What are regional SADC AI or data protection standards to align with

Regional SADC (Southern African Development Community) standards for AI and data protection are centered around the SADC Model Law on Data Protection and evolving soft-law instruments on AI ethics and governance.

SADC Model Law on Data Protection (2013)

- **Scope:** Applies to both manual and automated processing of personal data by public and private controllers permanently established in a member state. [1] [2]

- **Core Principles:**
  - Lawfulness, fairness, and transparency of processing
  - Purpose limitation (data must be collected for explicit, legitimate purposes)
  - Data minimization and accuracy
  - Security and confidentiality safeguards
  - Accountability of the data controller

- **Controller Obligations:**
  - Notification to and authorization from a national Data Protection Authority (DPA) for key processing activities
  - Designation of a representative in member states for certain cross-border activities
  - Maintenance of records/logs and cooperation with DPA. [2] [1]

- **Data Subject Rights:**
  - Access, rectification, deletion, temporary limitation of processing, and the right to object

- **Limits on Automated Decisions:** Includes restrictions and safeguards around the use of automated processing for significant decisions. [3] [1]

- **Cross-Border Transfers:**
  - Prohibited to countries (including SADC members) that have not adopted the Model Law unless the recipient ensures an adequate level of data protection. [2]

- **Enforcement:**
  - Requires an independent protection authority, with powers for warnings, fines, notices, and legal recourse for data subjects. [1] [2]

Regional Soft-Law and Policy Instruments

- **Windhoek Statement on Artificial Intelligence (2022):**
  - Signed by SADC ministers, this encourages capacity building, ethical AI, gender-inclusive data and research, investment in infrastructure, and strong cross-border and public-private partnerships. [4]

- **No Unified SADC AI Law:**
  - Most countries (except South Africa's draft AI policy) handle AI mainly through data governance and sectoral policies. The SADC Model Law is the key harmonization reference for cross-border data compliance and fundamental rights. [5] [4]

- **Alignment with Continental Efforts:**
  - SADC's principles and standards are in line with the African Union's Continental Strategy for AI, which emphasizes fairness, accountability, explainability, and social benefit in AI governance. [6]

Alignment Recommendations

For AI/data projects in Mauritius or Southern Africa:

- Explicitly map compliance to the SADC Model Law's core principles and data subject rights.
- Implement data governance/process documentation, privacy by design, clear opt-outs for automated decisions, and secure cross-border data flows only to countries with "adequate" protections. [3] [1] [2]
- Refer to the Windhoek Statement and AU/UNESCO guidelines for developing AI ethics codes and sector policies. [7] [4] [6]

These standards ensure that any compliance plan for Mauritius will also be regionally interoperable and meet best practices for Southern Africa.

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