

Draft



SADC TFCA NETWORK STRUCTURE

June 2014

1. Background

The SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement (1999) defines a transfrontier conservation area (TFCA) as “the area or component of a large ecological region that straddles the boundaries of two or more countries encompassing one or more protected areas as well as multiple use areas” and commits SADC Member States “to promote the conservation of shared wildlife resources through the establishment of TFCAs” (Article 4, objective 2f).

TFCAs also complement the goal of the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) which is to deepen regional integration in SADC. The SADC RISDP was adopted and approved by the SADC Council of Ministers in August 2003 and was developed for the period 2005-2020 to provide strategic direction to SADC programmes, projects and activities. It lists conservation, management and use of natural resources as a major component of a key priority intervention area, “environment and sustainable development” and acknowledges that transboundary conservation of natural resources is an existing challenge for the realisation of SADC policies and strategies on environment and land management. As such, TFCAs are considered a vehicle to ensure equitable and sustainable use of the environment and natural resources.

There are currently eighteen (18) existing and potential, terrestrial and marine TFCAs in SADC at different stages of development. These TFCAs are not developing uniformly across the region. Instead, they differ considerably in spatial parameters, the mix of land use categories, the level of cooperation between participating countries, and the extent of participation of locally affected communities. In order to promote the establishment and development of TFCAs as a conservation and development model across the region, a SADC TFCA Programme was approved in October 2013 by the SADC Ministers of Environment. The vision of the Programme is:

“SADC, a model of community centred, regionally integrated and sustainably managed network of world class transfrontier conservation areas.”

The Programme has the following mission:

“A functional and integrated network of transfrontier conservation areas where shared natural resources are sustainably co-managed and conserved to foster economic and social development, tourism, and regional integration for the benefit of those living within and around TFCAs and mankind at large.”

The Programme has seven key component areas with specific objectives, activities and outputs to be carried out at the regional, sub-regional and national levels to address some of the gaps identified by the SADC Member States in the establishment and development of TFCAs. These component areas are:

- Component 1: Advocacy and Harmonisation
- Component 2: Enhancement of Financing Mechanisms for TFCAs
- Component 3: Capacity Building for TFCA Stakeholders
- Component 4: Establishment of Data and Knowledge Management Systems
- Component 5: Enhancement of Local Livelihoods
- Component 6: Reducing Vulnerability of Ecosystems and People to the Effects of Climate Change

- Component 7: Development of TFCAs into Marketable Regional Tourism Products.

2. The SADC TFCA Network

The SADC TFCA Programme envisions the establishment of an information exchange, learning and innovation network which would facilitate the gathering, processing and dissemination of TFCA related information to TFCA stakeholders through Component 4. Key relevant activities required to achieve the stated outputs and objectives of this component as listed in the Programme include to:

- Document and disseminate innovative approaches in TFCA development and management
- Establish a central database on TFCAs
- Create a TFCA portal to link existing TFCA web-pages and other documentation

These activities and others would allow greater learning to take place within and between TFCAs and for good practices and important lessons to be drawn out from existing TFCAs, documented and shared across the region.

In response to this programme and the needs of TFCA practitioners within the SADC region, at an Inception Workshop held in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2013, a **SADC TFCA Network** was established by Member States through a participatory process of investigation, analysis and discussion. The ensuing sections of this document describe the main characteristics of the SADC TFCA Network.

2.1. Relevant Themes in TFCA Development

The SADC Member States identified the following themes as being the most relevant to TFCA development in the region:

- i. Governance
- ii. Legal provision
- iii. Policy harmonisation
- iv. Cross border law enforcement
- v. Conservation management
- vi. Tourism development
- vii. Community involvement
- viii. Benefit sharing
- ix. Sustainable financing
- x. Research
- xi. Monitoring and Evaluation

The SADC Member States acknowledge that establishing mutual forms of cooperation amongst TFCA practitioners presents opportunities which can positively contribute to the development of TFCAs in these thematic areas. Member States also recognise that there are several **common challenges** which hinder TFCA development which can be addressed by capitalising on the opportunities afforded by mutual cooperation. Key common challenges to TFCA development include:

- i. Developing a cross sectoral approach to TFCA development - nationally and regionally

- ii. Effective governance of TFCAs at the level of
 - Policies & legislation
 - Institutions
- iii. Establishing sustainable financing mechanisms for TFCAs
- iv. Enhancing community benefits and capacity development
- v. Demonstrating the value of TFCAs at the local, national and regional levels

2.2. Purpose of the SADC TFCA Network

To overcome TFCA challenges through shared learning, knowledge management and collaboration

2.3. Functions of the SADC TFCA Network

Drawing from the purpose, the functions of the SADC TFCA Network can be described as follows:

- i. Information exchange:**
 - o Sharing experiences within and across TFCAs
 - o Conducting field visits to enhance understanding of local contexts
- ii. Joint learning and knowledge management:**
 - o Developing a portal as a platform for joint learning, information exchange and knowledge management for SADC TFCA Network members
 - o Developing a regional repository of TFCA related information
 - o Innovation and idea testing through joint experimentation and documentation
 - o Knowledge product development
 - o Enabling peer review and feedback
- iii. Resource mobilisation**
- iv. Strengthening collaboration and relationships:**
 - o Conducting face to face meetings
 - o Developing linkages with TFCA stakeholder groups
 - o Facilitating empowerment at the level of the TFCA

2.4. Guiding principles

In order to effectively perform its functions and fulfil its purpose, SADC TFCA Network members are guided by the following principles:

- i. The network is only one tool being used to achieve a broader goal as stated in the SADC TFCA Programme
- ii. Active engagement, consistency and commitment to the SADC TFCA Network
- iii. Respect for the sovereignty, structures and systems of the SADC Member States
- iv. Respect for the systems and procedures within SADC
- v. Advocacy for peace, security and regional integration through TFCA development

- vi. Benefits of TFCAs should ultimately be accrued to the local communities living within and around TFCAs
- vii. Development of TFCAs as a *multi-sectoral, participatory* process
- viii. Engagement of relevant stakeholder groups without bias or prejudice
- ix. Deliberation and implementation with a spirit of equality, equity, collaboration, cooperation, mutual respect, accountability and transparency
- x. Commitment to implementation of mutually agreed work plans and activities
- xi. Ensuring that ownership of the SADC TFCA Network remains with and is led at all times by the Member States
- xii. Amicable resolution of disputes and disagreements
- xiii. Maintenance of a culture of giving and receiving

3. Organisational structure

3.1 Steering Committee

A Steering Committee shall be responsible for providing overall leadership to the SADC TFCA Network and shall act on decisions emanating from the Network's membership. It shall also be responsible for:

- Setting priorities and determining the strategic direction for the SADC TFCA Network;
- Prioritising linkages to other stakeholder groups;
- Leading by example in their active engagement within the SADC TFCA Network
- Attending periodic face-to-face meetings of the SADC TFCA Network
- Considering requests for membership
- Facilitating the resolution of any disputes amongst members of the SADC TFCA Network
- Consideration of calls for revocation of membership based on sound reasoning
- Reporting to and advising the SADC Technical Committee on Wildlife on key recommendations and activities of the SADC TFCA Network.

Each SADC Member State shall nominate one official to the Steering Committee. The SADC Secretariat will play the role of the Secretariat of the SADC TFCA Network. The Steering Committee shall be led by a Chairperson and two Deputy Chairpersons as per SADC Troika with the Chairperson changing yearly. However consistency shall be maintained within the leadership as two of the three individuals shall serve two years concurrently:

- Chairperson of Steering Committee: Current Chair of SADC
- Deputy Chairperson of Steering Committee: Deputy Chair of SADC
- Deputy Chairperson of Steering Committee: Immediate previous Chair of SADC

The Steering Committee shall hold face-to-face meetings at least once a year and preferably consecutively to SADC TFCA Network meetings. It shall otherwise strive to conduct its affairs online using any ICT tools at its disposal.

3.2 Other structures

It shall be the prerogative of the Steering Committee to constitute other structures, such as peer groups, other communities of practise, or project task groups as required, whose functions and composition shall be guided by the SADC TFCA Network's activity plan and specified in a Terms of Reference. The Steering Committee may invite and call upon individuals, experts or specialists from other sectors, institutions and organisations to sit in these groups as deemed necessary.

3.3 Role of SADC Secretariat

Since the SADC TFCA Network has been established under the auspices of SADC, in line with a regional programme to promote the development of TFCAs, the SADC Secretariat as the custodian of the various protocols, strategies and programmes to which the Member States prescribe, shall continue to play a crucial role in the SADC TFCA Network including:

- i. Ensuring that the activities of the SADC TFCA Network are aligned to SADC instruments
- ii. Providing secretariat, facilitation and moderation services as required by the SADC TFCA Network and by being part of the Steering Committee
- iii. Promoting awareness about the SADC TFCA Network
- iv. Facilitating technical and financial assistance to support the activities of the SADC TFCA Network
- v. Seeking synergies with other complementary programmes introduced in the region by other organisations and international cooperating partners
- vi. Conducting quality assurance of activities, services and products of the SADC TFCA Network
- vii. Establishing and applying rules of ownership and copyright of information and knowledge products of the SADC TFCA Network

4. Membership

TFCAs are initiatives driven by the governments of the SADC Member States. Similarly, the SADC TFCA Network shall be steered by the Member States. In addition to the agencies responsible for the development of TFCAs in each country, there is a diverse range of stakeholder groups which contribute to and benefit from the development of TFCAs, such as civil society (especially community based organisations and non-governmental organisations), private sector, international cooperating partners and other government agencies who may be represented in the membership of the SADC TFCA Network.

4.1 Becoming a Member of the SADC TFCA Network

Any individual, organisation or institution with an **expressed interest** or **demonstrable experience** in TFCA development may (i) request or (ii) be recommended by an existing member of the Network to join the SADC TFCA Network. Such requests and recommendations shall be forwarded to the Steering Committee for approval, based on which correspondence shall be issued to the said individual, organisation or institution, confirming their membership to the SADC TFCA Network.

4.2 Entitlements of a SADC TFCA Network Member

A Network member shall be entitled to:

- Access information shared on the open access levels of the SADC TFCA Network portal

- Attend SADC TFCA Network meetings
- Share TFCA related information on the portal with SADC TFCA Network members
- Participate in open discussions on the SADC TFCA Network portal
- Recommend new members to the SADC TFCA Network
- Call for the revocation of membership based on sound reasoning

It should be noted that the SADC Member States, through the Steering Committee, ultimately reserve the right of membership to the SADC TFCA Network.

4.3 Renewal of Membership

4.3.1 Steering Committee

SADC Member States shall, every two years, communicate any change to their nomination to the Steering Committee of the SADC TFCA Network. Any individual, who no longer forms part of the formally nominated contingent by Member States to the Steering Committee, may still form part of the membership of the SADC TFCA Network if he/she requests and such request is approved by the Steering Committee.

4.3.2 Other Members

Network members shall be required to renew their membership every two years failing which, their subscription to the SADC TFCA Network shall lapse automatically.

4.4 Termination of Membership

Membership of any member shall terminate upon his/her resignation submitted to the Steering Committee or when membership is not renewed at the end of two years, it shall automatically lapse.

Additionally, membership of the SADC TFCA Network shall be terminated in the event of a member failing to observe the principles of the SADC TFCA Network or conducting themselves in a manner unbecoming of the SADC TFCA Network. Such action may be brought to the attention of the Steering Committee by any member of the SADC TFCA Network and shall then be considered for termination.

5. Activities and Tools

The activities of the SADC TFCA Network shall be periodically determined through a participatory process of deliberation with members agreeing by consensus on priority focus areas. These activities shall be stated in an annual work plan and a report prepared and disseminated yearly on activities, achievements and challenges of the Network and its associated structures. Activities may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Face to face meetings
- Online meetings
- Sharing resources and information
- Online discussions
- Field visits
- Exchange visits
- Specific projects

The SADC TFCA Network may use a range of tools to implement agreed activities and achieve stated objectives. One key tool shall be the development of a Member Database, accessible to its entire membership. The internet offers a prime facility for efficient and effective communication and information sharing. The SADC TFCA Network shall have as its anchor a portal which shall be used as an **interactive intranet** to enable SADC TFCA Network members to share information, experiences and knowledge and serve as their primary communication platform. The portal shall have distinct access levels for its range of functionalities including discussion forums for the Steering Committee and the broader membership. Volunteers drawn from within the membership shall serve as portal administrators and online facilitators. Other tools that may be utilised by the Network include newsletters, social media, publications, etc.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The SADC TFCA Network recognises the importance of periodically measuring and assessing the value of the cooperation and whether it is delivering on its stated purpose and for this reason shall develop and apply a monitoring and evaluation framework for the SADC TFCA Network. The SADC TFCA Network shall, using this framework, be able to account to its membership on its activities, achievements and challenges.

7. Amendments to the SADC TFCA Network Structure

The SADC TFCA Network acknowledges that as an instrument for achieving the broader vision and mission of the SADC TFCA Programme, its priorities, activity profile, form and composition may change and evolve over time, in response to changing needs. Such changes shall be discussed and agreed upon by consensus by members at a face-to-face meeting and subsequently captured in the amendment of this document.

8. Synergies and funding

The SADC TFCA Network shall actively explore sources of financial support for its activities based on agreed priorities and work plans, including Member State contributions, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and international cooperating partners. Financial support shall particularly be sought for the organisation, implementation, and attendance of face-to-face meetings of the Network and its Steering Committee. The SADC TFCA Network shall also explore possible linkages to other networks to avoid duplication and ensure complementary approaches to addressing similar issues.