**SADC TFCA NETWORK**

October 2013

## 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.

The 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 are as follows:

* 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.

## SADC TFCA Network

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

1. Developing a cross sectoral approach to TFCA development - nationally and regionally
2. Effective governance of TFCAs at the level of
	* Policies & legislation
	* Institutions
3. Sustainable financing mechanisms for TFCAs
4. Enhancing community benefits and capacity development
5. Demonstrating the value of TFCAs at the local, national and regional levels.

As a result, at an Inception Workshop held in September 2013 in Johannesburg, South Africa, a **SADC TFCA Network** was established, in line with Component 4 of the SADC TFCA Programme, through a participatory process of investigation, analysis and discussion. Below are the main characteristics of the Network.

## Purpose of the Network

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

## Functions of the Network

The functions of the SADC TFCA Network are to:

* Determine common solutions to common challenges
* Share experiences within and across TFCAs
* Develop a regional repository of TFCA related information
* Enable peer review and feedback
* Develop linkages with TFCA stakeholder groups
* Strengthen collaboration and relationships
* Conduct field visits to enhance understanding of local contexts
* Facilitate empowerment at the level of the TFCA

## Guiding principles

In order to effectively perform its functions and fulfil its purpose, Network members affirm the following principles:

* The Network is just a tool to achieve a broader goal as stated in the SADC TFCA Programme
* Respect for the sovereignty, structures and systems of the SADC MS
* Advocacy for peace, security and regional integration through TFCA development
* Benefits of TFCAs should ultimately be accrued to the local communities living within and around TFCAs
* Development of TFCAs as a *multi-sectoral*, *participatory* process
* Engagement of relevant stakeholder groups without bias or prejudice
* Deliberate and implement with a spirit of equality, collaboration, cooperation, mutual respect, accountability and transparency
* Commitment to implementation of mutually agreed work plans and activities
* Ensure that ownership of Network remains with and is led at all times by the MS
* Amicable resolution of disputes and disagreements
* Culture of giving and receiving

## Membership

TFCAs are initiatives driven by the governments of the SADC Member States. In addition, each TFCA has a 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 government sectors other than the lead environmental/tourism agencies.

Therefore, the SADC TFCA Network shall consist of **core** and **extended** membership. **Core membership** shall be drawn from three levels as follows:

* National level: TFCA Focal Points/National Coordinators
* Local level : Agency Focal Points
* Regional level: International Coordinators for individual TFCAs

 SADC Secretariat

Member States shall nominate in writing between three and five (3-5) individuals fitting the above criterion to the SADC Secretariat as core members of the Network. Core members are primarily responsible for implementing Network activities, contributing to determining the strategic direction of the Network and providing linkages to other stakeholder groups. Fundamentally, core members acknowledge that their commitment and active engagement shall to a large extent, define the degree of success which the Network achieves. As such, Member States and the core membership acknowledges the importance of **consistency** of individual participation in the Network. Member States shall communicate to the SADC Secretariat in writing on any change in the composition of their nomination.

**Extended membership** shall be drawn from other stakeholder groups on an **invitational** basis. Member States shall be responsible for ensuring the appropriate and adequate identification of the stakeholders involved in each of their TFCAs and nominating extended membership to the Network based on mutually agreed criterion.

## Organisational structure

## Steering Committee

A **Steering Committee** (SC) shall be responsible for providing leadership and strategic guidance to the Network with the SADC Secretariat playing the role of Secretariat for the Network. The SC shall also report to and advise the SADC Technical Committee (TC) on Wildlife on key recommendations and activities of the network. Composition of the SC shall follow SADC Troika and therefore, the Chairperson of the SC shall change yearly, however consistency shall be maintained as three of the four individuals on the SC shall serve two years concurrently:

* Current Chair of SADC
* Deputy Chair of SADC
* Immediate previous Chair of SADC
* SADC Secretariat – TFCA Unit

## Champions

Each Member State shall nominate a specific Champion to drive both TFCA development and activities of the Network at the national level. Member States acknowledge that these need not necessarily originate from government institutions however the nominated individuals should be prominent, well respected figures who are able to advocate for and generate momentum within the country for TFCA development.

## Other structures

It shall be the prerogative of the Network core members and the SC to constitute other structures, such as ad hoc specialist groups, project task groups or thematic working groups as required, whose functions and composition shall be guided by specifically determined Terms of Reference. The Network may invite and call upon individuals, experts or specialists from other sectors, institutions and organisations to sit in these groups as deemed necessary.

## Role of SADC Secretariat

Since the 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 MS subscribe, shall continue to play a crucial role in the Network including:

1. Ensuring that the activities of the Network are aligned to SADC instruments
2. Providing secretariat, facilitation and moderation services as required by the Network and by being part of the Network SC
3. Promoting awareness about the Network
4. Facilitating technical and financial assistance to support the activities of the Network
5. Seeking synergies with other complementary programmes introduced in the region by other organisations and international cooperating partners
6. Conducting quality assurance of activities, services and products of the network
7. Establishing and applying rules of ownership and copyright of information and knowledge products of the network

## Activities

The activities of the Network shall be periodically determined through a participatory process of deliberation (including face-to-face-meetings) with core members agreeing by consensus on priority focus areas. The Network may use a range of tools and events to implement agreed activities and achieve stated objectives.

## Partnerships and funding

The Network shall actively explore sources of financial support for its activities based on agreed priorities and work plans, including MS contributions, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and international cooperating partners. It shall also explore possible linkages to other networks to avoid duplication and ensure complementary approaches to addressing similar issues.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The 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 Network. The Network shall, using this framework, be able to account to its extended membership, MS and other stakeholders on its activities, achievements and challenges.

The Network also 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.