and associated Activities. The matrix or results chain is shown in the Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1 in Volume 2 of this report).

1.3 Some Major Successes under the Current Strategic Plan

Notable successes during the current Strategic Plan period include:

- registration under the laws of Kenya in April 2003 as an international NGO operating regionally, thereby changing its status from being a collaborative project of the University of Manitoba and the University of Nairobi;
- the launch in May 2004 of the current Strategic Plan to guide the development of the Network over the next five years to 2009;
- relocation from the University of Nairobi to its present premises in the Nairobi Business Park in September 2004;
- establishment of functioning governance structures comprising of a General Council that meets annually and gives policy directions, an elected Board of Directors responsible for running the organisation on behalf of the members, and a Secretariat under an Executive Director who is responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of RATN's policies and programmes;
- development of formal administrative and financial management systems and procedures that govern the operations of the Network, the Board of Directors, and the Secretariat;
- retaining the confidence and support of the core group of donors that have continued to fund the Network from its infancy as a project until now;
- expansion of the Network from 22 MIs operating in eight countries at the start of the current plan period in May 2004 to the current (June 2008) 25 MIs in ten countries of the ESA region;

- expansion of its capacity development programmes and the introduction of several new courses;
- internal capacity development among the member institutions through training of their staff and management;
- training of 2073 alumni (57% of them female) during the past four years (2004–2008), some of the trainees drawn from countries outside the Network such as Eritrea, Namibia, Nigeria and Sudan.

1.4 Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

RATN is now in the final year of its current Strategic Plan (2004–2008). In March 2008, external consultants were contracted to conduct an evaluation of the current plan, and to provide recommendations for incorporation in the next plan for the period 2009–2014.

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation are provided in greater detail in Appendix 1. Briefly, the evaluation had five main objectives, namely:

- to assess the progress made by RATN in meeting the strategic goal and objectives set in its Strategic Plan (2004–2008) and in past annual plans and agreements with funding partners;
- to assess progress made by RATN (Secretariat and Member Institutions) in implementing the recommendations from the joint Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey (2005) and the Mid-Term Review (2007);
- to identify any important emerging issues in programmes and administration and provide recommendations to RATN and the donors on potential directions that should be incorporated into the next five-year Strategic Plan for the period April 2009 to March 2014;
- to identify the “value added” that RATN brings to the Eastern and Southern Africa region;
- to assess the soundness of the systems and governance structure (strategic planning, programmatic planning and implementation, financial management, human resource management) and their viability.

1.5 Some Critical Issues in HIV/AIDS Training and Capacity Development

Governments in Africa and elsewhere have identified human resources development as one of the strategies in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Examples of such international commitments made by governments in Africa and elsewhere include:

- “*Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases*”, passed by African heads of state and governments in April 2001,
- “*UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Global Crisis – Global Action*”, passed by the heads of state and governments in June 2001,
- “*Brazzaville Commitment on Scaling Up Towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support in Africa by 2010*”, approved at meeting convened by the African Union in March 2006.

Among other things, the declarations commit national governments and the international community to fight against stigmatisation and discrimination, to protect the rights of individuals living with HIV/AIDS, to promote access to treatment, prevention, to improve the status of women and children in order to reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. The 2001 UN Declaration noted that “strengthening of human resources and national health and social infrastructures (are) imperatives for effective delivery of prevention, treatment, care and support services” (para.22).

The Brazzaville Declaration also identified inadequate skilled human resources as one of obstacles to the rapid and sustainable scaling up of existing national programmes and services. Among the actions recommended to overcome these obstacles was the development of human resources by enhancing training and establishing regional mechanisms to coordinate and provide training, capacity-building, accreditation and quality assurance (para. 6(i) and 6(j)).

In the UN Declaration, the heads of states and governments identified several factors that are crucial in the fight against the epidemic. These are:

- *Leadership* – at the national, regional and sub-national levels, viewed as essential for an effective response to the epidemic;
- *Prevention* – described as the mainstay of the world's response to the epidemic;
- *Care, support and treatment* – described as fundamental elements of an effective response;
- *Human rights* – realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all was deemed essential to reduce vulnerability to HIV/AIDS;
- *Reducing vulnerability of women* and empowering them;
- *Reducing vulnerability of children* orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS;
- *Alleviating the social and economic impacts of HIV/AIDS* at the individual, family, community and national levels;
- *Research and development* – especially crucial in the continuing absence of a cure for HIV/AIDS.

It is imperative that the training programmes and other interventions by organisations such as RATN are mindful of the priorities set by national governments and international commitments. Not doing so would render their efforts irrelevant and reduce their potential impacts. It therefore follows that assessment of the relevance of RATN's training programmes is also informed by these international commitments and priorities for capacity development.

1.6 Structure of the Report

The organisation of the report has been guided by the objectives of the evaluation as set out in the Terms of Reference. The remainder of this report is organised into seven chapters. Chapter 2 discusses the methodology that was used for the evaluation. Chapters 3–6 examine the progress made by RATN in meeting the goals and objectives set out in the Strategic Plan and PMF against each of the five Key Result Areas, namely

- (i) establishment of a sustainable and functioning network of training institutions (Chapter 3),
- (ii) development of quality training and capacity development programmes that respond to the HIV/AIDS training needs of the region (Chapter 4),
- (iii) RATN's success as a source of information, advocacy, establishment of functional linkages with other HIV/AIDS bodies, and its ability to influence the policies and capacity development programmes of national and regional bodies in ESA (Chapter 5), and
- (iv) development and utilisation of a robust M&E system and RATN's responsiveness to the findings from monitoring and programme reviews (Chapter 6).

The overall approach was to take each Key Result Area and match it with the strategic objectives, strategies and activities that were identified against it at that time. Each of these was then interrogated

using a table that combines the original Strategic Plan data with the PMF in order to obtain a comprehensive view of all that was done, or should have been done, in the period 2004–2008. The results of the assessment were then summarised in a consolidated schedule (Appendix 5, Volume 2). By taking this approach, it was then possible to say:

- This is what RATN set out to do as stated in the Strategic Plan.
- These are the changes/additions that RATN made and focussed on within the scope of the PMF.
- This is what RATN achieved/did not achieve in terms of the goal and objectives in the Strategic Plan and the PMF.
- These are the constraints that hindered the attainment of objectives RATN had set for itself.

Key strategic issues emerging from the assessment and recommendations for consideration by RATN during the preparation of the next Strategic Plan are given at the end of each chapter.

In Chapter 7, progress made by RATN in implementing the recommendations of the joint Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey (2005) and the Mid-Term Review (2007) is discussed. The concluding chapter (Chapter 8) briefly summarises the major successes by RATN during the plan period as well as critical areas that will require further attention during the next plan period.

2. Methodology for the Evaluation

A multi-pronged methodology was used for the evaluation of the Strategic Plan. Fuller details of the methodology are given in Appendix 2 (see Volume 2). Briefly, there were several key steps in the evaluation process.

2.1 The Inception Phase

The principal consultants travelled to Nairobi and spent time in discussions with the management of the RATN Secretariat. The project inception report was prepared and discussed at a stakeholders' workshop held at the Nairobi Safari Club on 12 May 2008.

2.2 Review of Key Documents

Key documents and reports were obtained from the Secretariat. The aim of the review was to identify the strategies and activities undertaken by RATN since 2004 in order to achieve its strategic objectives, to assess the extent to which the plan targets had been achieved and the constraints and other problems experienced. The documentary review also sought to identify variances between the original KRAs as given in the Strategic Plan and the subsequent outcomes, together with their planned strategies that were added during the preparation of the Performance Measurement Framework. For each KRA, the Balanced Scorecard was used to check on a range of key performance indicators, notably operational effectiveness, efficiency, customer satisfaction and internal capacity. McKinsey's 7S Model was used to assess RATN's performance as an organisation.

2.3 Interviews with RATN Board Members, Management and Staff

Members of the RATN Board of Directors for 2007–08 were interviewed either during visits to their respective institutions or during the annual General Council meeting in Lilongwe in June 2008. Staff of the Secretariat were interviewed at the RATN Headquarters in Nairobi.

2.4 Human Resources Audit

A human resources audit was conducted to determine the extent to which the Secretariat's human resources were adequate to implement the Strategic Plan. The audit was limited to the specific context of this evaluation, and did not cover all aspects of the human resources in the Secretariat that would normally be investigated in a comprehensive human resources audit.

2.5 Field Missions and Interviews

Field visits were undertaken to several countries in the region to conduct interviews with management and staff of the MIs and other stakeholders. The countries visited and the institutions whose personnel were canvassed are listed in Table 1.

2.6 Interviews with International Cooperating Partners

Interviews were also conducted with representatives of some of RATN's international cooperating partners. Most of the interviews with the partners were conducted during RATN's annual General Council meeting in Lilongwe, Malawi, in June 2008. The partner organisations whose views were solicited are also shown in Table 1.

The names and institutional affiliations of all the persons that were interviewed are given in Appendix 3 (Volume 2) of this report.

Table 1: Countries, MIs and cooperating partners that were interviewed during the evaluation

Country	RATN MIs	Stakeholders	Former MI
Kenya	1. KAPC	1. Univ. of Nairobi	
	2. CEU, University of Nairobi	2. National AIDS Control Council	
	3. CAFS*		
Tanzania	4. TGNP	3. EANNASO	SOSMED
	5. ESAMI	4. East African Community	
Uganda	6. TASO	5. Uganda AIDS Commission	
	7. Mildmay Centre		
	8. THETA*		
Zimbabwe	9. CONNECT	6. National AIDS Council	
	10. FACT	7. Zimbabwe AIDS Network	
		8. SFAIDS	
Malawi	11. MIM	9. National AIDS Commission	
South Africa	12. PHRU, Wits University*	10. UNAIDS-Regional Support Team	

Cooperating Partners

1. CIDA
2. Sida
3. Irish Aid
4. University of Manitoba

* Only the Board members and senior management were interviewed in THETA, CAFS and PHRU

2.7 Survey of Alumni

A two-pronged approach was used to obtain the views of the alumni. Firstly, the names and email addresses of alumni from nine MIs were obtained and a questionnaire sent out to them. Some 390 alumni were approached, from whom 54 valid questionnaires were returned. Secondly, during the field missions to the respective MIs, those alumni that were available within the given town were invited to participate in focus group discussions. A total of 33 alumni from 8 MIs participated in the focus group discussions. Their names and institutional affiliations, and the courses which they had attended, are shown in Appendix 4 (in Volume 2) of this report. Overall, 87 former course participants over the 2004–2008 plan period were canvassed. The responses from the questionnaires were coded and the data analysed using SPSS. The focus group discussions provided mostly qualitative data on similar issues, but also gave opportunities to explore issues with the participants.

2.8 Alumni's Employer Organisations

All the alumni that participated survey were requested to provide the names and contact details of their immediate supervisors at their workplaces. This would enable the consultants to obtain the supervisors' views on the RATN courses and how the training had impacted on their organisations. Many of the alumni were reluctant to provide the names and email addresses of their supervisors, apparently unsure about the information the consultants would want to obtain from their supervisors/managers. A brief questionnaire was sent by email to some 15 supervisors whose staff had provided the necessary contact information. However, only three of the supervisors responded to the questionnaire.

3. A Sustainable and Functioning Network (KRA 1)

3.1 The Strategic Objectives

The first Key Result Area or Outcome in the Strategic Plan (see Table 1) was the establishment of a sustainable and functioning network of training institutions in the ESA region. There were six strategic objectives under this KRA, namely:

- mobilisation of adequate financial and human resources,
- establishment of effective governance and operational systems,
- establishment of functional linkages between the MIs and other national and regional bodies,
- organisation of strategic Network meetings to deliberate on mutual issues of concern in HIV/AIDS training,
- development of an inventory of training institutions and resource persons on HIV/AIDS in the region, and
- expanding the Network to other strategic countries in the region.

3.2 Summary of RATN's Achievements under KRA 1

During the past four years to March 2008, RATN has made considerable progress towards meeting the strategic objectives set out in its plan. Achievements made under each KRA and its Strategic Objectives, as well as missed targets and the reasons thereof, are summarised in Appendix 5 (see Volume 2).

Achievements in meeting the objectives of the first KRA are:

- RATN was able to secure funding from the core donors to support its programmes;
- the requisite financial and administrative procedures and manuals were developed and implemented;
- finances are subject to annual external audit and the reports are submitted for approval to the Board, the General Council and the donors;
- several of the individual MIs reported that they have established functional linkages with national and regional bodies;
- effective mechanisms have been established for MI management, training coordinators and trainers to meet regularly and deliberate on issues of mutual interest pertaining to capacity development;
- membership of the Network had expanded from 22 MIs operating in eight countries to 25 MIs in 10 countries by March 2008.

3.3 Mobilisation of Adequate Financial and Human Resources

3.3.1 Mobilisation of Adequate Financial Resources

RATN was created as a donor funded project and during the plan period has continued to be funded primarily by three core donors (CIDA, Sida and Irish Aid). While some income has been received from several other donors as well as from other activities such as consultancy work, this amount has been insignificant in relation to the core funding received. The three core donors contributed 95% of the US\$1.74 million income received by RATN in YF 2004/2005, 93% in 2005/06, 82% of income in 2006/07 and 90% in 2007/08 (Table 2).

Table 2: Income sources for RATN, FY 2004/05–2007/08 (US\$)

Source of funds	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
3 core donors' grants	1,660,704	1,457,403	1,186,866	1,857,392
Other grants (*)	80,271	92,176	44,751	36,000
Consultancy fees	–	nil	184,127	157,298
Membership fees	8,489	14,630	7,598	12,600
Other income	62,124	3,286	22,320	11,822
Total income	1,740,975	1,567,495	1,445,662	2,075,112
* grants from	ActionAid HRSA/I-TECH	UNIFEM ActionAid IHA	UNAIDS ActionAid USAID	UNAIDS

Source: RATN annual audited financial statements

The beginning of the Strategic Plan period was rather turbulent as problems of financial mismanagement experienced during 2002–2003 extended into the start of the plan. It is to its credit that RATN was able to speedily institute corrective measures and to ensure that effective financial management systems were put in place. The actions taken by the Board (i.e. launching a forensic audit, dismissing the former Financial Accountant and Accounts Assistant, and instituting legal action to recover money the Network had been prejudiced) went a long way to ensure that the organisation retained the confidence and support of the three core donors.

As a result of the measures taken by the Board, not only did the donors continue to support RATN, but all three have since extended their financial support. CIDA is providing a third phase of support that is expected to run for seven years from September 2007 to March 2014; Sida has an agreement for 3-year

support from April 2006 to March 2009; and Irish Aid approved a second 3-year support from April 2007 to March 2010. However, the donors have stressed that these agreements are not unconditional and their implementation will depend upon the outcome of the current evaluation as well as the successful finalisation of the new Strategic Plan. They have also stressed the urgent need for RATN to secure other sources of funding.

However, it is also important to note that RATN had estimated that it would need \$10.85 million to fully implement its planned programmes over the 5-year Strategic Plan period. Of this amount, \$9.29 million would be required during the first four years to March 2008. In the end, as shown in Table 2 above, RATN only managed to raise \$6.83 million to March 2008, leaving it with a shortfall of \$2.46 million. The failure to raise all the planned funds will have contributed to its failure to fully meet all its planned programmatic activities and targets, as well as lowering its administrative costs as a proportion of the annual budget.

3.3.1.1 Fund Raising and Diversification of Income Base

From the beginning of the plan period, there was recognition by the Board that it was essential to diversify the funding sources and to increase the Network's annual revenue. Various strategies for diversifying the sources of income were tried, comprising principally of approaches to other donors and international development agencies. The responses received were varied, ranging from (i) small contributions for specific projects, (ii) imposition of conditionalities such as those raised by DFID that RATN had to register as a charity organisation before it could be supported, or that PEPFAR funds are available only to country-specific applicants and not to regional organisations, to (iii) rejection by the Ford Foundation.

Some funding was secured from several other donors either as direct grants or in support of specific activities. The largest of the grants from non-core donors came from UNAIDS for the development of the Training Reference and Information Centre (TRIC), amounting to US\$72,000 disbursed over two financial years, 2007/07 and 2007/08. Other successful grant applications went to USAID for the "Africa 2010 Project" with support from the Academy for Educational Development and UNIFEM for two training workshops.

Towards the end of the plan period, RATN was beginning to realise some income from consultancies, although the proportion was still small, accounting for 13% in 2006/07 and 8% in 2007/08. For instance, between 2006 and 2008, RATN has been collaborating with CEU and five other partners on a DFID-funded research project (*"Addressing the Balance of Burden in AIDS"* or ABBA) in Kenya and Ethiopia. During 2006/2007, RATN collaborated with Mildmay Centre on a project to develop in-service training materials and trained "master trainers" for a course on palliative care on behalf of the Ministry of Health in Botswana.

Membership fees as a proportion of total income remain very small, given that annual subscriptions are only US\$500 per member institution.

Clearly, the financial resource base is still narrow and RATN remains as financially vulnerable today as it was at the beginning of the plan period. This vulnerability has also significantly affected its capacity to fulfil certain objectives and implement some of its activities. For instance, the Board decided to freeze the post of M&E Officer because, while its importance was recognised, funding for the post was not available. Likewise, the budget for FY 2004/2005 was curtailed after funding from one potential donor did not come through, forcing RATN to scale down its work to priority programme activities.

The issue of diversification of income sources was discussed at length during interviews with Board members, the Executive Director and donors. They all agreed that inability to broaden the income base is one of the biggest threats to the future viability of RATN. The donors in particular reiterated that,

although they had entered into agreements to continue funding the Network for the next few years, these commitments are by no means fully guaranteed. It has also been stressed that RATN needs to come up with creative ways of accessing some of the large funds now available in the fight against HIV/AIDS (Global Fund, PEPFAR, Gates Foundation, and the Clinton Foundation), the restrictions posed by being a regional rather than a national organisation notwithstanding.

Two main reasons were cited for the inability by RATN to broaden its income base. Firstly, it was noted that there were inadequate skills within the Board and the Secretariat for fund-raising. Secondly, for the first two or so years of the current plan period, the Board and the Executive Director had been pre-occupied with developing and implementing proper governance structures and financial management systems.

It was also suggested during the interviews that the appointment of a substantive Deputy Executive Director could have enabled the Executive Director to spend more time on fund-raising, leaving the deputy responsible for the day-to-day management of the Secretariat. The deputy would also have assumed responsibility for servicing RATN's governance structures and meetings, leaving the Network Development Manager to focus on network development issues.

It is only recently that the Board has begun to give attention to fund-raising and broadening the Network's income base. For instance, some members of the Board and representatives of MIs attended a resource mobilisation and fund-raising training workshop in Mombasa in November 2007. In May 2008, four representatives drawn from both the Board and Secretariat attended a resource mobilisation conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. However, this training on resource mobilisation is yet to be translated into actual income for the Network. A resource mobilisation strategy has recently been developed by the Secretariat and will be submitted to the Board for discussion and approval in October 2008.

3.3.1.2 Reduction of Administrative Overheads

Another issue pertaining to the Network's financial standing concerned the reduction of administrative overheads. Previous reviews of RATN have expressed concern that the overhead costs of the organisation are too high. The Strategic Plan had set a target to reduce administration costs from more than 30% to 18% by the end of the plan period. The Network has been unable to reach this goal and administration costs have remained above 20% throughout the past four years, standing at 31% of the operating budget in FY2006/07 and 25% in FY2007/08.

However, the inability to reduce administrative costs must be viewed against the fact that there are certain overheads that cannot be reduced significantly (e.g. rentals) and that the reduction can probably only be effected by increasing the income base while maintaining the administrative costs at their current levels. Other operational costs, notably fuel, have increased considerably and will also inhibit the reduction of the administrative burden. Increased fund raising is therefore very much a part of the equation to reduce administrative costs.

3.3.2 Mobilisation of Adequate Human Resources

In the Strategic Plan, it had been proposed to increase staffing from 13 to 16 by recruiting two Programme Assistants and a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. However, none of Programme Assistant positions were filled, largely because funding was not found to support them. The Programme Assistant positions have remained vacant in spite of the need for assistance constantly expressed by some of the departments such as Training Programmes. Although the salaries for these positions would have been covered under programme or departmental expenses, RATN's decision to keep them frozen was also influenced by constant reminders to reduce administrative overheads.

The position of M&E Officer was filled in August 2004, but the new appointee left after only five months. The post has remained unfilled in spite of the fact that it continued to be considered a priority. Consequently, a decision was made for managers to take responsibility for M&E within their departments and for the overall M&E function to come under the Network Development Manager.

However, in practice, RATN has for sometime been operating with 15 members of staff. A Research and Consultancy Coordinator has been with RATN since September 2006 while an Accounts Assistant has been employed since February 2007, both on a part-time basis. To an extent, therefore, the number of staff has grown but not as forecast in the Strategic Plan.

The staffing levels available within the Secretariat impacted on implementation of the Strategic Plan. During the interviews with the consultants, varying views were expressed as to whether the Secretariat was sufficiently staffed or understaffed. At one end, there were those who saw the high administration costs as evidence that the Secretariat was overstaffed while, on the other hand, some of the staff indicated that they had heavy workloads and were failing to cope because of inadequate staffing levels. In particular, the inability to recruit the proposed Programme Assistants was said to have resulted in heavy workloads for the operational departments.

The Training Programmes Department has been under tremendous pressure because of its limited staff capacity, with only the Manager and an Administrative Assistant. The Administrative Assistant's main duties are training logistics, organisation and following up on planned courses, and not the technical and professional aspects of the training programmes. The same applies to the Network Development Department where the Manager not only has the additional responsibilities for the overall M&E function of the organisation and servicing RATN's governance meetings, but has no assistant.

The current staffing situation illustrates a number of issues. Firstly, RATN should more fully exploit the flexibility in respect of funding for its Strategic Plan that it enjoys with the donors to expand or reduce its staff complement in line with its programmatic requirements and annual work plans. In this regard, it also needs to think strategically in order to maximise utilisation of the available human and financial resources. For instance, consideration could have been given to retrench some of the support staff that may not be fully utilised, and use the money to recruit middle level professional staff to those departments that need strengthening.

Secondly, the appointment of two short-term contract staff outside the positions proposed in the Strategic Plan, shows the limitations of prematurely deciding, at the start of a plan period, the actual number of staff that will be needed and the positions they will occupy. The staffing needs of an organisation are dynamic and should be responded to in relation to the situation on the ground rather than forecasts done at the start of a planning period.

3.3.2.1 Staff Turnover

All RATN personnel are hired on a contract basis, with the contracts being renewable every two years. RATN has performed reasonably well in terms of staff retention. A majority of the Secretariat staff have been with the organisation throughout the plan period and were involved in the development of the current Strategic Plan. There has only been one change among support staff throughout the plan period when the former Accounts Assistant was dismissed in December 2004. Among the management team, the Executive Director and the Training Programmes Manager have been with the organisation throughout the plan period.

Staff changes have, however, occurred at senior management level and these changes will have impacted on, and slowed down, the implementation of the Strategic Plan, especially during periods of transition from the out-going to the in-coming members, or where a post remains unfilled before the new appointee assumes duty. Changes at management level were in respect of four positions. The current

Financial Accountant joined RATN in early 2005 during the first year of the current Strategic Plan following the dismissal of the previous incumbent in December 2004. The previous Network Development Manager left in June 2007 after nine years with RATN and was replaced by a new Manager towards the end of 2007. Fortunately, RATN was able to cover the 6-month gap by arranging for a SAsAIDS employee to be attached to the Secretariat as an acting Network Development Manager.

When the previous Information and Communication Officer left in 2006, the position was unfilled for a short while before the current Officer joined in January 2007. The fourth management position is that of M&E Officer which fell vacant at the end of December 2004 following the departure of the incumbent who had been in post for only five months from August of the same year. As mentioned earlier, the Board then decided not to fill the post because of inadequate funding.

3.3.2.2 Availability of Technical Capacity

Any organisation that aims to succeed needs to have a team of both management and other staff with the requisite skills and capacity to execute its mandated functions and move it forward. RATN has a major advantage in that it can draw on the skills of staff from the Secretariat as well as from its member institutions. The availability of technical capacity within the MIs is one RATN's major strengths. This capacity has been exploited to advantage including for research, curriculum development and course delivery.

With respect to the RATN Secretariat, the staff have a wide range of expertise and experiences in several areas that complement each other to ensure that the organisation meets its objectives. The areas of competence of the current staff include project management, community health management, training and curriculum development, information systems management and database administration, library science, communications, marketing, strategic management, monitoring and evaluation, financial management and accountancy.

In 2006, RATN produced a Staff Training and Development Plan which identified some of the capacity development needs of the staff. A variety of methods were identified to address the training needs identified. These included the mounting of organisation-wide courses, individual training courses, attendance at workshops, on-the-job training, coaching and mentoring, attachments and distance learning. Support for staff to undertake long term training was considered but it was recognised that there were no finances for it.

The seven organisation-wide courses that were identified were as follows:

- Team building and communication skills,
- Performance management,
- Culture change and interpersonal relationships,
- Stress management and work-life balance,
- Work planning, organisation and time management,
- Succession planning, and
- Gender training.

Six of the seven planned courses were delivered and attended by most of the staff. The outstanding one is that for succession planning.

Some 32 courses were planned for individual staff members, excluding the Executive Director, the Network Development Manager who joined in late 2007 and the unfilled M&E Officer position. To date, 15 of these courses, or 47%, have been provided. This is a commendable achievement,

bearing in mind that even those who did not attend their intended courses, probably also attended several other courses or conferences that were either being delivered through the Network or at country, regional and international levels. As shown in Appendix 6, Secretariat staff have attended 27 other training courses as well as 19 regional and international conferences during the past four years. Capacity building courses have also been delivered for Board members, such as the workshop on “finance for non-financial managers” in 2006 and another on resource mobilisation held in Mombasa at the end of 2007.

Given the core skills available and the capacity development that has taken place, it can be concluded that in terms of technical skills, RATN has a reasonably broad base for implementing the Strategic Plan. This is confirmed by the fact that, in the 360o appraisals done in 2007, the average individual performances were adjudged at a high 76% with an average score on technical capability of 47% compared with 29% for behavioural skills.

The achievements above do not, however, mask deficiencies in skills in a number of key areas that could have made a difference. Inadequate fund-raising skills, for instance, is recognised as a limiting factor in attaining financial sustainability and reduction of dependence on donors. Equally, inadequate marketing skills have probably inhibited RATN from establishing a more visible regional presence and assisting the MIs to market their training programmes effectively.

It is also important for RATN to more critically evaluate whether it is getting “value-for-money” from the participation of its staff at all these training courses, regional and international meetings. With an average of one course/meeting per month during the past four years, and attendance shared between 10 people only (5 senior managers and 5 middle level support staff), this seems quite a heavy commitment on staff time and absence from the office. Continual absence from the office at external meetings may also be contributing to the heavy workloads reported by some departments.

3.3.3 Summary on RATN's Performance in Resource Mobilisation

In conclusion, it can be said that RATN succeeded in this objective in so far as it managed to mobilise the requisite financial resources required to run the Network. It has also been able to retain the support and commitment of its core donors. However, the amount of money raised was inadequate to enable it to fully implement all its planned programmes and to meet its set targets. Furthermore, it was unable to diversify its sources of funding and thus remains vulnerable. Diversification of funding sources should therefore remain one of the key priorities for the next Strategic Plan.

In terms of staffing, while RATN had a reasonable human resource base, the inability to fill the positions of M&E Officer and Programme Assistants left it rather thin in terms of staffing in the key programme areas and this constrained its ability to achieve all its objectives.

3.4 Effective Governance and Operational Systems are Developed and Functional

3.4.1 Operational Systems and Procedures

A review of the documents showed that a large amount of time and effort of both the Board and the Secretariat during the past four years went into the development and implementation of governance and operational systems. This was necessitated by two factors, namely the financial management problems experienced during 2002–2003 and the transformation of RATN from a project to an INGO.

Today, RATN has all the key systems and procedures needed to ensure effective governance and controls. The key procedures manuals in existence are:

- (i) a constitution,
- (ii) the current Strategic Plan 2004–2008,

- (iii) Financial Accounting Manual, developed in 2004,
- (iv) Management Manual, developed in October 2006 and covering personnel matters such as recruitment procedures, conditions of service, internal planning and reporting,
- (v) Staff Training and Development Plan (June 2006),
- (vi) HIV/AIDS Staff Policy (March 2007),
- (vii) Pay Policy (June 2007),
- (viii) organogram or organisational chart,
- (ix) Performance Measurement Framework for monitoring the implementation of the organisation's Strategic Plan and annual work plans,
- (x) Board Procedures Manual, and
- (xi) Assets Disposal Policy.

More recently (February 2008), a gender audit of the Secretariat was conducted, followed by a training workshop for staff on gender mainstreaming.

Most of the procedures and manuals have been developed or reviewed during the past year or two although not all are up to date. For instance, the Financial Accounting Manual still refers to the University of Manitoba as the Executing Agency for CIDA (p.2); explains the reporting requirements of the core donors separately although there has been a Joint Financing Agreement with them since 2006 (section 5); and states that RATN uses the computerised accounting software package called CATA-PULT although this was replaced with PASTEL some two years back.

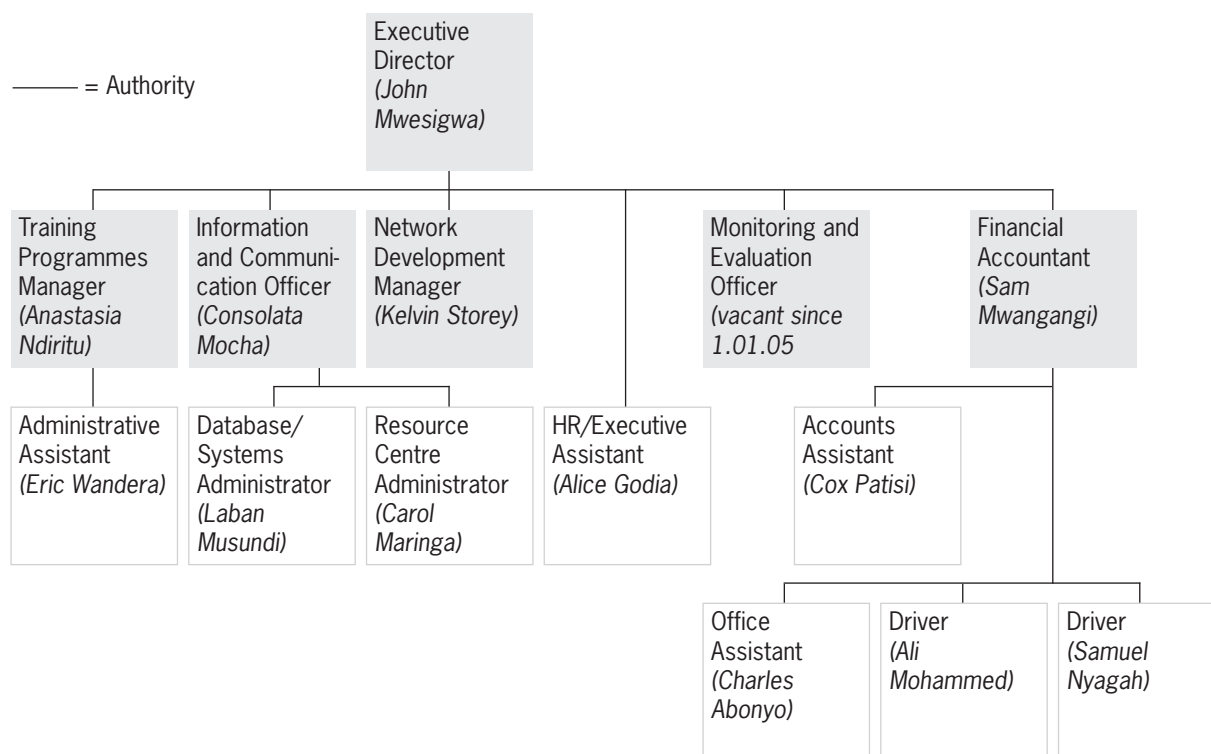
3.4.2 RATN Organisational Structure

RATN Secretariat is headed by an Executive Director, assisted by five heads of department: Network Development, Training Programmes, Information and Communication, Finance and Monitoring and Evaluation (Figure 1). The Monitoring and Evaluation Department has, however, remained without a head of department in post for most of the plan period. There is also an Executive Assistant who reports directly to the Executive Director. Below the heads of departments are various support staff positions.

As part of the HR audit, the staff were asked for their assessment of RATN's organisational structure. Two-thirds of the staff felt that RATN was a flexible organisation that was capable of adapting to changing needs and challenges even if it was sometimes a bit stiff and sluggish. While 70% of the staff had no complaints about the organisational structure, a number of anomalies were raised:

- Departmental boundaries are not clear in relation to some roles and responsibilities. For instance, both the Network Development and Information and Communication Departments have responsibilities to market the Network and the Training Programmes Department also works with the MIs to market the RATN training programmes, as do all other staff to varying degrees. The overlap is unavoidable to some extent, but it may be necessary to ensure that departmental responsibilities and job descriptions are more specific.
- The job titles of department heads are different, with the head of Information and Communication being designated an Officer while the others were appointed as Managers.
- The core business of RATN is development and promotion of training, yet staffing levels in the Training Programmes Department do not reflect that primary focus.
- Departments have been assigned additional responsibilities which tend to divert them from their core functions. For instance, the Network Development Department has responsibility for organising and servicing the Network's governance structures and meetings as well as the overall M&E function of the organisation.

Figure 1: Organogram for the Secretariat as at June 2008



- It is not clear who has primary responsibility for human resource matters. While the creation of the post of Executive Assistant was meant to transfer some of the HR functions, they remain fragmented and burdening the Executive Director who still has to make most of the human resource decisions. The Executive Assistant's duties in relation to human resource management are largely clerical.

It is therefore conceivable that the non-attainment of some of the objectives in the Strategic Plan can partly be attributable to an organisational structure that was slightly inappropriate.

There are omissions within the organisational structure which, had they been provided for, would have gone some way to address some of the current challenges. First, while fund-raising is a requirement for the Executive Director's job, this has not been pursued as vigorously as it should have. As mentioned earlier, the Board should have considered the appointment of a Deputy Executive Director to take over the day-to-day administrative duties of the Secretariat and servicing the Network's governance structures, leaving the Executive Director to devote more time to fund-raising.

Second, without a specifically designated marketing department, there are limits to the amount that can be done to market the Network and its training programmes. The result is that, for some of the courses, the initial interest shown at their launch is not sustained. The first two (or pilot) intakes of a course are generally well subscribed, primarily because RATN provides a higher level of support equivalent to ten tuition costs, compared to the equivalent of five sponsored participants for the regular courses after the pilot phase. Consequently, the numbers of participants decline after the pilot intakes because the trainees now have to find their own sources of funding. A member of the Secretariat dedicated to marketing would have had responsibility for ensuring continued uptake of the courses.

Third, more revenue could have been raised if the consultancy services had been constituted into a specific department headed at a higher level and with more decision making.

It is clear that there is a need to review the organisational structure of the Secretariat in order to ensure that it can achieve the organisation's objectives. Organisational structures are driven by the mandate and functions of the organisation as well as by the strategies adopted to implement that mandate.

As indicated above, the restructuring must follow and support the strategic direction taken and must, therefore, follow the adoption of a new Strategic Plan. However, even at this preliminary stage, it is possible to raise some of the key issues that will need to be addressed during the restructuring.

Some of the areas that will require re-thinking during the re-structuring include whether

- the Network Development Manager should be pre-occupied with servicing governance structures or whether he/she should be out identifying and vetting potential members, paying regular visits to MIs to achieve greater institutional penetration for RATN and visiting relevant national and regional institutions in order to achieve greater visibility for RATN;
- fund-raising should be done on a part-time basis or by a dedicated department with the requisite capacity to identify emerging opportunities for funding, consistently knock on doors and to tap into all possible reservoirs;
- the development of new courses should await initiation by members or whether RATN, at the Secretariat level, should have in-built capacity for tracking trends and research findings within the pandemic and then using the strength of the MIs to leverage itself to the cutting edge of HIV/AIDS training;
- consultancy cannot be scaled up as part of the re-structuring of the organisation, generating its own revenue to pay for its own way, and realising increased profits that make substantial contributions to the RATN budget and reduce its vulnerability to donor funding. In respect of consultancy work, extreme care will be required to ensure that it does not create a conflict of interest between RATN's core mandate of training and capacity development or compromising its advocacy work among NACCs and others vis a vis the drive to maximise income from consultancy services.

3.4.3 Governance Systems

Organisational governance can be examined from several angles, for instance with respect to implementation of administrative procedures, implementation of programmes and programme management, or participation in governance meetings by the relevant members. It has already been mentioned that RATN has, over the past five years, introduced a number of procedures and systems for the proper governance and financial management of the organisation. The following paragraphs will assess governance issues in RATN with respect to the MIs participation in the running of the Network and decision-making.

3.4.3.1 RATN Board

The RATN Board has, until the June 2008 annual General Council meeting, comprised twelve members, of whom two are permanent non-voting members representing the University of Nairobi and the University of Manitoba respectively. Following approval by the General Council in June 2008, the Board now comprises nine members, seven of whom are elected and two are the non-voting permanent members. Membership of the Board is vested in the member institutions, with the latter then nominating representatives to sit on the Board. Each year, half of the Board, other than the two non-voting members, retires and new members are elected. No one may serve on the Board for more than six years.

Each year, the Board conducts a self-assessment in which the members assess its performance in terms of their understanding and satisfaction with the mission and general purpose of the organisation, the level at which the Board is providing programme oversight to the Secretariat, the Board's understanding of its legal and statutory responsibilities, the level to which it is exercising its duties in relation to govern-

ance and the effectiveness and efficiency with which it is conducting its business. In one such self-assessment, 80% of the Board agreed/strongly agreed that they were doing well on all the parameters assessed.

The Board has definitely done well in governance. Attendance at Board meetings has been very high. A perusal of the minutes shows that the members are particular about ensuring that correct procedures are followed and that there is appropriate governance. It is to their credit that in 2004, they are the ones who initiated the forensic audit and addressed the issues raised therein with determination.

In order to improve the effectiveness of the Board, induction workshops have been organised for incoming members following their election at each General Council meeting. Topics covered during the induction include (i) concepts and fundamental issues in corporate governance, (ii) legal framework of RATN, (iii) strategic issues in RATN, (iv) RATN policies and procedures and Board charter, and (v) Terms of Reference for Board committees. Obviously, some of these topics will have positive spin-off effects on the Board members' own organisations. A training workshop was also organised for Board members on "finance for non-financial managers".

There has also been remarkable stability in terms of Board membership during the Strategic Plan period. Four of the MIs (Mananga, FACT, TASO, Mildmay) were continuously on the Board for the four years from 2004/2005 to 2007/2008 while four (ESAMI, IDM, KARA, MIM) have each served for three years. This means that 80% of the elected members have been on the Board for three of the Strategic Plan years.

However, reservations have been expressed by some members regarding prolonged service on the Board by some MIs which is resulting in a sense of exclusion on the part of those members that are left out for too long, that they are being denied the opportunity to contribute to the running of the organisation as well. Some members feel that RATN is not harnessing to the maximum the management expertise that is available across all its member institutions.

The number of years that members serve on the Board is an issue that RATN needs to re-consider during the next strategic plan period. Likewise, the continued presence of two non-voting members as permanent members of the Board seems anachronistic, given that RATN is no longer a university-owned project but a fully fledged international NGO.

3.4.3.2 Implementation of Board Decisions

Perusal of the minutes shows that the implementation of Board decisions and resolutions is the responsibility of the Secretariat through the Executive Director. The latter submits detailed progress reports on those resolutions at subsequent meetings of the Board.

However, there are a few issues that have remained on the agenda of the Board for several years without being fully resolved, raising concern about the pace of implementation of some key decisions. For example, the process of appointing trustees as required under the constitution started back in October 2004. The appointments were only recently finalised at the annual meeting of the General Council held in June 2008.

Likewise, suggestions for a deputy to the Executive Director and the development of a succession and contingency plan were raised by the donors in June 2006 and first discussed by the Board at its October 2006 meeting when the Secretariat was requested to prepare a paper for the next meeting. It was not until the middle of 2007 that the Secretariat proposed, and the Board eventually approved, a succession and contingency plan under which department managers are rotated to act during the absence of the Executive Director. As with the case of the M&E Officer post, part of the dilemma for RATN seems to have been inadequate funding to support the additional post of deputy director.

The issue of accreditation is another example of an item that has taken long to resolve with discussions having started in 2005 when the Secretariat was asked by the Board to carry out a survey of the accreditation processes in the region. As shown later (see section 4.7), some of the MIs have made progress with accreditation independently of the Network, but others have lagged behind. It is clear from the consultant's report commissioned by RATN in 2005 that there are considerable difficulties in trying to arrive at a common policy position that can apply to all the MIs, given the diversity of regulations and procedures for accreditation in the region.

What is important here is that issues should be brought to some finality so that they do not remain on the Board's agenda indefinitely. The fact that some issues have taken long to be finalised suggests a need for (i) the Secretariat to ensure that the relevant information and documentation are provided on time to enable the Board to make its decisions and (ii) the Board to expedite its decision-making by, for instance, using emails and tele-conferencing in between its scheduled meetings.

3.4.3.3 MI Participation in Board and General Council Meetings

RATN is a member-owned organisation, accountable to its members for all its programmes and activities. This model seems to have worked well in transitioning RATN from a project to an INGO. It is also a modality that was based on the availability of donor funding which has supported the participation of the MIs at the various meetings of the Board and the General Council.

Table 3 shows that RATN meetings throughout the plan period have been held mostly on schedule, a compliment to the Board, Secretariat and MIs. Some two years ago, the Board decided to reduce the number of scheduled meetings from four to three per year as a cost-saving measure. The two main committees of the Board, namely the Programmes Committee and the Finance and Administration Committee, normally meet a day or two before the full Board meeting. They are scheduled such that the Secretariat's management staff, especially the Executive Director, can attend both committee meetings.

Table 3: Governance meetings held, 2004/2005 to 2007/2008

FY	Board Meetings*	DCC/PCM Meetings	General Council Meetings	Directors' Forum
2004/05	April 2004			
	June 2004	June 2004	June 2004	
	October 2004			
	Febr. 2005	Febr. 2005		
2005/06	June 2005			
	July 2005	July 2005	July 2005	
	October 2005			
	Febr. 2006			Febr. 2006
2006/07	June 2006	June 2006	June 2006	
	October 2006			
	March 2007			
2007/08	June 2007	June 2007	June 2007	Aug. 2007
	Nov. 2007			
	March 2008			
2008/09	June 2008	June 2008	June 2008	

* Committee meetings are usually held a day or two before the full Board meeting.

However, questions have been raised as to how far this model is sustainable. It is not clear what would happen if donor funding were significantly reduced or if, in future, external funding is limited to actual programmes rather than meeting the costs of broader governance structures and activities. The question arises whether the MIs would be prepared to fund their costs of attending these functions.

As the next Strategic Plan is developed, it will be necessary to re-examine this model and find ways of making governance meetings sustainable. Part of the answer may lie in making the Network more visible and therefore relevant to a wider group of funding institutions. Another strategy would be to link the annual governance meetings to topical seminars or workshops/conferences which would encourage member institutions to meet their own costs of attendance. Further options are provided by the increased use of ICT, although this will be constrained by the fact that some MIs are not well-served with internet.

3.4.4 Human Resource Management Systems

RATN has made substantial progress in developing and operationalizing its human resources management systems.

3.4.4.1 Staff Recruitment

Staff at the Secretariat comprise local staff as well as expatriate personnel. Lately, the Board has taken steps to ensure that, for management positions, recruitment covers the entire region in order to attract the best qualified candidates. This is evidenced by the recent appointments of both the Network Development Manager and the incoming Executive Director. The recruitment procedures adhere to the policies of the Republic of Kenya and include advertising of the vacancy, short listing by a panel, interviews, selection and appointment of the successful candidate. In the interviews held during the human resource audit, the recruitment policy was seen as being fair and transparent by 70% of the staff.

3.4.4.2 Remuneration and Other Benefits

The pay policy that RATN follows is articulated in its Pay Policy document which was prepared in June 2007. The Pay Policy indicates RATN's position within the market and seeks to situate RATN's employees within the median quartile. It also provides for the salary and grading structures. However, the issue was raised as to whether expatriate staff should not be given expatriate conditions of remuneration. As RATN begins to recruit its management staff across the region, the issue of expatriate conditions and benefits is likely to recur in the future. It will therefore be necessary during the next plan period for RATN to investigate the feasibility and likely implications of having separate conditions of employment for expatriate or non-Kenyan staff.

RATN staff receive consolidated salaries made up of basic salary and travel allowance. Salary levels are determined by the Management Team. The staff receive a yearly inflation adjusted increment and are meant to receive a performance related increment after a 360o degree appraisal. There is a bonus payable in December, equivalent to an additional one month's salary and a gratuity of 15% of annual salary to be paid at the end of the contract period. Medical insurance is provided with RATN paying 100% premium for a spouse and two children under 18 years. The transport allowance is paid on the basis of management staff getting twice what support staff get because of usage of own vehicles on RATN business when RATN vehicles are not available.

Half of the staff indicated that they were satisfied with the basic remuneration while 20% felt it was inadequate. There was an awareness of RATN's limitations in terms of availability of funding, the need to reduce administrative costs and abuses that had occurred in the past in relation to facilities such as staff loans. However, a number of issues were raised by staff, notably:

- support with payment of school fees,
- loans for house and/or vehicle purchase,
- use of non-monetary incentives,
- removal of discrepancies in transport allowances between senior and junior staff,
- payment of acting allowances,
- accumulation of leave owed through overtime and inability to redeem the leave or to take time off in lieu (one member of staff has accumulated 562 hours over the past two years),
- introduction of expatriate conditions for non-local staff, and
- “dollarisation” of salaries.

These issues will require further investigation and the development of clear policy guidelines during the next plan period.

3.4.4.3 Performance Management

The introduction of the 360° appraisal system has been welcomed by most of the staff (70%). It was felt that because of the system, goals and targets are being set, staff realise what their key result areas are, and what they need to focus on.

In the 360° performance assessments that were carried out in June/July 2007, the average score achieved by staff was 76%. Of the 12 staff assessed, 3 achieved ratings above 80% (Very Good), while the rest achieved scores between 64% and 79% (Good). However, while the new appraisal system has generally been welcomed, some of the staff also expressed reservations with the assessments which they felt were sometimes clouded by personal feelings towards certain individuals. Although the payment of performance bonuses has not been effected to date, there was some uneasiness about using the results of the 360° performance assessments as a basis for the bonus payments.

There was near unanimous agreement that there is team spirit within RATN and that the Executive Director has played a major part in fostering team-work.

Areas mentioned as needing improvement in the next plan period include developing mechanisms to ensure that staff are not diverted from their set objectives as a result of ad hoc activities and crisis interventions, and improving the quality of objectives set so that they were measurable.

3.4.4.4 Promotion and Career Development

As can be expected in an organisation of RATN’s nature, there is very little scope for career progression because there is “nowhere” to go within the organisation. Most of the staff recognise and accept this. It is also recognised that employment within RATN is part of one’s career path which is crucial in that, by the time one leaves, one will have improved his/her prospects for a better job. As noted earlier, RATN has done well in developing the skills and competencies of its staff, even though some complained that opportunities are not always equitably distributed. This has to be balanced against the need to ensure that those sent to attend particular courses are the right people given the nature of their responsibilities, rather than view it as an exercise in balancing travel opportunities.

3.4.4.5 Discipline and Grievance Handling

Disciplinary procedures and grievance handling are outlined in the Management Manual. Some 85% of the staff felt that there was good discipline in RATN and that procedures were adhered to.

3.4.4.6 Gender Mainstreaming

The gender audit of the Secretariat took place during February 2008, followed by a training workshop for staff of the Secretariat and some MIs on gender mainstreaming. The gender audit sought to evaluate the Secretariat's structures, systems and programmes with a view to finding out the extent to which they promote gender equality.

On the positive side, the audit found that RATN has mainstreamed gender as a cross-cutting theme using the GASD Toolkit and that, together with some of the MIs (i.e. TGNP and IDM), is offering specific courses on gender, policy and HIV/AIDS. On the other hand, the audit found that, at the programmatic level, RATN's Vision, Mission, Core Values and Strategic Plan do not reflect a commitment to gender equality. Arising from the audit, RATN has been urged to take the necessary corrective action during the development of the new Strategic Plan.

In the interviews, the Secretariat scored high on its gender sensitivity, with most staff saying that it was very gender sensitive, and was especially so following the gender audit and workshop held at the beginning of this year. An issue raised regarding gender sensitivity was that no targets had been set in terms of what was to be achieved and over what time-frame.

3.4.5 Financial Management and Administrative Systems

The overall responsibilities of the Finance and Administration Department include management of the income and expenditure, fixed assets, office equipment, vehicles, the filing system and supervision of administrative support staff. The financial management and accounting procedures are spelt out in the Financial Accounting Manual. The Management Manual also contains a section on Financial Management which largely summarises the information contained in the Accounting Manual.

The organisational structure of the department, according to the Accounting Manual, provides for a Finance and Administration Manager plus five staff including an Administration Assistant and Accounts Assistant. A second Accounts Assistant has been hired on a part-time basis to assist in the accounts section of the department. On the administrative side, the Administration Assistant is supposed to supervise the Office Assistant and Drivers. However, the post of Administrative Assistant has not been filled to date. Instead, the Finance and Administration Manager is responsible for direct supervision of the Office Assistant and the two drivers.

Overall, and especially in relation to management of the organisation's finances, the department has done well. Taking into account that the current accounts staff were recruited after the previous staff had been dismissed for financial misconduct, it is a credit to the department and to RATN that they have been able to restore the confidence of the funding partners and have assured continued financial support for the organisation.

However, it is also possible that some functions have been given less attention due to inadequate staff, especially on the administrative side. For instance, according to the manual, RATN is supposed to use a central filing system, operated under the supervision of the Finance and Administration Manager. But in practice, each department/individual staff member keeps his/her own records, both paper and electronic, and there is no central filing system. Personnel files are kept by the Executive Assistant. The operation of decentralised filing systems without central control has dangers in relation to maintenance of institutional memory. It also makes it difficult to control and manage the electronic records created by each individual and filed according to each person's own preferences.

3.4.6 Summary on RATN's Governance and Operational Systems

At the start of the plan period, RATN was handicapped by weak governance and operational systems that were open to abuse. It is to its credit that, during the past four years, it has developed and implemented the requisite systems that have helped to enhance accountability and transparency, both

internally among staff and the member institutions and externally with its international cooperating partners. However, there are some aspects of the current governance and operational systems that require consideration by the organisation during the next strategic plan period, notably review and updating of the Financial Accounting Manual, review of departmental responsibilities in order to reduce overlaps and improve accountability, as well as review of the organisational structure and departmental staffing levels.

3.5 Functional Linkages between MIs and National and Regional Bodies are Established

The long term goal is for RATN and the MIs making substantive contributions to the formulation of regional and national policies for HIV/AIDS have bearing on capacity building and human resource development for effective HIV response. This includes advocating for increased budgetary allocations for training and other capacity development by RECS and National AIDS Authorities (2007/2008 Annual Report, p.17).

The evidence from the interviews with management of the MIs suggests that some have better and more effective linkages with national bodies than others. As of 2007, 58% of the MIs reported that they had linkages with national AIDS authorities; 50% had linkages with regional and international AIDS bodies. Those MIs that have linkages with national bodies have developed them, not because they are members of RATN, but through their own efforts and lobbying at national level.

One example of such successful linkage involves AMREF in Kenya. It has established linkages with the National AIDS Control Council by becoming a member of some of the NACC's four Monitoring and Coordination Groups (MCGs) dealing with (i) Prevention, (ii) Treatment, Care and Support, (iii) Mitigation and (iv) Support Services. Likewise, the Malawi Institute of Management (MIM) is delivering training for participants from various government and non-governmental organisations nominated and funded by that country's National AIDS Commission. In Tanzania, TGNP lobbies for gender-sensitive budgeting by, among other things, organising sensitisation workshops for legislators and other government officials. Other MIs, such as KAPC and ESAMI, have been able to make contact with their countries' respective Ministries of Health through delivering training for the World Bank funded ARCAN project whose Board of Directors comprises the ministries (of Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania) themselves.

Few MIs reported that they have functional linkages with regional bodies such as EAC or SADC. However, some may participate indirectly in the programmes and meetings of these bodies through their membership of such national and regional umbrella organisations as the Zimbabwe AIDS Network (ZAN), EANNASO or SANASO. However, most respondents, including Board members, expressed dissatisfaction with the current level of interaction and engagement between RATN on the one hand and national and regional bodies in ESA.

While acknowledging that RATN is now attending some key regional meetings and fora, its impact in influencing policies and decision-making remains minimal compared to its MIs in their individual capacities. RATN's low visibility and limited influence amongst regional bodies was also reiterated by representatives of these organisations. Some reported that they hardly knew about RATN and even wondered what its functions were. They were more knowledgeable about its MIs rather than RATN itself. Even among those bodies that have been sponsoring trainees to RATN courses, a common impression was that these courses had been developed by the institutions that were delivering those courses. They were unaware of the role of RATN in the development and delivery of those courses. The issue is who should get the recognition: the MIs in their individual capacity or the Network as represented by RATN?

3.6 Strategic Network Meetings and Fora are Held

The issues under consideration here are essentially a function of the Training Programmes Department. However, in the Strategic Plan, this particular strategic objective was placed under the first KRA, rather than under the second KRA on training and capacity development. It will be necessary in the next strategic plan to ensure that responsibility for implementation of the various strategic objectives is more clearly positioned in order to ensure accountability (see section 6.3).

RATN has developed several mechanisms that provide for top management and training coordinators and managers to meet and deliberate on issues of mutual interest pertaining to capacity development in HIV/AIDS. The meetings of the Board and, in particular its Programmes Committee, provide an opportunity for senior management to review current training initiatives and consider new areas of need.

A Directors' Forum, bringing together senior management from the MIs and the Secretariat, was introduced in February 2006 (see Table 3). The forum is held once every two years and is intended to give the participants an opportunity to share experiences and learn new skills that can benefit both the Network as well as the individual MIs. For instance, the 2006 meeting focused on "Performance Improvement and Corporate Governance". The last forum was held in August 2007 and the next is scheduled for 2009.

RATN procedures authorise the Programmes Committee to set up ad hoc Experts Committees. These sub-committees may include experts in the specific topic under discussion, representatives of training institutions that deliver training and/or have the potential of delivering training in the area under consideration, and leading researchers in the topic area. The Experts Committee's responsibilities include reviewing the current state of knowledge concerning critical issues pertaining to the topic under discussion and to define the training needs relating to it, to review existing training modules and identify gaps, develop an outline syllabus for the area under discussion, and make recommendations on strategies for the further development of the course.

Training managers/coordinators also meet regularly to review the Network's training activities within the Network. A recent meeting of the training coordinators held in May 2007 illustrates the range of training issues covered:

- (i) mainstreaming of GASD into the RATN training programmes and lessons learned during the previous year or so,
- (ii) accreditation of RATN courses,
- (iii) course logistics,
- (iv) quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation of courses and the piloting of the enhanced RATN M&E system (RTMES),
- (v) course content and curriculum reviews,
- (vi) review progress in the implementation of the findings and recommendations from the 2005/2006 alumni follow-up study, and
- (vii) reviewing the functions of the proposed Training Reference Group.

Recently, the Board has approved the formation of a Training Reference Group to facilitate training needs assessments within the HIV/AIDS sector. At the meeting of training coordinators held in May 2007, three of the MIs agreed to pilot the concept of a Training Reference Group.

3.7 Inventory of HIV/AIDS Training Institutions and Resource Persons

RATN had committed to develop an inventory of training institutions and resource persons on HIV/AIDS in the ESA region as one of the strategic objectives under the first Key Result Area. Development of the database has been undertaken by the Information and Communication Department as part of its strategic objective to have “RATN recognised as an effective source of information on ...HIV/AIDS training...in the ESA region” (i.e. KRA 3). Progress on the development of the database is therefore reviewed later (see section 5.6.1) in the report where other aspects pertaining to the third KRA are considered.

3.8 Network Expansion

It had been envisaged to increase the number of MIs from 22 to 30 operating in 13 countries (up from eight countries in 2004) by the end of the plan period. By March 2008, RATN had a membership of 25 MIs in 10 countries. Thus, the plan targets for network expansion were only partially met, at 38% increase in membership and 40% increase in the number of countries penetrated.

The expansion of the Network was negatively affected by a number of factors. Firstly, the admission procedures and vetting are quite rigorous. The rigor of the admission procedures also impose obligations on the Secretariat staff in terms of vetting the institutions, conducting field visits and finding sufficient budget resources for the process. As a result, of the seven new applicants for membership reported in the 2006/2007 Annual Report, three were eventually approved by the General Council (AMREF, KHI and REPSSI) while the other four were apparently unsuccessful.

Secondly, once admitted as a member, the budget is further impacted in at least two ways: (i) providing resources for course development and sponsorship for trainees admitted by the new member, and (ii) funding support to the admitted institution to participate in Network meetings and other activities. In general, and as evidenced by the membership application form, admission is tied to members' willingness and commitment to deliver a course under RATN. This, on its own, also put a limit on which institutions can apply for membership.

Thirdly, there were capacity constraints in the Secretariat that militated against network expansion during the plan period. The Network Development Department has additional responsibilities (i) to service governance meetings and (ii) to oversee the M&E activities of the organisation. This will have negatively impacted on the time the Network Development Manager could devote to network expansion activities. In addition, there would have been a drop in network expansion activities anyway shortly before and following the departure of the former Network Development Manager in June 2007 up to the time the new Manager joined.

As RATN moves to the next Strategic Plan, there are some fundamental questions that will need to be addressed with regards to network expansion. Besides the fact that the planned network expansion targets have not been met, the evaluation has also shown that there has been limited interaction in terms of MI-to-MI networking. This is probably not surprising given the current modality of network growth and expansion in which having just one member institution in a country is considered sufficient to label that as a Network participating country.

Yet, as noted in the 2004 Regional HIV/AIDS Training Needs Assessment, there is probably a need to form sub-regional and/or national level networks that would then feed into the work of a larger RATN at the ESA regional level. This suggestion is well worth re-examining during the planning for the next Strategic Plan. Such a focus would allow RATN to expand and consolidate within the participating countries, thus creating a sub-regional forum for enhanced MI-to-MI interaction at national level. The cooperation between TASO and Mildmay Centre in Kampala, Uganda, in sharing some training courses seems to provide a good model.

In these circumstances, the key questions are whether RATN should continue to expand outwards in terms of numbers of MIs and countries joining it, yet remain thin in terms of the services provided within those countries, or whether it should consolidate and deepen its relationship as well as level of services to the current membership and participating countries. Can RATN make an impact in influencing the policies of national bodies if it is only represented in each country by one institution, and which itself, may not be very active in delivering RATN courses? Is it possible to expand outwards and at the same time consolidate within the current participating countries? These are the issues that need to be addressed during the preparation of the next Strategic Plan.

3.8.1 Network Membership Criteria

Network expansion also raises the issue of what type or types of institutions should be considered for membership, given RATN's core business and current strategic goal. The model being used at present is linked to the prospective members' ability to deliver a training course. Institutions offering to deliver training are vetted in terms of their suitability and the adequacy of their facilities and personnel as a training institution, thereby ensuring that their courses will meet the required standards.

Once admitted into membership, there does not appear to be a mechanism for ensuring that members fulfil their obligations by delivering training courses regularly. As a result, not all members are regularly delivering training. Five of the institutions that were already members of the Network in 2004 did not deliver a single course during the entire plan period to 2008. Several of the MIs have widened their range of courses while others have continued to deliver only one course per year throughout the past four years. Given the goal of the Network to promote training and capacity development in the ESA region, it is evident that a large proportion of that strategic objective is being accounted for by only a few of the MIs.

However, it should be noted that some of the MIs that are not strong in training are actively contributing in the governance and programmatic development of the Network through their participation in Board and committee meetings. But there are also a few MIs that are apparently neither training nor participating in governance or programme activities. Reasons for their limited participation in either governance or programmatic functions are varied, including inability to attract sufficient numbers of applicants to their courses, priorities that lie elsewhere outside the Network (as is the case with some of the university departments), and an apparently lower perception of the benefits of membership.

The above suggests that the needs and priorities of the members may be different, ranging from those that want to use the Network to deliver training programmes to those that see networking as the major benefit of membership. It suggests a need for RATN to re-examine its membership criteria. If members merely want to benefit from the networking opportunities, it may not be necessary for them to go through the rigorous admission procedures and assessment of their capacity to deliver training. It would also go some way to reduce the administration costs of admission for RATN. It is also possible that, with such a shift in membership criteria providing for different categories of membership, the size of the Network could increase significantly. An additional question arising from such a change in membership criteria is whether it will still be feasible and valid to maintain the model of sponsored member participation in Network activities. The proposed review of the membership criteria has implications on the Network's constitution and the latter will also need to be changed as appropriate.

A review of the membership criteria would also provide an opportunity to assess the role of university departments within the Network. To date, some of them have not been strong in delivering RATN-sponsored training courses. Understandably, university departments have other demanding teaching and research commitments they are expected to fulfil. Perhaps by shifting the emphasis away from delivery of training, RATN could benefit more from the research capabilities of these university departments and linkages to other research institutions.

3.9 Value Added by Membership of RATN and Membership Satisfaction

The evaluation found that there are benefits that accrue to both the MIs and RATN as an institution from the Network. Important benefits that RATN as a network derives from its MIs include:

- being able to draw on a region-wide pool of management expertise for the Network;
- being able to draw on its member institutions' rich pool of experts for the development, review and implementation of the Network's training programmes and curricula;
- the presence of a member institution provides RATN with an entry point into that particular country and gives the Network the opportunity for engaging with national policy-makers.

But perhaps more important for the continued success of RATN is what its members think are the benefits of membership, as perceived at the level of both MI management as well as their training coordinators and trainers. The value that the MIs place on RATN will determine the extent to which they engage in its activities, as well as the amount of time and resources they are willing to commit to the Network.

Membership satisfaction surveys were held in June 2004 and February 2006. Members generally expressed satisfaction with RATN. In the February 2006 survey, 88% were satisfied with RATN's responsiveness to MI capacity development needs. There was 79% satisfaction with the general direction of RATN's goals and objectives and 75% were satisfied with RATN's governance. While there have been consistently high levels of participation in governance and other meetings organised by the Network, the issue though, in terms of sustainability, is whether these participation levels would be maintained if the members' attendance were not sponsored by RATN.

Perceptions of the value added from membership of RATN are likely to differ between persons, depending in part on the extent of their involvement in Network activities, the length of time a training institution has a member of the Network, and the proportion to which RATN courses contribute to the overall programmes and activities of the MI. In some instances, management in the MIs has changed and the new incumbents may not have the same perceptions of the value added from membership as their founding managers.

During interviews with senior management and trainers of the MIs, including Board members, the respondents were asked what they saw as the main advantages of membership of RATN for their own institutions: in other words, what value did being a member of the Network add to their own organisations? The benefits or value added from membership can be grouped into four:

- (i) membership facilitates networking with like-minded institutions and training providers,
- (ii) it widens the reach of individual institutions beyond its national boundaries,
- (iii) there is financial benefit in running RATN-funded courses, and
- (iv) internal capacity development from the training given to the staff of the MIs.

Several opportunities for networking to the mutual benefit of the member institutions were mentioned. For senior managers, these include Board and General Council meetings, as well as the recently introduced Directors' Forum. For training coordinators and trainers, opportunities for networking include Experts Committee meetings and other training workshops, as well as joint course development and review and the development of training materials.

However, middle level trainers in some of the institutions expressed concern about the low level of inclusiveness within the Network for all people involved with delivering RATN courses. They com-

plained that only the heads of institutions and senior managers are involved in RATN and have the greatest opportunities for interaction with their counterparts in other MIs. Issues discussed at the various fora attended by heads of institutions and information received through the Network were not always cascaded down to the training staff. As mentioned by one Project Manager working for an organisation that is also a member institution in response to the questionnaire sent out to supervisors of RATN alumni, “This was the first time for me to learn about RATN”.

Another benefit arose from the opportunities provided for enrolling course participants from outside national boundaries. All the respondents felt that this helped to enrich their training programmes because of the opportunities for sharing experiences among the course participants. In all instances, course participants are practitioners in the area of HIV/AIDS and they bring their own perspectives and experiences to the courses which they are able to share with both the trainers and other trainees.

Besides sharing of experiences, another advantage arising from enrolling course participants from outside their national borders is that the MIs become better known in the region as providers of training and other services. One MI reported that it had been invited to train about 100 people in a second country because an official in that country’s Ministry of Health was an alumnus who had obviously liked the course he had attended previously.

It is for this reason that many informants from the MIs urged RATN to find ways of continuing to provide financial support for regional participants as much as possible. Currently, RATN provides the equivalent of ten tuition costs during the first two intakes of a new course. Thereafter, RATN only meets tuition fees for the equivalent of five participants per intake. This means that prospective participants have to meet their own costs or seek sponsorship from their employers or other funding agencies. Cases were cited where participants travelled by bus from as far as Zambia and Malawi to attend courses in Uganda than miss the opportunity on the grounds of having failed to find the money for travel, tuition and living expenses.

For the larger MIs with a diverse portfolio of training programmes and substantial income from various sources, the money from RATN for running a course may be inconsequential. In this category are some of the management development institutions that may run as many as 100 different courses per year, of which only one or two are RATN courses. Other MIs in this category include university departments that receive funding from the public exchequer and other large-grant sources, as well as some of the larger and well-funded NGOs. However, for the smaller institutions, the money provided by RATN for trainee sponsorship constitutes a significant proportion of their income and is therefore highly appreciated.

Finally, as shown later (see Chapter 4, section 4.7), RATN has conducted several training courses for the staff of the MIs. These initiatives serve to enhance the capacity of the MIs to deliver their HIV/AIDS programmes.

3.10 Overall Assessment, Key Issues and Recommendations

3.10.1 Overall Assessment

RATN has, by and large, achieved the outcomes of this Key Result Area and the Strategic Plan’s overall objective of “moving from a project to an International NGO” has been realised. RATN has established itself as a functioning network of training institutions in the ESA region. Its achievements include securing donor funding to run the Network’s programmes, retaining the trust and support of the donors in the aftermath of the earlier financial problems, establishing proper governance and administrative structures, and recruitment and retention of well qualified and committed staff.

What remains unfulfilled, however, is the transformation of RATN into a sustainable Network since it is financially vulnerable today as it was at the beginning of the plan period. Administrative overheads also remain high as a proportion of the budget.

3.10.2 Key Strategic Issues

There are a number of key questions that will need to be addressed in the next Strategic Plan and these will require strategic responses.

- (a) *Financial Sustainability*: How can RATN achieve financial sustainability? How can RATN reduce its administrative overheads as a percentage of the budget?
- (b) *Network Expansion*: While the network should continue to expand, how should that expansion take place? Can expansion be reconciled with consolidation and can RATN afford more geographical expansion without consolidating its presence in the countries where it is already represented and without achieving current greater national and institutional penetration?
- (c) *Membership*: Is the current membership model valid? Are there lessons from the emerging patterns of network participation? Should membership be equated with ownership of the network? Can RATN afford to continue with its model of sponsored membership participation? How can RATN promote MI to MI networking and interaction? How can it add value to MIs and assure sustainable participation?
- (d) *Organisational Structure*: There will be need to reorganise the structure of RATN so that it is better able to execute the goals and objectives that will be set for the next Strategic Plan. The current funding arrangements with the three core donors do provide some leeway in that they do not fund particular staff posts, and RATN is therefore free to review its structure within the available budget. How can the organisation focus its human resources on its core mandates? How can the consultancy services be re-configured to take advantage of the regional character and skilled resources of the network without making the MIs feel that RATN is competing with them and without departing from its core mandate of training and capacity development?
- (e) *RATN's Constitution*: To what extent does the current constitution inhibit RATN from benefiting from the wide diversity of expertise available within its membership? How can the involvement, especially of the newer members, be enhanced? Do the current constitutional arrangements favour certain categories of members more than others? What are the constitutional implications of changing membership criteria?

3.10.3 Specific Recommendations for the Next Strategic Plan

The following recommendations are proposed for consideration as the next Strategic Plan is developed.

Financial Resources and Financial Sustainability

- RATN should develop more creative mechanisms for accessing the large HIV/AIDS funds that are now available, e.g. the Global Fund, PEPFAR, Gates Foundation, and the Clinton Foundation.
- RATN should consider appointing someone at sufficiently senior level (managerial grade) either on a full-time or part-time basis to be responsible for fund-raising and income generation, including development of the consultancy business for the organisation. The salary/fees, or part thereof, of the appointee could be linked to the amount of income that is generated on behalf of the Network.
- RATN should investigate the feasibility of establishing an Endowment Fund for the Network using capital from a one-off grant from a donor.

Organisational Structures and Human Resources

- RATN should consider realigning the organisational structure to meet the goals and objectives that will be set in the new Strategic Plan. The re-structuring should be informed by, and proceed after, the adoption of the new Strategic Plan and not before.

- There is need to review the distribution of responsibilities across departments and to match the staffing levels to the workloads.
- RATN should investigate the feasibility and implications of having separate conditions of service for expatriate or non-Kenyan staff.

Operational Systems and Procedures

- Administrative policies, operational systems and procedures should be reviewed as and when necessary to ensure that they remain current and relevant to the situation on the ground.
- The Financial Accounting Manual needs to be reviewed as a matter of urgency.
- There is need for RATN to re-organise its records management systems and ensure that a proper and secure central filing system is introduced.

Governance Systems and the Constitution

- RATN needs to review its constitution, especially in respect of sections pertaining to the terms of office of Board members as well as the status of the two permanent non-voting members.
- RATN needs to develop mechanisms for ensuring that all Board decisions and resolutions are implemented as expeditiously as possible.
- RATN should investigate the feasibility of linking the annual General Council meetings with high-level seminars/conferences on topical HIV/AIDS issues and use that as a mechanism for offsetting the costs of its governance meetings.

Network Expansion and Membership Criteria

- Network expansion during the next Strategic Plan period must be premised on a new vision and mission that RATN wants to guide it over the coming years. There is therefore need for RATN to “re-vision” itself to enable it to define its priorities and strategies for the next plan period. The Network may need to think beyond the delivery of training alone.
- RATN needs to make a strategic decision between extending its geographical coverage by going into more countries against deepening its visibility within the countries where it already has a presence, or consider a combination of both approaches.
- RATN should develop mechanisms for strengthening the level of MI-to-MI interactions within individual countries in order to engender a real sense of belonging.
- RATN should review its membership criteria so that they take into account the interests, strengths and expectations of both potential and current members.

4 Quality Training and Capacity Development (KRA 2)

4.1 The Strategic Objectives

The second KRA relates to the core business of RATN, namely the development and delivery, through its MIs, of quality training programmes that respond to the training needs of the region for capacity development among middle level managers and trainers in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

RATN had set two Strategic Objectives to be achieved during the plan period 2004–2008. These were

- (i) the development of improved training programmes, and
- (ii) improved capacity of MIs to provide an expanded quality training on STI/HIV/AIDS (gender sensitive and informed by the latest research).

4.2 Summary of RATN's Achievements under KRA 2

RATN's performance and achievements made under this KRA during the past four years of the plan period are summarised in Appendix 5. Key achievements are as follows:

- a total of 2,073 people have been trained in the four years to March 2008;
- 57% of the trainees in the past four years were female;
- 131, or 87%, of the plan target of 150 courses in five years have been delivered in the four years to March 2008;
- 17, or 85%, of the plan target of 20 new courses have been developed and delivered in the four years, including courses for marginalized groups;
- training courses and workshops have been organised for staff of the MIs to enhance their capacity in areas such as gender mainstreaming, ART, stigma and discrimination, M&E, ICT and development of the proposed e-learning curriculum, dissemination and familiarisation on the new M&E system (RTMES);
- board induction workshops and other initiatives that are intended to develop the members' management skills.

The courses delivered by the Network are all relevant to the fight against HIV/AIDS as prioritised by African governments and the international community in general. For instance, RATN courses have addressed several of the key areas identified in the 2001 UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, notably those dealing with

- *leadership*, by training staff within the MIs themselves as well as delivering courses on programme management and administration, thereby enhancing the management capabilities of the alumni's employer organisations;
- *care and support*, by delivering training in palliative care, community care, counselling and VCT;
- *treatment*, covered in courses on ART clinical management and laboratory management;
- *prevention*, by delivering courses that target behaviour change and counselling to enhance prevention skills;

- *human rights*, through mainstreaming of gender, stigma and discrimination in its courses, training in gender policy and HIV/AIDS, and delivering courses directed at marginalized groups;
- *reducing the vulnerability of women and children*, represented in the mainstreaming of gender, training in gender policy and HIV/AIDS, as well as providing training on child counselling; and
- *research*, reflected in the training on epidemiological research methodology to enhance the alumni's research capabilities.

4.3 Numbers Trained and Courses Delivered, 2004–2008

Table 4: Numbers trained by course clusters, April 2004 to March 2008

Course Cluster	Financial Year				Total Trained	
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	No.	% of total
Counselling & Related Courses	121	152	209	259	741	35.8
Care & Support Courses	110	110	133	92	445	21.5
Progr. Mgt & Research Methods	123	77	58	60	318	15.3
Advocacy, Gender & Policy Plan	104	150	90	87	431	20.8
Adult Education/TOT	7	13	11	11	42	2.0
Clinical & Lab. Mgt	n.a.	14	31	51	96	4.6
Total	465	516	532	560	2,073	100.0
% change from previous year		+11.0	+3.1	+5.3		

Some 2,073 people were trained under RATN between April 2004 and March 2008 (see Appendix 7), of whom 57% were females. Statistics obtained from the Secretariat show a steady but modest annual increase in the number of trainees, from 465 in 2004/2005 to 560 in 2007/2008 (Table 4). The percentage increase between 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 was 11%, 3% the following year, and 5% between 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

Annual trends comparing male and female enrolment over the past four years are shown in Figure 2 below. While the number of males has remained relatively constant at a little over 200 per year, the number of females has shown an upward trend from 246 in 2004/05 to 334 in 2007/08.

Figure 2: Males and females trained in MIs during the Plan period, 2004/05 to 2007/08

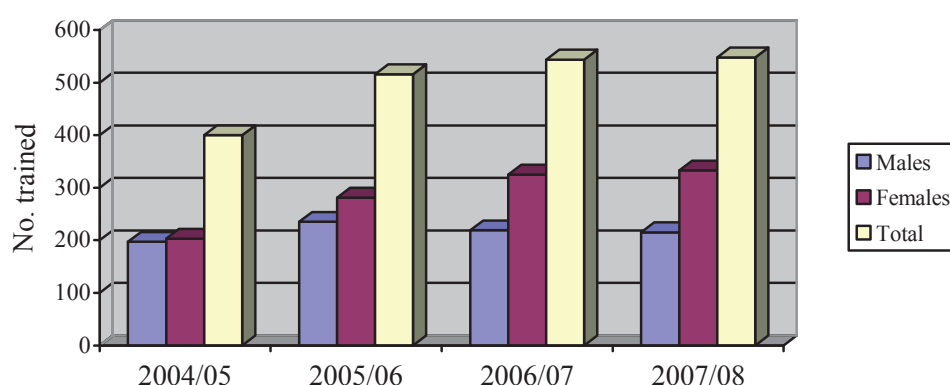


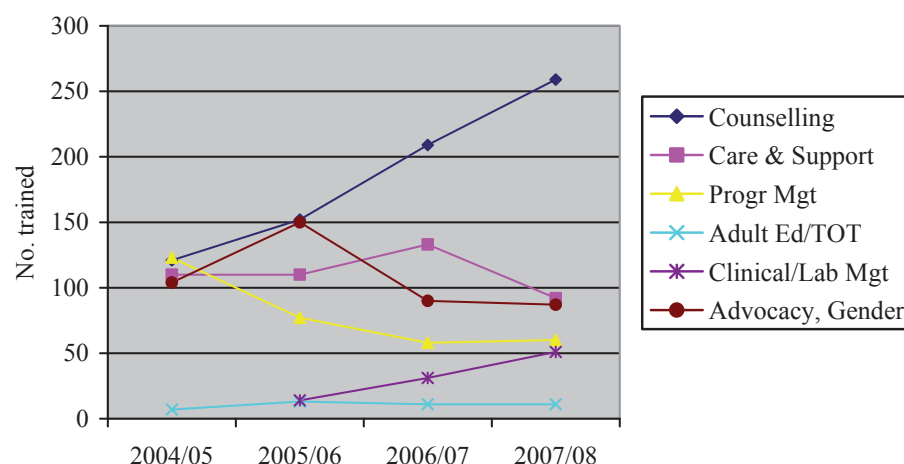
Table 5: Enrolment by gender according to course clusters, April 2004 to March 2008

Course Cluster	Males	Females	Total	% Females
Counselling & Related Courses	221	520	741	71
Care & Support Courses	200	245	445	55
Progr. Mgt. & Research Methods	186	132	318	42
Advocacy, Gender & Policy Plan	206	225	431	52
Adult Education/TOT	21	21	42	50
Clinical & Lab. Management	61	35	96	36
Total	895	1,178	2,073	57

The enrolment trends by gender for the different course clusters show that females have dominated in the counselling-related courses where, aggregated over the four years, they constitute 71% of the alumni (Table 5). On the other hand, females account for less than half of the alumni in the courses on programme management and research methods (42%) and in the clinical and laboratory management cluster (36%). The proportions between male and female alumni are more evenly balanced in the other course clusters. It will be important for RATN, during the next Strategic Plan period, to examine its selection criteria for its various courses in order to avoid falling into what seems to be an emerging pattern of stereotyping certain courses with particular a particular gender group. For instance, deliberately targeting women for courses in programme management and research techniques would go a long way in addressing gender biases at the workplace for management positions.

Although significant progress was made in terms of the numbers trained during the past four years, RATN is unlikely to meet its planned target. According to the PMF status report of 29 February 2008 (section 2.3, p.5), the baseline is given as 529, being the number trained during FY 2003/2004. The plan target is stated as “25% annual increase”. Computed from that base of 529 and a 25% annual increase, the plan target is therefore 3,809 trainees by March 2009. With a total of 2,073 trained to March 2008, there remains a shortfall of 1,736 that would have to be trained during the final year of the plan period, an achievement that is unlikely to be met.

It has been mentioned earlier in this report that the burden of training is being carried by only a minority of the MIs. Three-quarters of the alumni of the past four years have been produced by nine MIs and 50% were the product of five institutions only. Counselling was the most popular cluster of courses, accounting for 36% of the total number of RATN graduates over the four years to March 2008 (Table 4). Each year, the counselling cluster has increased its share of total enrolment, from 26% in 2004/2005 to 46% in 2007/2008.

Figure 3: Enrolment trends by course cluster, 2004/5 to 2007/2008

The counselling cluster was followed by courses on care and support services as well as on advocacy, gender and policy planning, each accounting for 21% of the trainees. The counselling cluster has shown an annual upward trend in terms of enrolment over the past four years (Figure 3), as did the recently introduced clinical and laboratory management cluster. On the other hand, the other clusters have shown a downward trend in enrolment, especially during the past two years or so.

In all, 131 courses were delivered during the past four years, thereby exceeding the original target of 120 courses that were supposed to have been conducted by March 2008 (or 87% of the target of 150 by the end of the plan period). Of these, 17 were new courses, or 85% of the planned target of 20 new courses over the five year planning period.

While RATN is on target in terms of the number of courses delivered and new courses developed, it has lagged behind its planned target in terms of the number of people trained. Since there is little difference between the various courses in terms of the size of each intake (generally less than 20 per group), the discrepancies in target attainment are explained by the uneven contribution to training among the MIs in terms of the numbers of courses each institution delivers per year. Overall, the MIs offering counselling courses, the most popular cluster, account for as much as two-fifths of all the RATN courses each year (Table 6). The major contributors to RATN's training programmes (KAPC, KARA, TASO and CONNECT) run between three and six courses or intakes each per year, while other MIs offer only single courses or intakes. At the same time, some of the other course clusters have experienced declining numbers of participants during the past two years or so, thereby reducing further the prospects of attaining the plan target in terms of numbers of alumni.

Table 6: Numbers of courses delivered, by course clusters, April 2004 to March 2008

Course Cluster	Financial Year				Total	
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	No.	% of total
Counselling & Related Courses	9	11	14	16	50	38.2
Care & Support Courses	8	8	8	5	29	22.1
Progr. Mgt & Research Methods	5	5	5	4	19	14.5
Advocacy, Gender & Policy Plan	4	6	4	7	21	16.0
Adult Education/TOT	1	1	1	1	4	3.1
Clinical & Lab. Mgt	1	1	2	4	7	5.3
Distance learning – PMTCT					1	0.8
Total	28	32	34	37	131	100.0

The number of courses run by the Network, and therefore the number of participants that can be trained each year, are dependent on the readiness of the MIs to mount the courses in relation to their other commitments, the uptake of the courses by prospective clients, funding patterns for training in the region, changing trends and critical issues in HIV/AIDS, as well as the availability of the requisite resource persons within the MIs. Uptake of the courses will also be influenced by the amount of advertising done as well as the ability of the applicants to pay or find sponsorship. In many instances, promotion of courses is by word of mouth among prospective clients, although most MIs publish annual training calendars and upcoming courses are also advertised in the RATN newsletter.

Although no detailed cost comparison with other training providers in the region was conducted, anecdotal information from the interviews with alumni and other key informants suggested that RATN courses are relatively more expensive. As more training providers enter the field of HIV/AIDS (some of them with dubious credentials, according to some of the NAC official), it is not surprising that potential clients will be drawn to those institutions offering similar courses, but charging lower fees than those charged for the RATN courses. It was also pointed out during the interviews that salaries in the region

for health and allied professionals are not particularly attractive and, unless one is sponsored by an employer or other body, high fees will be prohibitive for many.

If the number of courses developed and delivered is analysed in terms of who did what amongst the MIs, then a re-examination of its strategic thrust may be called for. For instance, having identified the courses that are popular, the Network might consider focusing its expansion plans more on bringing in members with the capacity to deliver those types of courses, thus increasing significantly the numbers that can be trained.

It may also be necessary to review the business model and begin to develop branded courses which can then be offered by a wider range of institutions, including those outside the Network on agreed licensing arrangements and under RATN's quality control. The issue here is whether RATN should continue to restrict course delivery to its members only or whether it should widen delivery of its courses to other institutions outside the Network. Such an approach would widen, not only its course delivery base, but also its associate membership while increasing its income base, thereby improving the sustainability of the Network.

4.4 Development of Improved Training Programmes

Whether RATN has lived up to its strategic objective to develop improved training programmes can be assessed in a number of ways. These include

- developing new courses that respond to emerging needs,
- regularly reviewing existing courses and incorporating findings from research into its curricula and courses,
- developing new and upgrading existing training materials,
- improving the capacity of trainers and resource persons within the MIs,
- drawing upon, and incorporating lessons learned, including feedback from its alumni,
- developing effective M&E systems to monitor its programmes and utilising the results thereof, and
- continually investigating opportunities to introduce innovative, effective and yet cost-efficient learning methodologies.

RATN has established mechanisms for regular curriculum reviews in order to ensure that its training programmes remain current and relevant. Curriculum reviews are conducted by Expert Committees whose members are drawn from amongst the MIs responsible for course delivery, often assisted by external facilitators/resource persons who are experts in the particular field. Meetings of the General Council, the Programmes Committee, feedback from course participants, reports from HIV/AIDS conferences and other fora are also used to identify new training needs and courses for review.

Two formal training needs assessments have been conducted to date, the first in 1994 before the establishment of RATN as a project, and the second in 2004. But formal training needs have been shown to be expensive. More recently, a less expensive approach of identifying training needs has been adopted involving the establishment of a Training Reference Group which is supposed to identify emerging issues on HIV/AIDS and their training needs, as well as providing feedback on the quality and appropriateness of training courses.

In other instances, feasibility studies are conducted to assess the need for particular courses and capacity within the MIs to deliver them. This was the case prior to the development of counselling training courses for the visually and hearing impaired whereby a survey was conducted and strategy paper developed with the assistance of external consultants in 2005.

RATN is supposed to be at the cutting edge in terms of the development and implementation of training programmes for the fight against HIV/AIDS. The successes achieved in this regard during the past five years are reflected in the number and diversity of new courses that have been developed and introduced by the Network. Each year has also seen new courses being introduced: four in 2004/05, five in 2005/06 and six new courses in 2006/07. During the past year (2007/08), two new courses were introduced. Some of the courses developed and introduced during the past five years include:

- ARV for Counsellors,
- Child Counselling,
- Programme Management and Administration,
- Medical Laboratory Practices and Management,
- ART Clinical Management,
- HIV Counselling and Testing,
- Counselling for the Hearing Impaired,
- Counselling for the Visually Impaired,
- Counselling for Marginalized Groups,
- Post-graduate Certificate in Counselling.

In respect of the counselling courses for marginalized groups, KAPC has opted to deliver its courses to the visually and hearing impaired as separate courses for each target group while CONNECT has been running the course with mixed groups of both disabled and other persons.

RATN can be said to have performed well in meeting its set targets in terms of developing new training methodologies. Cooperation with MIs and associate institutions in the ESA region and abroad has resulted in quality methodologies being developed and made available to members, thereby enhancing the value of membership. Distance e-learning is being investigated in conjunction with the University of Manitoba and the first intake of students for a course in Management of HIV/AIDS Programmes is scheduled for early 2009.

The significant progress that has been made in training must be weighed against concerns that have also been raised. During interviews with some of the training managers and trainers within the MIs, it was pointed out that curriculum reviews have not always been held as regularly as they should in order to ensure that the courses remain current and relevant. The understanding is that courses should be reviewed at least once every two-to-three years, or earlier if the need arises. But, according to some of the training managers and trainers interviewed, their courses have not been reviewed by RATN for at least five years.

Furthermore, where a course is being offered by two MIs, there is a strong likelihood of divergence of the content over time as individual trainers and/or institutions undertake their own internal reviews and changes to suit their needs and special interests. In that event, after a few years of such individual *ad hoc* revisions, it may not be possible to find common ground in the course as delivered by the two institutions, despite carrying a common title.

A number of informants also pointed that, while RATN has been responsive to changing needs for training in some areas, it has missed out in certain respects by failing to exploit new opportunities emerging from the research into HIV/AIDS. An example cited was the need for training arising from the research into male circumcision. The feeling was that RATN had been slow in responding and the

opportunity for training in this area had been seized by other organisations. A similar call was made in the 2004 regional training needs assessment report for RATN to be proactive to changing needs and to develop a more rapid response mechanism.

For the future, and to ensure that it is at the cutting edge in terms of meeting the training needs of this evolving epidemic, RATN needs to exploit more aggressively its comparative advantage of having research organisations and university departments among its membership to update it on the latest research findings. It needs to use the well-positioned members to develop new training programmes that meet the emerging challenges as they arise.

4.5 Alumni Follow-up Studies and Feedback

There are several points at which information and feedback on training can be obtained from the alumni. These are either during the pre-course period as applicants provide personal and professional details for purposes of selection and enrolment, during the training as they make pre-course, mid-course and end-of-course assessments, and through follow-up studies at their workplaces.

All member institutions are expected to submit course evaluation reports at the end of each training session. The reports are submitted to the Board via the Programmes Committee at their scheduled meetings while the statistical data becomes part of the annual report to the General Council, stating the courses run during the year, the institutions responsible for their delivery, duration, and the number of trainees that had attended each course broken by gender. In order to ensure compliance by the MIs on the submission of the course evaluation reports, the Board took the decision to reimburse the second tranche (50%) of each course grant for RATN-supported trainees only after submission of the report by the training institution.

One of the targets of the Strategic Plan was to conduct alumni follow-up studies every two years as part of monitoring to assess whether they were incorporating the newly acquired skills into their work situations. The first alumni study was in 2000 when RATN was still a project. A second follow-up study was conducted in 2005/2006. The latter study to a large extent validated the results from the first study. Of particular interest were the findings that 90% of the alumni had found the courses to be relevant and applicable to their work situations, 84% of the supervisors reported improved programming, and 52% of the alumni surveyed reported changes in their ways of programming and working. By and large, the results confirmed the relevance and usefulness of the training programmes being delivered by RATN.

However, conducting only one follow-up study during the five-year plan period (instead of the target of two) points to the costliness of the exercise under the current modality and raises the need, during the next plan period, to find new ways of obtaining more regular feedback on the alumni. Consideration might be given to providing budgets for national level exercises which can then be done more regularly using standardised platforms or data collection tools. This could be done within the context of the recently developed RTMES which is being rolled out to the member institutions.

The dissemination of the 2005/2006 survey results through CD was a commendable achievement to provide feedback on the findings to the alumni, the MIs and other stakeholders. However, feedback attempts are bound to be limited as long as there are no ready fora for reviewing and commenting on the findings. The attempt made by MIM, in collaboration with the Secretariat, to form an association of all RATN alumni based in Malawi is a step in the right direction. There will be need to re-think what can be done in regard to mechanisms for obtaining feedback from alumni during the next Strategic Plan.

Supporting the formation of national associations of alumni in all the member countries is one strategy that can be used to provide a forum for interaction. It need not cost a lot of money if such an association were hosted by one of the MIs in the country with limited funding support from RATN.

Another possibility for consideration would be to organise, at the time of the annual General Council meeting, a mini-conference that would deal with topical issues in HIV/AIDS and which would bring the alumni together. These mini-conferences could be open to other organisations working in the area of HIV/AIDS and thus bring greater visibility and recognition to RATN as a whole.

4.6 Alumni's Assessment of RATN Courses

Alumni that were canvassed by means of the focus group discussions and through the questionnaire survey were asked to comment on the training courses which they had attended. Almost without exception, all were very complementary of the training that they had received, the methodologies that were used and the training materials. For instance, 86% of the respondents to the email questionnaire said the course which they had attended had been very relevant to their work situation, while the remaining 14% felt it was relevant. Likewise, 88% said the training methodologies used had been very good and effective, with the remaining 12% saying the approaches used were only average.

When asked to elaborate on which methodologies they had found most effective, participants in the focus group discussions said they had benefited the most from the participatory approaches used as well as the opportunities for field visits to various case study sites where they were able to interact with service providers, PLWHAs and others. Three-quarters of the questionnaire respondents rated the training materials as very good, while the remaining 25% said they were only average in quality. Many of the respondents said they were using the training materials from their courses as references at their own workplaces.

The alumni were also asked in what ways they thought they and their employer organisations had benefited from the courses which they had attended and if they had experienced any problems prior to, during, or after as a consequence of their attendance. The main benefits to themselves reported by the alumni were:

- acquisition of new skills and knowledge relevant to their work (e.g. on community mobilisation, laboratory management, PMTCT, behaviour change, ARV counselling, research methods, policy analysis, programme management, etc), which was cited by a large majority of the respondents;
- the opportunity to meet, network and share experiences with people from different organisations and countries;
- work performance had improved;
- some had been promoted or given more challenging responsibilities at their workplaces;
- some had used the training to find better paying and more challenging employment opportunities;
- a few said the courses had enabled them to explore their hidden selves and to cope with their own personal problems, or had been enabled to become better listeners, even at home with their own children and families (see box).

"The counselling training has helped me cope with my personal problems and opened my world to the needs of the Deaf people. As a result I was able to perform some volunteer work with Deaf people affected and infected by the HIV virus that causes AIDS. My volunteer work in turn led to a full five year scholarship to study in the USA. I thought that counselling was for the mentally ill until I tried the therapeutic affect (sic) of counselling. I am now doing Social Work at university level as a result of my Counselling training".

The responses concur with the results from the 2000 and 2005/2006 alumni follow-up studies. For instance, in the 2000 pilot study, the main benefits cited by the respondent alumni were (i) experience sharing (81% of the respondents) and (ii) acquisition of new skills and their transferability to the participants' own work situations (62%).

The alumni also thought that their employer organisations had benefited from the training in several ways, including (see box below as well):

- some reported that they had shared the experiences and information with colleagues at their workplaces;
- the human resources base of their employer organisations had been enhanced because of the training they had received;
- some were implementing at their own workplaces the ideas that they had learned during the training (e.g. one teacher reported that they had formed an Anti-AIDS Club for children at their school, others were mainstreaming gender or HIV/AIDS, or taking a rights-based approach in their programmes, another had introduced an HIV/AIDS policy at their workplace, etc);
- others reported that service delivery and work performance at their workplaces had improved and new procedures and systems had been introduced as a result.

Many of the benefits to both the individual alumni and their employer organisations concur with the findings from the 2006 alumni follow-up study.

Comments from alumni on how they and their organisations had benefited from the RATN training

I have started a rehabilitation programme and we have 420 children, a majority of them were street children, and many of them lost their parents due to AIDS. With the knowledge RATN (sic), we are able to help them better. I also have more people coming for counselling than before – from Uganda

They use me a lot in counselling those taking the drugs and follow up of clients. I also shared my experience with the rest of the staff who did not attend the training – from Cambodia

I introduced OVC social clubs in congregation so children can meet together and during this meetings we get opportunity to solve their problems – from Tanzania

Improved my gender perceptions and objective action at all levels; project design, implementation, management, monitoring and evaluation and reporting – from Zambia

Am now working with minimum supervision in areas of ART programme activities. I took all the staff through what we had covered from the training which created a very big impact as far as ART programme activities are concern (sic) – from Uganda

My work is more organised and now I deliver and feel very confident to work with very competitive partners – from Kenya

Introduction of the rural based mobile VCT services, which have become very successful and assisted in reduction of stigma in the community – from Zambia

Influenced the formulation of an HIV/AIDS workplace policy – from Malawi

I got knowledge and skills that has improved my job on the position I am holding now – I was promoted from Assistant CBO Project Officer to CBO Project Officer – from Malawi

One head of an NGO also confirmed the positive impacts that had occurred within their organisation following the attendance of their manager at a RATN course as follows:

Has sourced for more HIV/AIDS publications to our HIV/AIDS Resource Centre

Has introduced computer services and internet in our Resource Centre

Has helped build a positive linkage between our organisation and the Ministry of Health

Has helped source donor funding from ... (name given)

Has improved collaborative spirit of our organisation with other organisations working in HIV/AIDS in ... (name of region given)

Through his coordination UNDP has provided our organisation with book-shelves for our HIV/AIDS Resource Centre.

Some 70% of the respondents reported that they had not experienced any problems relating to their attendance before, during, or after the courses. However, a few alumni reported that they had experienced problems, the issues raised being

- inadequate financial support to cover transport costs to and from the training venue;
- duration of some of the courses which was considered too short in relation to the amount of material that needed to be covered;
- some of the trainers not always ready, or too busy with other commitments; and
- training materials not being made available on time in some of the institutions.

“RATN should understand that training (hearing impaired) people in counselling is useless unless they are going to help them find jobs. Periodic announcement of training will only fatten some of them for one month (food at five star hotels) and then it is back to reality.

Your programs are very good. But what is the end result when (hearing impaired) graduates cannot find jobs and are not accepted back by the (hearing impaired) community? They feel frustrated that RATN is really wasting their time and money. Do not get me wrong. I support your effort to educate the (hearing impaired) people. But they cannot get access to diploma or higher diploma training; assume that this education entitles them to a job and in a way they are right; and above all (hearing impaired) graduates are abused as poorly trained by ... (name supplied). Few of us are able to make use of this education for self-enrichment like I did. Perhaps in the next intake you will address these problems”.

From a course participant with disability

As RATN introduces courses for marginalized groups and those with disabilities, it needs to give serious consideration to the unique problems that these candidates face in society and the implications on their livelihoods and dependents even during their time on a course (see box).

Participants from marginalized groups are more likely to come with lower educational qualifications and may have greater difficulties in understanding the topics.

As a result, they may take more time to cover the same course syllabus and perhaps require the use of simplified and/or specialised training materials. For instance, visually impaired trainees will require course materials produced in Braille. Additionally, trainees with hearing impairment require sign language experts to support the course facilitators. Many of the disabled are self-employed and one concern raised was how they would be able to support their families for the duration of the courses.

Both the alumni as well as the MI trainers reported that there was inadequate post-training follow-up. This issue had been raised in previous alumni follow-up surveys. The alumni strongly felt that they would benefit from occasional visits from the training institutions to assess how they were performing following their training and, also, to assess implementation of the work plans they will have prepared during the training. In fact, when the alumni were asked how they thought RATN could improve its

training courses, post-training follow-up was the most cited recommendation (22% of the respondents), followed by a request to increase the duration of the courses (suggestions varied but ranged between one and three weeks) (cited by 13% of the respondents).

Such follow-up is likely to be most appreciated where the alumni may feel that they are being denied the opportunity by their superiors to implement their new ideas and skills. In the words of one former trainee when asked to explain the changes he had introduced, “Not much can be done without monetary allocation and the authorities’ good will”. Another former trainee reported that she had not been able to implement any of the proposals in her work plan because the authorities at her faith-based school had not been supportive. She had not even been able to share her experiences with colleagues. Said another trainee, “If my employer knew what I was going to do I couldn’t have gotten the chance to go (to attend the course) in the first instance”.

The informants – trainers, alumni and other stakeholders – were asked to identify what they considered as the skills and training gaps in the fight against HIV/AIDS and to suggest how RATN could contribute to address those capacity needs. The proposed training programmes are at two levels: (i) specialist training for their HIV/AIDS interventions and (ii) capacity development to enable them to manage their organisations and programmes more effectively. It was emphasised that new course developments should be informed by current research findings and should be responsive to the needs of the time.

The following were identified as areas in need for development of new training courses:

- re-emphasis on prevention, including positive prevention;
- to address the needs of positive adolescents, for instance dealing with reproductive health education, skills/vocational training (RATN would have to identify new MIs engaged in skills training for the youths);
- treatment and support, including adherence to drugs, HIV-related complications (cancers, brain impairment, TB), disclosure, stigma;
- skills development among CBOs, e.g. leadership development, record keeping, preparation of proposals to enable CBO leaders to access funds for their projects, organisational development, financial management and reporting;
- courses targeting national and local level legislators (e.g. Parliamentary Health Portfolio Committee members) on international conventions (e.g. UNGASS) HIV/AIDS policies, and community dissemination of research findings (e.g. for the promotion of male circumcision within their constituents);
- HIV/AIDS at the workplace targeting HR managers, SMEs;
- paediatric HIV/AIDS treatment and care;
- “Caring for Carers”, many of whom are volunteers, are dealing with stressful situations (grief, chronic illness, poverty, nutrition, etc) on a daily basis, are over-burdened, emotionally stressed and suffer burn-out, giving attention to the associated “burden of care” and gender issues.

4.7 Capacity Improvement within MIs for Expanded Quality Training

Since 2004, RATN has implemented several initiatives to improve the internal capacity of the MIs to deliver training. Capacity development needs of the MIs are identified through various channels such as meetings and commissioned studies. Initiatives taken to improve the training capacity of the MIs include:

- development in 2005 by a task force made up of representatives from the MIs of a toolkit or guideline for mainstreaming issues related to gender, anti-retroviral therapy and stigma and discrimination (GASD) into RATN training courses;
- a workshop on GASD for trainers from the MIs held in Zambia;
- training workshop (September 2007) on monitoring and evaluation attended by 21 of the MIs' training managers and coordinators organised by HEARD in South Africa;
- a RTMES dissemination workshop held at ESAMI, Arusha, in November 2007;
- two training workshops for ICT staff from the MIs and the Secretariat held in 2007, one in Malawi and another in Swaziland;
- a four-week course on strategic management of libraries and information resource centres held for MI staff in Swaziland in 2007;
- facilitator support programme between MIs to jointly participate in course delivery at the hosting institution – the programme was piloted in 2004/2005 between TASO, CONNECT and Mildmay Centre during the delivery of the Child Counselling course, but, unfortunately, it has not been widely taken up by the other MIs;
- upon request from the Kigali Health Institute for assistance with its counselling course, arrangements were made for KAPC and CONNECT to provide staff support in developing and delivering the first pilot course in 2007;
- regular meetings and workshops for MI training managers and coordinators to review various training issues.

Although the Network has not made much progress in putting the idea into practice, it has also discussed the establishment of mobile training teams involving sending teams of trainers to the various countries to deliver particular courses. This would bring the trainers to the trainees, with obvious substantial cost savings compared with sponsoring regional participants.

At the senior management level, RATN Board induction and training workshops will also have had beneficial impacts on the MIs in that the participants are exposed to management skills to run their own organisations. Other workshops for Board members that will have had positive impacts on the participants' own organisations include the one on "finance for non-financial managers" held in 2006 and, more recently, the workshop on resource mobilisation held in 2007. Likewise, the Directors' Forum held every two years enables participants to exchange ideas that will also impact on the management of their own institutions.

It is worth noting that several of the issues discussed at the training managers and coordinators' workshop in May 2007 were also raised with the consultants by some of the informants during the evaluation visits to the MIs. For instance, many of the MIs have not made much progress with accreditation of their courses, partly because the countries have different accreditation authorities (e.g. national universities, vocational training authorities, or councils for higher education), and have different accreditation requirements and modalities (e.g. requirements for minimum contact hours before a course can be approved as meeting a particular threshold for a certificate or diploma, qualifications of teaching staff – universities may require a minimum of a Masters degree, teaching facilities and equipment, library resources, etc). A report by a consultant contracted by RATN in 2005 highlighted these diverse accreditation requirements and procedures in the ESA countries and made a number of recommendations for consideration by the Network and its MIs.

Currently, only a few MIs have secured, or are pursuing, accreditation of their RATN courses with institutions of higher learning, for instance CONNECT with the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU), KARA with the University of Zambia (UNZA), KAPC with the University of Manchester in the UK and Mildmay Centre with Mbarara University. The case of CONNECT is interesting in that it has been running its counselling course long before the establishment of the ZOU in the 1990s. When ZOU was preparing to introduce its degree programme on counselling, it was looking for library and other resources from CONNECT, and that way, a mutual relationship became established.

All the training coordinators and trainers interviewed reported that they were doing pre- and post-training evaluations. Evaluation reports are then prepared and submitted to RATN. As mentioned earlier, there is a clear financial incentive for compliance. However, what is lacking is the sharing of these evaluation reports among the MIs, especially where two or more institutions are offering the same course. The other MI will not know the kind of feedback, and possible suggestions for change and improvement, emanating from its partner institution.

4.8 Overall Assessment, Key Issues and Recommendations

4.8.1 Overall Assessment

RATN's core business is the development and delivery of training courses that are relevant and topical for the enhancement of human resources in the fight against HIV/AIDS. During the past four years, training has been given to over 2,000 participants, a little over half of them females. While the Network has not met its planned target in terms of numbers of alumni, it is on course to achieving its plan targets in terms of the numbers of courses delivered and the number of new courses developed. The courses that are being run and/or developed by the Network all fall within the priority areas in the fight against HIV/AIDS as agreed by African governments and in international conventions. Tools have been developed to monitor its training programmes and the feedback from the alumni has been very positive. RATN has also implemented capacity building initiatives to enhance the human resources base of the MIs themselves in a number of key areas, including ICT, M&E, GASD and others.

4.8.2 Key Strategic Issues

There are several key strategic issues that must inform the next Strategic Plan:

- a) *Training Focus:* Taking into account that the largest results are being delivered by only a few institutions (in terms of numbers trained), should RATN not re-configure its training priorities and programming to achieve greater results by focussing on what brings more results (80/20 principle), without diverting from its focus on global and regional trends and needs for capacity building in the fight against HIV/AIDS?
- b) *Branding of RATN Products:* Should RATN not change its business model and consider branding its products but making them available to a wider spectrum of training deliverers beyond the network? Do the numbers trained on some courses justify the heavy investment that will have been made in course development? Should RATN not be developing flagship products that can achieve regional penetration?
- c) *Positioning at the Cutting Edge:* How can RATN position itself at the cutting edge of training development and delivery? Does it have the staff to position it, or can its members find the time to put it at that cutting edge?
- d) *Alumni Follow up:* How should Alumni be more extensively followed up? Could the idea of national alumni forums be the answer and could resources be found to support such initiatives?

4.8.3 Specific Recommendations for the Next Strategic Plan

The following recommendations are made for consideration as the next plan is developed:

- RATN should examine the feasibility of identifying specific courses for which it has comparative advantage and developing these as its brand courses, thereby developing a niche market for itself within the wider field of HIV/AIDS training.
- The feasibility of selling its branded courses under license to other training institutions that are not members of the Network should be examined. Marketing these branded courses would not only increase RATN's visibility and extend its influence, but would also generate additional income.
- The Network should ensure that all its courses are reviewed on a regular basis, and at least once every two years, in order that they remain current and relevant in the fight against HIV/AIDS.
- The issues above need to be investigated and decisions taken on them within the framework of an overall training policy for the Network.
- There is need to develop mechanisms to ensure that RATN keeps track of, and is regularly updated on, emerging issues in HIV/AIDS, including new findings from research and that it promptly responds by identifying the training gaps.
- MIs should provide for following up on a sample of their alumni, at least for the first six months post-training.
- A number of suggestions were made during the course of this evaluation for new areas of training as shown in section 3.3.4 of this report. RATN should investigate the viability and need for such new training initiatives.

5 RATN as an Information Source and Influence on National/Regional Bodies (KRA 3&5)

5.1 The Strategic Objectives

The third and fifth KRAs of the Strategic Plan/PMF share a lot in common. The fifth KRA was not in the original Strategic Plan, but was subsequently included during the formulation of the Performance Measurement Framework. In order to avoid duplication in the analysis of their achievements, the two are reviewed together in the following paragraphs.

The third KRA in the Strategic Plan envisaged RATN becoming recognised as an effective source of information on, and an advocate for, quality STI/HIV/AIDS training and capacity development in the ESA region. In the fifth KRA, it was envisaged that the Network would ensure that, through its advocacy work, national and regional bodies would have capacity building and human resources components within their policy frameworks and budgets.

The Strategic Objectives set by RATN under the two KRAs were:

- (i) policies of MIs and regional bodies on training and capacity development are influenced positively;
- (ii) effective linkages between the RATN Resource Centre and the resource centres of other MIs, collaborating agencies and affiliate institutions are enhanced;

- (iii) information to RATN's internal and external publics effectively disseminated;
- (iv) data management and web-based communication systems improved;
- (v) advocacy action plan developed and implemented; and
- (vi) contributions by RATN noted in outcomes of international and national consultative forums and programme advisory boards.

5.2 Summary of RATN's Achievements under KRAs 3&5

RATN has again made progress in meeting the strategic objectives set out under these two Key Result Areas. The major achievements may be summarised as follows:

- RATN has been participating in meetings and other fora of national and regional bodies through which it seeks to influence their policies on training and capacity building;
- The number of users per month for RATN's Resource Centre has risen from 75 in April 2004 to 176 per month in 2007/2008, far exceeding the plan target of 100 users per month;
- The HIV/AIDS training material and other publications held by the Resource Centre have been digitalised and made available for electronic distribution;
- 80% of all the enquiries handled by the Resource Centre are by email, a development in line with the digitalisation of its training materials;
- the plan target of 20% annual increase in the RATN newsletter circulation has been exceeded;
- the annual publication schedule of the newsletter has been observed;
- reader feedback on the newsletter has been obtained and has been positive;
- the newsletter is also available on the RATN web-site;
- the RATN web-site has been re-developed and improved;
- visits to the web-site are monitored and reported.

5.3 RATN's Participation and Influence in National and Regional Fora

RATN has been scaling up its participation in regional and international fora and its interactions with national and regional bodies. It has participated in the SADC/UNAIDS Partnership Forum for Southern Africa and the EAC/UNAIDS Partnership Forum for Eastern Africa. Meetings have been held with NACs in a number of countries during the past few years as well as with the HIV/AIDS units of the two regional bodies, EAC and SADC. Thirdly, it has established linkages with regional civil society HIV/AIDS umbrella bodies, SANASO and EANNASO. In January 2008, RATN signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SANASO aimed at strengthening collaboration between the two organisations in capacity building for HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa. Negotiations are under way for a similar agreement with EANNASO. RATN has also interacted with SAfAIDS, another HIV/AIDS information dissemination organisation working in the region.

RATN participation in these meetings and engagement with national and regional HIV/AIDS bodies is a welcome development to influence policy, identify training needs as well as enhance its visibility among policy makers at the highest levels. However, both the Board members and Secretariat admit that a lot more work is required to raise the level of recognition and acceptance of RATN as a key actor in the HIV/AIDS sector.

Similar sentiments were expressed during interviews with officials in these national and regional bodies and representatives of civil society organisations. There is some degree of confusion in the minds of officials of national and regional bodies as to the role of RATN and the kind of services it provides via its member institutions. The result among them is that, if they require a particular service or information, they are more likely to call on a member institution to provide it rather than on RATN. In other words, RATN is “below their radar” even in countries where it has more than one MI, especially in comparison with some of its MIs that have much stronger name and service delivery recognition.

The challenge for RATN is to raise its name recognition among policy makers before it can begin to make an impact on policy formulation. Since the annual General Council meetings rotate amongst the member countries, its visibility could be enhanced if cutting edge conferences or workshops were organised to coincide with the annual gatherings, drawing participants from across the spectrum of organisations that deal with training in HIV/AIDS. It is worth noting that during the same week that the 2008 annual General Council meeting was being held at the Crossroads Hotel, Lilongwe, hosted by MIM, the Malawi National AIDS Commission was simultaneously presenting its annual Monitoring and Evaluation Report for 2007 at a three-day conference at MIM. This could be viewed as a missed opportunity for RATN to publicise its role within the Malawian HIV/AIDS sector.

RATN needs to find a mechanism that will make it possible for NACs, when interacting with its MIs, to also closely identify them as members of the Network. This will only happen if RATN directly up-scales its contacts with the NACs and at the same time gets the NACs to identify RATN with its MIs in each particular country. There are one or two possibilities in terms of raising the profile and visibility of RATN at national level.

One possibility is to increase the number of MIs in each country delivering RATN programmes so that, by sheer numbers and intensity of activities, RATN becomes a major player in the delivery of HIV/AIDS training in that country. It goes without saying that where RATN has only one member in a country, and that member delivers only one RATN course per year, (amongst among many other courses run by the same MI), then the visibility and name recognition of RATN is bound to be limited.

Secondly, RATN could become a recognised player by developing and making available, to a wider market than just the MIs, branded training programmes that can be adapted for use by the major non-member training institutions, thus raising the profile of RATN as a provider of branded quality training materials (see section 4.3 above).

5.4 Advocacy

In the 2005/2006 Annual Report, it was acknowledged that not enough advocacy work had been done because of inadequate capacity within the Secretariat. However, the following year, 2006/2007, some progress was made and a three-year Advocacy Strategy was prepared. Among other things, the strategy proposed that:

- RATN and the MIs would make substantive contributions to the formulation of capacity building policies by regularly and meaningfully participating in strategic HIV/AIDS fora at the national level;
- NACs and RECs undertaking well planned and formally structured capacity assessments and training needs assessments in all national and regional HIV/AIDS responses;
- NACs and RECs developing capacity strengthening plans for the national and regional level responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic;
- NACs and RECs increasing their budgetary allocations for training and other capacity strengthening activities;

- NACs and RECs implementing effective, well planned, focused and quality assured capacity strengthening plans which have high impact;
- Organisations properly utilising monitoring and reporting on all activities and resources being used for capacity strengthening within the national and regional responses.

However, by the end of the following year, it was reported that most of the advocacy targets had not been achieved and that external technical assistance was needed for advocacy work. A consultant was to be contracted during 2007/2008 to assist in collecting data on budgetary allocations being made by national AIDS authorities and regional bodies towards capacity development for the HIV/AIDS sector.

It is not surprising that not much was achieved. Looking at the proposed advocacy activities above, it is only the first one that indicates what was to be done by RATN in order to achieve the desired result. The other five are more of expected outcomes than activities and do not specify how they are to be achieved. And even with the first activity, it is not clear how the “substantive contributions” would be made or how RATN would “meaningfully” participate in “strategic HIV/AIDS fora”.

5.5 Information Dissemination to RATN's Internal and External Publics

Effective and enhanced information dissemination was one of the goals that RATN set out to achieve under the current Strategic Plan. Its internal and external publics can be said to comprise staff and alumni of the MIs as well as other stakeholders such as NACS and other regional organisations respectively. Several mechanisms are available for RATN to distribute its information to both these internal and external publics, including its newsletter, web-site, the Resource Centre, as well as direct marketing and advocacy.

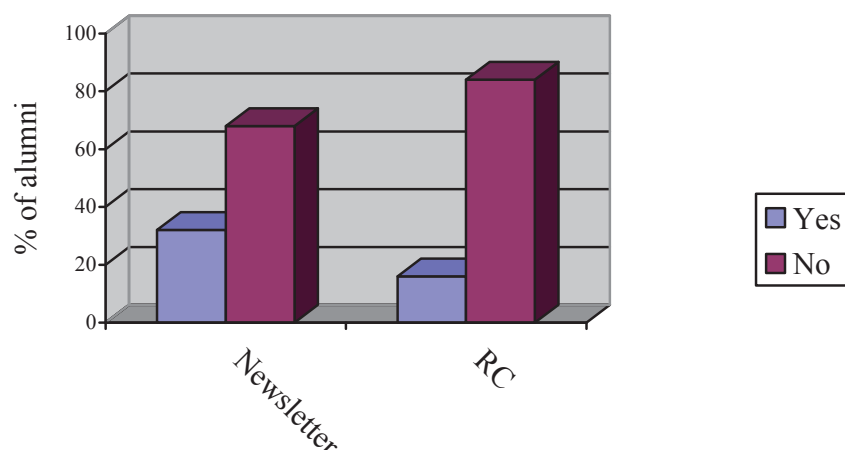
5.5.1 The RATN Newsletter

The Strategic Plan's targets of producing and sending the quarterly newsletter to all the MIs have been met in full. The 20% annual increase in circulation has been exceeded and all the MIs are receiving the newsletter according to the planned publication schedule. Reader feedback has also been very positive with many commenting that the newsletter provides them with information on upcoming training courses, testimonials from former trainees, news and events within the Network, that it has enriched their own resource centre collections, and that it is a useful vehicle for disseminating news and information on MIs. It was also suggested that the newsletter should include information on critical research as well as publicising “best practices” within the Network.

The Information and Communication Department in the Secretariat maintains a mailing list which is used to distribute the newsletter to recipients. Each MI receives 15 copies of the newsletter for distribution among its staff and lodging in its own resource centre or library. Donors, associate members, libraries, alumni that have applied for inclusion on the mailing list, as well as other stakeholders, are also sent copies by mail. However, the concern raised in previous reviews remains valid today. In mailing to institutions such as NACs and Ministries of Health, the newsletter is unlikely to reach the right individuals, but is more likely to end up as general mail in the reception area.

Low access to the newsletter among the alumni was confirmed by the participants in both the focus group discussions and the questionnaire survey. Only 32% of the alumni said they were on the RATN mailing list and received the newsletter directly through the post (Figure 4). In response to the question whether their organisations received the newsletter, again a low proportion (23%) said their employers were on the RATN mailing list.

Figure 4: Proportion of alumni (i) receiving the newsletter and (ii) using the Resource Centre



The newsletter is also accessible on the RATN web-site and consideration is being given to make e-copies available as a “pdf” file. Making the newsletter available on the RATN web-site and distributing it electronically offers alternative methods for it to reach a wider audience. However, these strategies face challenges because of limited access to the internet for many of the intended readers. Even among the MIs, there are some whose access to the internet is constrained by low bandwidth such that downloading large documents is extremely slow. Some MIs are not networked, and staff have to wait for their turn to use the one or two PCs that are connected to the internet. Internet access is unlikely to be any better within the smaller HIV/AIDS service organisations outside the large towns and cities.

Use of internet cafes to access the newsletter sent by email may turn out to be relatively expensive for some of the potential readers and therefore discourage them from reading or downloading it. Salaries in the health sector and related fields in the ESA region are not particularly high such that internet expenses may be accorded a low priority. In the context of the next Strategic Plan, RATN needs to re-examine its strategies in relation to the quantities that are being produced, costs of onward distribution by the MIs, and enhancement of electronic distribution within the context of limited internet access for many potential readers.

5.5.2 The Resource Centre

The Resource Centre was a key component of the strategies adopted to get RATN recognised as an effective source of information on HIV/AIDS training and capacity development in the ESA region. The plan target was to achieve a 30% increase in the average number of monthly users by the end of March 2009 (100 users per month), from a baseline of 75 users per month as of April 2004.

By 2007/2008, the average number of users of all categories (postal, email, phone and physical visits) per month had risen to 176. Thus, the plan target has been achieved by a wide margin.

Today, most enquiries handled by the Resource Centre are by email, accounting for 80% of all enquiries. This trend is in line with the developments that have taken place within the Resource Centre. From the beginning of the plan period, it was recognised that there was need to transform the Resource Centre’s operational modality and shift its focus away from physical visits to electronic communication, especially following the relocation of the Secretariat from the University of Nairobi to the less central Nairobi Business Park. A Resource Centre Strategy paper was prepared by the Secretariat and submitted to the Board. Digitalisation of the Resource Centre started in FY2005/2006. Over 3,000 training materials and publications on HIV/AIDS were transferred to “pdf” format and uploaded into the web. These are now being uploaded onto TRIC. The information is available in abstract form in a searchable database on the internet.

While the growth in enquiries is welcome, it still raises questions about the level of usage of the Resource Centre. With a membership of 25 MIs, 176 users per month represents a mere seven per MI per month. Assuming that some of the seven are from the MIs' own resource centres, this means usage by trainers, trainees and alumni still remains low.

There is still a need to raise awareness of the Resource Centre and what it has to offer among the Network's alumni and even among some of the training staff in the MIs. During the interviews with trainers and alumni, it was clearly evident that many of the respondents were unaware of the facility. Thus, 84% of the alumni said they have never made use of the Resource Centre (see Figure 4). Some of the participants in the focus group discussions were actually surprised to hear that there was such a facility within the RATN organisation.

However, those alumni that have used the Resource Centre were highly satisfied with both the quality of the information and resources held by the Centre and the standard of service provided by the staff. Some 60% rated the quality of the information as excellent while another 10% rated it as good. Likewise, 40% rated the standard of service provided by the staff as excellent and the remainder rated it as good.

5.5.3 Marketing RATN and its Courses

Marketing of RATN and its courses differs between MIs. Some of the MIs produce annual training calendars showing all their training courses for the entire year, including the RATN courses. The training calendars may, or may not, be published in the media, usually national newspapers in the MI's home country.

Formal marketing of RATN courses is done through several channels:

- annual training calendar, newsletters and brochures produced and distributed by both RATN and individual MIs;
- information placed on the MIs' web-sites as well as through RATN's own web-site;
- advertisements placed in the media inviting applicants for particular courses; and
- displays mounted by the Secretariat at various national and regional exhibitions.

A small number of the MIs that were canvassed during the field visits for this evaluation said they do not usually advertise their organisations' courses. They argue that, in most instances, they receive more applications than the number that they can accommodate in a course. This obviates the need for advertising. Many of the alumni also revealed that they had learned about the courses by word of mouth either through friends who were former trainees or during visits to the MIs.

One of the strategies adopted under the Strategic Plan was internet marketing via the RATN web-site and those of the MIs. This, however, only had a limited impact because, as explained below (see section 5.6.2), a number of the MIs have no web-sites or, if they have, they are not linked to the RATN web-site. The limited success achieved by RATN in marketing its courses via the internet is probably a reflection of the limited influence that RATN has on the overall policies and programmes of the MIs. A consultant was hired in March 2007 to prepare a marketing and communications strategy for RATN but failed to deliver. A new consultant was hired in February 2008 and has submitted a report whose recommendations are now being implemented.

Marketing also raises two related issues, namely sponsorship for the trainees and ownership of the courses. RATN has adopted a policy to provide full sponsorship for applicants only for the first two intakes of a new course. Thereafter, it sponsors the equivalent of five participants (or US\$10,000) per course, depending on the fees charged by the MI. On the other hand, it is not economically viable for

an MI to run a course with only five participants that are sponsored by RATN. Therefore, the MIs enrol more participants who are sponsored by their employers, other organisations, or are able to pay for themselves. Most MIs said they enrol between 10 and 25 participants per course. This means that in almost all instances after the pilot phase, any given course will have only a minority of participants that are sponsored by RATN. During the next strategic plan period, RATN will need to discuss and agree with the MIs on the issue of sponsorship for its courses. This is especially important, given the decline in enrolment into some of the course clusters.

It remains an unresolved (and for some MIs a highly sensitive) issue as to whether RATN can claim full ownership of some of the courses. In the words of one interviewee, “Just because we are members doesn’t mean RATN now owns us. We need an MoU to clarify the relationship”. In some instances, courses have been developed jointly between RATN, the particular MI and other non-RATN organisations. For instance, TGNP’s course of gender, policy and HIV/AIDS was developed with support from both RATN and the Southern African AIDS Training Centre and its brochures clearly acknowledge the two organisations’ contribution. During discussions at SOSMED, disagreement over ownership of the course of research methodology was cited as one of the reasons for its withdrawal from the Network in 2006/2007. Apparently, SOSMED had been offering the course even before joining the Network and felt that RATN was now claiming total ownership. Additionally, according to some of the informants, the reduction in RATN-sponsored participants, and therefore in the level of financial benefit, has diminished the enthusiasm and commitment of some MIs to mount RATN courses.

The issue also has implications in the kind of certificates of attendance that are awarded to the course participants – should the certificates for all the participants carry the RATN logo and name (together with that of the MI), or should this designation be restricted only to those participants that are sponsored by RATN? The type of certificate awarded is particularly problematic where a majority of the participants has been sponsored by one organisation or by an employer as has sometimes happened. For instance, organisations such as the Foundation for Civil Society, UNIFEM, CDC, WHO and the Southern African AIDS Training Centre (SAT) have often supported more participants in a cohort than RATN.

The MIs have adopted different solutions to the problem. Some are issuing two certificates for attendance at the same course, one carrying the RATN name and logo only to those sponsored by RATN, and another carrying only the name and logo of the training institution to the other participants. In other MIs, all the participants are issued with one certificate carrying the names and logos of both RATN and the training institution.

Availability of sponsorship also has an impact on the number that is able to attend a particular course. As RATN has scaled down its level of sponsorship during the past few years, some of the less popular courses have seen their enrolment drop. In 2004/2005, two courses on “Targeted Interventions” and “Voluntary Counselling” which were scheduled to be run by PSG in Harare and AIC in Kampala were cancelled, one of the reasons given being the small number of participants able to attend in the absence of sponsorship. In the case of PSG, another reason was the re-location of the organisation from Zimbabwe to South Africa that was taking place at about the same time.

As RATN prepares its next Strategic Plan, it will need to consider the best options, for instance (i) whether to continue funding a limited number of participants per course, (ii) to withdraw from sponsorship completely, or (iii) to sponsor fewer courses (based on some criteria – market need or popularity with applicants?) at greater depth.

5.6 Data Management and Web-based Communication Systems

RATN also undertook to improve its communication systems and develop its capacity for information dissemination electronically. These include the development of a database of HIV/AIDS training institutions and resource persons and upgrading of the RATN web-site. These initiatives are closely linked with some of the developments described in the preceding section (e.g. electronic distribution of the newsletter and access to the Resource Centre via email – see section 5.5)

5.6.1 Inventory of HIV/AIDS Training Institutions and Resource Persons

Reference was made earlier in section 3.7 that RATN had intended to develop an inventory of training institutions and resource persons on HIV/AIDS in the ESA region during the current plan period. Substantive work started with the provision of a grant in July 2006 by UNAIDS for the development of a web-based Training Reference and Information Centre (TRIC). The project was initiated by the UNAIDS Regional Support Team for East and Southern Africa (RST-ESA) based in Johannesburg, South Africa, as a tool to enhance access to, and availability of, HIV/AIDS training information and resources in the region. The initiative was in line with RATN's own strategic objective of developing an inventory of training institutions and resource persons in the region.

By mid-2008, data on 192 STI/HIV/AIDS related courses from 60 training institutions and 20 colleges and universities across 12 countries in the region had been captured. The database will be hosted separately from the main RATN web-site. There will be a link to facilitate access between the two web-sites. RATN plans to increase the number of countries covered by TRIC to 20 to include French and Portuguese speaking countries in the region. TRIC is now in its pilot phase.

The development of TRIC is likely to further raise the public profile of RATN and considerably enhance its goal to be recognised as an effective source of information on HIV/AIDS training and capacity development in the ESA region. There was an obvious convergence of interests between RATN and UNAIDS on this project to ensure wide dissemination of information on training opportunities on HIV/AIDS in the region.

However, during the interviews, UNAIDS expressed some misgivings on the modalities and pace of implementation. For instance, UNAIDS had expected that RATN would already have much of the basic information on hand, thereby obviating the need to hire consultants to collect and collate the data from all the different countries, given the time and cost implications. There was also concern about the quality of the proposed presentation and layout of the web-site as well as the intention to host it separately from the main RATN web-site.

In a related development to improve access to information, in 2007/2008, RATN signed a two-year agreement with the Health Inter-Network Access to Research Initiative (HINARI) for free access to, and use of, the on-line biomedical information published by publishers listed on the HINARI portal. HINARI provides free or very low cost on-line access to over 3,500 titles of major journals in the biomedical and related social sciences from over 85 major publishers world-wide to not-for-profit academic and research institutions in developing countries.

5.6.2 The RATN Web-site

The RATN web-site has undergone re-development during the early part of the current plan period. In 2004/2005, a consultant was hired to advise RATN on the web-site content, appearance and links. A new and more interactive web-site was subsequently developed and operationalised. All indications are that this has gone well as evidenced by the increasing number of visits to the web-site. By 2006/2007, hits were ranging from 20,000 to 35,000 per month.

Table 7: Web-site development among MIs and links with the RATN web-site as of July 2008

Member institution	MI has a web-site (Y/N)	Web-site has link RATN (Y/N)
AIC	Yes	Yes
CONNECT	Yes	Yes
CAFS	Yes	Yes
KAPC	Yes	Yes
TASO	Yes	Yes
AMREF	Yes	No
CEU, University of Nairobi	Yes	No
ESAMI	Yes	No
HEARD, University of KZN	Yes	No
IDM	Yes	No
KARA	Yes	No
KHI	Yes	No
Mananga	Yes	No
Mildmay Centre	Yes	No
MIM	Yes	No
PHRU, Wits University	Yes	No
REPSSI	Yes	No
Chikankata	Yes	No
School of Public Health, KNZ	Yes	No
THETA	Yes	No
TGNP	Yes	No
FACT	No	No
GU Centre, Harare	No	No
NARESA	No	No
PSG-SA	No	No

As with respect to access to the RATN newsletter through the internet, there are limitations on the extent to which MIs and individual readers are able to take advantage of these developments. The MIs are at different stages of ICT development and some have very limited facilities, making their use of these developments peripheral. A perusal of the internet showed that, as at July 2008, 84% of the MIs had developed web-sites where they could market their programmes and activities while 16% had not web-sites (Table 7).

More interesting is that, of the 21 MIs that are advertising themselves on the internet, only five have links to the RATN web-site. This represents only 20% of the RATN membership, albeit an increase from 13% reported in 2006/2007. However, while on the one hand a user can access the web-sites of any of these 21 MIs from the RATN web-site, the service is not always reciprocated by a majority of the Network membership. Some of the 21 web-sites have links to other partner organisations, but not to RATN, thereby raising questions about their level of commitment to market the Network.

5.7 Overall Assessment, Key Issues and Recommendations

5.7.1 Overall Assessment

Major successes have been scored by RATN during the past four years in terms of the developments within the Resource Centre, regular production and dissemination of the Newsletter and the development of TRIC. In spite of the fact that availability of technology is limiting access to e-communication,

the digitalization of Resource Centre and the gradual migration to the electronic platform is the inevitable way to go. Publication of the newsletter has been on schedule, circulation has increased as planned and reader feedback has been positive.

However, despite the fact that RATN is participating in regional fora and has established contacts with key organisations, there has been limited success in terms of making it visible at national and regional levels. There is general consensus that a lot more needs to be done in this regard. Raising RATN's profile among national and regional authorities and advocacy should be major areas of focus during the next plan period. Likewise, utilisation of the Resource Centre still requires substantial improvement, including its use by the MIs and alumni, especially now that training materials can be accessed electronically, thereby removing the constraints imposed by geographical distance.

5.7.2 Key Strategic Issues

There are a number of key strategic issues that should be considered as the next Strategic Plan is prepared:

- a) **Influencing Regional Policies:** How can RATN meaningfully influence policies at national and regional level if, even at institutional level, it has not yet achieved effective penetration?
- b) **Achieving Greater Visibility:** What strategies can be adopted to achieve greater national and regional visibility. Should RATN not use the annual gatherings to bring the spotlight on itself or should it continue with these gatherings that do not attract much media attention? Shouldn't national/regional cutting edge conferences be organised around the annual meetings?
- c) **Marketing of Courses:** Against a background of some courses with declining attendances, or cancellations, how can MIs be assisted to market their training programmes? Is it all because of reduced sponsorship? If so, could RATN ever afford full sponsorship?
- d) **Ownership of Courses:** What about the issue of course ownership? How can it be resolved? Can branding provide some solution?
- e) **Newsletter:** The Newsletter has performed well and has been well received. But is the paper copy a modality that can outlast the next Strategic Plan period?

5.7.3 Specific Recommendations for the Next Strategic Plan

- RATN should consider having a Marketing Manager whose responsibilities would include implementation of the Advocacy Strategy and engaging with national and regional bodies together with the Executive Director.
- RATN should consider organising regional conferences on topical issues pertaining to training in order to enhance its visibility.
- RATN should consider documenting, publishing and marketing "best practices" from among its MIs and alumni.
- As part of the registration process at the start of each training course, participants should be required to complete forms providing their postal details to be forwarded to the Information and Communication Department for inclusion on the mailing list for the RATN newsletter.
- All the MIs should be urged and supported to develop web-sites. They should be urged to ensure that their web-sites have links to the RATN web-site.
- Now that the focus is on electronic communication and information dissemination, RATN should advertise the services of the Resource Centre among both the training staff in the MIs as well as among its alumni.

- The issue of “ownership” of RATN courses and certification of course participants should be resolved with the concerned MIs as expeditiously as possible and to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.

6 Plan and Programme Monitoring (KRA 4)

6.1 The Strategic Objectives

The focus in this KRA was the establishment of a robust and functioning monitoring and evaluation system within RATN. The wording was subsequently altered in the PMF to refer to RATN being able to respond to findings from monitoring, programme reviews and evaluations. The Strategic Objectives under this KRA were

- (i) a monitoring and evaluation strategy developed by the end of the first year of the plan period;
- (ii) a comprehensive plan for monitoring of training programmes and impact developed;
- (iii) functional and effective monitoring system for Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), training network;
- (iv) quality M&E support to programme thematic areas established and functioning; and
- (v) effective monitoring of the strategic plan implementation.

6.2 Summary of RATN’s Achievements under KRA 4

There were two main levels at which monitoring and evaluation was to be undertaken during the plan period. At the first level, it was necessary to monitor implementation of the Strategic Plan to ensure that Network programmes and activities were kept on track and that the expected Outcomes would be achieved. The second level of monitoring was at the programme level where it was essential to monitor the delivery and, through reviews and surveys, the impact of training. In both respects, RATN has done well and achieved its Strategic Objectives.

The highlights are:

- a Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) was developed at the start of the plan period to facilitate monitoring of the Strategic Plan;
- regular status reports based on the PMF have been compiled and presented at each meeting of the Board to monitor implementation of the Strategic Plan;
- pre- and post-training evaluations are conducted and the reports submitted to the RATN Secretariat;
- the RATN Training M&E System (RTMES) has been developed and is currently being rolled out to the MIs to monitor the Network’s training programmes.

6.3 Monitoring the Strategic Plan

At the strategic level, the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) was developed to monitor implementation of the Strategic Plan by the Board and the Secretariat. Throughout the plan period, the PMF has been updated for presentation at each Board meeting, reporting on the current status for

each target, and on the targets for the particular year. The PMF has thus provided an invaluable tool for RATN to keep focused on its Strategic Plan and, for that, it must be congratulated.

The evaluation also gave the consultants the opportunity to assess the structure, content and operationalization of the current Strategic Plan and the PMF and how these may have affected the effectiveness of the process of monitoring. There are important lessons from this exercise that should be taken into consideration during the development of the next Strategic Plan. The areas of concern are summarised below and more detailed discussion is provided in Appendix 8 (Volume 2) of the report.

- *Collapsing of Strategic Objectives between the SP and the PMF:* In compiling the PMF, the indicators that were selected had the effect of condensing some of the Strategic Objectives that had been given in the Strategic Plan. This made it difficult to track each Strategic Objective from one document to the other and, therefore, over the plan period to assess progress in implementation.
- *Inconsistency in Defining the Plan Period:* The Strategic Plan was for five years, meaning it started in FY 2004/2005 and will end in FY 2008/2009. However, in the PMF, many of the plan targets seem to have been set for the end of FY 2007/2008.
- *Lack of Clear Progression in the Structure or Format of the Strategic Plan:* In a strategic plan, there should be clear progression from the *Key Result Area/Outcome* to the *Strategic Objectives*, to the *Strategies* that will be used to achieve those objectives, and finally to the *Activities* that will be carried out in implementing those strategies. This progression was not consistently present in the current Strategic Plan and its Result Matrix.
- *Overlaps in Activities under Strategic Objectives:* There were some overlaps in terms of activities as between strategic objectives and departmental responsibilities and, therefore, accountability for implementation.
- *Lack of “SMARTness” of Strategic Objectives:* There some Strategic Objectives that were incomplete and could not be described as what is termed “SMART”.
- *Plan Targets and Baseline Data:* There were instances where it was difficult to interpret the plan targets in relation to the baseline data given.

6.4 Monitoring of Training Programmes

At the second level, monitoring has been conducted on the training programmes. Two significant developments took place in this regard: the development of the M&E Strategy and the development of the RATN Training Monitoring & Evaluation System (RTMES).

The first task that was undertaken was the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, an activity that was completed with the approval of the strategy by the Board in February 2006.

After this, however, not much was done beyond collecting training data from the MIs, presumably because of the absence of a substantive M&E Officer. The programme monitoring tools that were in use before the start of the plan period continued to be used until RTMES was developed in 2007, with rolling out to the MIs starting in early 2008.

RTMES was developed to:

- provide linkages of the RATN M&E strategic framework indicators to the tools used for its training function,
- provide more quantitative and well streamlined training information that could inform RATN about the quality of its courses,

- assess how well RATN training programmes are continuously and progressively meeting its goals and objectives,
- track progress towards achievement of specific capacity development objectives at input, output, outcome and impact levels,
- produce information and M&E results that would be highly accessible and usable to address HIV/AIDS, and
- produce information that would contribute to enhancing the training and capacity
- building interventions for HIV/AIDS.

The system will considerably enhance the capacity of the MIs to monitor RATN training programmes. What remains to be ascertained, however, is the extent to which the MIs will comply and adhere to the more demanding data requirements of RTMES. Before RTMES, there were already delays in submitting course evaluation reports and statistics to the Secretariat.

Overall, RATN has done well in collecting and reporting statistical data on its training programmes, despite there being a few defaulting institutions. The statistics showing the courses run, by which institutions, when, duration of the courses and the numbers trained in each course are reported in RATN's annual reports. Over the past five years 2004–2008, only four MIs were unable to submit their reports and statistics on five occasions.

6.5 Overall Assessment, Key Issues and Recommendations

6.5.1 Overall Assessment

RATN did well to prepare a strategic plan and adhere to its implementation. The plan has enabled the organisation to make the transition from a project to a fully fledged international NGO. Commendable progress was made in monitoring the implementation of the Strategic plan through PMF. As a result of this, RATN remained focussed on and committed to the plan's objectives throughout.

However, the absence of an M&E Officer for much of the plan period must have considerably affected the implementation of this KRA. Individual departments took on the task of monitoring programmes and activities within their respective areas of responsibility while the overall M&E function was added to the duties of the Network Development Manager. It is therefore possible that the M&E function did not receive the full attention that it needed. The result is that there is general consensus that follow-up of alumni has been rather sketchy, and even the submission of course evaluations by MIs has been difficult.

6.5.2 Key Strategic Issues

- M&E as a KRA:* Questions have been raised as to whether this should have been a KRA on its own or a strategy for the fulfilment of an objective. Should it thus remain as a KRA/Outcome or should it be relegated to a Strategic Objective e.g. under Training
- Post of M&E:* There is consensus that M&E is a critical function. But, should the post of M&E officer be filled as originally envisaged or should it be re-designated or re-assigned to one of the departments to meet changing needs of the organisation?
- MI Commitment to M&E:* How can MIs be enticed to buy into the necessity for M&E? Is it feasible for them to be given responsibility for regular follow ups of alumni? Would they request to be paid for this?
- Vision and Mission:* Now that the organisation has been transformed from a project to an International NGO, is the previous vision and mission still valid? Should RATN not re-vision as well as take stock of the organisation's mission?

- e) *PMF and the Strategic Plan*: The PMF provides an important tool for monitoring plan implementation. However, should it not be prepared at the same time as the Strategic Plan so that it is fully aligned to the plan's Strategic Objectives and Strategies.

6.5.3 Specific Recommendations for the Next Strategic Plan

- The practice of having status reports on the implementation of the Strategic Plan presented at each meeting of the Board has worked well and should be continued into the next plan period.
- RTMES as it is structured is quite demanding in its data requirements. RATN will need to closely monitor compliance by the MIs. In this respect, the appointment of a substantive M&E Officer is urgent.
- Review the Mission and Vision of the Network.
- Align the strategic objectives with the strategies and activities.
- Use the "SMART" principle to frame the plan's objectives and strategies.

7 Implementation of Recommendations from Previous Reviews

7.1 Introduction

Over the past five years, reviews conducted on behalf of the Network by external consultants as well as annual monitoring missions by the donors have made recommendations aimed at improving RATN's performance from both institutional and programmatic perspectives. Other recommendations have come from meetings of the ICPs, the General Council as well as the Board itself. Key reports in this regard are the Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey (2005) and the Mid-Term Review (2007).

The preceding sections of this report have shown those areas where RATN has performed well and met its Strategic Plan objectives, areas in need of improvement, as well as the constraints that have hindered the fulfilment of its planned targets. As it has been implementing its Strategic Plan, RATN has simultaneously been addressing many of the issues and recommendations raised in the Beneficiary Survey and the Mid-Term Review.

Steps taken by the Board and the Secretariat towards implementation of the recommendations contained in the Beneficiary Survey are summarised in Appendix 9 (Volume 2 of this report). Most of the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review emanated from, or were very similar in their thrust, to those made in the Beneficiary Survey. In respect of the more recent Mid-Term Review, which was only finalised in mid-2007, the Board noted at its meeting in March 2008 that, despite the political disturbances in Kenya during January and February, 70% of the recommendations had already been implemented.

7.2 Progress Made in Implementation of Recommendations

The key achievements in implementing the recommendations of the Beneficiary Survey and the Mid-Term Review are summarised below. A more detailed progress assessment is given in Appendix 9.

The RATN Board

- Scheduled Board meetings have been reduced from four to three per year and the size of the Board has been reduced from 12 to 9 as cost saving measures.

- A status report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan has been presented at every meeting of the Board using the Performance Measurement Framework.

RATN as an Active Regional Network

- Contacts have been made with national and regional bodies, but RATN's visibility remains low.
- Cooperation between MIs is taking place to some extent, with joint course development, course reviews by Experts Committees.

Training and Development

- Formal TNAs have proved expensive and RATN is using other techniques to identify training gaps, e.g. Experts Committee meetings, regional and international meetings, feedback from evaluations and from alumni. It is also discussing the establishment of a sub-committee to be known as the Training Reference Group.
- Some individual MIs have made progress with accreditation, others not.
- Courses on ARV/ART, and on laboratory management, have recently been introduced.
- Distance/e-learning is being investigated with the University of Manitoba and the pilot phase is expected to start towards the end of 2008.

Capacity Building within the MIs

- Training courses for staff in the MIs have been conducted covering several areas, including ICT, library and resource centre management, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

RATN Resource Centre

- RATN has shifted the emphasis of the Resource Centre and now a majority of the enquiries are by email.
- Over 3,000 training materials and publications on HIV/AIDS have been digitalised and are available electronically in abstract form. The materials are being uploaded onto TRIC.

The RATN Newsletter

- Publication of the quarterly newsletter has been on schedule.
- Some 2,500 copies are distributed to MIs, stakeholders and alumni on the mailing list.

Information Management/Database

- TRIC is now in the pilot phase; it currently holds information on 192 courses in 60 training institutions and 20 colleges and universities on HIV/AIDS in 12 countries in the ESA region.
- Visits to the RATN web-site are monitored and reported to the Board and in the annual report.
- Training statistics are being collected, collated and reported to the Board and in the annual report.
- An M&E system (RTMES) has been developed and is being rolled out to MIs.

RATN and Marketing of its Services

- A marketing and communication strategy has recently been developed and was submitted to the Board for consideration in February 2008
- Some steps have been made to market RATN's services through the media and displays at exhibitions.

Financial Sustainability of the Network

- Current commitments by the core donors go up to March 2014 for CIDA, March 2009 for Sida and March 2010 for Irish Aid. However, RATN continues to be financially vulnerable because of its high dependence on the three core donors.

- Some Board members and Secretariat staff have recently attended training workshops on resource mobilisation in Mombasa and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- A fund-raising strategy has recently been developed and will be considered by the Board in September 2008.
- Some consultancy work has been done in partnership with the MIs, but income from this source is still low.

7.3 Is RATN a Learning Institution?

RATN's response to the recommendations made in the two previous reviews (and other reviews for that matter), raises the question whether RATN is a learning institution that seeks to improve itself. The evidence provided above suggests that it is indeed a learning institution. As mentioned above, by March 2008, almost three-quarters of the recommendations from the Mid-Term Review had been implemented or were in the process of implementation.

Similarly, many of its programmes and activities during the past four years have been driven by a need to learn and improve, be it

- from its alumni through feedback from course participants,
- during curriculum reviews that bring together training managers from the different MIs and are facilitated by external experts,
- through feedback from donors and other international cooperating partners,
- supporting capacity development initiatives and organising training for its MIs and for staff of within Secretariat, or
- through participation in national, regional and international meetings and conferences.

7.4 Overall Assessment

RATN is to be commended for the manner in which it has taken comments and recommendations from these various sources in order to strengthen itself as an institution. These can only enhance its effectiveness as a key player in capacity building for the fight against HIV/AIDS in Eastern and Southern Africa. It has made considerable progress in implementation of the recommendations from previous external reviews as well from its international cooperating partners, without, most importantly, losing sight of its mission and *raison d'être*.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The evaluation had five main objectives. In respect of the first objective, it is clear that the Regional AIDS Training Network (RATN) has met most of the goals and objectives it had set out to achieve in its Strategic Plan 2004–2008. It is to the credit of the Board and the Secretariat that, once the plan and the accompanying PMF had been accepted for implementation, they have consistently kept focused on attainment of those strategic objectives.

Most targets have been fulfilled or are close to fulfilment. Where progress has been lagging, it is nonetheless “work in progress” and those tasks have not been completely forgotten. Given where the organisation stood in 2003–2004 and where it stands today, it is clearly evident that much has been done, although more still needs to be done in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Both the Board and management recognise the challenges that remain, especially in the area of fund-raising and diversification of income sources.

The second objective of the evaluation was to assess progress made by RATN in implementing the recommendations from the joint Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey and the Mid-Term Review. Again, it is the considered opinion of the consultants that almost all the recommendations have been implemented. In a few instances, implementation may have been slow, but it is essentially “work in progress”.

The third objective of the evaluation was to identify important and emerging issues in programmes and administration and provide recommendations for incorporation into the next Strategic Plan. The report has identified a number of these issues, both programmatic and administrative, and made recommendations for consideration by the RATN Board and Secretariat. The emerging strategic issues and specific recommendations for the next plan period are summarised at the end of each of Chapters 3 to 6.

The evaluation also assessed the value that RATN brings to the MIs and the region in general, thus addressing the fourth of the evaluation’s main objectives. The value that RATN brings was assessed at several levels, namely the individual MI level, the alumni that have been trained by the organisation, and the wider publics and other stakeholders. Overall, the evaluation found that RATN’s contribution to capacity development is highly valued by the MIs and the alumni. However, much still remains to be done to train more people in the needed areas and to raise RATN’s visibility among national and regional HIV/AIDS authorities. The Network will definitely need to do better during the next Strategic Plan period if it is to have a lasting impact in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

In respect of the fifth and final objective, the evaluation has shown that RATN has made tremendous progress in establishing functioning and effective governance and operational systems and procedures. Given where it stood in 2003, the Board and Secretariat are to be congratulated for the progress achieved to date. While there is always room for improvement, and key areas in need of improvement and/or review have been highlighted in this report, the Network now has sound, functional and effective systems and structures.

8.2 Has RATN Lived Up to its Mission and Strategic Goal?

In 2004, RATN defined its Mission as the promotion of training and capacity development for the fight against HIV/AIDS in the ESA region. The evidence presented in this evaluation confirms that RATN has fulfilled its mission. Today, RATN is a functioning Network of reputable training institutions which have trained more than 2,000 people over the past four years, even though the number trained fell short

of the target for the plan period. Its training programmes are addressing the capacity needs to alleviate the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region and beyond.

Its Strategic Objective for the period 2004–2008 was to provide a link between training institutions and to facilitate regional collaboration in capacity development. Again, RATN can claim to be providing that link which, as shown in this report, is highly valued by the member institutions and, through the MIs, is making a contribution to capacity building for the fight against HIV/AIDS in the ESA.

However, there are many other actors in the fight against HIV/AIDS, many more of whom are not members of the Network. It is therefore problematic for any individual organisation or network to claim that its efforts have contributed to a reduction in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS or mitigated the impact of the epidemic on communities in the region. This requires a collective effort by all partners at the community, sub-national, national, regional and international levels. For this reason, assessment of the impact by RATN in reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and mitigating the impact of the epidemic remain indeterminate.

8.3 Summary of RATN's Achievements, 2004–2008

RATN's key achievements over the past four years have been discussed in the previous chapters. These include:

- It has successfully made the transition from a project to a well established international NGO.
- It was able to secure funding from its major donors to support its planned operations.
- It has developed and installed the requisite financial and administrative procedures and manuals.
- There is proper financial accountability, including external auditing and reporting to the Board, the members and the donors.
- The Network has expanded from 22 MIs in 8 countries in 2004 to 25 members operating in 10 countries by the beginning of 2008.
- During the past four years, over 2,000 people have been trained by RATN, of which 57% were females.
- It is largely on track to meeting its planned targets in respect courses delivered and new courses developed.
- Staff of the MIs have also received training in several critical areas, thereby enhancing their human resource capabilities.
- Considerable progress has been achieved in information dissemination, especially through the newsletter and the re-development of its web-site.
- Monitoring of both the Strategic Plan implementation and the Network's training programmes has been effectively undertaken and a new monitoring tool (RTMES) has been developed and is being rolled out to the MIs.

However, there also some areas where progress has not been as well as it could have been. In particular, RATN needs to address the following issues during the next plan period:

- Broaden its income base in order to reduce dependence on the three core donors, and in so doing ensure greater financial sustainability;
- Raise its profile and influence among national and regional bodies so that it can begin to have an impact on their policies;

- Be pro-active in identifying emerging training needs and more fully find ways of effectively using the capacity for innovativeness contained in its combined membership in finding ways of combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic; and
- Find ways of enhancing usage of its information resources, notably the Resource Centre.

9 Select References

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5. RATN *Progress on Performance Measurement Framework*
6. RATN (2004) *Strategic Plan 2004–2008*
7. RATN (2005) *Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey: Evaluation Report*
8. RATN (2005) *Accreditation of RATN Courses: Exploring the Possibilities*
9. RATN (2006) *Alumni Training Follow-up Study Regional Assessment Report*
10. RATN (2007) *Mid-term Review of RATN's Strategic Plan*
11. RATN *Report on the Experts Committee Workshop for RATN Training Managers and Coordinators Held at the Nairobi Safari Club, 14–18 May 2007*
12. CAFS, USAID and RATN (2004) *Eastern and Southern Africa Regional HIV/AIDS Training Needs Assessment*
13. *Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases*, passed by African Heads of State and Governments, April 2001
14. *UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS: Global Crisis – Global Action*, passed by the Heads of State and Governments, June 2001
15. *Brazzaville Commitment on Scaling Up Towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support in Africa by 2010*, approved at meeting convened by the African Union, March 2006

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference

1. Background

Regional AIDS Training Network is an NGO working regionally in ten countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region. RATN started in 1997 initially as a project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) designed to build regional capacity to combat Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)/HIV/AIDS by creating a network of training institutions in ESA. RATN is in itself not a course provider but functions as a catalyst to strengthen the capacity of member training institutions and as a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences. RATN's Secretariat works with its established network of Member Institutions (MIs) to adapt and develop short-term skills-upgrading courses targeted at mid-level STI/HIV/AIDS workers, trainers, programme managers and senior policy makers.

The success of RATN during the first five years (1997–2002) led to other donors joining CIDA, notably the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Irish Aid, in supporting the formalisation of the network under the African local Board of Directors. The MIs set up a Board of Directors to oversee the registration of RATN as an NGO, and jointly the donors approved additional phases of support to transform RATN into a fully functional and sustainable African legal entity that will build African capacity to meet the challenges of HIV/AIDS. On its part, CIDA approved five more years from May 2002 up to the end of March 2007; however, a no cost extension of CIDA's support was made till the end of June 2007. CIDA has signed a new Contribution Agreement with RATN for third phase of support over seven years effective mid-September 2007 till March 2014. Following a productive institutional audit, Sida approved an additional three years in support to RATN starting in January 2003 till end December 2005. Currently, Sida has an agreement with RATN for 3-year support from April 2006 till March 2009. Irish Aid (formerly Development Cooperation of Ireland) approved funding support to RATN from January 2004 till end of December 2006. Irish Aid approved a second agreement of 3-year support from April 2007 till March 2010. While other donors such as Human Resources Services Administration (HRSA), I-TECH, UNAIDS, UNIFEM and ActionAid/SIPPA have provided some modest funding, usually for special projects, CIDA, Sida and Irish Aid have provided the bulk of the core programming funding available to RATN over the ten years of its existence both initially as a project and later as an NGO.

2. Description

RATN was formally registered as a Non-Governmental Organisation in April 2003 with its Secretariat headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. An Executive Director was recruited and started work in September 2003. A year later (in September 2004) the Secretariat office was relocated from the University of Nairobi premises to Nairobi Business Park, off Ngong Road. RATN has upgraded its financial management and management processes, under the direction of the Board of Directors elected by and from the General Council of all MIs.

Coverage: RATN delivers its training programmes through the MIs, and all MIs have recognised competence in delivering capacity development services through their training programmes and a significant reach to AIDS Service Organisations in their own countries and beyond. RATN currently has 25 MIs in ten countries in ESA, namely Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland and South Africa. It expects to recruit new more MIs in the existing countries and in new countries of Mozambique, Namibia, Eritrea and Ethiopia, by the end of 2008.

Strategic Plan: During 2004, RATN developed a five year Strategic Plan (2004–2008). The first Partner Consultative Committee, (comprised of all donors, the Board, RATN Staff and the founding universities), meeting in June 2004, approved the Strategic Plan entitled: *Moving from a Project to an International NGO*. In 2006, the three major bilateral donors agreed to harmonise and coordinate their support to RATN through a Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA). Under the JFA, the donors jointly share RATN operational costs without earmarking. The emergence of RATN as an independent institution with a comprehensive Strategic Plan, and the agreement of the donors to take a harmonised and coordinated approach to funding support marked a major step in the life of the organisation. To date, the JFA has worked well.

Evaluation/Beneficiary Survey in 2004 and Mid-Term Review in 2006: In the latter half of 2004, RATN Board and the donors jointly commissioned an evaluation and beneficiary survey at the start of implementation of the Strategic Plan to assess the state of the institution and provide a baseline against which progress will be measured. The evaluation process was productive and the evaluators concluded among other things that “RATN’s basic idea and concept are valid and worth supporting”. A Mid-term Review (MTR) of the Strategic Plan was also commissioned in October 2006 and stretched into the first half of 2007 with a production of a comprehensive MTR Report which was positive overall. The reports of the comprehensive evaluation and MTR are available both at the Secretariat and RATN’s website – www.ratn.org. RATN Management has been implementing the recommendations of the MTR and satisfactory progress has been made.

2.1 Strategic Goal

RATN identified its strategic goal as “To reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and mitigate the impact of the epidemic on communities in the region. In order to achieve this goal, RATN will link the training Member Institutions and facilitate regional collaboration in the prevention, treatment and management of STIs/HIV/AIDS. In addition, RATN will promote and support the development of skills training aimed at alleviating the impact of STIs/HIV/AIDS throughout the ESA Region”. CIDA, Sida and Irish Aid funding supports these objectives by providing core funding support to RATN’s development as an institution as well as to support the delivery of RATN’s programming as defined in its Strategic Plan.

2.2 Activities

RATN’s Strategic Plan for 2004–2008 titled “Moving from a Project to an International NGO” identified the following strategic thrusts and directions for the organisation:

- Increasingly independent, owned and governed by the African Institutions that make it up;
- More “capacity development focused” and a Network that adds “real value” to MIs and other partners;
- More pro-active to remain relevant by staying abreast of, and incorporating, the latest understanding and techniques for management of STD/HIV/AIDS in Africa;
- More “learning centred”;
- Financially more sustainable through diversification of its funding base including increased income generation from consultancies.

2.3 Expected Results

Given its reach and competence, RATN recognises that it is uniquely placed to play a leading role in training and capacity development. RATN’s established network of MIs throughout ESA, with their array of experiences in building skills to address these issues, is regarded as an ideal vehicle for mounting a comprehensive programme to strengthen institutional capacity throughout the region. RATN and

MIIs believe that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive strategy to address capacity development across the region. The Strategic Plan 2004–2008 focuses the network on achieving the following key results.

Results Chain for RATN

Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Adequate financial and human resources mobilised to support RATN programmes Effective RATN governance and operational systems developed and functional Functional linkages between Member Institutions (MIs) and other national and regional bodies established and maintained Strategic network meetings and fora that deliberate on mutual issues of concern in HIV/AIDS training and capacity development held An inventory of training institutions and resource people in HIV/AIDS in the region developed Expanding network to other key strategic countries in the region	A sustainable and functioning network of training institutions in ESA	A reduction of the prevalence of STI/HIV/AIDS and mitigation on the impact of the epidemic on communities in the region
Improved training programmes developed Improved capacity of MIs to provide an expanded quality training on STI/HIV/AIDS (gender sensitive and informed by latest research)	Quality training and capacity development programmes that respond to the STI/HIV/AIDS training needs of the region	
Policies of MIs and regional bodies on training and capacity development influenced positively Effective linkages between the RATN Resource Centre and the resource centres of other MIs, collaborating agencies and affiliate institutions enhanced Information to RATN's internal and external publics effectively disseminated Data management and web-based communication systems improved	RATN is recognised as an effective source of information on, and an advocate for, quality STI/HIV/AIDS training and capacity development in the ESA region	
A monitoring and evaluation strategy developed by the end of the first year of the plan period A comprehensive plan for the monitoring of training programmes and impact developed Functional and effective system for Information, Communication and Technology, Training Network Quality M&E support to programme thematic areas established and functioning Effective monitoring of the strategic plan implementation	RATN responds to findings from monitoring, programme reviews and evaluations	
Advocacy action plan developed and implemented Contributions by RATN noted in outcomes of international and national consultative forums and programme advisory boards Functional linkages between MIs and other national and international HIV/AIDS bodies established	Regional economic communities (RECs) and national policies for HIV/AIDS have capacity building and human resource components	

3. Review Scope and Focus

The evaluation had five main objectives:

- to assess the progress made by RATN in meeting the goals and objectives set in its Strategic Plan (2004–2008) and in past annual plans and agreements with funding partners;
- to assess progress made by RATN (Secretariat and Member Institutions) in implementing the recommendations from the joint Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey (2005) and the Mid-Term Review (2007);
- to identify any important emerging issues in programmes and administration and provide recommendations to RATN and the donors on potential directions that should be incorporated into the next five-year Strategic Plan for the period April 2009 to March 2014;
- to identify the “value added” that RATN brings to the Eastern and Southern Africa region;
- to assess the soundness of the systems and governance structure (strategic planning, programmatic planning and implementation, financial management, human resource management) and their viability.

3.1 Reasons for the Evaluation

Since 2003, RATN has undergone a major transformation from a project to an independent NGO and some of the significant organisational changes include the following:

- *Institutional Structure:* RATN is now registered as a separate legal entity;
- *Governance Structure:* RATN is now governed by a Board of Directors elected from, by and accountable to, the Member Institutions;
- *Management Structure:* RATN is now managed by an Executive Director appointed by, and accountable to, the Board of Directors;
- *Financial Management:* RATN has upgraded its financial management systems to allow it to account for funds to multiple donors;
- *Strategy:* RATN is in its third year of the Strategic Plan and would like to be assured it is in the right direction before the current Plan comes to an end;
- *Coordination and Harmonisation by International Cooperating Partners (ICPs):* The Partners Consultative Meeting (PCM) is a forum where ICPs meet with the RATN Board once a year around mid-June. RATN agreed with Sida, CIDA and Irish Aid a Joint Financing Arrangement which is a joint approach to monitoring, evaluation, audit and reporting. The JFA allows other funding partners to join in.

The evaluation will be conducted jointly with the participation of ICPs.

3.2 Scope and Focus

The evaluation specifically will:

- 3.2.1 *Provide an independent assessment of RATN implementation to date as an NGO, including key achievements, financial performance, the effectiveness and efficiency of the programmes when evaluated against the objectively verifiable indicators identified in the Performance Measurement Framework (PMF), including*
- areas for improvement,
 - strengths and weaknesses,

- risks and critical assumptions,
- opportunities and constraints to achieving objectives,
- appropriateness of the design, activities, level of resources and time-lines,
- other HIV/AIDS interventions and RATN's niche/value added, and
- possibilities for sustainability (both programmatic and financial).

3.2.2 *Assess RATN's current structure and processes, mechanisms and tools to the extent to which they will:*

- enable the organisation to implement more strategic, integrated and effective programming for the increased benefit of the target beneficiaries,
- enable RATN to provide accurate and timely financial reporting and results-based progress reporting which meets accountability requirements,
- provide other current and future donors, as well as the Board, with useful information on the capacity of the NGO.

3.2.3 *Assess the capacity of the MIs to allow an evaluation of RATN's impact in building the capacity of its MIs.*

4. Roles and Responsibilities

RATN Board will take the overall lead for the Summative Evaluation. A joint RATN-Donor Steering Committee (SC) approved by the RATN Board will coordinate the evaluation and be responsible for guidance throughout its execution and approval of all deliverables on behalf of the RATN Board. *The RATN Board shall make the final decision on the acceptance of the final Evaluation Report.* The SC will consist of two members of the RATN Board, on MI, and a representative of the donors. RATN will chair the SC. The Executive Director shall facilitate the operations of the SC (for example placing advert for the tender in the media and into appropriate websites, organising meetings, etc).

4.1 Stakeholder Involvement

The Summative Evaluation will take into consideration input from a full range of RATN stakeholders: RATN Board, donors and other International Cooperating Partners, Member Institutions, RATN Management and other RATN partners including relevant National AIDS Authorities, Civil Society Organisations and Regional Economic Communities (e.g. EAC, SADC, COMESA).

5. Deliverables

The Evaluation Team is required to produce the following deliverables, in English and deliverable electronically to RATN Management, *which in turn will distribute the deliverables to the members of the Steering Committee:*

5.1 Draft Work Plan, due within two weeks of signing the contract, and including:

- Review Expectations
- Review Methodology
- Roles and Responsibilities of Evaluation Team members
- Review Framework
- Framework for Information Collection and Analysis
- Reporting
- Work Schedule.

- 5.2 Final Work Plan, prepared within one week of receiving the comments of all parties.**
- 5.3 Draft Report (electronic version in Word).**
- 5.4 Final Evaluation Report (electronic version in Word), finalised within two weeks of receiving comments on the draft report.**

Note: IT is expected that final report will include a detailed gender analysis.

Proposed Elements of Data Collection

RATN has had a major focus on capacity development and adding real value to its MIs. Thus, it needs *concrete supplementary information on what is happening*. The information collected will enable to assess progress made and will be used for comparison with the results of the summative evaluation of the SP during 2008.

A. Information Needs

- Information on current scenario for purpose of comparison over time;
- Information that will help us design the Strategic Plan for the Network;
- Information to help identify the most significant developments;
- The information should be reflective on what has been happening and the future desired state (recommendations);
- Information collected will help in scaling up activities.

B. Checklist of Some Information Needs

(Not in any order)

- Relevance and effectiveness of the technical assistance and training given to the MIs (relevance of the network/how to make RATN more relevant).
- Quality of cooperation with Member Institutions and effectiveness of coordination mechanisms (information on the linkages, how functional it is)(combine this with client satisfaction on service delivery).
- Degree of compliance with membership agreement.
- Factors and constraints that have influenced actual implementation, including factors affecting performance (managerial, technical, organisational, institutional, and socio-political issues), in addition to other external factors unforeseen during design.
- Results and impacts, in terms of outcomes – identifiable benefits to primary stakeholders.
- Necessary adjustments.
- Provide a clear set of lessons learnt (learning oriented evaluation) for purposes of replication and generalisation and also for documentation of best practices.
- Capacity issues/capacity gaps.
- Skills enhancement and possible support areas.
- Utilisation of skills.
- Issues revolving around participation/level of involvement in network activities.
- Current activities of the MIs.
- Limitations.

Target group

- Real beneficiaries/attainment of the training needs as far as HIV/AIDS is concerned
- Actual beneficiaries including women and people living with HIV/AIDS

C. Sampling

There are 25 MIs in 10 countries, 12 in Eastern Africa (EA) and 13 in Southern Africa. As contacting all MIs is likely to be prohibitively expensive, a sample of 6 MIs should be selected.

Factors influencing the sample size

Budget, time, type of information required

Options for sampling/sampling criteria

Random sample and probabilistic sample for more specific information

Geography or thematic areas

Appendix 2: Methodology for the Evaluation

1. Project Inception Phase

Work on the evaluation started in mid-April 2008 when two members of the team of consultants travelled to Nairobi, Kenya, on the inception visit. During the visit, meetings were held with RATN's Executive Director and other members of the Secretariat, as well as with the team of consultants from HLSP that has been contracted to develop RATN's next Strategic Plan. The consultants also collected key documents from the Secretariat for review. They also developed a Draft Inception Report which detailed how the evaluation was going to be conducted and submitted it to the Steering Committee for approval. The Draft Inception Report was subsequently discussed at a stakeholders' workshop held at the Nairobi Safari Club on 12 May 2008. A final Inception Report was prepared incorporating comments from the workshop participants. The evaluation proper commenced in mid-May 2008 following approval of the Inception Report.

2. Review of Documents

The RATN Secretariat provided the consultants with hard and electronic copies of key documents that were to be utilised during the evaluation. The documents included the Strategic Plan 2004–2008, annual reports, annual work plans and budgets, previous consultancy reports (e.g. Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey, Mid-Term Review, ESA Regional HIV/AIDS Training Needs Assessment, Alumni Training Follow-up Study), RATN Performance Measurement Framework, and various management documents (i.e. Management Manual, Accounting Manual), RATN employment policies (on HIV/AIDS, pay, staff development), minutes and other papers of the RATN Board of Directors, its two committees and the General Council.

Over the following weeks, the consultants reviewed these documents in detail in order, among other things, to identify key strategies and issues, to assess the extent to which targets set in 2004 had been achieved and the constraints and other factors that may have influenced the attainment of those strategic objectives.

During the analysis and review, the consultants sought to assess the extent to which each of the KRAs or Outcomes had been achieved, and the strategies used to achieve those outcomes. It was also noted that, over time, the original four KRAs in the Strategic Plan had been modified and expanded following the development of a Performance Measurement Framework as the basic tool for monitoring RATN's performance. The documentary review therefore also sought to identify variances between the original KRAs and the subsequent additional outcomes, together with their planned strategies.

For each KRA, the Balanced Scorecard was used to check on a range of key performance indicators. The concept of the Balanced Scorecard was developed in the early 1990s at the Harvard Business School. It came out of a realisation that no single performance indicator can capture and explain the full complexity of an organisation's performance. In this evaluation, the Balanced Scorecard was used to assess the following groups of indicators:

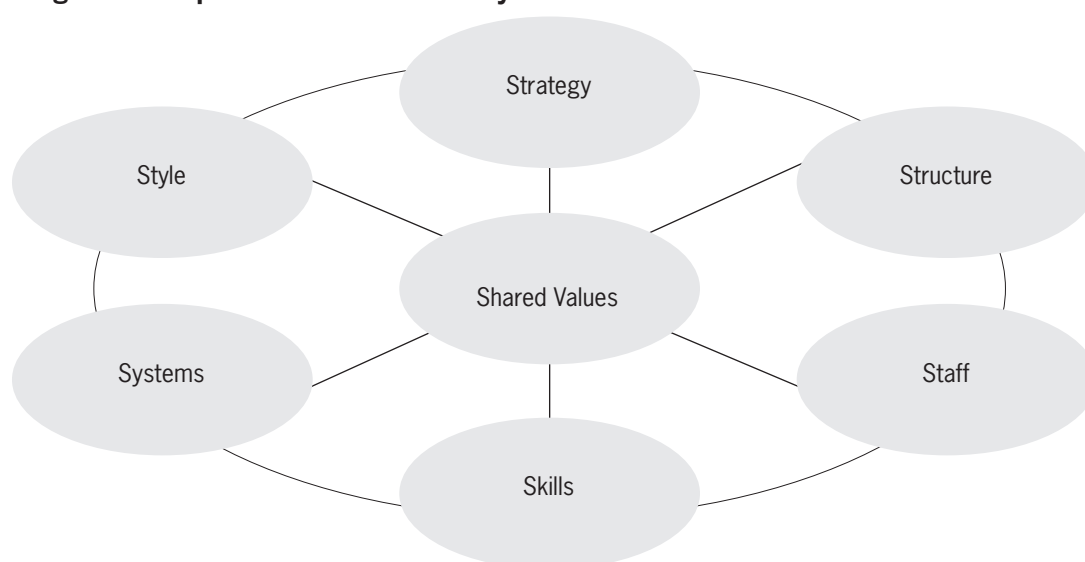
- operational effectiveness (e.g. number trained, amount of funds raised);
- efficiency (e.g. cost of running courses, cost of fund raising, cost of enrolling a new MI);
- customer or client satisfaction (e.g. proportion of alumni that are satisfied with the training received);
- internal capacity (e.g. number of staff in MIs able to deliver the courses, systems developed to receive, manage and account for funds raised, systems developed to monitor quality of training provided by MIs).

RATN's organisational performance (strengths and weaknesses) over the plan period was assessed from both documentary evidence and during interviews with members of the Board, the Secretariat, the MIs, donors and other stakeholders. McKinsey's 7S Model, developed in the early 1980s by the consulting firm of McKinsey and Company, was used to assess RATN's performance as an organisation. McKinsey's 7S Framework analyses seven variables, all beginning with the letter 'S', to assess how they have impacted on the ability of an organisation to meet the goals and objectives set out its strategic plan. The seven factors are:

- *Strategy* – the plan or course of action for the allocation of scarce resources to achieve identified goals over time;
- *Structure* – the way in which the organisation's units relate to each other as depicted in its organisation chart;
- *Staff* – the number and types of personnel within the organisation;
- *Skills* – the distinctive capabilities of the staff in the organisation;
- *Systems* – the procedures, processes and routines followed within the organisation for doing what needs to be done (e.g. financial management systems, procedures for recruitment, promotions and performance appraisal);
- *Style* – the cultural style of the organisation, including what is distinctive and special about it, and the way in which managers behave in achieving the organisation's goals;
- *Shared values* – what the organisation stands for and believes in, or the guiding principles that members share (the 'glue' that holds the organisation together).

The shape of the model was designed to illustrate the interdependence of the variables (see figure below).

Diagrammatic presentation of McKinsey's 7S Model



3. Interviews with RATN Board Members, Management and Staff

Members of the RATN Board of Directors for 2007–08 were interviewed either during visits to their respective institutions or during the annual General Council meeting in Lilongwe in June 2008. Eight of the 12 Board members were interviewed. Staff of the Secretariat were interviewed at the

RATN Headquarters in Nairobi. The names and institutional affiliations of all the persons that were interviewed are given in Appendix 3. Issues covered during the interviews with Board members and staff of the Secretariat included governance and organisational structure, management systems and procedures, policy formulation and implementation, programming, monitoring and evaluation, finances and fund-raising, work experience and training among others. The interviews were conducted with the aid of structured interview guides.

4. Human Resources Audit

A human resources audit was conducted to determine the extent to which the Secretariat's human resources were adequate to implement the Strategic Plan. The audit was limited to the specific context of this evaluation, and did not cover all aspects of the human resources in the Secretariat that would normally be investigated in a comprehensive human resources audit. For instance, a more comprehensive HR audit would have included a job evaluation for all the Secretariat staff. But this was neither feasible in the time available nor was it within the scope of the evaluation.

The instruments used to conduct the audit were:

- a questionnaire for all staff to complete giving details of their academic, technical and professional qualifications, work experience, courses, seminars, regional and international meetings attended, governance meetings attended, their perceptions on various issues relating to the organisational structure and culture, systems and processes used, and training received in accordance with RATN's Training and Staff Development Plan;
- interviews with all the staff individually.

5. Field Missions and Interviews

The evaluation involved visits to a number of countries in the Eastern and Southern African region and interviews with key informants in selected member institutions and with other stakeholders. The countries covered were Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Malawi and South Africa. The field missions were conducted over an 8-week period from mid-May to early July 2008. Also interviewed were representatives of some of RATN's international cooperating partners. A total of 66 key informants were interviewed (see Appendix 3).

The interviews during the field missions were conducted with the aid of structured interview guides. Several interview guides were developed, specifically intended for use with each category of respondents, namely (i) management of the member institutions, (ii) training coordinators and trainers of RATN courses and (iii) other stakeholders. Issues covered during the discussions included the respondents' assessment of the benefits of membership of the Network, training programmes, lessons learned over the past five years and problems they had encountered, capacity issues and gaps, and assessment of future training needs.

6. Survey of Alumni

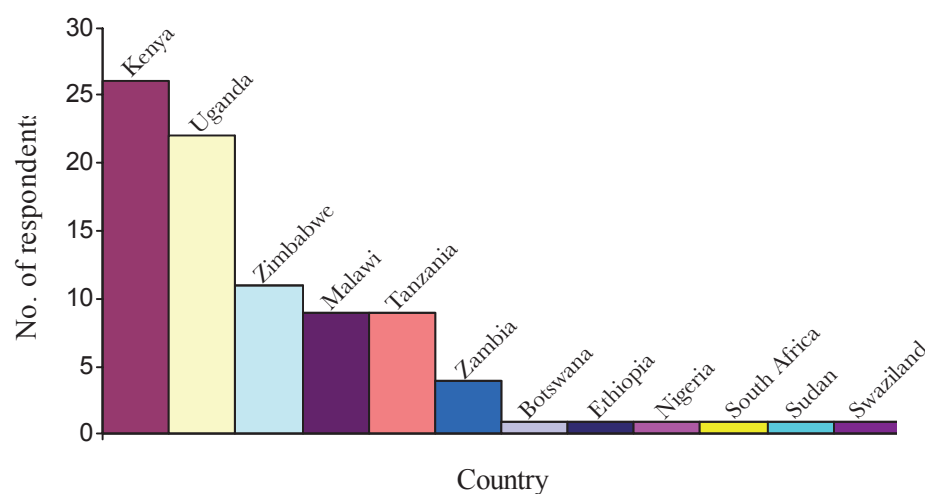
A two-pronged approach was used to solicit the views of participants at RATN courses held over the past five years. Nine of the MIs (excluding CAFS, PHRU and THETA) were requested to provide names of their trainees since 2004 together with email addresses and telephone numbers. During the field missions to the respective MIs, those alumni that were available within the given town were invited to participate in focus group discussions. The names and institutional affiliations of the alumni that participated in the focus group discussions, and the courses which they had attended, are shown in Appendix 4. The number of alumni in a group varied between two and nine. A total of 33 alumni

from 8 MIs participated in the focus group discussions. It was not possible to hold a similar group discussion at FACT in Mutare, Zimbabwe, because the field mission to that country coincided with the country's second round of the national presidential election, during which period NGOs were ordered by the government to close their offices and stop all their programmes and activities.

The views of other alumni were solicited by means of an emailed questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to some 390 alumni with known email addresses supplied by the institutions that had trained them. A total of 54 valid questionnaires were returned.

Overall, 87 former course participants over the 2004–2008 plan period were canvassed, of whom 33 were from the focus group discussions and 54 through the questionnaire survey. In both the focus group discussions and the emailed questionnaire, information sought from the respondents included the courses they had attended; the benefits from the training and how their skills had been enhanced; the changes they had implemented and other impacts within their employer organisations following the training; their knowledge of, and interactions, with RATN; use of the RATN Resource Centre; access to the RATN newsletter and website. The responses from the questionnaires were coded and the data analysed using SPSS. The focus group discussions provided mostly qualitative data on similar issues, but also gave opportunities to explore issues with the participants.

The 87 alumni that participated in the evaluation either through the focus group discussions or the questionnaire survey came from 12 different countries, from Ethiopia in the north to South Africa and Swaziland in the south, and as far west as Nigeria (see figure below). However, the majority of the respondents were from Uganda and Kenya, followed by Zimbabwe, Malawi and Tanzania.



The respondent alumni do not constitute a random sample of all the people that have been trained by RATN between 2004 and 2008, but only those with email addresses and were willing to respond to the questionnaire or were available for the focus group discussions. However, the large proportion of respondents from the five countries is indicative of the dominance of both alumni and MIs that are active in training delivery in those countries. While all are working within the HIV/AIDS sector, they represent very diverse educational and employment backgrounds, including medical practitioners and nurses, counsellors, teachers, trainers, programme managers, laboratory technicians, social workers, researchers and academics.

7. Alumni's Employer Organisations

All the alumni that participated in the evaluation either in the focus group discussions or the questionnaire survey were requested to provide the names and contact details of their immediate supervisors at their workplaces. The information was required to enable the consultants to approach the supervisors in order to obtain their views on the RATN courses as well and how the training had impacted on their organisations. Unfortunately, many of the alumni were reluctant to provide the names and email addresses of their supervisors, apparently concerned that the consultants wanted to check with their supervisors/managers. A brief questionnaire was sent by email to some 15 supervisors whose subordinates had provided the necessary contact information. However, only three of the supervisors responded to the questionnaire.

Appendix 3: Key Informants that were Interviewed and their Institutional Affiliations

SN	Institution	Interviewee name	Job title	Position in RATN
1	KAPC	Cecilia Rachier Elias Gikundi Samuel Aloyo Eunice Kiburu George Ouko Emmah Chege Leah Mugambi	Executive Director Deputy Executive Director Training Coordinator Counsellor/Trainer Psycho-social Support Coordinator Counsellor/Trainer Counsellor/Trainer	Former RATN board member
2	CEU, University of Nairobi	Dr. Mark Joshi Dr. Richard Ayah	Director, CEU & Dept of Medicine Department of Community Health & AHRM Course Coordinator	
3	CAFS	George Kahuthia	Country Team Leader/Kenya	Alternate board member
4	TGNP	Beatrice Ezekiel Diana Kidala Asseny Muro Mary Rusimbi William Venat	RATN Course Coordinator A/Head, Gender Training Institute P/t Consultant & founder member Former Executive Director (Rtd) Internee Trainer	Former RATN board member
5	ESAMI	Peter Kiuluku Bandali Bachu	Consultant Consultant	Former RATN board chairman
6	TASO	Juliana K. Nyombi Hannington Nkayivu Getrude Muzoora	Director, Training & Capacity Dev Training Manager Trainer	Board member
7	Mildmay	Dr. E. Luyirika Dr. Y. Karamagi Juliet Businge David Kavuma Josephine Nahiggya	Centre Director/ Director of Clinical Services Academic Programme Manager Curriculum Development Coordinator/ Nurse/Trainer Trainer/Counselling Psychologist Registrar/Librarian	
8	THETA	Dr. Dorothy Balaba Primrose Kyeyune	Executive Director Training & Capacity Building Manager	Board Deputy Chairperson
9	CONNECT	Dennis Mudede Olgar Madondo Darwin Manyame Evelyn Hungwe	Executive Director Programmes Manager Training Coordinator Training Officer	Board member
10	FACT	Jephias Mundondo Pardon Muyambo Sibongile Maidza Varaidzo Nyadenga	Executive Director Programme Manager – Training & Capacity Building Training Programme Officer Programme Officer	Board member
11	MIM	Prof. Benson Kandoole Precious Givah Isaac Chiphazi Wilfred Chinthochi Chrissie Najira	Executive Director Operations Director Sen. Management Dev. Consultant Sen. Management Dev. Consultant Management Dev. Consultant	Former Board member Ex-alternate board member

SN	Institution	Interviewee name	Job title	Position in RATN
12	Mananga	Dr. Rangarirai Taruvinga	Executive Director	Board Chairperson
13	RATN Secretariat	Dr. John Mwesigwa	Executive Director	
		Sam Mwangangi	Financial Accountant	
		Kelvin Storey	Network Development Manager	
		Anastasia Ndiritu	Training Programmes Manager	
		Consolata Mocha	Information & Communication Officer	
		Carol Maringa	Resource Centre Administrator	
		Laban Musundi	Database & Systems Administrator	
		Alice Godia	Executive Assistant	
		Eric Wandera	Administrative Assistant	
		Yvonne Machira	Research & Consultancy Coordinator	
		Cox Luhava	Assistant Accountant	
		Isabell Osallo	Accounts Assistant	
		Charles Abonyo	Office Assistant	
		Samuel Nyaga	Driver	
		Ally Mohammed	Driver	
14	University of Nairobi	Prof Walter Jaoko	Chairman, Dept of Medical Microbiology	Board member
15	University of Manitoba	Dr. James Dean	Head, International Relations, Manitoba	Board member
16	SOSMED	Prof. M.T. Leshabari	School of Public Health and Social Sciences, MUCHS, Dar es Salaam	
17	National AIDS Commissions and AIDS Control Programmes	Selinah J. Kibogy	Programme Officer-Capacity Building, NACC, Kenya	
		Prof. J Rwomushana	Director for Policy, Advocacy & Knowledge Management, Uganda AIDS Commission, Uganda	
		Raymond Yekeye	Operations Director, NAC, Zimbabwe	
		Dr. Biziwick Mwale	Executive Director, NAC, Malawi	
18	CIDA	Sherry Greaves	Senior Programme Officer, Ottawa	
		Pamela Branch	M&E Consultant, Ottawa	
19	Sida	Anne Lindeberg	Regional Advisor, Swedish-Norwegian HIV/AIDS Team, Lusaka	
20	Irish Aid	Anne Anamela	Regional HIV/AIDS Advisor, Pretoria	
21	EANNASO	Lucy Ng'ang'a	Executive Director, Arusha	
		Titus J Twesige	Team Leader-Network Development & Linkage, Arusha	
22	EAC	Dr. Stanley Sonoira	Senior Health Coordinator, Health Department, EAC Secretariat, Arusha	
23	Zimbabwe AIDS Network	Sheilla Dotoro	Programmes Manager, Harare	
24	SAfAIDS	Sarah Page	Deputy Director, Harare	
23	HIVSA (for PHRU)	Diane Fine	Training Manager, Johannesburg	
24	UNAIDS	Susan O'Leary	Regional Advisor, Technical Support-Regional Support Team East and Southern Africa, Johannesburg	

Appendix 4: Alumni-participants in Focus Group Discussions

MI	Participant names	Job title and employing organisation	RATN course & year attended
KAPC	1. Francis Jabedo	Priest – Catholic Church, Nairobi	Counselling, 2006
	2. Vicky D. Maiyo	Counsellor/HR Assistant – Nairobi Water Company, Nairobi	Counselling, 2007
	3. Mary M. Gathege	Counsellor – Umoja VCT Centre, Nairobi	Counselling, 2006
	4. Daniel Ogola	Country Director – Matibabu Foundation	Counselling, 2006
	5. Richard Njeru	Counsellor/Trainer Supervisor – KAPC	Counsellors' Supervision, 2001
CEU, Univ. of Nairobi	6. Lenet M. Bundi	Nursing Officer/Programme Officer – Ministry of Health, Nairobi	C&BC, 2006 (MIM); AHRM, 2007
	7. Jonathan Mwangi	Medical Student – Medical School, University of Nairobi	AHRM, 2007
	8. Harrison O. Ojuok	Medical Practitioner – Nairobi	Counselling, 2006 (KAPC); AHRM, 2006; Advocacy Skills, 2007 (CAFS)
	9. Rahab Ngugi	Patients' Services Manager – Nairobi Women's Hospital, Nairobi	AHRM, 2006
	10. Daniel W. Kimani	Youth Coordinator – Marie Stopes, Kenya	AHRM, 2006
TGNP	11. Upendo Kibasa	Counsellor/Coordinator – WAMATA, Dar es Salaam	Gender Training on Policy & HIV/AIDS, 2006
	12. Kidani Magwillla	Administrator – Tanzania Network of Community Health Funds	Gender Training on Policy & HIV/AIDS, 2007
	13. Aloyce Mwogofi	Human Resources Officer – President's Office, Public Service Mgt	Gender Training on Policy & HIV/AIDS, 2006
	14. Suzan Kipuyo	Project Officer – AMREF, Dar es Salaam	TOT, 2006
ESAMI	15. Patience Sekinabo	Outreach Backstop – FORDIA, Dar es Salaam	TOT, 2007
	16. Margaret Ndagire	Nurse – JCRC, Kampala	ARV for Counsellors, 2007
Mildmay	17. Margaret Kwikiriza	Counsellor – Nsambya Home Based Care Centre	ARV for Counsellors, 2006
	18. Esther Ajambo	Teacher/Counsellor	ARV for Counsellors, 2007
TASO	19. Helen Semivule	Teacher Training College Tutor – Ministry of Education	Counselling 2005, Child Counselling 2006
	20. Harriet Namusisi	Counsellor – Baylor College of Health Education, Mulago Hospital	Child Counselling, 2006
CONNECT	21. Lewis Garaba	Chairperson – Kasipiti Foundation, Harare	Systemic Counselling, 2007
	22. Martha Masawi	Counsellor – University of Zimbabwe-UCSF Project, Harare	Systemic Counselling, 2002
	23. Phephisiwe Muranda	Senior Counsellor – University of Zimbabwe-UCSF Project, Harare	Systemic Counselling, 2002
	24. Nicholas Musarira	Nurse Counsellor – Makoni 24-Hour Medical Centre, Chitungwiza	Systemic Counselling, 2007
	25. Nakayi Nengomasha	Senior Counsellor – Padare, Harare	Systemic Counselling, 2007
	26. Auxilia Masunda	Nurse Counsellor – Parirenyatwa Hospital, Harare	Systemic Counselling, 2007
	27. Emilia Hatendi	OVC Project Officer – ActionAid International (Zimbabwe), Harare	Systemic Counselling, 2006
	28. Ettie Mangisi	Volunteer Counsellor – Celebration Church, Harare	Systemic Counselling, 2008
	29. Patricia Mandisarira	Nurse Counsellor, – ZNFPC, Harare	Systemic Counselling, 2007
	30. Rose Maliyana	Counsellor – Lighthouse Trust, Lilongwe	Programme Management & Administration, 2007
MIM	31. Loretta Gumbo	HIV/AIDS Coordinator/Nursing Sister – MIM, Lilongwe	Communication & Behaviour Change 2006; Programme Management & Administration 2007
	32. Samuel Jeke	Bank Clerk – Nedbank, Lilongwe	Programme Management & Administration 2005
	33. Catherine Pangani	Deputy HIV/AIDS Coordinator – Malawi Police Service, Lilongwe	Communication & Behaviour Change 2007

Appendix 5: Core Schedule

– Evaluation of the RATN Strategic Plan, 2004–2008

Key Result Area 1: A sustainable and functioning network of training institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa							
Strategic Objective 1.1: Adequate financial and human resources mobilised to support RATN objectives							
Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Mobilise the required resources		To raise USD 10.853 over the SP years:	RATN budget USD 1,253,438. Annual deficit \$1,556,914	Total realised to 2007/08: \$6,922,648	74	74% of the target reached but largely from existing donors. Strategy used to meet donor requirements and thus ensure continued funding was adequate and the core donors seem fairly well satisfied. However, strategy has left RATN still heavily dependent on the core donors and thus vulnerable. Issue of sustainability has not been resolved and the organisation still does not have sufficient capacity for self sustainability.	The Strategic Plan period came at a difficult period as the organisation transitioned from being a project to becoming an INGO and as it grappled with initial financial irregularities. Much focus was inevitably put on getting the systems and structures and getting the organisation well established as an INGO worthy of being the recipient of the donor funds. RATN has done well in establishing the administrative and governance systems and cultivating a culture of accountability.
		FY2004/05 \$2,354,000		FY2004/05 \$1,281,803			
		FY2005/06 \$2,640,000		FY2005/06 \$1,714,765			
		FY2006/07 \$2,740,000		FY2006/07 \$1,896,980			
		FY2007/08 \$1,557,000		FY2007/08 \$2,029,100			
		FY2008/09 \$1,562,000		FY2008/09 \$2,533,700			
		Total target for 2004/05 to 2007/08: \$9,291,000					

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
		Administrative overhead drops to 18% of budget	38% of budget in annual 2003/04	32% of budget 2004/2005 26% of budget 2005/2006 31% of budget 2006/2007 25% of budget 2007/2008	42	Various attempts made to reduce administrative overhead, including reducing expenditure on such items as communications and transport. Donors have continued to press for and demand reduction of administrative costs.	One of the main reasons is probably due to fact that the budget resources did not significantly increase so as to diminish the administrative costs as a proportion. The structure of RATN was also not well suited to a reduction of administrative overheads because of emphasis on heavy governance procedures and sponsored network participation of its members.
	Solicit funding from new donors through marketing of RATN programmes			Core donor funding as % of total budget: 2005/2006: 95% 2006/2007: 97% 2007/2008: 91%. In 2006/07 income from consultancies \$184,127 while in 2007/08 it was \$157,298. Three funding proposals were submitted in 2004/2005. In 2005/2006, RATN scored some success with the Academy for educational Development and DFID making awards for programmes RATN was involved in. Two consultancy projects were also executed.		Not much success achieved with fund raising. Several fund raising strategies used, including approaching other non-core/new donors such as Ford Foundation, DFID, USAID, Royal Netherlands Embassy, ACBF, UNIFEM, Ford Foundation, DANIDA and NORAD, undertaking consultancies, hiring a consultant to assist with fund raising and sending Board members to attend fund raising workshops. Unfortunately, fund raising consultant hired did not deliver required result. Only limited success has been achieved and 89.5% of the 2007/2008 budget was funded by the three main donors.	The strategies proposed, of approaching other donors, undertaking consultancies and contracting consultants to support fundraising were basically sound, if rather limited. However, only limited success was achieved partly because of human resource constraints including time constraints as well as lack of in-house skills. Insufficient focus was also put in the original SP strategy to market RATN programmes. It is also probable that the origins of RATN and continuing donor funding were not conducive for developing an organisational culture of fund raising.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Demonstrate proper use and accountability for all funds	Strengthen financial and accounting systems	To conduct annual audits by an external firm on time. Audited financial statements distributed 3 weeks prior to GC and approved by GC.	Audit reports noting weakness in complying with internal control policies and structures.	All years of SP have been audited. Audit reports presented to the Board and GC and approved. Audit for 2007/2008 has been completed and the audited accounts presented to the General Council. Issues of timeliness of the reports have been addressed.	100	Annual Audits have been consistently undertaken and issues raised dealt with. Forensic audit in 2004 resulted in discovery of financial irregularities finally resulting in the dismissal and prosecution of several accounting staff. Concerns expressed by donors have been dealt with and continued support is evidence of general donor satisfaction with improved management of the finances after the 2003/04 problems. Problems with services of audit firms have been overcome. Efforts have been made by Board to ensure that audits are done on time.	Initial problems with finance staff have by and large been overcome. Oversight provided by the Finance and Administration Committee has been crucial in improving financial management. Introduction of internal audit function has also tightened up on financial management
Improve capacity for financial management and reporting			Accounting Manual prepared in 2004. Management Manual prepared in 2006. In FY2005/2006, the Accounts Office changed the accounting software from Catapult to Pastel.			Financial management and reporting greatly improved over the SP years. In 2007 RATN adopted several new and revised International Accounting Standards.	In FY 2004/2005, the Board and Management attended a one day course on "Finance for Non-finance Managers". Supervision and direction given by Finance and Administration Committee on financial management and reporting.
Prepare a Human Resource Policy and Plan	Ensure that appropriate staff are recruited and retrained and their skills are constantly improved	16 staff: (To add 3 new staff comprising 2 programme assistants and an M&E Officer)	13 Staff employed at Secretariat.	13 staff The ratio of male to female staff is 2:1; the ratio of male to female within the management team is 1:1.5.	0	The number of staff at the Secretariat did not increase and remained at 13. Therefore this objective was not achieved. The main reason was the constraint imposed by having to find the funding for the new posts or to get a donor to fund the post. Without significant additional funding, the posts remained unfilled. For instance, the October Board meeting directed that the Programme Assistant position should wait for new funding.	The basic strategy of finding a donor to support any new posts was at the centre of the failure to fill these posts. Without the additional staff, the Secretariat remained pressured to undertake administrative tasks and deliver programme results.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
	Develop HR Manual and Strategy			Management Manual issued October 2006, including human resource procedures. Pay Policy issued March 2007. HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy also issued. Gender audit carried out and report issued in February 2008.		Human resource policies and strategies developed and implemented. Assignment of human resource management issues to Executive Assistant freed the Executive Director from some of the routine human resource issues. There is general satisfaction amongst staff about human resource management and conditions of service. However, ED still heavily burdened by HR issues which should be dealt with at lower levels. Generally manual is adhered to and people feel, for instance, that discipline is high and well administered.	Organisationally, the major part of managing the human resources still lies with the Executive Director. The Executive Assistant largely confined to the clerical side of processing HR issues. The failure to implement the human resource structures as specified in the HR Manual and thus to have an Administrative Assistant under a "Finance and Administration Manager" has reduced focus on HR issues
	Develop Staff Development Plans and performance appraisal			Performance management system developed and introduced in November 2004. Staff Training and Development Plan 2006/07–2008/09 prepared in June 2006. A three sixty degree staff appraisal introduced and used.		RATN has done well in trying to develop its human resources. Of the 32 courses that were identified in the plan for individual staff, 47% were delivered. In addition, staff also attended many other workshops and seminars which were not necessarily on their Staff Development Plan. Interviewed staff acknowledge progress made even though they still feel they could do with more training. Training needs are also identified through the 360o appraisal.	The platform for development of staff has been laid. However, organisationally, there is still need for an overall HR management responsibility that will, for instance, ensure that training is delivered as per the training plan. Responsibility for HR needs to be given to someone at the Manager level.
	Identify skills gaps for achievement of the Strategic Plan						

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
	Support attendance at short courses, seminars/workshops			The attached annexure shows the courses and seminars that have been attended by staff outside the training received as per the Training and Staff Development Plan. As shown, staff attended 27 training programmes and 19 regional and international conferences.		See comments above. Staff interviewed felt that their attendance at some of these seminars and conferences has helped bring more visibility to RATN. There are instances when they have exhibited RATN materials or when they have been given an opportunity to address the meetings.	See comments above. Some staff, however, feel that attendance at meetings tends to be by a few people.
	Provide on job coaching and mentoring			Difficult to assess although all say they do it as a matter of routine		Difficult to assess although it probably is being done.	Difficult to assess.
Strategic Objective 1.2: Effective RATN Governance and Operational Systems developed and functional							
Improve overall functioning of the governance structures through short term technical assistance	Develop constitution and by-laws			RATN constitution approved prior to start of the Strategic Plan. Some minor amendments during the plan period.		All indications are that the constitutional framework for RATN has been firmly set and is working well to control and guide the organisation as well as give it legal status. Governance has been very strong with strict adherence to the organisation's constitution. The induction of new Board members has also helped to perpetuate the strong governance traditions.	As an organisation, RATN is now stable and well grounded. The Secretariat has developed a culture of adherence to laid down procedures. It is instructive that there have been virtually no incidents of boardroom dissent or expressions of dissatisfaction by the MIs and stakeholders.
Negotiate HQ Agreement				Headquarters Agreement successfully negotiated and concluded		The Headquarters Agreement is in place and holding. The Secretariat is submitting the necessary annual returns.	The troubles that beset Kenya at the beginning of the year proved the necessity to have a Risk Management Framework and to have contingency plans in place.
Induct Board members				New Board members inducted soon after each GC where the elections take place. Board Procedures Manual developed in 2005/2006		Strategy achieved as Board members are being inducted soon after the GC meeting. The induction soon after the GC is an efficient and cost effective way of inducting the new members. The fact that only part of the Board is elected each year also provides for continuity.	The transitions from one Board to the next have been seamless and the Boards have functioned well, giving real credibility to governance of RATN. The manner in which the Board handled the forensic audit and the resultant fallout also increased its credibility in the eyes of the funding partners.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Board to meet Quarterly to review progress in plan implementation	Appointment of local Board by MIs and its effective running		Board elected by MIs at each GC as per the constitution.			Throughout the plan years, there was regular transition from one Board to the next. Board procedures were respected and adhered to. The Board elections have been efficiently handled.	The provision for retiring half of the Board each year made for continuity. The system of alternates also reduced instances of non-attendance of Board meetings.
	Develop, approve and implement Strategic Plan		Strategic Plan prepared in 2003, approved by Board and ratified by the General Council in June 2004.			This objective has by and large been achieved. The approach used by RATN in strategic planning is participatory and inclusive. The Performance Measurement Framework then enables RATN to keep focus on the attainment of the Strategic Plan objectives. However, the extraction of the PMF from the Strategic Plan resulted in many Strategic Objectives being lost sight of in terms of tracking through the PMF. It is commendable that annual reporting is also closely tied to the Outcomes.	The strategy used in developing and implementing the Strategic Plan was basically sound. The PMF has made it possible for RATN to keep the eye on the ball in terms of plan implementation.
	Participation of all Departments in planning and budgeting		Annual budgets prepared in consultation with all departments.			Departments participate in preparation of annual budgets which are also presented to the Board for ratification. Donors also consulted on budgets. Process has generally been satisfactory.	The Financial Accountant has responsibility for budget preparation. Has to take into account donor funding and other constraints. Continuing donor support indicative of general satisfaction with processes used.
	Achieve budget and performance targets		Strategic Plan monitored through the PMF which was produced and tabled at the Board meetings. Mid-Term review of SP conducted from September 2006-March 2007.			The PMF was an important instrument for monitoring the Strategic Plan. However, the adoption of indicators that were not directly aligned to all the Strategic Objectives meant that not all of the latter were tracked by the PMF. The donors, however, were satisfied by use of the PMF.	The achievement of budget and performance targets was reported to and assessed by the Board, GC and donors on a regular basis.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
General council meetings to be held annually	Convene Board and General Council meetings	100% participation at Board meetings		95% participation at Board meetings.	95	Participation at Board level has been very high and RATN has consistently reported 100% attendance. Only now and then were apologies received. The cost of holding Board meetings has, however, been high and various measures have been taken including reducing the number of Board meetings from 4 to 3 per year. The size of the Board is also being reduced and the Board composition is being reviewed. There has also been capacity building for the Board with Board inductions being done, some courses held for Board members and recently, Board members attending a workshop on fund raising.	There is little doubt that the governance structures including the Board have worked well and there has been great commitment by Board members and their institutions. The manner in which the Board commissioned and dealt with issues arising from the forensic audit in 2004 did much to credit RATN in the eyes of the key donors.
	Active participation of MIs in RATN meetings and training	100% participation at GC meeting		84% at June 2007	92	Participation in the General Council meetings has been quite high. The issue that has been raised, however, is whether the level of participation would be this high if the MIs were expected to pay their own for attendance. The cost of hosting the GC has been relatively high. The budget for the GC meeting in 2004 was \$60,852 and that for the Botswana GC meeting in 2006 was \$90,854.	The structure and format of the General Council makes RATN accountable to its membership as most decisions have to be ratified by the General Council. The annual meetings also provide a forum for the MIs to meet and bond.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
		100% payment of membership fees		23/25: 92%, up 42% from 50%	92	The rate of payment of membership fees has been fairly high even if some MIs have not always paid on time. It would seem that the MIs have been well satisfied with the fee levels. While issues have been raised about the value that RATN adds to the MIs, the membership satisfaction surveys that were conducted in 2004, 2005 and 2006 all generally reflected a high level of satisfaction amongst the MIs even though there was acknowledgement that MI to MI networking was weak. The payment of membership fees shows the commitment of the MI to the network. Only one case has been reported of an MI that, for one of the years, requested a waiver. The benefits of membership are many, including sponsorship for attendance at meetings and capacity building.	
Secretariat maintaining liaison with NGO Council and NACs	Liaise with NGO Council						
	Delivery of member services			MIs facilitated to develop and deliver training courses. MIs also facilitated to participate in various fora. Some MIs contracted to deliver consultancy services to RATN		The Secretariat has delivered many services to the MIs. Chief of these has been the assistance given for course development as well as for hosting of the courses themselves, including sponsorship of some candidates. The regular membership Satisfaction Surveys that have been held have generally confirmed the levels of satisfaction of the members with the network. By facilitating MIs to develop and deliver training programmes, RATN has added a lot of value to the MIs and also provided a platform for sharing of information and experiences.	
	Communication and knowledge sharing			RATN meetings and Resource Centre providing the forum for communication and knowledge sharing		The meetings held and the Resource Centre provide the mechanisms by which RATN communicates and shares knowledge. There have, however, been complaints by the ICPs about the level of communication between the Secretariat and themselves.	

Strategic Objective 1.3: Functional linkages between MIs and other regional HIV/AIDS bodies established and maintained							
Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Identify, establish and maintain strong linkages between training institutions in ESA			Ad-hoc linkages exist with SAfAIDS, SAT, SANASO, AFRICASO and NAP+.	RATN participating in the Regional Advisory Group of the Regional Programme of IHA, SAFAIDS Regional Advisory Group and SADC/UNAIDS Partnership forum for Southern Africa and EAC / UNAIDS Partnership Forum for Eastern Africa.		RATN is gradually scaling up its participation in regional and international fora. However, this is being limited by the lack of a substantive deputy to the Executive Director, thus tying down the latter to mundane administrative tasks that should be delegated.	Organisational capacity, particularly in terms of staffing has severely limited the involvement of RATN in regional and international fora. Staff have largely been focused on their own administrative and programme to find time to devote to links with other organisations.
				RATN invited to participate in next SADC partnership forum on 4th April 2008		There is general consensus in RATN that the involvement could be more and that RATN is not as visible as it should be.	
			No data on number of countries allocating funds for capacity development and training in their National HIV/AIDS budgets.	No data on number of USD 56,929 made available for work with RECS and NACCs (Workplan and budget FY 2007/2008)		No progress. A external consultant is still to be identified and contracted for the study	
			Trends analysis in national budgeting not yet undertaken by RATN.	RATN has attended SADC/EAC partnership forums			
				Study being undertaken on current levels of resources available at national level for training and capacity development.			
Explore possibilities of making effective links with National Aids Commissions and regional bodies	Link with National AIDS Commissions		No data on linkages between MIs and their national HIV/AIDS authorities.	80% MIs report linkages with their National AIDS authorities. Secretariat has made contacts with NACs of Kenya, Zambia, Swaziland, Malawi, Uganda, and Tanzania		The primary link between RATN and NACs will have to be through the MIs themselves. 80% of the MIs have reported that they have such links. The question though is, are these links of them as members of RATN or primarily in relation to themselves as organisations working in the area of HIV/AIDS. The answer is probably that it is in the latter capacity that they have these links.	RATN's geographical spread is achieved through its members. But these members are not RATN branches as such but independent organisations with their own separate mandates.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
	Develop linkages with regional bodies such as EAC, SADC		No data on linkages between MIs and regional and other international bodies.	12 (50%) of MIs report linkages Meetings held with SADC, COMESA and EAC respective HIV/AIDS units. Advocacy Strategy now in place and to be prioritized and implemented in next FY2008/9.		The comments relating to NACs are also applicable in relation to regional and international bodies. While meetings can be held with these organisations, the capacity to influence regional bodies is likely to be difficult to achieve, especially given the fact that some of these organisations have their own HIV/AIDS units. Who is RATN to try to tell them what to do in relation to HIV/AIDS training?	The comments above are also applicable here.
	Develop advocacy plans and materials	See under 5.1	See under 5.1	See under 5.1		See under 5.1	See under 5.1
Strategic Objective 1.4: Strategic Network meetings and fora that deliberate on mutual issues of concern in HIV/AIDS training and capacity development developed							
Hold meetings from time to time	Convene Expert Committee meetings		Expert Committee meetings convened from time to time, eg for development of GASD			Expert Committees were another means for RATN to use the resources within the network for development of new programmes. The concept seems to have worked well and committees were used to facilitate course development.	The committees were a commendable way of utilising network expertise and resources and partly justify why there should be a network.
	Convene Network meetings	See below	See below	See below		See below	See below
	Convene Governance meetings (Biennial Directors Forum, Donor consultative meetings, Capacity development meetings for resource persons)		Two biennial Directors Forums held. PCM meetings held annually. Various capacity development workshops held for the Secretariat, Board and for MIs.			RATN has done well in organising governance and capacity development meetings. Governance meetings have by and large been held on schedule, the organisation has generally been excellent and RATN has used these forums to promote participation between MIs	RATN has developed and refined its capacity to organise and conduct these meetings. However, taking into account the amount of effort required to organise these fora, it is questionable if this has not overtaxed the Secretariat and diverted many of the staff from fulfilling their core duties.

Strategic Objective 1.5: An inventory of training institutions and resource people in HIV/AIDS in the region developed and maintained

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Maintain an inventory of member institutions and their activities				Secretariat maintains files for each MI. Member profiles also in RATN database as well as information on the staff resources of the MIs.		RATN necessarily keeps an interest on the MIs. However, RATN does not necessarily track all the activities of MIs as it does not have the human resources to do so. The MIs have so many other focuses beyond RATN that it would be impractical for RATN to keep abreast of everything happening in the MIs.	The organisational structure and human resources available can only allow a partial tracking and involvement of RATN in the activities of its MIs. It has been said that there are also difficulties in getting the MIs to respond to requests for information made by RATN.
Establish an inventory of trainers and resource persons				Database of training institutions developed and refined in 2005. Upgraded into TRIC.		TRIC has provided a major facility for RATN to obtain, keep and disseminate information on the MIs. The database is going to be expanded in terms of coverage. This has been a very positive development which will provide invaluable information not only to the members but to other interested stakeholders.	TRIC should make it possible to transform the role of the Resource Centre from being a paper based repository into an electronic and digital resource centre accessible across the region and the world. The challenge, organisationally, is to grow the database as well as keep it up to date.

Strategic Objective 1.6: Expanding network to other key strategic countries in the region

Expand RATN Membership	Develop membership criteria and application forms		Membership criteria and application forms developed and used. Categories of membership defined, application form prepared, institutional and site assessment tools developed.			The process by which MIs become members is fairly rigorous starting with an assessment of the applying institution, approval by the Board and final ratification by the GC. The application form puts emphasis on the course that the applicant institution wishes to offer through RATN. This process, however, has its attended costs and can be limiting in terms of trying to grow the network. The vetting of facilities at which the courses will be offered is meant to assure quality of training but, naturally, again increases the cost of running the network.	The admission of the new members is the responsibility of the Network Development Manager. During the period of the current SP, this manager was also responsible for organising the governance meetings as well as for M&E., responsibilities that must have limited the capacity to attend to network development issues.
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Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Expand RATN Membership	Establish partnerships with institutions in existing and new countries	30 MIs (Target of 8 new MIs)	22 MIs	25 MIs in the Network. (3 new)	38	The target of expanding the network by addition of new members was only partially met with the addition of three new members. Of particular importance was the addition of a member in Francophone Africa. The admission procedures for new members are rigorous and costly the benefits of the assessment outweigh these costs. Tying the admission to a new course to be delivered or raises the stakes in terms of new membership. Four institutions that applied for membership in 2006/2007 were all turned down.	Part of the limited success in this regard must be attributed to insufficient human resources at the Secretariat as well as budget. The network development portfolio is, unfortunately, the one that has been lumbered with two other major responsibilities: Governance meetings and M&E.
		13 Countries (5 new countries)	8 countries	10 countries	40	While the target of 13 countries may not have been achieved, the network did grow in the plan period and expanded to two other countries, one in Francophone Africa. Suggestions have also been made for the network to expand to West Africa.	The human and capital resources available to RATN to expand the network are clearly inadequate. New membership also brings with it budget implications as the new members must be supported to participate in the network.
	Marketing and communications	See under 1.2	See under 1.2	See under 1.2		See under 1.2	See under 1.2
	Maintain existing network members			Only 1MI exited network. Membership Satisfaction Surveys conducted in June 2004, February 2006 and June 2007. Feb 2006 Survey: 88% satisfied with responsiveness of RATN to MI development needs; 75% satisfaction with governance and 79% with general direction.		Members generally continued to express satisfaction with RATN. Results of Membership Satisfaction Surveys positive. In the plan period, only one MI, SOSMED of Tanzania exited the network.	RATN has tried to ensure that members remain satisfied. The high level of participation at network meetings is evidence of a high level of satisfaction with the network.

Key Result Area 2: Quality training and capacity development programmes that respond to the STI/HIV/AIDS training needs of the region

Strategic Objective 2.1: Improved relevant training programmes developed

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Establish the training needs in the region	Conduct regular reviews of courses		Training needs assessment finalised to identify priority training needs	Training Needs Assessments conducted. Training reference Group set up. GASD developed, piloted and implemented. Survey on accreditation conducted in 2005. Strategy for working with marginalised groups developed and approved in 2005. Investigations commenced into Distance Blended Learning. RTMES developed and launched.		RATN has put a lot of effort into conducting training needs assessments as well as to try and determine the needs of the evolving epidemic. However, it was found that the approach of conducting training needs at national level was too costly and this was abandoned in favour of the TRG. Views have also been expressed that RATN has not been as proactive as it should have been and that some good opportunities have been missed, eg issue of circumcision.	To a large extent, RATN has depended on expertise either from the MIs or external. It has been postulated that RATN's move away from the UoN denied it the opportunity of being in close proximity of the evolving research and thus of being able to keep at the cutting edge of the epidemic.
Improve training programmes through regular reviews and updates of training needs in the region]	Facilitate training through RATN courses	150 courses delivered by March 31, 2009. (120 by end of March 2008)	RATN running 27 courses 8 of which were new courses delivered in FY 2003/2004	FY 04/05: 28, 4 new FY 05/06: 32, 5 new FY 06/07: 34, 6 new FY 07/08: 35, 2 new Total: 129 courses	108	The target set for number of courses delivered has been exceeded. There are institutions that are very active in course delivery and these have made it possible for RATN to achieve its targets. For instance, in 2004/2005, 41% of the trainees came from 3 courses run by 6 MIs.	The strength of RATN lies in the strength of its MIs and their capacity to deliver the training programmes. The strict criteria that have been set for vetting the institutions for membership as well as in terms of the training facilities has made it possible to ensure that the programmes delivered are of high quality as evidenced from the alumni surveys conducted.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
		25% annual increase in trainees over baseline in FY03/04 529 (230M/299F) trainees	Baseline 529 trainees in FY2003/2004	FY 04/05: 465 (219M/246F) FY 05/06: 516 (233M/283F) FY 06/07: 532 (217M/315F) FY 07/08: 560 (226M/334F) Cumulative: 2,073 to March 2008 (895M/1,178F)	75	The assessment of the attainment of an increase of 25% over the baseline is dependent on what was meant by the SP Target. If it was intended that the number of trainees increased by 25% annually from a baseline of 529 trainees, by end of year five 3,811 would have been trained. By end of year four (March 2008), 2,073 had been trained, or 54% of plan target. However, the greatest returns have been achieved from a limited number of courses, primarily counselling and related courses while RATN has also noted that in some courses, the attendance figures have been declining over the years, e.g. in care and support courses. It has to be remembered that 2004 was a rather disturbed year with the move of premises to the Nairobi Business Park.	A number of constraints have been identified to account for the attendance at courses. One of these is inadequate marketing. While resolutions have been made to pursue “aggressive” marketing strategies, there is not much evidence that this was done, other than through use of the traditional channels such as production of the annual calendar and marketing through the web-site. Unfortunately a consultancy firm hired in 2007 to prepare a marketing and communications strategy did not deliver. Institutionally, it does not seem that there was much capacity to do this. The RATN model also imposes certain limitations in terms of what marketing RATN can do in each member country or for each MI. There also seems to be limited use of the media to promote RATN courses.
	Identify experts in training and capacity development Identify trainers in liaison with MIs			Database of MI resource persons established in 2007.		Not much progress took place on the database of MI resource persons. Work did not start until after October 2006 when the Programmes Committee instructed that a template for inputting cvs be developed and that the database be established by March 2006.	The information on resource persons is meant to be included in TRIC. Some has already been obtained but not many cvs have been entered in the. Organisationally, it would probably be better if this initiative was spearheaded by the consultancy wing as part of developing a database to be used during project tendering.
	Develop and review curriculum	At least 3 new methodologies to be implemented in training.		4 developed and implemented	133	RATN has more than exceeded the target set in the Strategic Plan. The process used of involving the MIs as well as expert associated institutions such as UoM is sound and should be encouraged.	RATN is fulfilling its core mandate by supporting the development new training methodologies. RATN extensively uses the pool of expertise available in its MIs which is a great benefit.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
	Curriculum developed and supported in 30% of the training courses	Curriculum developed and supported in 30% of the training courses	Curriculum development and review activities of MIs supported in counseling for training and community care	Joint curriculum has been developed with the MIs. Accreditation of courses has also been explored for several years but not resolved.		There is no data to determine if curriculum development has been supported in 30% of the training courses. However, indications are that, taking into account the quantity and diversity of courses offered by most of the MIs it was an unrealistic target to begin with and was not achievable.	RATN does not have the capacity or the resources to be able to support 30% of curriculum development in the MIs. This would be major undertaking and the resources are simply not there.
	Develop training materials	20 new training courses developed in 5 areas for the period of the strategic plan.	Training needs assessment finalised to identify priority training needs	21 new courses developed in 19 new areas	105	The target of 20 new courses developed has been exceeded. The cost of course development has, however, sometimes also been high in relation to the numbers then subsequently trained on that course.	RATN certainly adds value to MIs by assisting them to develop and deliver courses. The mixture of MIs, including academic institutions makes this possible. The cross fertilisation and sharing of experiences is a vital contribution that RATN makes to the MIs.
Strategic Objective 2.2: Improved capacity of MIs to provide an expanded quality training programme on STI/HIV/AIDS							
Establish the capacity of MIs to deliver training programmes	Work with MIs to develop mechanisms for capacity development programmes	Development needs identified through various meetings, fora and studies commissioned. Several capacity development needs articulated and addressed for the Board, Secretariat and MIs				A significant amount of capacity building has been delivered during the plan period, ranging from programmes for Board members and Secretariat to programmes for the MIs. By the very nature of its geographical spread, the cost of hosting such activities is high.	RATN has done well in terms of capacity development for the Board, Secretariat and the MIs. This has enhanced the operational capacity of the organisation as well as the MIs. The impact on the MIs may, however, be more difficult to measure depending on their nature and composition.
Improve capacity of MIs to provide expanded quality STI/HIV/AIDS training programmes	Improve skills and capabilities of MIs to develop, deliver and evaluate training in their areas of specialisation	30% increase in MIs Trainers trained by March 31, 2009	RATN cumulatively supports 180, (74M/106F) trainers and managers for in-service training.. Baseline 54 (19M/35F) trainers in FY03/04	FY 04/05: 20 (10M/10F) FY 05/06: 26 (11M/17F) FY 06/07: 94 (37M/57F) FY 07/08: 83 (44M/39F) Total 223 (102M/123F)	74	RATN has done well in building the capacity of MIs to deliver the courses. The courses have been diverse including monitoring and evaluation.	RATN is fulfilling an important part of its mandate as well as assuring course quality by providing training for the trainers. It is again one of the advantages of the network that, within it, there are MIs with the capacity to develop and deliver the training.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
	Provide RATN alumni with enhanced skills to deliver quality extension services and to access continued learning opportunities M&E follow up on courses, alumni and supervisors	To carry out alumni follow up every two years. (10% increase from 25%) in Alumni reporting influencing their organizations)	In 2000 pilot alumni study (190 respondents): – 62% reported transferability of skills to their work situation. – 62.3% reported courses were relevant and skills acquired were transferable. – 81% reported that the training received was applicable. – 88% of supervisors reported improved services to clients. Alumni reporting new initiatives: 44.6% initiated training programs 14.9% initiated better fund utilization 50% Initiated counselling 39% Initiated home based care.	Second alumni study completed with 49% coverage: – 90% reported that the courses were relevant and applicable. – 84% of supervisors reported improved programming. – 52% of alumni reported changes in ways of programming and working as a result of attending courses. Alumni Study Qualitative Data (FGD & Case Studies) support results RTMES developed to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of alumni. Training Reference Group also meant to give feedback on appropriateness of courses.		One Alumni Study has been conducted during the Strategic Plan period even though the intention had been to conduct a study every two years. The results of the study, however, seemed to confirm the results of the earlier (2000) study which had found that overall, there was satisfaction with the training received and that there had been work changes as a result. That only one alumni follow up study was conducted during the SP period reflects also the budgetary implications of this exercise and brings in questions of sustainability.	The use of MIs to conduct the study showed the strength of the network to undertake some of the major programmatic activities. It confirmed the wisdom of having, within the network, a range of MIs, including institutions of higher learning. The training and involvement of national collaborators was also important in building MI capacity and establishing a sustainable base for future continuing follow ups.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
	Feedback key lessons to MIs and alumni			Results of the 2005/06 Alumni Study disseminated through CDs.		Only one Alumni study was conducted during the plan period. The transfer and dissemination of the results through CD was a commendable attempt to provide feedback on the lessons to the alumni. However, feedback attempts are bound to be limited as long as there are no ready forums for that feedback. Attempts made by MIM to form a forum for the alumni are a step in the right direction.	The geographical spread of the network poses major challenges in terms of keeping the alumni involved or given feedback. This is made more difficult by the limited access to IT that affect many of the alumni. At institutional level, mechanisms need to be found that will make the MIs interact more with the alumni.
	Make training programmes gender sensitive			Gender audit carried out in February 2008 and followed by a Workshop attended by both Secretariat and MI staff. RATN reports track gender participation in training programmes.		Gender audit and training have provided the platform for RATN to mainstream gender into the Secretariat as well as in programmes. Interviewed staff all feel that RATN is now very gender sensitive. However, it has to be borne in mind that this is recent development whose results will be seen in time.	Positive steps have been taken to make RATN gender sensitive. In the next Strategic Plan, it will be useful to ensure that there is an officer who is specifically charged with tracking this responsibility and who is given set targets to achieve.
	Carry out Facilitator Support Programmes	To respond to requests for Facilitator Support	Facilitator Support Programme and mobile team concept implemented in 2 course areas.				
	Facilitate fora for sharing of ideas and lessons	See under 1.4	See under 1.4	See under 1.4		See under 1.4	See under 1.4
	Facilitate extension services						
	Update M&E tools		See M&E section	See M&E section		See M&E section	See M&E section
	Publicise and disseminate results of M&E.	See under 4.4	See under 4.4	See under 4.4		See under 4.4	See under 4.4

Key Result Area 3: RATN is recognized as an effective source of information on quality STI/HIV/AIDS training and capacity enhancement in ESA

Strategic Objective 3.1: Policies of MIs and regional bodies on training and capacity development positively influenced

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
influence policies of RATN membership and regional bodies through information, communication and extension services	Carry out policy advocacy	See under KRA/Result Statement 5.	See under KRA/Result Statement 5	See under KRA/Result Statement 5	See under KRA/Result Statement 5	See under KRA/Result Statement 5	See under KRA/Result Statement 5
	Maintain website and disseminate lessons learned	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3
	Produce and distribute newsletters	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3	See under Strategic Objective 3.3
	Receive and process inquiries			RATN receives and processes inquiries from MIs and from the public.	RATN deals with inquiries received and gives feedback. However, it was mentioned that at times, staff at Secretariat unable to answer some questions about programmes because they will not have attended them and will not what they are like.	Key staff who deal with inquiries should ideally be exposed to some of the programmes so they can confidently deal with inquiries received.	

Strategic Objective 3.2: Effective linkages between RATN resource centre and the resource centres of other MIs, collaborating agencies and affiliate institutions enhanced

Explore new modalities to acquire, store and display materials on STI/HIV/AIDS	Explore new modalities to acquire, store and display materials on STI/HIV/AIDS	To increase the dissemination of information to MIs, alumni, and collaborating agencies.	RATN RC providing information to physical visitors to RC.	RC providing information on CDs and other electronic formats (PDF).	RATN moved quickly to explore other ways of providing information and did well in this regard. The biggest challenge is making sure that	The Resource Centre as well as the targets set were premised on physical supply of information on HIV/AIDS training. RATN, however, quickly realised the need to explore new modalities for doing this and in that way, made sure that the service could remain relevant.
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Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Increase access to resources on HIV/AIDS	Disseminate accurate and timely information to MIs and regional bodies	30% increase in monthly requests for information processed by Resource Centre by March 31, 2009, over baseline average of 75/month.	Average of 75 users per month.	Average 176 users per month. However, physical visits growing at low rate. The target of a 30% increase in users per month has been exceeded by far. As per target, the number should have increased to 97 users per month.	235	The Strategic Plan target has been surpassed by far in terms of users of the RC but not in terms of physical visitors. The latter is not likely to grow significantly. The increasing number of electronic visitors will continue to enhance the value and relevance of the RC. It will also make it possible for the RC to avail a larger range of training materials than would be possible if physical copies had to be acquired and made available. TRIC will also considerably enhance the role and status of the RC.	There are a number of institutional issues to be considered. Firstly, the vast majority of the MIs are scattered in various geographical locations all over southern and Eastern Africa thus immediately limiting the extent to which they can physically access the Resource Centre. While the migration to an electronic platform will increase accessibility from remote locations, the inadequate ICT infrastructure in some of the MIs as well as other organisations that are involved with HIV/AIDS is bound to limit the extent to which they will access the information in the Resource Centre, even electronically.
Use mass media to advocate the public attendance of RATN courses			In FY2006/2007, RATN's profile was featured in a supplement of "The East African". In FY2007/2008, RATN published training related information in a number of dailies in Kenya highlighting the role of RATN. Publicity was also gained in other publications such as AHILA, the COMESA Souvenir Magazine and the World Bank Magazine "Perspectives on Development". RATN also exhibited at			There has been limited usage of the public media in publicising RATN and its activities and it is only in the last two years that significant progress has been made. While RATN assists the MIs in marketing the training programmes by producing the annual course calendar, the distribution of this is not as wide as it could be.	There are probably institutional limitations both in terms of budget and staffing resources. Marketing of the programmes is central to increased attendance at RATN courses and until it is fully addressed there will be limited success. On the other hand, if done successfully, it can increase the amount of revenue earned by RATN.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Strategic Objective 3.3: Information to RATN's internal and external publics effectively disseminated							
Source and acquire Information management system that is server based			Server upgraded in 2004/2005.			The ICT infrastructure at RATN has been upgraded considerably. However, there is still need to develop procedures for the handling and management of electronic records outside the databases. Recent problems with the e-mail system point to a lack of clear procedures in this regard.	There is currently no one with direct responsibility for the management of records, both paper and electronic. Each officer keeps their own records as they find workable. There is need to apportion responsibility for this activity and to develop a records management policy.
Refine RATN's website to make it more user friendly			New and interactive website developed in 2005/2006. 13% of MIs having links to RATN on their websites. All MIs with websites have information on RATN on their web-sites. TRIC developed and launched. Web links have also been established with other institutions to share information.			RATN has taken great strides to develop its ICT. The upgrading of the website and recent launch of TRIC have positioned it well in terms of the objective of carrying information related to HIV/AIDS training in the region. However, there are limitation in terms of the MIs and alumni accessing the information readily. Comments have also been made that the presentation of the website is not as attractive as it could be.	While the RATN Secretariat has enhanced its ICT capacity considerably, there are issues relating to the capacity of the MIs to take advantage of these facilities.
Produce and distribute news-letters and other relevant publications	Produce and distribute newsletters and other relevant publications	All MIs to receive copies of RATN publications for wider dissemination	70% of MIs receiving bulk copies of the RATN Newsletter for further distribution to their networks.	All MIs (100%) continue to receive bulk copies of the RATN Newsletter. (see under Strategic Objective	100	All MIs now receive copies of the Newsletter for further distribution. Not all alumni are on the mailing list and interviews with alumni showed that many were not receiving the Newsletter. So, while the operational target of sending copies of the Newsletter to all the MIs was being met, there are still issues of distribution to be addressed.	The mailing of the newsletter is an important avenue for RATN to maintain visibility. A dual strategy will need to be followed so that the newsletter can be obtained in both hard and electronic copy.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
		20% annual increase in Newsletter circulation.	Newsletter mailed out to 2000 individuals every quarter.	Over 3,000 materials and publications on HIV/AIDS were transferred to PDF format and uploaded into the web. The information is in abstract form in a searchable database in the internet. Information was also disseminated in soft copy. Development of the Web based information system – Training Reference and Information Centre (TRIC) is ongoing to enhance HIVAIDS information acquisition. Newsletter mailed out to over 3000 individuals every quarter. Development of Communication and Marketing Strategy is also underway. Newsletter questionnaire has been developed and sent to various groups to assess its usefulness.	166	While the SP target was a 20% increase in annual circulation, the figure has been eclipsed and there has been a 50% increase in circulation, representing a 166% achievement of the set target. RATN has regularly published the newsletter as per set schedule. The initial publication schedule of 4 issues was subsequently reduced to allow time between issues for adequate preparations. Starting the plan period at around 2,500 copies, the newsletter has grown to 3,000 copies per issue. All MIs receive and it now also uploaded to the website. In 2006/2007 it was reported that 250 readers had accessed the newsletter electronically. The newsletter also contains articles written by the MIs and/or the alumni. Consumer satisfaction is being assessed through rapid surveys of the readers.	The capacity of RATN to prepare and publish the newsletter has been developed and thus the newsletter has been published with regularity.
	Communication and knowledge sharing	See under 1.2	See under 1.2	See under 1.2		See under 1.2	See under 1.2
	Advocacy through mass media and other fora	See under KRA/Result Statement 5.	See under KRA/Result Statement 5.	See under KRA/Result Statement 5.		See under KRA/Result Statement 5.	See under KRA/Result Statement 5.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Strategic Objective 3.4: Data management and web communication systems improved							
Assess internal and external communication systems	To strengthen the RATN communication infrastructure.	Poor electronic use of the RC by MIs.	Significant strides have been made to transform the Resource Centre and give it capability for electronic handling and transmission of information. Electronic use of the Resource Centre (RC) by MIs now accounts for 14% of total usage.	The limitation will remain for some time as the capacity of MIs, alumni and others to access the RC. But there is not much that RATN can do to build the capacity of MIs because the MIs are institutions on their own with other mandates and responsibilities.	The first four years of the plan were for RATN to establish its systems. The next plan must now focus on enhancing access to the resource base that has been established. New strategies will be required, e.g. establishing teleconferencing facilities at one MI in each country.		
Establish framework for Standard Operating Procedures for monitoring purposes	Update, monitor and maintain Website/Refine RATN databases	Strengthen monitoring of ICT activities by developing appropriate tools To develop a functional and effective monitoring system for ICT.	Poor monitoring of ICT activities To improve data management and web based communication	ICT M&E needs identified. TA services will be recruited to support development of M&E tools. This will be best addressed in the next Strategic Plan	There was not much progress in implementing this objective. As noted, it is proposed that technical assistance be sourced under the next Strategic Plan for monitoring of ICT activities.		
Digitise the Resource Centre	To improve data management and web based communication Increase information networks between and among MIs.	82% of MIs attend the first RATN ICT Workshop 82% of MIs participating in information networks	66% of MIs attended the third ICT workshop. 72% of the MIs attended the 4th ICT annual workshop. This marked an increase of 6% of attendance. An interactive RATN website has been piloted.	The annual ICT workshops have been well attended and have provided a means for RATN to become better known in the MIs. It is reported that after the workshops, there is increased interaction between the MI staff who will have attended.	The trained ICT staff of the MIs could be used to provide increased electronic interaction between RATN and the MIs and between the MIs themselves.		
Utilise email and web marketing communications more	To utilize all MI web-sites as a marketing tool for RATN.	No record of MIs with RATN web linkages on their website.	13% of MIs have links to RATN on their websites. These have placed their Course information with RATN on their websites. In November 2007, a workshop was held at Mananga to enhance MI staff capacity in media relations, marketing and brand development.	The number of MIs with links to the RATN website and who thus advertise RATN courses on their websites is very small. While RATN has said that those without the facility should be assisted, this has not yielded much result and the numbers of MIs with websites or links to the RATN website have not grown very much over the plan period. And yet each year of the SP, an ICT workshop has been held for staff of the Secretariat and MIs.	While part of the reason for limited marketing on the web is due to inadequate infrastructure on the part of MIs, the main reason for this might lie in the limited extent to which RATN can influence the direction and priorities of the MIs, taking into account that, for many of them, the membership of RATN is not necessarily their top priority.		

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
		To improve dissemination of information through electronic media.	No electronic version of RATN Newsletter produced	Electronic (PDF) version of the Newsletter now being mailed out to MIs and other partners		Strides have been made to make information available through the electronic media. Limitation is still the capacity of the MIs and alumni to uptake the electronically available information.	ICT capacity in the MIs is the biggest hindrance to the uptake of electronically availed information.
	To develop the capacity of MIs in ICT.			ICT Workshops held every year and attended by Secretariat and MI staff. (Nairobi, Kampala, Mananga) ICT staff and 2 MI representatives attended Association of Health Information Librarians in Africa (AHILA) Conference and UNAIDS Programme Coordination Board (PCB) meeting. ICT staff also attended ICT Expo on wireless communication and information backup systems. 8 ICT staff received capacity on ICT i.e. 2 in Mananga Centre and 6 at the Malawi Institute of Management		RATN has done a commendable job in developing the ICT capacity of MIs and the Board has been very supportive of the initiative. However, it would appear that this investment in ICT training has not led to significant improvements in the level	As RATN moves more and more into the digital era, it will be ext

Key Result Area 4: A robust and functioning monitoring and evaluation system				
Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04 Achieved at end Feb 08	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Strategic Objective 4.1: A monitoring and evaluation strategy developed by end of first year of the plan period				
Negotiate M&E system with stakeholders especially MIs	Consult all key stakeholders on M&E functions		Stakeholders consulted during development and approval of M&E Strategy.	MIs involved in identifying and articulating the M&E functions and in developing the strategy. Unfortunately, while being recognised as a key function in RATN, it was not possible to fill the M&E post during the plan period.(Except for a 6 month period)
Document the strategy	To develop and operationalise an M&E strategy	An ad-hoc M&E system exists. No M&E strategy in place	The first draft of the M&E strategy was developed in November 2004 and approved by the Board in February 2006.	M&E did not have the focus that it was claimed to have or deserved. The result was that only limited progress was achieved because of the organisational constraints.
Update M&E tools			RTMES developed and rolled out as the platform for monitoring of RATN training programmes.	The operational manual of RTMES provides the tools for use of the methodology. Capacity in RATN and the MIs has been built through the training programme that was held in November 2007.
Strategic Objective 4.2: A comprehensive plan for monitoring of training courses and impact developed				
Agree indicators of measure-ment to be used with stakeholders	Develop a comprehensive plan for monitoring of training courses.		RATN Training Monitoring and Evaluation System (RTMES) developed and finalised in March 2007, training of MIs in the system conducted in November and system rolled out in January 2008.	The Monitoring and Evaluation of RATN training programmes has been encountering problems in terms of MIs using and feeding back even the basic forms that were available before RTMES. Without a full time M&E officer, it remains to be seen what the response is going to be with RTMES and whether there will be greater compliance.
Clarify roles for the M&E system		See above	See above	See above

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Assessment Target – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Identify type of information or data to be collected		See above	See above	See above	See above	See above
Establish process for feedback and reflection		See above	See above	See above	See above	See above
Monitor and evaluate the training programmes	Establish quality support to programme thematic areas	See above	Quarterly programmatic reviews undertaken and progress reported to the Board.	Quarterly programmatic reviews carried out through the revised PMF and reports provided to the Board for discussion and approval .	While Quarterly reviews were made and submitted to the Board, the depth of coverage of the reviews was limited because of the failure to fill the post of M&E officer. There were also problems in getting the MIs to submit the course evaluations.	M&E capacity at the Secretariat continued to be inadequate during the plan period and there was thus limited review of the programmes themselves. As observed from the Annual Reports, information tended to focus on providing statistics on numbers trained and analysis of trends in course attendance.
Conduct MI Survey			Membership satisfaction surveys conducted in 2004, 2005 and 2006.	Members expressing general satisfaction with RATN in terms of its strategy and direction as well as programme delivery.	Use of membership satisfaction surveys a good tool for getting feedback on MI views and satisfaction.	
Conduct Client Survey			See under 2.2	See under 2.2	See under 2.2	See under 2.2
Follow up on alumni		See under 2.2	See under 2.2	See under 2.2	See under 2.2	See under 2.2
Strategic Objective 4.3: Functional and effective monitoring system for information, communication and technology						
Survey information and communication tools						
Establish Standard Operating Procedures for ICT		See under 3.4	See under 3.4	See under 3.4	See under 3.4	See under 3.4

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Assessment Target – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Assessment Target – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
	Submit Quarterly Reports to RATN Programmes Committee	See under 4.2	See under 4.2	See under 4.2	See under 4.2	See under 4.2
Strategic Objective 4.4: Quality M&E support to programme thematic areas established and functioning						
	Liaise with other Managers on level of MI activities		Administrative routine		Administrative routine	Administrative routine
	Conduct specific surveys		Various surveys conducted. eg. M&E Study Training Needs Assessments. Alumni Surveys. Survey on Accreditation. Gender Audit.		A significant number of surveys have been undertaken by RATN. It is commendable that, in most instances, in order to facilitate decision making, surveys/assessments were conducted. Such activities, however, can be time consuming and it is likely that some of these tasks impinged on the time of the Secretariat staff and diverted them from their core focuses.	The commissioning of surveys and assessments has enriched the decision making process in RATN. Where expertise was available within the Secretariat, the information was gathered by the staff and made available to the Board.
Strategic Objective 4.5: Effective monitoring of the strategic plan implementation						
	Submit Quarterly Progress Reports to RATN Board	Do quarterly programmatic reviews and prepare presentations to the Board	Quarterly programmatic reviews carried out and presented to the Board. Action points on Board resolutions followed up by Secretariat.		The Secretariat must be commended on the efficient manner in which it serviced the Board, compiling the Quarterly Reports for the Board meetings. They also compiled other documents, including schedules that tracked the implementation status of e.g. the MTR and Aide Memoirs submitted by the International Cooperating Partners.	Major demands were put on the Secretariat to service the Board and ICPs. While the reduction of the frequency of Board meetings from four to three must have come as a relief, the Secretariat was constantly being requested to come up with concept papers or to investigate and report.

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
		Effectively monitor the implementation of the strategic plan	Action points developed by RATN on a quarterly basis for reporting to the Board on their resolutions	The principal tool for monitoring implementation of the SP was the PMF. PMF reports were compiled and submitted to the Board as required. From time to time, schedules were also compiled to track implementation of certain recommendations such as those made in the MTR or by ICPs.		RATN did well to keep focus on implementation of the Strategic Plan. The PMF was an excellent tool for achieving this. However, the variances that occurred when the PMF was developed resulted in inconsistencies in terms of tracking all the Strategic Objectives and activities that had been set out in the Strategic Plan.	The Strategic Plan (2004–2008) was the very first that RATN had developed. Implementation of the plan was therefore bound to be a learning experience and it was recognised that the staff would need to be given the skills to undertake this task. This was done through the staff development plan that was prepared in 2006.
				Joint donor and board evaluation completed and disseminated to partners. Action Plan developed. Joint RATN-ICP Steering Committee set up.		While it was the primary responsibility of the Board to monitor the implementation of the SP, the plan was also being monitored by the ICPs through both formal evaluations as well as the annual PCMs.	The additional monitoring of plan implementation was important in ensuring that the ICPs were satisfied with what was being done and could continue to provide funding.
Conduct participatory programmatic reviews at the end of each year	Annual participatory programme reviews	Develop the capacity of MIs in M&E	No baseline data available on MI M&E activities.	Training for MI staff on M&E undertaken by HEARD in August 2007.		The GC provided a platform each year for the MIs to come together and review progress made. Development of RTMES and training of MI staff in the system further enhanced the capacity of the MIs in M&E. However, without a full time M&E officer, there was a limit to the amount of monitoring that could be done.	The coming together of MIs at the GC is an important institutional mechanism for regular programme reviews. The training of MI staff in M&E has enhanced their capacity for monitoring. However, capacity in the Secretariat in terms of staff for M&E remains unresolved.
	Follow up of courses and alumni	See under 2.2	See under 2.2	See under 2.2		See under 2.2	See under 2.2

Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
	Conduct reviews after third and fifth year			Mid Term Review conducted in 2006 and Final Evaluation in 2008.		RATN has fulfilled this objective by conducting the Mid-Term Review and the current review. The latter had to be done before the end of year five in order to provide the results to the ICPs for funding purposes. The recommendations arising from the MTR have by and large been implemented.	The conducting of external reviews is important in enabling RATN to obtain an external assessment of its performance. While there were problems with acceptance of the MTR report, many of the recommendations were deemed valid and have been implemented. The MTR also provided RATN a learning curve in terms of contracting and supervising consultants.
	Document and disseminate lessons			Abridged version of MTR prepared and disseminated to stakeholders. Results of surveys and other studies disseminated at GC. Website also used to disseminate results and lessons.		RATN has gathered a great deal of documentation through the various studies and surveys that it has undertaken over the plan period. The increasing use of electronic media, the enhancement of the website, the development of TRIC are all contributing to a wider dissemination of results and lessons learnt.	The capacity of RATN to document and disseminate experiences/lessons has been enhanced during the plan period. What remains a concern is the capacity of MIs to uptake the information made available and thus to benefit from these positive developments.

KRA/Outcome/Result Statement added after Strategic Plan Issued

Key Result Area 5: Regional economic communities and national policies for HIV/AIDS have capacity building and human resource components

Indicator 5.1: Increased budgetary allocations for training and other capacity development by RECS and National AIDS Authorities

Strategies	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 2004	Achieved at End Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment Balanced Scorecard	Assessment Institutional Framework
	To develop and implement an advocacy strategy with the specific goal of influencing the amounts allocated for HIV/AIDS training and capacity development activities.		No data on number of countries allocating funds for capacity development and training in their National HIV/AIDS budgets.	RATN Annual Reports noted that little progress was made in 2005/2006 and 2006/2007. However, USD 56,929 made available for work with RECS and NACCs in the Work Plan and Budget for FY 2007/2008.		Not much progress was achieved in the implementation of this objective until 2007/2008 when a budget allocation was made, contacts were initiated and several forums attended. The 2005/2006 Annual Report noted that no progress had been made in area of advocacy because there was lack of capacity at the Secretariat. In 2006/2007 a three year Advocacy Strategy was developed but the 2007/2008 reported that the targets of the strategy had not been achieved	Little progress was achieved in this area because RATN was not well equipped for such advocacy. With the staff resources available and the governance and administrative burdens on the shoulders of the Executive Director, it is not surprising that not much was done.
				RATN has attended SADC/EAC partnership forums. Strategic meetings held with NACCs in Kenya, Botswana, Zambia and Uganda. Meetings also held with SADC, COMESA and EAC HIV/AIDS Units to establish common interest areas. Study being undertaken on current levels of resources available at national level for training and capacity development.			

Indicator 5.2: RATN and MIs making substantive contributions to the formulation of policies by regularly participating in HIV/AIDS coordinating forums.

90% of MIs collaborating with their national HIV/AIDS bodies	No data on linkages between MIs and their national HIV/AIDS authorities. Secretariat made contacts with NACCs of Kenya, Zambia, Swaziland, Uganda, and Tanzania	80% MIs report linkages with their National AIDS authorities. Secretariat made contact with NACCs in 5 countries (50% of member countries). While the MIs may have reported having links with NACCs it is unlikely that this was at a level where they were trying to influence the policies of the NACCs.	The objective was only partially achieved. As reported, the Secretariat made contact with NACCs in 5 countries (50% of member countries). While the MIs may have reported having links with NACCs it is unlikely that this was at a level where they were trying to influence the policies of the MIs is not facilitative to the achievement of this objective.	There were organisational limitations in relation to implementing this strategy. Capacity to influence the policies at national level required constant dialogue between the NACCs and RATN. With MIs preoccupied with their own mandates, not much was done in this regard. The membership structure as well as level of participation of the MIs is not facilitative to the achievement of this objective.
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Strategy	Activities	SP Target	Baseline April 04	Achieved at end Feb 08	% of SP Target	Assessment – Balanced Scorecard	Assessment of Institutional Framework
		90% of MIs collaborating with regional and international HIV/AIDS bodies.	No data on linkages between MIs and regional and other international bodies.	12 (50%) of MIs report linkages		There are limitations in terms of the extent to which RATN can influence its members to do certain things and it is debatable if the links reported here were a result of RATN's influence or were already there even before these MIs became members.	The nature of the membership does not necessarily result in RATN being able to significantly influence the policies of its members as RATN activities in many of them are a tiny proportion of what they do
Indicator 5.3: RATN entering new collaborations with other regional bodies and networks							
	Influence policies of regional bodies on capacity development and training.	Ad-hoc linkages exist with SAFAIDS, SAT, SANASO, AFRICASO and NAP.	RATN participating in the Regional Advisory Group of the Regional Programme of IHA, SAFAIDS Regional Advisory Group and SADC/UNAIDS Partnership Forum for Southern Africa and EAC/UNAIDS Partnership Forum for Eastern Africa.	RATN invited to participate in SADC partnership forum on 4th April 2008		There is no data to show what the existing situation is in terms of the policies of the regional bodies on capacity development and training. It will be difficult to assess whether linkages that RATN makes with them are the ones that make the difference.	In the next Strategic Plan, RATN will have to re-strategise in relation to this objective. It may have to see if new strategies can work such as organising specific workshops for the regional bodies in order to try and influence their policy directions.
	Establish linkages with COMESA, GLIA, EAC, SADC and other inter-governmental organizations.	Meetings held with SADC, COMESA and EAC respective HIV/AIDS units. Advocacy Strategy now in place and to be prioritised and implemented in next FY2008/9				Linkages have been established with several of the organisations but concrete steps will come when the Advocacy Strategy is implemented in 2008/2009.	For significant progress to be made in this area, it will be essential to free the Executive Director from routine administrative tasks so that there can be focus on networking and linkages.

Appendix 6: Courses, Workshops and Seminars Attended by Secretariat Staff during the Plan Period

Description/title	Venue city/country	When?	No. of staff who attended
A. Training Workshops/Courses			
1. Finance for Non-Finance Managers	CCG	2004	1
2. Tax and Statutory Deduction Workshop	Nairobi	2005	1
3. Human Resource Development Programme	Manzini	2005	1
4. KAPC Counselling course (personal initiative) (1month)	KAPC	2005	1
5. Performance Management Workshop	Nairobi	2005	2
6. Corporate ICT Strategy	Nairobi	2005	1
7. VOIP Training	Nairobi	2006	1
8. Staff Exchange Programme (5days)	SAFAIDS, Harare	2005	1
9. ICT Workshops (annual)		2004/5/6/7	1
10. Sexuality, violence and HIV/AIDS workshop (1day)	Nairobi	2005	1
11. Team Building and Communications Skills	Mombasa	2005	3
12. Culture Change and Interpersonal Relationships		2005	2
13. Budget Formulation and Management	Mombasa	2006	1
14. Wireless Networking	Juja	2006	1
15. Training of Stigma Trainers	Zambia	2006	1
16. Monitoring and Evaluation	Durban	2006	1
17. Management Skills for Executive Assistants	Malawi	2006	1
18. Stress Management and Work-life Balance		2006	3
19. RATN-MI ICT Course	Malawi	2007	1
20. Communications and marketing strategy workshop (2 days)	Nairobi	2007	1
21. Driving for Survival and Anti Car jacking techniques	Nairobi	2007	2
22. Fire Marshall Training	Nairobi	2007	1
23. Knowledge Management Capacity Building Workshop	Nairobi	2007	1
24. Project Formulation and Management	ESAMI	2007	1
25. ICT Workshop	Mananga	2007	1
26. NGO Sustainability	Nakuru	2008	1
27. Summer School for On-line Learning	Ottawa	2008	1
B. Regional and International Meetings/Conferences			
1. KAPC Conferences	Nairobi (3X)	2005–2007	1
2. KAPC Conference	Nairobi	2007	1
3. AIDS Conference	Abuja	2005	1
4. E-Learning Conference	Addis Ababa	2006	1
5. AHILA Conference	Mombasa	2006	1
6. ICASA Conference	Nairobi	2006	1
7. Toronto International AIDS Conference	Toronto	2006	1
8. Counselling Conference	Nairobi	2006	2
9. ICT Development Expo	Nairobi	2007	1
10. SAHARA Conference	Kisumu	2007	5
11. UNAIDS PCB Meeting	Lusaka	2006	1

12. COMESA	Nairobi	2007	1
13. Gender Festival	Dar es Salaam	2007	2
14. 2nd APCA Palliative Care Conference	Nairobi	2007	1
15. Counselling Conference	Nairobi	2007	3
16. International Resource Mobilisation Workshop	Kuala Lumpur	2008	1
17. SADC/UNAIDS Partnership Forum	Johannesburg	2008	1
18. RAANGO	Johannesburg	2008	1
19. RAANGO	Johannesburg	2008	1

Appendix 7: Numbers of Training Courses Conducted each Year, by Course Clusters and Institutions, April 2004 to March 2008

Financial Year (April–March)	Courses run by MIs	Number of trainees		Total number trained	Number sponsored by RATN*	MIs running the courses
		F	M			
2004–2005	Counselling and Related Courses					
	1) Counsellors' Supervision	4	5	9	9	KAPC
	2) Counselling	45	26	71	30	KAPC, KARA, CONNECT
	3) ARV for Counsellors	10	7	17	8	Mildmay
	4) Child Counselling	20	4	24	8	TASO
	Care and Support Courses					
	5) Community Care for HIV	54	35	89	26	TASO, Chikankata, FACT
	6) Traditional Medicine & Alternative Therapies	4	12	16	5	THETA
	7) Children and their Carers	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	8	Chikankata
	8) Palliative Care	3	2	5	3	Mildmay
	Programme Management & Research Methods					
	9) Programme Management & Administration	30	44	74	15	ESAMI, MIM, Mananga
	10) Research Methodology	6	27	33	3	SOSMED
	11) Advanced Health Research Methods	9	7	16	15	CEU
	Advocacy, Gender and Policy Planning					
	12) Gender & HIV/AIDS	13	5	18	10	IDM
	13) Advocacy Skills	6	8	14	4	CAFS
	14) Gender Training on Policy & HIV/AIDS	13	9	22	5	TGNP
	15) Policy & Planning	26	24	50	3	HEARD
	Adult Education					
	16) Adult Education/TOT	3	4	7	5	ESAMI
	Other					
	17) Distance Learning: PMTCT Module	n.d.	n.d.	25	10	Univ. of KZN
Sub-Total		246	219	465	167	

Financial Year (April–March)	Courses run by MIs	Number of trainees		Total number trained	Number sponsored by RATN*	MIs running the courses
		F	M			
2005–2006	Counselling and Related Courses					
	1) Counsellors' Supervision	11	9	20	15	KAPC
	2) Counselling	69	30	99	35	KAPC, KARA, CONNECT
	3) ARV for Counsellors	4	6	10	5	Mildmay
	4) Child Counselling	16	7	23	5	TASO
	Care and Support Courses					
	5) Community Care for HIV	45	29	74	25	FACT, Chikankata, TASO
	6) Traditional Medicine & Alternative Therapies	5	7	12	5	THETA
	7) Children and their Carers	10	7	17	5	Chikankata
	8) Palliative Care	2	5	7	5	Mildmay
	Programme Management & Research Methods					
	9) Programme Management & Administration	30	33	63	15	ESAMI, Mananga, MIM
	10) Research Methodology	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	2	SOSMED
	11) Advanced Health Research Methods	7	7	14	10	CEU
	Advocacy, Gender, Policy Planning & BCC					
	12) Gender & HIV/AIDS	13	21	34	25	IDM
	13) Advocacy Skills	6	7	13	3	CAFS
	14) Gender Training on Policy & HIV/AIDS	20	12	32	5	TGNP
	15) Policy & Planning	20	19	39	3	HEARD
	16) Communication & Behaviour	15	17	32	7	MIM
	Adult Education					
	17) Adult Education/TOT	6	7	13	5	ESAMI
	Clinical Management					
	18) Laboratory Management	4	10	14	10	Mildmay
Sub-Total		283	233	516	180	

Financial Year (April–March)	Courses run by MIs	Number of trainees		Total number trained	Number sponsored by RATN*	MIs running the courses
		F	M			
2006–2007	Counselling and Related Courses					
	1) Counsellors' Supervision	6	4	10	10	KAPC
	2) Counselling	94	30	124	52	KAPC, CONNECT, KARA
	3) ARV for Counsellors	18	8	26	5	Mildmay
	4) Child Counselling	20	5	25	5	TASO
	5) Counselling for the Hearing Impaired	8	6	14	14	KAPC
	6) HIV Counselling & Testing	8	2	10	10	AIC
	Care and Support Courses					
	7) Community Care for HIV	44	34	78	25	FACT, Chikankata, TASO
	8) Traditional Medicine & Alternative Therapies	7	9	16	5	THETA
	9) Children and their Carers	10	8	18	5	Chikankata
	10) Palliative Care	12	9	21	5	Mildmay
	Programme Management & Research Methods					
	11) Programme Management & Administration	21	27	48	15	ESAMI, MIM, Mananga
	12) Research Methodology	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	3	SOSMED
	13) Advanced Health Research Methods	4	6	10	7	CEU
	Advocacy, Gender, Policy Planning & BCC					
	14) Advocacy Skills	9	2	11	2	CAFS
	15) Gender Training on Policy & HIV/AIDS	14	9	23	5	TGNP
	16) Policy & Planning	13	22	35	5	HEARD
	17) Communication & Behaviour	6	15	21	5	MIM
	Adult Education					
	18) Adult Education/TOT	9	2	11	5	ESAMI
	Clinical Management					
	19) ART Clinical Management	7	7	14	10	Mildmay/TASO
	20) Laboratory Management	5	12	17	10	Mildmay
Sub-Total		315	217	532	203	

Financial Year (April–March)	Courses run by MIs	Number of trainees		Total number trained	Number sponsored by RATN*	MIs running the courses
		F	M			
2007–2008	Counselling and Related Courses					
	1) Counsellors' Supervision	21	5	26	5	KAPC
	2) Counselling	104	36	140	30	KAPC, CONNECT, KARA, KHI
	3) ARV for Counsellors	13	5	18	5	Mildmay
	4) Child Counselling	13	5	18	5	TASO
	5) Counselling for the Hearing Impaired	7	5	12	10	KAPC
	6) HIV Counselling & Testing	3	5	8	8	AIC
	7) Counselling for the Visually Impaired	6	5	11	11	KAPC
	8) Counselling for Marginalized Groups	20	6	26	10	CONNECT
	Care and Support Courses					
	9) Community Care for HIV/AIDS	35	34	69	20	FACT, TASO, Chikankata
	10) Palliative Care	14	9	23	3.5	Mildmay
	Programme Management & Research Methods					
	11) Programme Management & Administration	22	29	51	9	ESAMI, MIM, Mananga
	12) Advanced Health Research Methods	3	6	9	8	CEU
	Advocacy, Gender, Policy Planning & BCC					
	13) Advocacy Skills	2	3	5	2	CAFS
	14) Gender Training on Policy & HIV/AIDS	16	5	21	20	TGNP
	15) Communication & Behaviour Change	13	23	36	5	MIM
	16) Gender & HIV/AIDS	20	5	25	5	IDM
	Adult Education					
	17) Adult Education/TOT	3	8	11	5	ESAMI
	Clinical Management					
	18) ART Clinical Management	13	14	27	8.5	TASO/Mildmay
	19) Laboratory Management	6	18	24	5.5	Mildmay, AMREF
Sub-Total		334	226	560	175.5	
Total Number Trained 2004–2008		1178	895	2073	725.5	

* On RATN scholarships

n.d. = No data given in the annual report

Sources: RATN Annual Reports, 2004–05, 2005–06, 2006–07, 2007–08 and RATN Statistics

Appendix 8: Comments and Recommendations on the Structure of the Next Strategic Plan

1. Introduction

The evaluation gave the consultants the opportunity to assess the structure and format of the current Strategic Plan. The manner in which the plan was structured presented some difficulties in efforts to assess what was intended to be achieved, what was achieved and how it was achieved. There are important lessons from this exercise that should be taken into consideration during the development of the next Strategic Plan. In the following paragraphs, the consultants outline some of these issues for consideration during the next process.

2. Collapsing of Strategic Objectives

In compiling the PMF, the indicators that were selected condensed some of the Strategic Objectives as they had been given in the Strategic Plan and therefore made it difficult to track each Strategic Objective from one document to the next and therefore over the plan period to assess implementation progress. For example, Key Result Area/Outcome 1 as given in the Strategic Plan had six clearly articulated Strategic Objectives. However, when the PMF was prepared, these were condensed into two Indicators only. The schedule below (see table below) shows the Strategic Objectives under Key Result Area 1 as extracted directly from the Strategic Plan (Section 4.3, p.20, and Section 4.4 “Operational Matrix/Change Chain”, pp.27–28). The table further illustrates the strategies and activities that were proposed for Strategic Objective 1.1.

Original strategic objectives, strategies and activities for SO 1.1 under the first KRA of the Strategic Plan

Key Result Area 1: A sustainable and functioning network of training institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa

Strategic Objective	Strategy	Activity
SO 1.1: Adequate financial and human resources mobilised to support RATN programmes	Mobilise the required resources	Solicit funding from new donors through marketing of RATN programmes
	Demonstrate proper use and accountability for all funds	Strengthen financial and accounting systems
		Improve capacity for financial management and reporting
	Prepare a Human Resource Policy and Plan	Ensure that appropriate staff are recruited and retrained and their skills are constantly improved
		Develop HR Manual and Strategy
		Develop Staff Development Plans and performance appraisal
		Identify skills gaps for achievement of the Strategic Plan
		Support attendance at short courses, seminars/workshops
		Provide on-the-job coaching and mentoring
SO 1.2: Effective RATN governance and operational Systems developed and functional		
SO 1.3: Functional linkages between MIs and other national and regional HIV/AIDS bodies established and maintained		

SO 1.4: Strategic Network meetings and fora that deliberate on mutual issues of concern in HIV/AIDS training and capacity development developed
SO 1.5: An inventory of training institutions and resource people in HIV/AIDS in the region developed
SO 1.6: Expanding network to other key strategic countries in the region

Results statements and indicators as shown in the PMF of February 2008

Result Statement	Indicators
1. A sustainable and functioning network of training institutions in Eastern and Southern Africa	1.1 Number of MIs in number of countries contributing own resources towards growth and strengthening of the network 1.2 Adequate financial and human resources mobilized and efficiently managed to support RATN programmes
2. Quality training and capacity development programmes that respond to the STI/HIV/AIDS training needs of the region	2.1 New courses and methodologies implemented to respond to identified needs and gaps 2.2 MI courses improved as a result of RATN capacity development initiatives. 2.3 Target groups reached through programme activities continuously expanding. 2.4 Alumni incorporate new skills into their work plans
3. RATN is recognized as an effective source of information on quality STD/HIV/AIDS training and capacity enhancement in	3.1 RATN responds to increased demand for information and services. 3.2 Increased utilization and dissemination of RATN information by MIs 3.3 Information on training and CD easily available and accessible to MIs, alumni, collaborating agencies and affiliated institutions
4. Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and national policies for HIV/AIDS have capacity building and human resource components	4.1 Increased budgetary allocations for training and other capacity development by RECS and National AIDS Authorities 4.2 RATN and MIs making substantive contributions to the formulation of policies by regularly participating in HIV/AIDS coordinating forums. 4.3 RATN entering new collaborations with other regional bodies and networks
5. RATN responds to findings from monitoring, programme reviews and evaluations	5.1 A robust and functioning monitoring and evaluation system in place 5.2 Formulation and follow-up of action points by RATN to the findings of programme monitoring, reviews and evaluations 5.3 All MIs effectively managing own monitoring systems.

The table above shows the Result Statements and Indicators as shown in the PMF of 29 February 2008, with Result Statement 1 (i.e. KRA 1 in the previous chart) now condensed to carry only two Indicators in place of the previous six Strategic Objectives. While the rationale that has been given for this is understandable (that there were too many Strategic Objectives to track) it, however, made it difficult during the evaluation to directly track the attainment of each Strategic Objective. It also meant that no baseline information was collected for the original six Strategic Objectives.

The divergence between the original plan and the PMF also resulted in several changes being made and, perhaps, in the shifting/re-alignment/deletion of some targets. As an example, the PMF of March 2005 has, under the second Outcome, an Indicator (2.2) which states: “Increase over baseline of REPEAT clients seeking training”. A target increase of 30% was then stated. With time, this indicator was removed from the PMF and did not appear anywhere thereafter. As planning gets under way for the next Strategic Plan, the important lesson is to ensure that the targets and indicators are well thought out and framed from the outset so that they do not need to be altered along the way.

3 The Plan Period

The Strategic Plan was for a five-year period, meaning it would start in FY 2004/2005 and end in FY 2008/2009. However, in the PMF, many of the targets appear to have been set for the end of FY 2007/2008. For instance, in respect of MI courses being improved (Indicator 2.2), the PMF report of 29 February 2008 gives the plan target as “30% increase by March 31, 2008”. Likewise, the plan target for users of the Resource Centre (Indicator 3.1) is set as “30% increase by March 31, 2008”. It is unclear whether this was deliberate or whether it was an error. If it was deliberate, it had the effect of reducing the target date for achievement by one year. It would also mean that RATN has been working for attainment of the targets one year before the end of the Strategic Plan period.

4 Structure/Format of the Strategic Plan

In a strategic plan, there should be a clear progression from the Key Result Area or Outcome, to the Strategic Objectives, to the Strategies to be used to achieve the strategic objectives and finally the Activities to be carried out in implementing the strategies. In the Strategic Plan 2004–2008, this progression is not consistent throughout. Equally, the activities in the Operational Matrix/Change Chain are not directly aligned to what is in Chapter 4, “The Plan” section. There are also several strategies that were articulated in the Strategic Plan but which were not followed by specific activities to be carried out.

In the next Strategic Plan and to facilitate plan implementation and accountability, it is recommended that this linkage and progression, from Key Result Area to Strategic Objective, to Strategy and finally to Activity be fully articulated.

5 Overlaps in Activities under Strategic Objectives

In the current plan, there are some overlaps in terms of activities as between strategic objectives and departmental responsibilities. There are also cases in the PMF where the Strategic Plan target does not agree with the status explanation. In the PMF status report of 29 February 2008, under 5.1, the strategic plan target which states: “Develop a comprehensive plan for monitoring of training courses”, is followed under the status report section by an account of the MTR reporting and discussion rather than explaining the progress towards developing the comprehensive plan for monitoring courses.

6 Incomplete Objectives and Strategies

There are certain Strategic Objectives that are not, in themselves, complete. One such example is the following Strategic Objective under the second KRA: “Improved training programmes developed”. The question that can then be asked is: “What happens after the programmes have been developed”? Surely the intention was to develop and “DELIVER” the training programmes. There are several other instances of such incomplete objectives.

There are also several instances when the Strategies proposed are incomplete and therefore make it impossible to achieve the stated Strategic Objective. Examples are the Strategies outlined for the Strategic Objectives under fourth KRA. There are five strategic objectives and five strategies. However, close scrutiny of the strategies shows that they relate to only one or, at most, two of the strategic objectives. It is recommended that for the next strategic plan, there be a clear relationship between the Strategic Objectives and the Strategies to be used to achieve those objectives.

7 Quality of Strategic Objectives

There are two main issues to note about the quality of the strategic objectives that were set in the Strategic Plan 2004–2008.

- It is good to note that most of the strategic objectives are expressed as the *Result* to be achieved, e.g. “A comprehensive plan for the monitoring of training courses and impact developed”. However, some are not as clearly expressed, e.g. “Expanding network to other key strategic objectives”.
- Most of the objectives are not “*SMART*” i.e. *Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Result-oriented and Time-bound*. As a consequence, it is now difficult to measure whether the objective was achieved or not. For instance, how does one measure if and when:
 - “Adequate” financial and human resources had been mobilised;
 - “Improved” relevant training programmes had been developed;
 - “Effective” linkages had established between the RATN Resource Centre and the resource centres of other MIs

While it is accepted that targets were subsequently identified for the plan, this was after the fact rather than as part of the planning process. For the next strategic plan, it is recommended that the “*SMART*” concept be used to develop the strategic objectives so that their achievement can be measured with more precision at the end of the plan period. Using this concept also ensures that there is no doubt as to what is intended to be achieved.

The above issue is also reflected in the Strategic Plan Targets that were subsequently developed. Examples of targets that are bound to be difficult to assess achievement are:

- “To respond to requests for Facilitator Support”
- “To reach marginalised populations with training”.

It is important that strategic plan targets are precise and thus, it is recommended that in the next Strategic Plan, the targets also conform to the “*SMART*” principle.

8 Plan Targets and Baseline Data

There are cases where it is difficult to interpret the Strategic Plan targets in relation to the baseline data given. As an example, there was a target of 30% increase by March 31, 2008 in the numbers of MI trainers trained. The baseline was given as “RATN cumulatively supports 180 (74M, 106F) trainers and managers for in-service training. 54 (19M, 35F) trainers and managers trained in FY2003/2004.” The PFM status report for 29 February 2008 then states “94 (37M, 57F) trainers trained since April 2006, a 52% increase over baseline”. It is difficult to determine exactly what was meant to be achieved per year and over the entire plan period. The Annual Report of 2005/2006 reported that 26 trainers and managers had been trained, which represented an “11% increase from the baseline”.

To avoid such ambiguities in the next Strategic Plan, it will be essential to make the relationship between the target and the baseline data as clear as possible so that it will be easier to assess the achievement of the targets.

Appendix 9: Recommendations from the Evaluation and Beneficiary Survey (2005) and Implementation Actions Taken

Recommendations	Actions taken and status as at July 2008
3.1 RATN as an Efficient, Self-governing NGO	
3.1.1 The RATN Board and Governing Council	
1) The Board should look into possibilities of reducing the frequency of meetings and, where possible, combine them with other meetings to reduce travel costs. Depending on availability of reliable telephone lines, it would be ideal to hold tele-conferences or open chats through the internet.	Scheduled Board meetings have been reduced to three per year – see section 3.2.2.3 of this report. At the General Council meeting in June 2008, size of the Board was reduced from 12 to 9 members which will reduce costs of meetings
2) The efficiency of the Board meetings and the preceding committee meetings should be critically analysed.	The Board decided to maintain the status quo because the Executive Director needed to attend the committee meetings as well in order to be fully acquainted with the deliberations and decisions and therefore, be accountable for their implementations
3) During a Board meeting, a routine session on monitoring of progress with respect to RATN's Strategic Plan should be built in.	Monitoring of the Strategic Plan has been a regular item on the agenda of each Board meeting – see section 3.5.1 of this report
4) If decisions need to be taken in the interim between meetings, they should be dealt with through email as much as possible to reduce travel costs. The money freed from board meeting costs should be shifted to other areas.	The Board and the Secretariat have endeavoured to do this as reflected in the minutes of the Board reporting on decisions taken after consultations via email
3.1.2 The RATN Secretariat	
1) A Board decision called for strengthening of M&E needs within RATN. The paper prepared by I-TECH on M&E of training in August 2003 presented a very valuable basis for this concept.	Appointment of an M&E Officer did not take place because of lack of funds to support the position. M&E functions were assigned to the Network Development Manager – see section 3.2.1.2 of this report RTMES has been developed to monitor training and is now being rolled out to MIs – see section 3.5.2
2) Once an M&E Officer is available for the RATN Secretariat, care must be taken that capacity building of Secretariat and MI staff in data management and M&E steps and procedures are an integral part of the person's job. Responsibility for daily information management must remain with the responsible officers and should not be delegated to an M&E specialist.	See above. Capacity development for MI staff as well as Training Coordinators has been on-going – see section 3.3.5. Training programmes data management has remained with the Training Department
3) The fact that RATN subsidises the courses it initiates and also sponsors participants has seen the Secretariat sometimes being mistaken for being a donor. In its interactions with the MIs, Secretariat staff should take care to counteract this impression and to reinforce the fact that the network is dependent on contributions from all its parts.	The perception still prevails. One of the perceived benefits of belonging to the Network is financial – see section 3.2.3.2 of this report
3.2 RATN as an Active Regional Network	
1) Concerted efforts should be made to shift funds or fund-raise in favour of essential networking activities such as building relations with national and regional bodies, implementation of national networking activities involving RATN alumni, membership appraisals, trainers' meetings, etc.	Fund-raising and diversification of RATN's funding base still requires much improvement – see section 3.2.1.1 Contacts have been made to build relationships with national and regional bodies, but more still needs to be done to raise RATN's influence and visibility – see sections 3.2.3.3 and 3.4.1

Recommendations	Actions taken and status as at July 2008
2) RATN should consider the benefit of forming a sub-network of other regional organisations, some of which are already involved in RATN (SAfAIDS, SAT) and others which are not yet involved (e.g. REPSSI)	Not done yet
3) There seems to be insufficient clarity concerning the added benefit of stronger cooperation with national or regional bodies. Some of the national HIV/AIDS coordination bodies (e.g. in Zambia or South Africa), which would be the target of such efforts have not heard about RATN. Written information on RATN (for instance the newsletter) might reach the wrong level within the organisations. Personal introduction might be needed to elaborate possibilities for cooperation. Before investing much time into building up contacts, financial capabilities and willingness of such bodies need to be researched.	See above – RATN's visibility remains low and key officials in regional bodies are more likely to be aware of individual MIs than RATN. RATN has committed to a consultancy to assess financial allocations made by regional bodies towards capacity development, but study not yet conducted.
Joint ventures and cooperation between MIs (e.g. joint proposal writing, joint course development, personnel exchange, collegial mentoring, etc) should be encouraged whenever possible. Such cooperation could result in synergy effects which would represent a definite comparative advantage of being a member in RATN	Some trainer/facilitator exchange between MIs has taken place, but more still needs to be done. Joint course development and review is taking place through Experts Committees, Task Forces and the Training Reference Group.

3.3 RATN and Capacity Building for Member Institutions

3.3.1 Training and Development

1) Training needs assessment should be considered an on-going process and not something that is only done once in a while. Monitoring emerging gaps or changes must be a routine for RATN. This must be a standard item on the Programmes Committee meetings' agenda and RATN Secretariat should prompt MIs to feed back current trends at least twice a year.	Formal TNAs have turned out to be expensive. Trend now is to identify training gaps through less formal means such as during meetings of training experts, feedback from trainees via course evaluation reports, and through the Training Reference group Only one TNA was conducted during the plan period against the plan target of once every two years – see section 3.3.2
2) For certification purposes, entry level to courses would have to be proven and systematic assessment after course completion is necessary. This issue, however, is closely linked with the on-going discussion on accreditation of RATN courses.	Some MIs have made progress on accreditation, others not. The nature of training programmes run by MIs makes accreditation with universities problematic – see section 3.3.5
3) Quality control of training courses and training materials is one of the most central services RATN should offer. The product with which RATN is most directly identified are the training courses it helps develop and it sponsors.	Quality control being done through course review meetings. However, regularity of the reviews needs to be consistent across all the courses – see sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.5
4) RATN should develop and offer more in-depth training on ARV and ART, particularly aspects of drug administration, drug monitoring, side-effects, etc. This training should be relevant not only for counsellors but also for doctors. Specific training for laboratory technicians or ART monitoring should be pursued pro-actively as this will represent one of the very pressing training markets in HIV/AIDS	These are among the new courses that have been introduced during the past few years – see Appendix 4 for the range of courses developed and being offered. Alumni background data shows that trainees have included doctors, laboratory technicians as well as nursing staff.
5) RATN should continue to encourage and support alternative cost-effective training models such as: mobile training, facilitator exchanges or new models which combine a presence/distance learning mode.	Distance or e-learning being developed in partnership with the University of Manitoba. Facilitator exchange has taken place between some of the MIs, but more could be done. Little progress has been made with mobile training teams.

Recommendations	Actions taken and status as at July 2008
3.3.2 Capacity Building for MIs	
RATN should clearly define its capacity development mandate, develop and ratify a capacity building strategy and communicate it to its MIs. An important element in this is a definition of MIs' ICT development. Related to this are efforts at raising necessary funds for the capacity development measures and/or representing the costs adequately in the yearly budget. Building up the capacity among the MIs through their own communication and exchange needs to be reinforced.	ICT capability within MIs is variable and still weak in some in terms of hardware and internet access – see sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3. Board decided that it cannot support MIs with hardware, but can provide technical support. Training of ICT staff has taken place – see section 3.3.5
3.3.3 Innovations Fund	
1) RATN should try to mobilise money for an Innovations Fund out of which new and innovative ideas by course alumni could be sponsored.	Nothing has happened on the Innovations Fund
3.4 RATN as an Effective Regional Source of Information	
3.4.1 Capacity Building in ICT	
1) It has been noted that the MIs' levels of Information Technology (IT) are diverse. However, since a minimum infrastructure and knowledge base in this area is a pre-requisite for networking, RATN should consider whether it wants to assist certain MIs in upgrading email and website facilities (either in terms of hardware, software or knowledge), so that these can actually become actively communicating network members.	See above under 3.3.2: Capacity Building for MIs
2) RATN should offer more in-depth MI staff capacity building on IT, particularly website design. Since the target group for this particular training are internet-literate people, the possibility of including distance-learning modules into this training should be explored.	See above under 3.3.2: Capacity Building for MIs
3.4.2 The Resource Centre	
1) The RATN RC should clearly shift its objective from building up a physical library in Nairobi to providing up-to-date information in digital form as a matter of priority.	Most acquisitions have been digitised and made available through the internet. A Resource Centre Strategy paper was prepared to guide developments – see section 3.4.4
2) The RATN RC's role of assisting MIs in developing their own RCs should be strengthened. Funds for this should be made available to the RC.	A 4-week training workshop was organised for Resource Centre staff of the MIs on strategic management of libraries and information resource centres during 2007 – see section 3.3.5
3) The RC should strengthen and formalise its ties with other RCs in other regions (e.g. SFAIDS) and systematically distribute RATN material through their distribution network and vice versa. This would increase awareness for all parties involved.	Employees of resource centres in the MIs reported that they receive regular updates from the RATN Resource Centre. This is done electronically by email, etc
4) The strategic paper on the RC which, in its second part, contains a six-step plan for future development is well thought out and a point in the right direction. The RATN Secretariat should immediately operationalise the ideas in the paper, break them down to yearly activities, calculate the costs and present realistic work packages to the Board for further discussion.	This has been done – see section 3.4.4 on recent developments within the Resource Centre. Funding is being provided under the annual plan and budget.

Recommendations	Actions taken and status as at July 2008
3.4.3 The RATN Newsletter	
1) Offering alumni to enter the newsletter distribution list (be it by mail or electronically) should be routine procedure for MIs during a RATN-sponsored course. To facilitate this, RATN should ensure that sufficient copies of the newsletter are sent out to the respective MI before the beginning of the course.	Enrolment of alumni onto the mailing list remains low and distribution of the newsletter beyond the MIs needs to be up-scaled – see section 3.4.2
2) The Secretariat should discuss guidelines for use of the RATN newsletter by the MIs and publicise those to all MIs.	
3.4.4 Information Management/Database	
1) RATN should continue to capitalise on the current trend of accessing information in electronic form. Its website should be updated continuously, hits/visits monitored and analysed and efforts made to put RATN website links into strategic places not only on its MIs' and AIs' websites, but also on other sites dealing with HIV/AIDS training and capacity building.	MIs still need to link their web-sites to the RATN web-site – see section 3.4.3 Development of TRIC has progressed and is now in the pilot phase – see section 3.2.3.4 Visits to the RATN web-site are monitored and reported to the Board and in the annual report.
2) With the help of the newly adapted databases, information management within RATN should be intensified in order to stay abreast of developments.	Training statistics are being captured and reported by the Training Department working together with the Database Administrator – see Appendix 4 and section 3.3.1 The development of RTMES should assist in data capture and information management and reporting, provided MIs fully cooperate – see section 3.5.2
3) The websites for RATN and MIs be used creatively to promote the network, e.g. the history and development of the network as well as services.	Quality of web-sites is variable. A majority do not mention RATN and have links to the RATN web-site and therefore are not serving to promote the Network – see 3.4.3
4) A database on resources in HIV/AIDS training (experts, trainers, resource persons, consultants and training materials) should be compiled by RATN and shared with other RCs in the regions.	This is being done under TRIC which is now in the pilot phase – see section 3.2.3.4
3.5 RATN's Impact on Advocating Increased Capacity Building	
1) In order to provide a clear direction for RATN, a draft advocacy strategy should be elaborated, discussed with the RATN Board, finalised and distributed to all RATN MIs and AIs.	An Advocacy Strategy paper was developed in 2006. However, activities and targets set in the paper have not been met – see section 3.4.6
2) The strategy should also integrate advocacy as an activity that would effect changes outside of the RATN network, be it national or regional policy making bodies.	See above
3) In an attempt to build up closer links and cooperation with national/regional bodies, it is recommended to identify one or two individuals within each organisation who take an interest in RATN and who could be used as catalysts for RATN into their respective organisation.	See above
4) As a matter of priority, work on interventions of regional/national bodies and intellectual resources in the region should be completed. This represents an important pre-requisite for effective networking and advocacy work	See above
3.6 RATN and Marketing of its Services	
1) RATN should make concerted efforts to curve its own niche and further define where its real comparative advantage lies (e.g. networking and skills development).	A marketing and communication strategy has been developed and was submitted to RATN in February 2008 for consideration by the Board – see section 3.4.5

Recommendations	Actions taken and status as at July 2008
2) RATN should reinforce its efforts to fully utilise the marketing channels which are open to it. For instance, it should distribute its newsletter widely and in a more targeted way, be it to its alumni or to other national/regional organisations. In the latter case, RATN should take care to ensure that its newsletter reaches the right persons at the right levels.	The possible options are being considered under the recently completed marketing and communication strategy – see above See also section 3.4.2 on the newsletter and its distribution
3) Increased use of mass media (especially newspapers) for promotion/marketing purposes should be discussed. Advertising costs should be calculated, cost/benefit estimates made and a decision reached as to what extent the mass media can be used for marketing purposes. Direct marketing by attending public round-table discussions or broadcast/TV shows and talks could be another channel for marketing and would be less expensive.	Some steps have been taken to publicise RATN through the media, e.g. displays at exhibitions and conferences. But most MIs said they do not advertise their courses in the media because the number of applications they receive usually exceed the places available anyway – see section 3.4.5
4) A standard RATN presentation (power point slides) should be developed and made available to all MIs (may be even publicised on the website). An agreement should be reached with all MIs who host RATN-sponsored courses that this presentation will form an integral part of the course schedule.	The powerpoint presentation was prepared and distributed to MIs. But its use during training courses was found to be variable – some alumni said they had been exposed to it while others had not.

3.7 RATN's Financial Independence

3.7.1 Financial Sustainability of the Network

1) From the evaluators' point of view, on the occasion of the next Partners' Consultative Meeting in July 2005, present funding partners should be asked to specify their future funding position towards RATN after the present contracts expire. This would provide RATN with a clearer understanding of the funding necessities.	Current commitments go beyond 2008/2009, but this is not unconditional – see section 3.2.1.1
2) RATN should seek assistance in devising a fund-raising strategy (time scope of at least three years) that would help it put the recommendations into practice. This strategy should be prepared as soon as possible (possibly before the next Board meeting), be presented then and implemented if approved by the Board. It should be reviewed again and discussed at the next Board meeting after its presentation.	Some Board members and Secretariat staff have recently attended training workshops on fund-raising and resource mobilisation – see section 3.2.1.1 A fund raising strategy has recently been developed and will be presented to the Board in September 2008
3) RATN should concentrate on concerted efforts toward donor diversification.	see above
4) RATN should pool consultants and potential consultancy topics from its MIs and offer regional consultancy as a means of generating income. MIs need to link up with RATN at regional level to be able to access regional funds for capacity.	Some work has been done to develop the consultancy business jointly with the MIs and a few contracts have been won. But income from consultancies still remains very low relative to the total annual budget – see 3.2.1.1
5) Consideration shall be made on selling training manuals and other intellectual property rights could be used as an income generating possibility.	This has not been done to date
6) The RATN Secretariat should inform MIs regularly about what the membership fee is used for or which services it covers.	This is being done to some extent and non-paid MI cannot vote at the annual General Council meetings, although they can attend and participate in discussions. Membership fees account for a small proportion of total income – see section 3.2.1.1

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