Southern African Development Community (SADC) Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework (WBESF) Implementation Roadmap



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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 6

Acronyms & key concepts 6

1. Objectives of the Roadmap 7

2. Overview of the key steps of the Roadmap 7

2.1 Step identification 7

3. Regional policy and programme coherence 10

4. Step A: Developing a supportive policy, governance, and regulatory enabling environment 12

Key issues in the region 12

Key requirements 13

Roles and responsibilities 14

Recommendations 16

Priority actions - what must happen first 17

Implementation roadmap for Step A 17

Phase 1: Policy alignment and institutional foundations (0–18 months) – "Create the enabling environment" 17

Phase 2: Regulatory reform and harmonisation (1–3 years) – "Make it work" 18

Phase 3: Regional integration and adaptive governance (3–5 years) – "Create a competitive regional system" 19

Key milestones 20

Outcomes by Year 5 21

Flagship programme 21

SADC Wildlife Economy Governance and Policy Harmonisation Programme 21

5. Step B: Building capacity, raising awareness, & understanding roles and responsibilities 22

Key issues in the region 22

Roles and responsibilities 25

Recommendations 26

Priority actions - what must happen first 27

Implementation Roadmap for Step B 27

Phase 1 (0–18 months) – Foundation: Needs assessments, SADC WBESF Champions activation, basic modules, awareness campaigns – Build foundational capacity and awareness 27

Phase 2 (1–3 years) – Activation: Scale training, incubators, mentorship, internships, SADC TFCA WBE CoP exchanges – Scale practical capacity, enterprise support, and peer learning 29

DRAFT V1

Phase 3 (3–5 years) – Scaling: Certification, regional centres of excellence e.g. AWEI, SAWC SADC Leather Tanning Network, ALU SOWC PDCs, integration into national systems 30
Key milestones by year 5 32
Expected outcomes by Year 5 (aligned with WBESF SO2 & SO3) 32
Flagship programme 32
SADC Wildlife Economy Skills Academy/Capacitation Programme 32
6. Step C: Creating an enabling business and investment environment 33
Key issues in the region 34
Key requirements 34
Recommendations 37
Priority actions 38
Implementation roadmap 38
Phase 1: Investment Readiness (0–18 months) – "Make it Investible" 38
Key outputs 38
Implementation priorities (Table 20) 38
Phase 2: Market and Value Chain Development (1–3 years) – "Make it Work" 39
Key outputs 39
Implementation priorities (Table 21) 40
Phase 3: Scaling and Competitiveness (3–5 years) – "Make it Globally Competitive" 40
Key outputs 40
Implementation priorities (Table 22) 41
Cross-cutting enablers (run throughout all phases) 41
Expected outcomes 42
Flagship programme 42
SADC Wildlife Economy Enterprise & Investment Hub 42
7. Step D: Developing value chains & wildlife economy enterprises 43
Key issues in the region 43
Key requirements 45
Roles and responsibilities 45
Recommendations 48
Priority actions - what must happen first 49
Implementation roadmap 49
Phase 1 (0–18 months) – Diagnostics, bankable projects, pilots – "Establish evidence base and launch viable pilots 49

DRAFT V1

Phase 2 (18 months – 3 years) – Operationalise value chains, scale SMMEs – Strengthen and expand wildlife economy enterprises 50
Phase 3 (3–5 years) – Regional integration, innovation, competitiveness – Achieve regional scale and global competitiveness 51
Expected outcomes by Year 5 (WBESF SO1) 52
Flagship programme 53
SADC Wildlife Enterprise Accelerator 53
Cross-cutting enablers ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
8. Step E: Enabling market access, marketing and branding 54
Key issues in the region 54
Key requirements 56
Roles and responsibilities 56
Recommendations 59
Priority actions - what must happen first 60
Implementation roadmap 60
Phase 1 (0–18 months) – Intelligence and branding (domestic/regional emphasis) – Build market intelligence and establish a unified SADC WBE brand 60
Phase 2 (18 months – 3 years) – Pilot initiatives and trade facilitation – Launch cross-border trade pilots and strengthen market linkages 61
Phase 3 (3–5 years) – Expansion, certification, international positioning – "Achieve international market competitiveness and brand recognition" 62
Key outputs 62
Expected outcomes by Year 5 63
Flagship programme 63
Brand SADC Wildlife Economy Programme 63
9. Step F: Monitoring, Learning, Adaptive Management and Scaling 64
Key issues in the region 65
Key requirements 66
Recommendations 67
Priority actions - What must happen first 68
Implementation roadmap 68
Phase 1: Monitoring Foundations (0–18 months) – "Measure Progress" 68
Phase 2: Learning and Adaptive Management (1–3 years) – "Learn and Improve" 69
Phase 3: Scaling and Continuous Improvement (3–5 years) – "Sustain and Grow" 70
Flagship programme 71
SADC Wildlife Economy Observatory 71

DRAFT V1

M&E framework: Key Performance Indicators....71
Expected outcomes by Year 5 (WBESF SO3)....72
10. Cross-cutting sources & References....73
Annex A: Infographic summary of the Roadmap....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Annex B: One page infographic of each Step....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**
....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

DRAFT V1

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Acronyms & key concepts

COP	Community of Practice
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC WBESF Champions	SADC Wildlife Based Economy Strategic Framework Implementing Champions
SADC WBESF TIG	SADC Wildlife Based Economy Strategic Framework Champions Technical Implementation Group
TFCA	Trans-Frontier Conservation Area
WBESF	Wildlife Based Economy Strategic Framework

DRAFT V1

1. Objectives of the Roadmap

The SADC Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework (WBESF), approved by Ministers on the 22nd June 2023, is a key document in terms of strategically guiding the unlocking and growing of the wildlife economy across all SADC Member States. Likewise, the approved Coasted Action Plan (CAP) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework for the WBESF provide essential guidance to stakeholders. In order, however, to support the implementation of the Framework, CAP and M&E Framework, this Roadmap unpacks six key steps which aim to achieve the below six key strategic objectives, which include to:

- Strengthen policy, governance and institutional enabling conditions
- Build capacity, leadership and partnerships
- Mobilise finance and investment
- Develop competitive and inclusive wildlife economy value chains
- Expand market access, trade and regional competitiveness
- Strengthen sustainability, inclusion, resilience and adaptive management

The broader theory of change which this Roadmap aims to provide detailed guidelines on is that if SADC creates an enabling policy and investment environment, builds capacity, mobilises finance, develops competitive value chains, improves market access, and strengthens monitoring and governance, then the wildlife economy will grow sustainably, creating jobs, attracting investment, improving livelihoods and supporting biodiversity conservation.

While the Roadmap provides regional guidance, its implementation should remain sufficiently flexible to accommodate the differing institutional capacities, legal frameworks, wildlife economy maturity, and national development priorities of individual SADC Member States.

It is important to note that each step of the Roadmap can be read and applied independently, depending on what a user needs to understand, scope or implement. Although the steps are presented in a logical sequence, they can also be implemented concurrently.

2. Overview of the key steps of the Roadmap

This section provides an overview of the key steps in the Roadmap for the implementation of the SADC Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework (WBESF), with the following sections providing more detail and guidelines on each step.

2.1 Step identification

The Roadmap steps were derived from a comprehensive multi-stakeholder diagnostic process, including:

- **Situational analysis:** Assessment of existing SADC Protocols (e.g., Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement), as well as the SADC WBESF, SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063, SADC TFCA programme, the ALU SOWC Roadmap for Africa's Wildlife Economy (2021), Boosting Intra-African Trade Action Plan, and AWEI's Liberalising Intra Africa Trade (Non-tariff barriers) as well as other relevant reports and documents related to the wildlife economy and

trade in the region. Analysis of the SADC WBESF and the related Costed Action Plan (CAP) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework provide the foundations for the development of the Roadmap.

- **Stakeholder consultations:** Regional engagement with national wildlife authorities, ministries of finance, private sector associations, academia and conservation NGOs. At the SADC Secretariat level Directors and Ministers were consulted, with Ministers endorsing the Roadmap. External reviews were conducted by SADC TFCA Network, SADC WBESF Champions, SADC WBESF TIG, xx xx and including the key stakeholders in SADC region, such as WBE value chain actors.
- **Benchmarking:** Analysis of successful wildlife-based economy (WBE) models within the SADC region and globally, identifying critical success factors and best practices.

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Overall, this Roadmap is a document that supports the implementation of the WBESF within the SADC region. The steps were identified by assessing the region's natural heritage as a key economic asset that must be balanced with biodiversity conservation. These steps are aligned with the overall WBESF which incorporates international biodiversity commitments (such as the CBD-Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), CITES and SDGs) and existing SADC environmental protocols. The aim is to create an enabling environment for the growth of the wildlife economy in the region by shifting from uncoordinated, fragmented value chains to a cohesive regional approach.

The implementation of the WBESF Roadmap should be closely coordinated with the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap, particularly in relation to regional value-chain development, local processing and beneficiation, standards and certification, SMME development, investment mobilisation and trade facilitation. Wildlife-economy interventions should, where practicable, utilise existing regional and national industrialisation instruments, institutions and programmes rather than establishing parallel systems.

The WBESF Roadmap should also be implemented in close alignment with the SADC Tourism Programme, recognising wildlife-based tourism as an established component of the regional wildlife economy. Synergies should be developed in relation to destination development, TFCA tourism circuits, regional branding, tourism skills, investment promotion, market intelligence and community-based tourism. Existing tourism institutions, programmes and marketing platforms should be utilised to avoid parallel initiatives and duplication of resources.

Furthermore, implementation of the Roadmap should be viewed as adaptive rather than prescriptive. Member States may implement the recommended actions according to national priorities, available resources and institutional readiness.

The WBESF Roadmap is underpinned by the four interlinked **Strategic Objectives (SOs) from the WBESF** that follow a logical progression:

1. **Objective 1 (Economic growth):** Focuses on developing globally competitive, innovative, and sustainable value chains to drive regional development.

2. **Objective 2 (Socio-economic inclusion):** Ensures that the economic growth from SO1 is inclusive, focusing on poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods at the household level.
3. **Objective 3 (Enabling environment):** Establishes the necessary regional and national alliances and regulatory frameworks to implement the strategy.
4. **Objective 4 (Global recognition):** Ensures the framework is recognised nationally and globally to drive adoption and implementation.

The SADC wildlife-based economy is estimated at **USD 30+ billion regional asset** with significant untapped potential for **jobs, growth, and rural livelihoods**, but it requires **coordinated policy reform, stronger governance, and a more enabling investment climate** to unlock this opportunity. This WBESF Roadmap provides guidance to support long-term, sustainable implementation of the WBESF with a strategic priority of creating a coherent, investment-ready enabling environment that aligns conservation with economic growth.

The WBESF Roadmap consists of six main steps, which although listed A to F, do not necessarily have to be implemented sequentially. Many of these steps can be implemented concurrently. However, Step A provides a foundational guide for an enabling environment for the implementation of the other steps. The six steps are:

- **Step A:** Developing a supportive policy, governance and regulatory enabling environment.
- **Step B:** Building capacity, raising awareness, and understanding roles and responsibilities.
- **Step C:** Creating an enabling business and investment environment
- **Step D:** Developing value chains and wildlife economy enterprises.
- **Step E:** Enabling market access, marketing and branding.
- **Step F:** Managing risks, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and data collection

The coordinated implementation of these steps aims to support the achievement of the strategic objectives of the SADC WBESF. Each step is consistently structured and includes the following elements:

- Key issues/constraints in the region
- Key requirements for success
- Roles and responsibilities
- Risks and mitigation
- Required resources
- Recommendations
- Priority actions
- Implementation roadmap (Phase 1–3)
- Expected Outcomes by Year 5
- Flagship regional programme suggestion/s
- Further Guidance/tools/resources

For purposes of prioritisation, the six Steps should be implemented through two consolidated periods. The short-term period, covering approximately 0–24 months, should focus on governance, diagnostics, coordination, priority-setting, resource mobilisation and preparation of pilot initiatives. The medium-term period, covering approximately Years 2–5, should focus on implementation, value-chain development,

enterprise support, investment, market access and scaling of demonstrated approaches. This clustering does not replace the six Steps but provides a practical sequencing framework for Member States.



Figure: SADC WBESF Roadmap implementation steps

3. Regional policy and programme coherence

The WBESF Roadmap does not operate as a stand-alone regional initiative. Its implementation should contribute to, and draw upon, existing SADC regional strategies, protocols and programmes relating to industrialisation, tourism, trade, infrastructure, skills development, biodiversity conservation and regional integration. The WBESF Roadmap therefore seeks to provide the wildlife-economy dimension of these broader regional agendas, while avoiding the establishment of parallel institutions, financing mechanisms, information systems or implementation platforms. Table 1 shows regional coherence and implementation linkages to the WBESF Roadmap.

Table 1: Regional coherence and implementation linkages of the WBESF Roadmap

Existing SADC framework/programme	Relevant focus	Link with the WBESF Roadmap	Proposed mechanism for synergy
SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap	Regional value chains, beneficiation, competitiveness and industrial upgrading	Processing and value addition of wildlife products; SMME and enterprise development	Integrate wildlife value chains into existing industrialisation, SME, standards and investment programmes
SADC Tourism Programme	Regional tourism development, destination marketing, skills and investment	Wildlife-based tourism, community tourism and TFCA tourism products	Joint product development, coordinated branding, tourism investment and use of existing tourism institutions
SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan	Regional integration, economic development and sustainable use of resources	Provides the wider development framework for the WBESF	Align outcomes, reporting and implementation priorities with RISDP results
SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement	Conservation, sustainable use and regional cooperation	Legal and policy foundation for the WBESF	Use existing wildlife governance and technical structures
SADC TFCA Programme	Transboundary conservation, livelihoods and tourism	Cross-border wildlife enterprises, tourism circuits and community benefits	Implement pilots through existing TFCA governance and financing structures
SADC Trade Protocol and trade-facilitation mechanisms	Intra-regional trade and reduction of trade barriers	Market access and movement of legal wildlife products and services	Address standards, customs and non-tariff barriers through existing trade structures
SADC Protocols and programmes on Forestry and Fisheries	Sustainable use and sector-based value chains	Natural products, fisheries, forestry and BioTrade components of the wildlife economy	Coordinate sector-specific value-chain interventions through responsible structures
SADC skills and education frameworks	Skills development and mutual recognition	Wildlife-enterprise, tourism, processing and business competencies	Integrate WBE training into existing TVET and qualifications systems
WBESF Costed Action Plan and M&E Framework	Actions, budgets, indicators and reporting	Operational foundation for the roadmap	Avoid new parallel indicators; use the approved WBESF reporting system

Figure 1: Regional policy coherence and implementation linkages of the SADC Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework (WBESF) Roadmap



The following sections provide detailed information on the six WBESF Roadmap steps to unlocking and growing the wildlife economy in the SADC region.

4. Step A: Developing a supportive policy, governance, and regulatory enabling environment

To successfully and sustainably unlock and grow the wildlife economy in the SADC region, an enabling and supportive policy, governance and regulatory environment is essential.

Key issues in the region

- **Fragmented governance and regulatory frameworks:** wildlife economy spans multiple sectors (tourism, fisheries, forestry, trade), with limited coherence and coordination across Ministries and countries with fragmented policies across wildlife, tourism, forestry and fisheries, with slow, complex regulatory processes.
- **Inconsistent legal definitions of "wildlife products" and "wildlife services"** creates confusion and **hinders** effective and consistent monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- **Uneven protocol ratification and implementation:** not all Member States have ratified or operationalised all SADC Protocols.
- **Limited domestication of regional strategies:** national policies are often not aligned with regional strategic objectives. Given the diversity of legal and governance systems across SADC Member States, policy harmonisation should focus on promoting convergence of principles and mutual recognition where appropriate, rather than complete legislative uniformity.
- **Weak cross-border coordination and harmonisation**: particularly for transfrontier conservation Areas (TFCAs), non-tariff barriers and value chains.
- **Regulatory complexity**: permitting systems (e.g. for trade, land use, wildlife utilisation) can be slow, unclear or inconsistent.
- **Data and monitoring gaps**: limited socio-economic and ecological data to inform policy, decision-making, sustainable use and adaptive management.
- **Strategic gaps:** Current challenges include a lack of a cohesive "Brand SADC" for wildlife products and services, and the need to move beyond traditional protected-area conservation toward a more integrated economic asset model. As well as policy complexities in the inter-regional trade of wild products.
- **Lack of official benefit-sharing mechanisms** for local communities which limits the scale and reach of impacts.
- **Capacity constraints** in enforcement and implementation of policies and regulations allows for potential leakages related to illegal, unregulated and unreported wildlife economy activities.

The SADC wildlife-based economy is underpinned by a **layered policy architecture** combining international commitments, regional protocols, and guiding national strategies, laws, policies and regulations. The WBESF is anchored in the **1992 SADC Treaty** and the **1999 Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement**, which emphasise regionally agreed-upon approaches to conservation and sustainable use. Other key enabling protocols include those on **fisheries**, **forestry**, tourism, and **environmental management and sustainable development**.

The SADC policies outlined in the SADC Wildlife-based Economy Framework (WBESF) collectively provide the **legal enabling environment**, particularly for sustainable use to deepen regional economic integration, boost intra-SADC trade and industrialisation, reduce trade barriers (including for small-scale traders), and develop supporting infrastructure to enhance competitiveness, value addition, and sustainable socio-economic development across Member States. **Guiding strategies (non-binding)** (e.g. Green Economy Strategy, Wildlife-based Economy Strategy Framework) translate protocols into actionable programmes and emphasise value chains, trade, and inclusive growth. The guiding strategies provide **implementation direction**, focusing on value chains, inclusive growth, and sustainability.

A critical gap, however, is that there is **no single, dedicated regional legal instrument** (law or protocol) for the wildlife-based economy and governance is fragmented across sectors. It is, therefore, important that a roadmap that harmonises and shows policy linkages across wildlife economy activities and related sectors is developed. Implementers, including SADC WBESF Champions, as well as others working to implement the WBESF, have to understand the linkages and identify the barriers, as well as opportunities in order to develop country level guides for policy harmonisation to unlock and grow the wildlife economy.

The overall SADC WBESF and, therefore, this WBESF Roadmap, is guided by, and aligned with, the **SADC Treaty** and relevant protocols, including those for wildlife conservation, law enforcement, forestry, and fisheries. However, there is a **"fragmentation gap"** that exists in terms of national wildlife policies often conflicting with land-use, trade, tourism, or agricultural policies. The alignment of national legislation with the SADC WBESF to **create a unified regional market** provides a significant opportunity to expand the wildlife-based economy locally, nationally, regionally and internationally.

Key requirements

Policy and legislative requirements

- Harmonised wildlife economy policies across SADC.
- National wildlife economy strategies aligned with the WBESF.
- Clear national legal frameworks for community rights, benefit-sharing and sustainable use.
- Where feasible, Member States should prioritise integrating wildlife economy objectives into existing national policies and development plans before considering development of new stand-alone wildlife economy policies.

Governance requirements

- Multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms.
- National wildlife economy coordinating structures.
- Regional governance and reporting mechanisms.

Institutional requirements

- Clearly mandated focal institutions.
- Dedicated wildlife economy units within governments.
- Operational and effective national WBE Champion networks.

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Stakeholder engagement requirements

- Structured consultation processes.
- Indigenous and local community participation.
- Private sector engagement platforms.

Roles and responsibilities

Oversight of the WBESF is shared across the SADC Secretariat (FANR Directorate), national Ministries of Environment/Tourism, and Transfrontier conservation area (TFCA) management bodies. A key element is collaboration and partnerships: success relies on **Multi-Sectoral Committees** and collaboration that bridges the gap between "Conservation Authorities" (who manage resources) and "Economic Development Agencies" (who manage investment). This can be achieved through resource and opportunity leveraging (joint projects across sectors), and quasi-compulsory arrangement by policy/strategies/forums or senior management. **TFCA structures,** such as the Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) programmes should facilitate cross-border wildlife management and economic cooperation.

A key challenge is that institutional mandates are often **overlapping or unclear**, limiting efficiency. The main stakeholders and their role are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Step A stakeholders and their main roles

Stakeholder	Role
SADC Secretariat	Provides support and guidance to Member States. Provides regional coordination, monitoring, and administrative support for the strategy's implementation. Where appropriate, existing SADC governance mechanisms, including the SADC WBESF TIG, existing Technical Committees and relevant national coordination structures, should be utilised before establishing additional institutional arrangements.
WBE Champions	National leadership, raising awareness and supporting training and capacity building.
Member States	Responsible for policy implementation. National departments responsible for wildlife, environment, and natural resources are the primary implementers at the domestic level. Each country is responsible for ensuring their specific regulatory environments (policy, legislation, and regulations) are in place.
Private sector (e.g. tourism operators, game ranchers, traders)	Provide capital through developing businesses and investment, as well as creating and growing markets, which rely on a supportive enabling environment.
Communities (Community-based organisations and other CBNRM structures)	Active role in participation in the wildlife economy and resource stewardship
NGOs	Capacity building and facilitation
Academia	Research and training

The SADC WBESF Strategic Objective 3 explicitly identifies international, regional, and national alliances as the foundation for an enabling environment. Cooperation is required to manage trans-regional wildlife populations and to ensure that local communities

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benefit from the fair and equitable sharing of resources. Overall, collaborations and partnerships are foundational for implementation of the SADC WBESF:

- **Value chains require coordination and integration** across:
  - Input suppliers/sources
  - Producers/harvesters
  - Processors
  - Traders
  - Regulators
- **Cross-border cooperation** is essential for:
  - Wildlife and wildlife product movements
  - Wildlife and wildlife product markets integration and streamlining to operate across national boundaries
  - Trade liberalisation and free trade realisation
  - Joint governance in transfrontier conservation areas
- **Public–private–community partnerships** are key for:
  - Investment mobilisation
  - Inclusive benefit sharing
  - Sustainable resource management

Table 3 provides an overview of potential risks and the related mitigation strategies and Table 4 lists the required resources for Step A.

Table 3: Risks and mitigation

Potential risk	**Mitigation strategy**
Political resistance resulting from competing interests, mandates, or priorities	High-level ministerial engagement; Regional peer learning
Institutional fragmentation due to competing mandates and/or objectives between sectors	Inter-ministerial coordination platforms
Weak implementation due to lack of commitment, finances, capacity, or will	Clear accountability frameworks
Stakeholder exclusion where youth, women, and previously disadvantaged persons may be left out of the wildlife economy	Mandatory consultation processes

Table 4: Required resources

Type of resource	**Examples**
Human capital	Policy specialists; Legal experts; Governance advisors; Facilitators
Financial	Policy review funding; Consultation budgets; Institutional strengthening support
Technology	Governance information systems; Policy databases; Stakeholder engagement platforms
External expertise	Legal drafting; Regional integration specialists; Institutional development experts

DRAFT VI

Recommendations

- **Legislative harmonisation and strengthening of policy coherence**:
    - Conduct national audits of wildlife, tourism fisheries, forestry, trade, natural resource use etc. policies
    - Identify inconsistencies between national regulatory frameworks and the SADC WBESF
    - Develop a national wildlife economy policy framework
    - Domesticate the SADC Wildlife-based Economy Strategy Framework into national policies
    - Rationalise and align internal legislation across Member States to support the legal trade and sustainable use of wildlife resources
    - Priority should be given to strengthening implementation of existing legislation and identifying targeted policy gaps before initiating comprehensive legislative reforms.

- **Institutional structure and coordination:** Establish national structures to guide, monitor, and report on the implementation of the wildlife economy:
    - Where not already existing, establish national wildlife economy coordination platforms/units/forums
    - Appoint and empower national wildlife economy focal points
    - Establish/strengthen inter-ministerial coordination platforms and collaboration mechanisms
    - Define clear roles and mandates across agencies
    - Ensure that the SADC WBSEF Champions network, as well as the SADC WBESF Technical Implementation Group (TIG) remain functional and active to support active implementation, awareness raising and support for the WBESF at a national level.
- **Stakeholder mapping:** map all key actors across the different wildlife product and service value chains; establish national mutli-stakeholder platforms (e.g. the Wildlife Forum in South Africa); initiate regular dialogue mechanisms (e.g. the SADC WBESF TIG and Champions).
- **Enhance regulatory efficiency:** where possible, standardise and/or streamline permitting procedures/systems (tourism, trade, wildlife use) within each country and across SADC borders to facilitate regional trade.
    - SADC should develop model legislation for intra-regional processing and value addition to ensure certainty and transparency for investors. Model legislation should be provided as voluntary regional guidance that can be adapted to national legal systems and constitutional arrangements.
    - Digitise licensing, monitoring and compliance systems, trade tracking and traceability, thereby improving transparency, accountability and predictability.
    - Strengthen cross-border agreements, e.g. KAZA Univisa and the SADC Univisa.
    - Introduce time-bound approval processes.
    - Develop clear regulatory guidelines.

- **Legal clarity:** Draft model legislation related specifically to supporting the implementation of the SADC WBESF for Member States to adopt.
- **Inclusive planning:** Adopt inclusive development plans that integrate the wildlife economy into broader national economic and land use strategies.
- **Streamlined regulations:** Create a regulatory environment that supports economic transformation while ensuring environmental sustainability and ease of doing business.
- **Regional integration:** Strengthen cross-border value chains and TFCAs; harmonise standards for wildlife products and services; support cross-border trade, peer to peer learning on value chains; strengthen implementation of TFCA frameworks.
- **Inclusive governance:** formalise and strengthen community rights and benefit-sharing frameworks and mechanisms; strengthen CBNRM frameworks and institutions; embed gender and youth participation.
- **Improve monitoring and adaptive governance:** Invest in data systems for wildlife populations, overall biodiversity monitoring, wildlife economy-related socio-economic data, value chain integration into technical models, and support evidence-based policy and practice and apply adaptive management approaches for policy and practice refinement.
- **Strengthen enforcement and compliance**: Strengthen enforcement capacity through training, resourcing and cross-border collaboration.

Priority actions - what must happen first

1. Policy audit + gap analysis
2. Institutional coordination mechanisms established
3. Regulatory reform (permitting, licensing)
4. Policy alignment and harmonisation
5. Digital systems and enforcement strengthening

Implementation roadmap for Step A

Recognising differing national capacities, Member States may adopt a phased implementation approach based on national priorities and readiness.

Phase 1: Policy alignment and institutional foundations (0–18 months) – "Create the enabling environment"

Focus: Establishing governance, policy and institutional foundations for wildlife economy growth.

Key outputs

- National policy and legislative audits completed.
- Gaps and inconsistencies with the WBESF identified.
- National wildlife economy coordination platforms established.
- National WBE Champions and focal points formally appointed and operational.
- Stakeholder mapping and engagement platforms established.
- Draft national wildlife economy policy frameworks developed.

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- Baseline governance, regulatory and institutional assessments completed.

Table 5 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 1, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 5: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Conduct national policy, legislative and regulatory audits	Member States (Environment, Wildlife, Tourism Ministries), SADC Secretariat	Structured policy review templates; national audit teams; gap analysis reports
Map stakeholders and establish coordination platforms	Member States, WBE Champions, local authorities	National stakeholder mapping exercises; establishment of inter-ministerial committees
Establish national wildlife economy coordination structures	Member State governments, SADC Secretariat	Formal ministerial directives; creation of WBE units and focal points
Develop draft national wildlife economy policy frameworks	Member States with technical support from SADC Secretariat	Policy drafting task teams; technical working groups; stakeholder consultations
Establish baseline governance and regulatory assessments	SADC Secretariat, Member State focal points, academia	Baseline studies; institutional assessments; data collection frameworks
Initiate regional dialogue on policy harmonisation	SADC Secretariat, TFCA bodies, Member States	Regional workshops; policy harmonisation forums; technical advisory groups

Key output: Coordinated governance structures and policy reform agenda established.

Phase 2: Regulatory reform and harmonisation (1–3 years) – "Make it work"

Focus: Improving regulatory efficiency, policy coherence and cross-border cooperation.

Key outputs

- National wildlife economy frameworks adopted and integrated into national development plans and other trade or economic development frameworks.
- Streamlined permitting and licensing systems introduced.
- Inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms functioning effectively.
- Community rights and benefit-sharing frameworks strengthened.
- Cross-border cooperation agreements expanded.
- Regulatory guidelines and standards developed and harmonised.
- Digital permitting, compliance and monitoring systems piloted.

Table 6 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 2, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

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Table 6: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Domesticate WBESF into national policies and strategies	Member States, line ministries	Cabinet approvals; policy integration into national development plans
Streamline permitting and licensing systems	Regulatory agencies, wildlife authorities, trade ministries	Regulatory reform programmes; digitisation of permits; one-stop service systems
Strengthen benefit-sharing and community rights frameworks	Member States, CBNRM institutions, NGOs	Legal reform; community co-management agreements; participatory governance structures
Implement inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms	Member State governments	Formal coordination committees; performance agreements across ministries
Pilot digital governance systems (permitting, monitoring, compliance)	SADC Secretariat, Member States, tech partners	Digital platforms; e-permitting systems; mobile compliance tools
Expand cross-border cooperation agreements	Member States, TFCA structures, SADC Secretariat	Bilateral/multilateral agreements; TFCA governance frameworks; trade facilitation protocols
Develop regulatory guidelines and standards	SADC Secretariat, standards bodies, Member States	Technical working groups; regional standards development; model regulations

Key output: More efficient, transparent and harmonised governance and regulatory systems.

Phase 3: Regional integration and adaptive governance (3–5 years) – "Create a competitive regional system"

Focus: Achieving regional policy coherence, integrated governance and adaptive management.

Key outputs

- Harmonised wildlife economy governance frameworks across Member States.
- Fully operational digital permitting, compliance and reporting systems.
- Regional standards and guidelines for wildlife economy activities adopted.
- Cross-border wildlife economy value chains supported by enabling regulations.
- Regular monitoring, reporting and adaptive governance mechanisms functioning.
- Increased investor confidence through regulatory certainty and transparency.

Table 7 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 3, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

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Table 7: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Finalise regional policy harmonisation across Member States	SADC Secretariat, Member States	Regional protocols; harmonised policy frameworks; ministerial endorsements
Scale digital permitting and compliance systems region-wide	Member States, SADC Secretariat, ICT partners	Integrated regional digital platforms; interoperable data systems
Strengthen regional monitoring, reporting and learning systems	SADC Secretariat, academia, WBE Champions	Regional dashboards; annual reporting systems; knowledge platforms
Adopt regional standards and guidelines for wildlife economy	SADC Secretariat, standards bodies, Member States	Regional standard-setting bodies; technical consensus processes
Scale cross-border value chain cooperation and trade facilitation	Member States, private sector, TFCA bodies	Trade corridors; simplified trade regimes; TFCA economic agreements
Embed adaptive governance and evidence-based decision-making	Member States, SADC Secretariat, research institutions	M&E systems; policy feedback loops; real-time data analytics platforms
Strengthen investor confidence through regulatory transparency	Member States, investment agencies, private sector	Investment facilitation desks; regulatory certainty frameworks; streamlined approvals

Key output: A coherent, transparent and investment-friendly regional policy and governance framework supporting a competitive and sustainable wildlife economy.

Phase 1 builds the governance foundations, Phase 2 aligns and streamlines national systems, and Phase 3 delivers a harmonised, digitally enabled and regionally integrated wildlife economy governance framework across SADC.

The expected result by Year 5 is a fully functioning and harmonised policy, governance and regulatory environment that enables sustainable wildlife economy growth, supports regional trade and investment, strengthens community participation and benefit-sharing, and aligns conservation and economic development objectives across SADC

Key milestones by year 5

Phase 1 (0–18 months)

- Policy audits completed
- Stakeholder mapping completed
- National coordination structures established
- Draft policy reform roadmaps developed

Phase 2 (1–3 years)

- National wildlife economy frameworks adopted
- Regulatory reforms implemented
- Benefit-sharing mechanisms strengthened
- Digital permitting systems piloted

Phase 3 (3–5 years)

- Regional policy harmonisation achieved
- Cross-border governance systems operational
- Digital governance systems scaled
- Integrated regional wildlife economy governance framework functioning

Outcomes by Year 5

- Coherent and aligned policy frameworks across SADC Member States
- Efficient, transparent and digitised regulatory systems
- Strong cross-border governance and value chain integration
- Increased investor confidence and reduced regulatory risk
- Inclusive governance with functioning community participation and benefit-sharing systems
- Enhanced sustainability of wildlife resources

Flagship programme

SADC Wildlife Economy Governance and Policy Harmonisation Programme

Components:

- Policy reviews
- Legal harmonisation
- Governance strengthening
- Champion network support

Table 8: Further guidance/tools/resources

Resource	Link	Relevance
SADC WBESF + CAP/M&E	See cross-cutting	Baseline for domestication and gap analysis.
SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement	https://www.sadc.int/document/protocol-wildlife-conservation-and-law-enforcement-1999	Harmonisation of wildlife law, community management and enforcement cooperation.
SADC Treaty (consolidated text)	https://www.sadc.int/document/consolidated-text-sadc-treaty-amended-2025	Constitutional regional mandate for sustainable resource use and integration.
SADC Protocols index	https://www.sadc.int/sadc-protocols	Entry point to Trade, Industry, Tourism, Forestry and Fisheries protocols that WBESF must align with.
SADC-CITES Engagement Strategy (2022–2026)	https://www.sadc.int/sadc-strategic-documents	Regional guidance for legal wildlife trade and CITES implementation.
FAOLEX	https://www.fao.org/faolex/en/	Comparative legal research for national policy audits.
Ecolex	https://www.ecolex.org/	
UNCTAD BioTrade Principles and Criteria	https://unctad.org/topic/trade-and-environment/biotrade/principles-and-criteria	Model sustainability, legality and benefit-sharing criteria for national policy. Publication: https://unctad.org/publication/biotrade-

DRAFT V1

Resource	Link	Relevance
		principles-and-criteria-terrestrial-marine-and-other-aquatic-biodiversity
UNCTAD BioTrade and ABS handbook	https://unctad.org/publication/biotrade-and-access-and-benefit-sharing-concept-practice-handbook-policymakers-and	Practical ABS / community rights guidance for regulators.
Nagoya Protocol on ABS	https://www.cbd.int/abs	Legal basis for fair and equitable benefit-sharing from genetic resources.
IUCN SULi	https://www.iucnsuli.org/	Evidence and policy tools on sustainable use and community rights.
African Wildlife Economy Institute (AWEI) Info Hub	https://wildlifeeconomy.info/	Policy briefs, legislation notes and African wildlife-economy research.
ALU SOWC Wildlife Economy Resource Database	https://research.alueducation.com	Regulations, policy briefs and wildlife economy research and resources

5. Step B: Building capacity, raising awareness, & understanding roles and responsibilities

Effective implementation of the SADC Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework depends on Member States and stakeholders having the knowledge, skills, and clarity needed to act. This step focuses on targeted capacity-building programmes that strengthen institutional and technical abilities across government, communities, and the private sector. It also prioritises awareness-raising so that all actors understand the strategic opportunities and requirements of the wildlife-based economy. Clear definition of roles and responsibilities ensures coordinated action and reduces duplication as countries move from strategy to implementation.

Key issues in the region

- **Limited capacities in enterprise identification, management and business development**: Community-based wildlife enterprises frequently lack advanced skills for national WBE opportunity mapping, strategic planning, financial management, operational efficiency, marketing, and adaptive business practices, which undermines WBE enterprise opportunity identification including the viability, scalability, and contribution to local economies.
- **Inadequate expertise in sustainable harvesting**: There is limited knowledge and application of best practices for the ecologically sustainable harvesting of wildlife resources (including game meat, non-timber forest products, and edible insects), increasing risks of resource depletion, habitat degradation, and failure to meet certification or market standards for sustainability.
- **Underdeveloped ecotourism operations and management**: Many potential and existing community ecotourism initiatives suffer from insufficient skills and capacity in product development, visitor management, hospitality standards, interpretation, safety, and the integration of conservation messaging with authentic cultural and natural experiences.

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- **Weak value addition, market strategy, and value chain analysis capabilities**: Actors in the wildlife-based economy often remain confined to low-value primary production with limited ability to conduct value chain analyses, identify upgrading opportunities, develop market strategies (how to create demand and market for wildlife based products), engage in processing, branding, packaging, or establish linkages to higher-value domestic, regional, and international markets.
- **Insufficient mechanisms for sustainable finance for community projects**: Community wildlife enterprises and projects face significant barriers in accessing appropriate and affordable finance, including grants, blended finance, impact investments, and revenue-sharing arrangements, due to perceived high risks, lack of collateral, limited financial literacy, and absence of tailored financial products and intermediaries.
- **Low levels of entrepreneurship and innovation**: There is a general scarcity of entrepreneurial mindsets (relevant knowledge on entrepreneurship), risk-taking culture to be incentivised through social protection measures to give rural people the possibility to take risks, and support ecosystems (incubators, mentors, networks) specifically geared towards identifying and utilising opportunities in the wildlife-based economy, including new products, services, technologies, and business models.
- **Deficient community business modelling and governance**: Many community institutions lack robust, equitable, and transparent business models, ownership structures, benefit-sharing arrangements, governance frameworks, leadership capacity, and mechanisms for accountability, conflict resolution, and adaptive management of collective wildlife-based enterprises.
- **Low awareness of the wildlife-based economy as a driver of jobs, livelihoods, and conservation**: Widespread limited understanding among rural communities, traditional leaders, local government officials, and other stakeholders about the potential of well-governed WBE activities. Specifically, how to generate sustainable employment, improve household incomes, and contribute to biodiversity conservation and climate resilience, resulting in low buy-in, participation, and advocacy.
- **Unclear or overlapping roles and institutional mandates**: Fragmented and sometimes conflicting responsibilities among national and local government agencies, sector departments (environment, tourism, agriculture, trade), traditional authorities, community-based organisations, and private sector actors create confusion, duplication of efforts, gaps in support services, and bureaucratic hurdles. This particularly constrains the participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities in WBE enterprises, governance structures, and benefit streams.
- **Limited design and implementation of inclusive participation strategies**: Insufficient targeted interventions, training programmes, mentorship, accessible infrastructure, and policy measures to actively promote and enable the meaningful involvement and leadership of women, youth, and people with disabilities across all segments of the wildlife-based economy value chains and decision-making processes.

These constraints directly impede the building of capacity, raising of awareness, and clear understanding of roles and responsibilities that are essential for effective implementation of the wildlife-based economy at community and enterprise levels across SADC.

The effective realisation of community-level wildlife-based economy initiatives is supported by **the broader enabling architecture of the WBESF, which promotes inclusive growth, value chain development, entrepreneurship, and sustainable socio-economic benefits for local communities**. The WBESF provides the strategic direction for community participation and enterprise development. Guiding strategies (non-binding) translate these protocols into actionable programmes and emphasise value chains, trade, entrepreneurship, community business development, and inclusive growth. The guiding strategies provide implementation direction, focusing on building local capacities, strengthening community governance, raising awareness of opportunities, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and ensuring equitable participation and benefit-sharing.

The overall SADC WBESF and this community enterprise and participation dimension are guided by, and aligned with, the SADC Treaty and relevant protocols. However, there is a **"capacity, awareness and role clarity gap"** that exists in terms of national policies and programmes on skills development, entrepreneurship support, community governance, awareness creation, and participation often not being fully aligned with the inclusive, value-chain-focused, and sustainability objectives of the WBESF. The alignment of national and sub-national strategies for capacity building, awareness raising, role clarification, and inclusive participation frameworks with the SADC WBESF provides a significant opportunity to expand community enterprise development, create decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods (with particular emphasis on women, youth, and people with disabilities), enhance local governance of natural resources, and strengthen the contribution of the wildlife-based economy to conservation and socio-economic development locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally. socio-economic development locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Capacity development initiatives should, where possible, strengthen and utilise existing national and regional training institutions rather than establishing parallel institutional arrangements.

Table 9: Key requirements

Component / Area	Key elements
Skills development systems	• National skills assessments • Competency frameworks • Accredited training systems
Awareness and communication	• Public awareness campaigns • Decision-maker engagement • Community education programmes
Institutional capacity	• Training institutions • Centres of excellence • Knowledge management systems
Leadership development	• WBE Champion training • Executive leadership programmes

Roles and responsibilities

Capacity building and awareness, directly supports WBESF SO2 (inclusion) and SO3 (enabling environment through alliances). The aim is to equip stakeholders including policymakers and value chain actors to manage wildlife as an economic asset while at the same time conserving it. This is in line with the SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement and the Green Economy Strategy. Table 10 shows the main stakeholders as well as their roles and responsibilities in capacity building and awareness.

Table 10: Roles and responsibilities

Stakeholder	Key responsibilities
SADC Secretariat (FANR Directorate)	Regional coordination, toolkits, peer learning, monitoring and evaluation
SADC WBE Champions (Three per Member State)	National drivers: lead awareness, training cascade, coordinate ministries/communities, share pilot tools regionally via SADC WBE TFCA Community of Practice
Member States / National governments	Appoint focal points, integrate WBE into national plans, curricula and policies
SADC WBE TFCA Community of Practice	Cross-border peer learning and joint capacity activities
Academic/training partners (e.g. SAWC, African Leadership University - SOWC; Stellenbosch University - AWEI)	Specialised training and research
Private sector, NGOs, CBNRM structures	Mentorship, apprenticeships, on-the-ground implementation

Table 11 provides an overview of potential risks and the related mitigation strategies and Table 12 gives an overview of the required resources for Step B.

Table 11: Risks and mitigation

Potential risk	Mitigation strategy
Skills drain: Skilled personnel in wildlife-based economy training and enterprise support programmes frequently leave for better opportunities, resulting in loss of institutional knowledge and reduced programme effectiveness.	Implement retention incentives i.e. competitive remuneration, clear career progression pathways, non-monetary benefits (e.g. housing support or professional recognition) to retain experienced trainers, facilitators, and enterprise mentors within the sector.
Low participation: Target groups, especially women, youth, and people with disabilities in rural communities, often show limited engagement in WBE capacity-building initiatives due to low awareness, access barriers, or perceived lack of relevance.	Conduct targeted outreach through culturally appropriate community mobilisation, partnerships with traditional leaders and local organisations, and tailored communication campaigns to raise awareness and encourage inclusive participation in training and entrepreneurship programmes.
Poor training quality: Inconsistent or sub-standard training delivery fails to equip participants with practical, market-relevant skills, undermining the overall impact and credibility of capacity-building efforts for community wildlife enterprises.	Establish and enforce accreditation and quality assurance systems for training providers and curricula to ensure consistent standards, relevance to wildlife economy value chains, and formal recognition of qualifications across Member States.

DRAFT V1

Limited funding: Insufficient and unpredictable financial resources constrain the scale, quality, continuity, and geographic reach of training and capacity-building programmes for community enterprises and practitioners.	Develop public-private partnership (PPP) training models that mobilise co-financing, technical expertise, and infrastructure from government, private sector, NGOs, and development partners to sustainably fund and deliver high-quality capacity-building initiatives.

Table 12: Required resources

Resource category	Key components
Human	• Trainers • Mentors • Extension officers • Communications specialists
Financial	• Training funds • Scholarships • Awareness campaign budgets
Technology	• E-learning platforms • Knowledge portals • Mobile learning tools

Recommendations

1. Conduct local- and national-level capacity needs assessments - Carry out structured assessments to identify gaps in knowledge, skills, institutional systems, and resources required for effective WBE development at both community (local) and national levels. This should cover technical skills (e.g., sustainable harvesting, processing, business management), awareness of policies and markets, governance, and inclusive participation. Ways to implement include:

- Use participatory tools such as surveys, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and institutional capacity assessment frameworks.
- Disaggregate findings by gender, age, and disability.

Assessments should be conducted periodically (e.g., every 2–3 years) to track progress and emerging needs

2. Ensure effective implementation by conducting a participatory stakeholder mapping exercise at the outset to clearly define, document, and communicate the specific roles, responsibilities, and accountability lines of all actors

3. **Develop costed action plans based on the capacity needs assessments, to be used to approach funders/donors/investors, etc** - Translate the findings of the capacity needs assessments into practical, prioritised, and fully costed action plans that clearly outline activities, timelines, responsible actors, budgets, and expected outcomes for capacity building and awareness in WBE. These plans should be designed to attract funding from donors, development partners, and investors. Ways to implement include:

- Prioritise high-impact interventions (e.g., training of trainers, awareness campaigns, incubation support, and institutional strengthening).

DRAFT V1

- Include clear monitoring indicators and sustainability measures.
- Package the action plans into professional funding proposals or investment blueprints/cases, highlighting alignment with SADC WBE strategies and potential for scalable impact across the region.

4. Leverage existing tools and resources – This includes making use of existing centres of excellence and national training institutions, including government wildlife training colleges, universities and specialised regional institutions, to ensure long-term sustainability. Also, existing programmes and training opportunities which include the SADC WBE Champions, BioInnovation Academy Courses / BioTrade Training of Trainers (ALU SOWC), IUCN MOOCs, Wildlife Economy Professional Development Course (ALU SOWC), CITES induction course (AWEI SU), Liberalising intra-Africa trade in wild meat (7-part e-learning journey / video series).

5. Roll out modular training and awareness campaigns ("Wildlife Pays" / "Brand SADC WBE") using radio, schools, and digital tools. Prioritise women, youth, and people with disabilities. For example, women should be prioritised through dedicated leadership training and equal representation in conservancy committees, increasing their role in decision-making and tourism enterprises. Also, youth should receive targeted skills development in guiding, hospitality, and crafts, entrepreneurship, sustainable harvesting, creating employment pathways and strengthening intergenerational support for conservation. People with disabilities need to be included through accessible training materials, adapted venues, and tailored capacity-building programmes, ensuring they could participate in and benefit from wildlife economy opportunities.

6. Invest and promote study/peer learning tours (e.g., Namibia CBNRM, SADC TFCA WBE peer to peer learning exchange) and embed WBE in vocational/extension services. Deliver content through community radio, schools, and digital platforms (WhatsApp, social media, and mobile apps) in local languages. Use simple, engaging formats such as radio dramas, school eco-clubs, and short video messages.

7. Share pilot assessment outcomes across all 16 countries via SADC WBESF Champions network and SADC WBE TFCA CoP to promote the sharing of lessons learned and best practices.

Priority actions - what must happen first

- Activate and train SADC WBE Champions to cascade knowledge.
- Align with SADC Industrialisation Strategy for skills in value addition and green economy practices.

Implementation Roadmap for Step B

Phase 1 (0–18 months) – Foundation: Needs assessments, SADC WBESF Champions activation, basic modules, awareness campaigns – "Build foundational capacity and awareness"

Focus: Establishing the foundational capacity, awareness, leadership, and institutional readiness required for effective implementation of the SADC Wildlife-based Economy Strategy Framework (WBESF) at national and community levels.

Key outputs

- Comprehensive national and regional capacity needs assessments completed, identifying skills gaps, awareness levels, and participation barriers (especially for women, youth, and people with disabilities).
- SADC WBESF Champions formally designated, trained, and operational across all Member States.
- Foundational training modules, competency frameworks, and basic curricula developed, accredited, and piloted.
- Targeted public awareness campaigns and community education programmes designed and launched.
- Baseline data, monitoring frameworks, and feedback mechanisms for capacity, awareness, and participation established.
- Institutional partnerships with training institutions and centres of excellence activated, with initial resource mobilisation achieved.
- Initial leadership development programmes for WBE Champions and key stakeholders initiated.

Table 13 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 1, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 13: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Conduct national and regional capacity needs assessments (skills, awareness, institutional gaps, and participation barriers)	Member States (Environment, Wildlife, Tourism, Education Ministries), SADC Secretariat, WBE Champions	Standardised needs assessment toolkits and survey instruments; stakeholder consultations; baseline study methodologies; gap analysis reports
Designate, formally appoint, and train SADC WBESF Champions, CBOs and national focal points	Member State governments, SADC Secretariat	Champion appointment directives; structured induction and leadership training curricula; certification frameworks
Develop foundational WBE training modules, competency frameworks, and basic curricula	SADC Secretariat, training institutions, centres of excellence, academia	Curriculum development task teams; competency framework workshops; pilot testing with selected Member States; accreditation processes
Design and roll out targeted public awareness campaigns and community education programmes	Member States, WBE Champions, communications specialists, civil society	Awareness campaign toolkits and messaging frameworks; community mobilisation guides; multi-channel communication strategies (including mobile and digital tools)
Establish and strengthen partnerships with training institutions and centres of excellence	SADC Secretariat, Member States, training institutions, private sector partners	Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs); joint programme design; resource and expertise sharing agreements

DRAFT V1

Mobilise human, financial, and technological resources for Phase 1 implementation	SADC Secretariat, Member States, development partners, private sector	Resource mobilisation strategies and budgets; PPP training partnership models; scholarship and funding mechanisms; e-learning platform deployment
Develop and operationalise monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems for capacity and awareness activities	SADC Secretariat, Member State focal points, WBE Champions	M&E frameworks and indicators; feedback and reporting templates; knowledge management systems; mid-phase review mechanisms

Key output: Foundational capacity, awareness levels, and leadership structures established to enable effective and inclusive rollout of the SADC WBESF across Member States.

Phase 2 (1–3 years) – Activation: Scale training, incubators, mentorship, internships, SADC TFCA WBE CoP exchanges – "Scale practical capacity, enterprise support, and peer learning"

Focus: Scaling up practical training delivery, enterprise incubation, structured mentorship, internship programmes, and cross-border SADC TFCA Wildlife-Based Economy Communities of Practice (CoPs) to translate foundational capacity into active, sustainable wildlife-based economy enterprises and implementation across Member States.

Key outputs

- Advanced and specialised WBE training programmes are scaled and delivered across Member States with increased reach and participation (especially women, youth, and people with disabilities).
- Functional WBE incubators and enterprise support hubs established or strengthened in priority areas and TFCAs.
- Structured mentorship programmes operationalised, pairing experienced practitioners with emerging entrepreneurs and WBE Champions.
- Internship and practical placement programmes established with wildlife enterprises, conservation agencies, and value-chain actors.
- SADC TFCA WBE Communities of Practice (CoPs) formally launched and actively facilitating knowledge exchange, joint learning, and cross-border collaboration.
- Increased number of community- and youth-led wildlife-based enterprises initiated, strengthened, or accessing markets and finance.
- Monitoring and evaluation data demonstrating improved skills application, enterprise performance, and peer learning outcomes**.**

Table 14 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 2, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 14: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Scale delivery of advanced and specialised WBE training programmes (value addition, sustainable harvesting, ecotourism, business modelling, etc.)	Member States, training institutions, centres of excellence, SADC Secretariat	Updated training curricula and modules; accredited training providers; e-learning and blended delivery platforms; mobile learning tools; training quality assurance systems
Establish and operationalise WBE incubators and enterprise support hubs in priority locations and TFCAs	Member States, SADC Secretariat, private sector partners, TFCA bodies	Incubator operational guidelines and selection criteria; business development support packages; co-working and prototyping facilities; linkage to finance and markets
Design and implement structured mentorship programmes for emerging WBE entrepreneurs and practitioners	WBE Champions, experienced practitioners, training institutions, SADC Secretariat	Mentorship matching platforms and guidelines; mentor training and support; structured mentoring cycles with clear objectives and reporting
Establish and manage internship and practical placement programmes with enterprises and conservation agencies	Member States, private sector wildlife enterprises, conservation agencies, training institutions	Internship frameworks and agreements; placement matching systems; supervision and reporting templates; certification of practical experience
Launch and facilitate SADC TFCA WBE Communities of Practice (CoPs) with regular cross-border exchanges	SADC Secretariat, TFCA bodies, WBE Champions, Member States	CoP charters and governance guidelines; virtual and in-person exchange programmes (study tours, joint projects, knowledge-sharing platforms); thematic working groups
Identify, select, and provide enterprise support to community and youth-led WBE initiatives	WBE Champions, Member States, incubators, civil society organisations	Enterprise selection criteria and application processes; tailored business development support; access to finance and market linkages
Develop and implement monitoring, knowledge capture, and adaptive learning systems for Phase 2	SADC Secretariat, Member State focal points, WBE Champions, academia	Results framework and indicators; enterprise performance tracking tools; knowledge management systems; regular learning reviews and feedback loops

Key output: Practical capacity scaled through expanded training, functional incubators, structured mentorship and internships, and active TFCA Communities of Practice, resulting in strengthened wildlife-based economy enterprises and enhanced cross-border peer learning across the SADC region

Phase 3 (3–5 years) – Scaling: Certification, regional centres of excellence e.g. AWEI-SAWC SADC Leather Tanning Programmes, ALU SOWC PDCs, integration into national systems – "ensure traceability, sustainability and legitimacy of trade"

Focus: Consolidating and scaling wildlife-based economy capacity by establishing quality certification systems, strengthening regional centres of excellence, and integrating WBE skills development, training, and enterprise support into national education, skills, and economic development systems for long-term sustainability and impact.

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Key outputs

- Regional and national certification and quality assurance systems for WBE training, practitioners, and enterprises developed and operational across Member States.
- Key regional centres of excellence (including SAWC, AWEI, SADC Leather Tanning Network, and ALU SOWC) strengthened, networked, and together delivering high-quality, accredited programmes at scale. Regional Centres of Excellence should operate as complementary institutions with clearly defined comparative advantages, avoiding duplication of mandates and promoting collaborative delivery of specialised training.
- WBE modules, qualifications, and competencies formally integrated into national Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), higher education, and professional development frameworks.
- Sustainable financing, governance, and business models for regional centres of excellence and thematic networks operationalised.
- Harmonised quality standards and mutual recognition mechanisms for WBE qualifications and certifications across the SADC region.
- Increased number of certified WBE practitioners, trainers, mentors, and enterprises contributing to value chains and job creation.
- Evidence of systemic mainstreaming of WBE capacity development and enterprise support into national policies, budgets, and institutions.
- Funding of WBE projects from national development funds and funders.

Table 15 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 3, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 15: **Implementation priorities**

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Develop and operationalise regional and national certification frameworks for WBE training, practitioners, and enterprises	SADC Secretariat, Member States (Education, Labour, Wildlife/Tourism Ministries), professional bodies, centres of excellence	Certification frameworks and standards; accreditation bodies and processes; mutual recognition agreements; quality assurance guidelines and audits
Strengthen and scale the capacity of key regional centres of excellence (AWEI, SAWC, ALU SOWC PDCs) and the SADC Leather Tanning Network	SADC Secretariat, AWEI, SAWC, ALU SOWC, Member States, private sector partners	Institutional strengthening plans; joint programme development; resource mobilisation strategies; networking and twinning arrangements between centres
Integrate WBE modules, qualifications, and competencies into national TVET, higher education, and professional development	Member States (Education and Labour Ministries), training institutions, SADC Secretariat, centres of excellence	Curriculum integration guidelines and toolkits; national qualifications framework alignment processes; lecturer/trainer capacity building; pilot integration programmes
Establish sustainable financing and governance models for regional centres of excellence and thematic networks	SADC Secretariat, centres of excellence, Member States, development partners, private sector	Business and sustainability plans for centres; diversified revenue models (training fees, consultancies, partnerships); governance charters and accountability frameworks

DRAFT V1

Develop and implement harmonised quality standards and mutual recognition mechanisms for WBE qualifications	SADC Secretariat, Member States, centres of excellence, professional bodies	Regional quality standards and benchmarks; mutual recognition protocols; regional quality assurance reviews and peer learning
Support certification of WBE practitioners, trainers, mentors, and enterprises	WBE Champions, training institutions, centres of excellence, Member States	Certification application and assessment systems; recognition of prior learning (RPL) mechanisms; enterprise certification schemes linked to market access
Monitor, evaluate, and document systemic integration and long-term outcomes of Phase 3	SADC Secretariat, Member State focal points, centres of excellence, academia	Integrated M&E framework with outcome indicators; impact studies; knowledge products and case studies; regional learning and sharing platforms

Key output: Quality certification systems operationalised, regional centres of excellence strengthened and networked, and WBE capacity development and enterprise support integrated into national systems, ensuring sustainable, high-quality, and scalable impact across the SADC region.

Key milestones by year 5

- **Month 6:** Assessments completed and shared regionally.
- **Month 12:** Champions platforms operational; first cohorts trained.
- **Year 3:** Measurable increase in trained practitioners.
- **Year 5:** Skills embedded; regional network active.

Outcomes by Year 5

- Comprehensive national and regional capacity needs assessments.
- SADC WBESF Champions formally designated, trained, and operational across all Member States.
- Foundational training modules per Roadmap step, competency frameworks, and basic curricula developed, accredited, and piloted.
- Targeted public awareness campaigns and community education programmes designed and launched.
- Baseline data, monitoring frameworks, and feedback mechanisms for capacity, awareness, and participation established

Flagship programme
SADC Wildlife Economy Skills Academy/Capacitation Programme

Components:

SADC WBE Champions training.

WBE Certification programmes.

Community enterprise management training.

Business leadership development.

Table 16: Further guidance/tools/resources

Resource	Link	Relevance
Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC)	https://wildlifecollege.org.za/	Accredited SADC-facing training in NRM, community development and enterprise skills.
ALU School of Wildlife Conservation	https://sowc.alueducation.com/	Wildlife-economy research, professional development and entrepreneurship programmes.
ALU SOWC programmes	https://sowc.alueducation.com/programmes/	Professional development courses and wildlife-economy research.
ALU SOWC Lessons Learned series	https://sowc.alueducation.com/lessons-learned/	Peer-learning case studies for Champions and CoPs.
African Wildlife Economy Community of Practice	https://sowc.alueducation.com/african-wildlife-economy-community-of-practice/	Regional learning partnership aligned with TFCA WBE CoP.
AWEI study / learning hub (incl. Liberalising Intra-Africa Trade)	https://wildlifeeconomy.info/	Matches the draft's reference to the liberalising intra-Africa trade e-learning journey. Course cited in draft: https://wildlifeeconomy.info/study/learn/liberalising-intra-africa-trade
AWEI about / institute	https://wildlifeeconomy.info/about/the-institute	Think-do tank for wild foods, wild enterprise and policy training.
FAO Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme	https://www.fao.org/in-action/swm-programme/en	Community rights, legal reform, food security and wildlife-use training tools; active in several SADC states.
IUCN SULi resources	https://www.iucnsuli.org/	Training-relevant evidence on livelihoods and sustainable use.
Namibia CBNRM / NACSO	https://nacso.org.na/business-enterprise-and-livelihoods/	Best-practice community enterprise, governance and benefit-sharing model for study tours.
Community Conservation Namibia	https://communityconservationnamibia.com/	Annual State of Community Conservation reports and enterprise data.
SADC TFCA peer-learning (GLTFCA WBE exchange)	https://tfcaportal.org/repository/gltfca-learning-exchange-programme-livelihoods-and-wbe	Existing SADC TFCA WBE peer-exchange model named in the Roadmap.

6. Step C: Creating an enabling business and investment environment

AS functional wildlife economy requires alignment across **market, financial, institutional, and infrastructure conditions.** The majority of private sector investors require **low regulatory risk and long-term certainty**. The investment environment should recognise the diversity of wildlife economy actors, ranging from community enterprises and SMMEs to large private investors, with tailored support mechanisms appropriate for each category. In contrast to these often larger scale investors, there are also local entrepreneurs and those starting or working in SMMEs, who invest skills, profits, etc., who form an important part of a self-sustaining wildlife economy. **Unlocking the wildlife economy in the SADC region requires shifting from fragmented regulation to an**

investment-ready system that enables finance, strengthens value chains, and scales inclusive growth.

Key issues in the region

- Limited access to finance and investment pipelines
- Underdeveloped/informal value chains and local processing
- Skills and capacity gaps
- Infrastructure constraints
- High perceived investment risk
- Inability to recognise or leverage existing value chains

Key requirements

- **Policy certainty, predictability and regulatory clarity** (linking to Step A):
  - Investors require transparency and a stable legal framework to treat wildlife as a viable economic asset.
  - Predictable, transparent regulatory systems (permits, licensing, trade)
  - Secure land and resource tenure (especially for communities and private operators)
  - Alignment of sectoral policies (wildlife, tourism, forestry, fisheries)
- **ALU SOWC Wildlife Economy Investment Index (WEII) categories:** As defined by the ALU School of Wildlife Conservation (SOWC) in its Wildlife Economy Investment Index (WEII), a supportive environment must, amongst other things, address:
  - **Infrastructure:** physical and digital connectivity to support value chains.
  - **Access to finance:** mechanisms to provide capital for wildlife-based enterprises.
  - **Security and stability:** ensuring investment safety and political stability.
  - **Security of tenure and property rights:** clear tenure and rights to use and manage wildlife resources. Clear land rights for investors and local partners.
  - **Ease of doing business:** streamlined registration for wildlife-linked enterprises (e.g., ecotourism, sustainable harvesting).
  - **Regulatory streamlining and certainty:** Creating a context that complies with the rule of law to allow the sector to operate and adapt effectively.
- **Data availability:** a regional "Wildlife Economy Intelligence Hub" providing baseline biodiversity data and market demand insights, as well as information on the economic value of wildlife economy products and services would provide data for informed and data-driven policy- and practice-decision-making.
- **Investor protection:** developing protocols that ensure predictability, transparency, accountability, and protection for those investing in wildlife economy activities and value chains.
- **Sustainable use principles:** ensuring all business activities align with conservation objectives and scientifically determined resource limits; clear investment frameworks; and secure land and resource tenure.
- **Market and value chain development:** clear demand for wildlife products/services, with functioning value chains linking production to markets and market intelligence and promotion.

- **Financial and investment conditions:** access to credit and blended finance, impact investment, conservation finance mechanisms, etc. as well as incentives, e.g. tax incentives, subsidies for sustainable practices, payments for ecosystem services, etc. Derisking of investments (guarantees, insurance); investment pipelines (bankable projects)
- **Infrastructure and logistics:** transport and access (roads, airports, ports); tourism infrastructure; cold chains and processing facilities.
- **Institutional strengthening:** of ministries, regulatory agencies and local governance systems.
- **Capacity building:** training programmes aligned with wildlife economy sectors, SMME development, community-based enterprise.

Table 17 provides an overview of potential risks and the related mitigation strategies and Table 18 lists the required resources for Step C.

Table 17: Roles and responsibilities

Stakeholder	Role
SADC Secretariat	Regional coordination; supportive policy enabling environment
WBE Champions	National leadership
Member States	Policy implementation
Private Sector	Investment, capacity building and markets
Communities	Participation, entrepreneurship, enterprise development and resource stewardship
NGOs	Capacity building, investment and facilitation
Academia	Research, M&E, capacity building and training

Table 18: Potential risks and mitigation

Potential risk	Mitigation strategy
Political changes – Elections or shifts in government priorities can disrupt long-term policy implementation	Enshrine the strategy in cross-party national frameworks; Develop and adopt model legislation and regulations for the intra-SADC wildlife-based economy; Foster stable international, regional, and national alliances that transcend election cycles
Governance risks – Weak enforcement of regulations, corruption, or administrative inefficiencies	Establish a robust regional governance framework with performance monitoring, reporting, and evaluation; Commit to regulatory harmonisation across sectors to mainstream the wildlife economy
Capacity gaps – Lack of technical expertise at the local level hinders inclusive value chain growth	Implement targeted workforce training programmes; Promote knowledge and technology transfer between Member States; Provide focused support in skills, knowledge, and finance to local communities, SMMEs, and entrepreneurs

DRAFT V1

Potential risk	Mitigation strategy
Global market volatility – External economic shocks or changes in international trade regulations (e.g. CITES) can impact viability	Focus on value chains with clear comparative advantages; Diversify markets beyond international exports to include local, national, and regional markets; Invest in "Brand SADC" marketing to build a resilient regional market identity
Reputational and market risk - value chains involving consumptive use face growing scrutiny in key international investor and consumer markets	Differentiated branding or certification (separating non-consumptive from consumptive products where appropriate), proactive stakeholder engagement with responsible investment bodies
Foreign dominance – Value chains dominated by foreign firms may limit benefits to local communities	Design policies that prioritise national gains; Establish local entrepreneurs as preferred suppliers; Use micro-credit and fiscal incentives to support community-based BioTrade cooperatives and small-scale operations
Climate and environmental risk – Extreme weather, biodiversity loss, and overexploitation threaten the natural asset base	Embed climate resilience, ecological safeguards, and sustainable resource management into all wildlife economy planning and investments
Social risks – Inequitable benefit-sharing, community exclusion, and land/resource conflicts	Implement Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) compliant value chains; Establish equitable and empowering partnerships with communities
Economic and market risks – Dependence on volatile sectors (e.g. tourism) and limited diversification of products and markets	Diversify wildlife economy products, services, and activities; Expand focus on local, national, and regional markets
Financial risks – Limited access to capital, high perceived risk by investors, and macroeconomic instability	Improve data collection for data-driven decision-making; De-risk the wildlife economy through blended finance, investment guarantees, regulatory certainty, and diversified markets
Exclusion of vulnerable groups – Women, youth, and people with disabilities may be marginalised from economic benefits	Ensure extensive consultation and targeted support; Embed mandatory inclusion measures across governance, finance, skills development, and enterprise support
Variable commitment among Member States	Strengthen regional peer learning and periodic progress reviews
Limited national budget allocation	Integrate WBE activities into national development and sector budgets
Staff turnover within implementing institutions	Institutionalise training and knowledge management systems
Overly ambitious implementation expectations	Prioritise implementation based on available resources and phased approaches

Table 19: Required resources

Type of resource	Examples
Human capital	Wildlife economy specialists; economists; investment and finance experts; value chain specialists; business development advisors; entrepreneurship trainers; tourism development experts; market access specialists; regulatory and compliance officials; community facilitators; processors and product developers; digital systems specialists; project preparation experts
Institutional	Dedicated wildlife economy units within government; investment promotion agencies; development finance institutions; national wildlife economy coordinating mechanisms; SMME support agencies; centres of excellence; incubation and accelerator programmes; community governance structures; public-private partnership platforms

DRAFT V1

Type of resource	Examples
Finance	National government budgets; development partner grants; public-private partnerships (PPPs); blended finance facilities; wildlife economy investment funds; concessional finance; guarantee facilities; first-loss capital; venture capital; impact investment funds; climate and biodiversity finance (PES, carbon, biodiversity credits); microfinance and community enterprise financing
Technology	Wildlife Economy Intelligence Hub; biodiversity databases; GIS and remote sensing systems; digital permitting systems; traceability platforms; blockchain-enabled product tracking; e-commerce platforms; investment portals; market intelligence systems; digital compliance and monitoring systems; mobile applications for communities and enterprises
Infrastructure and logistics	Roads and transport networks; border posts; airports and air access infrastructure; tourism facilities; visitor centres; processing facilities; cold-chain infrastructure; storage facilities; energy infrastructure; water infrastructure; rural connectivity and telecommunications systems
Research, knowledge and evidence	Economic valuation studies; biodiversity assessments; market research; investment climate diagnostics; value chain assessments; feasibility studies; business case development; baseline data; monitoring and evaluation systems; applied research partnerships with universities and research institutions
Skills development and capacity building	Technical and vocational training programmes; entrepreneurship development; financial literacy programmes; investment readiness support; community enterprise training; wildlife product processing skills; tourism service training; digital skills development; mentorship and incubation programmes
External expertise and technical assistance	Investment structuring advisors; legal and regulatory experts; blended finance specialists; conservation finance experts; value chain development advisors; market access experts; certification specialists; biodiversity economists; digital innovation partners; international development partners
Market development resources	Regional branding initiatives; trade promotion programmes; export development support; certification systems; quality standards; regional and international trade fairs; buyer-seller platforms; digital marketplaces; destination marketing programmes
Natural capital	Healthy wildlife populations; protected areas; conservancies; TFCAs; fisheries resources; forests and natural products; ecosystem services; biodiversity assets that underpin wildlife economy enterprises and investment opportunities

Recommendations

- **Strengthen investment readiness:** develop national wildlife economy investment plans and pipelines; package bankable projects and pipelines, establish blended finance and de-risking mechanisms; promote conservation finance and impact investment
- **Build competitive value chains:** prioritise high potential and high growth sectors (wildlife-based tourism, wildlife ranching and products, fisheries and aquaculture and BioTrade and natural products); invest in local value addition to reduce raw exports; and strengthen market access (regional and international).
- **Improve and expand access to finance:** establish dedicated wildlife economy financing facilities (like the SADC TFCA Financing Facility); create dedicated financing windows for SMMEs and community enterprises; expand credit, guarantees and incentives; promote blended finance and de-risking tools.
- **Strengthen skills and capacity:** scale technical training in business and entrepreneurship; wildlife economy enterprises, etc. and support community-based enterprises to have access to this.

- **Invest in infrastructure and systems:** improve tourism and trade infrastructure; improve rural access and connectivity; develop digital systems for permits, traceability and market access.
- **Improve market access:** strengthen national, regional and international market linkages.
- **Reduce risk and increase stability:** ensure policy consistency and transparency; strengthen governance and enforcement; develop risk mitigation tools (insurance, guarantees).
- **Promote inclusive growth:** ensure community participation in value chains; strengthen benefit-sharing mechanisms; support women and youth entrepreneurship.

With targeted reforms and coordinated investment, the wildlife economy can become a cornerstone of inclusive growth, job creation, and conservation-led development across SADC.

Priority actions

- Reduce risk and increase stability
- Strengthen investment readiness
- Strengthen skills and capacity
- Improve and expand access to finance
- Invest in infrastructure and systems

Implementation roadmap

Phase 1: Investment Readiness (0–18 months) – "Make it Investible"

Focus: Establishing the enabling investment environment, building investable wildlife economy opportunities, and strengthening the financial ecosystem to unlock public and private investment.

Key outputs

- National wildlife economy investment plans developed and approved.
- Investment climate diagnostics completed.
- Policy certainty and regulatory clarity for wildlife economy investment strengthened (including tenure, permitting and sector alignment).
- Priority wildlife economy value chains identified and prioritised.
- National pipelines of bankable wildlife economy projects developed.
- Blended finance facilities and de-risking mechanisms designed.
- SADC Wildlife Economy Investment Portal established.
- Market intelligence systems initiated, including demand, pricing and investment data.
- Early digital permitting and investment information systems launched.

Table 20 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 1, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

DRAFT V1

Table 20: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Conduct national investment climate diagnostics and value chain assessments	Member States (Finance, Environment, Wildlife, Tourism, Trade Ministries), SADC Secretariat	Investment climate assessments; value chain analyses; regulatory reviews; investor consultations
Develop national wildlife economy investment plans aligned with national development priorities	Member States, National Planning Commissions, SADC Secretariat	National investment planning processes; cross-sector planning workshops; technical advisory support
Identify, prepare and package bankable wildlife economy projects	Member States, Development Finance Institutions, private sector, conservation organisations	Project preparation facilities; feasibility studies; business case development; investment readiness support
Design blended finance facilities and de-risking mechanisms	Ministries of Finance, Development Finance Institutions, SADC Secretariat, development	Blended finance facility design; guarantee schemes; first-loss funds; concessional finance mechanisms
Establish the SADC Wildlife Economy Investment Portal and digital investment systems	SADC Secretariat, Member States, regional technology partners	Regional digital platform development; project pipeline database; digital permitting systems; investment information portal
Strengthen market intelligence and investment promotion systems	SADC Secretariat, Member States, investment promotion agencies, research institutions	Market assessments; pricing and demand databases; investor outreach; regional investment forums

Key output: Investment-ready pipeline of WBE enterprises, financing architecture and enabling investment environment established. A possible quick win could be to expand the model of the SADC TFCA Financing Facility to cover broader wildlife economy sectors.

Phase 2: Market and Value Chain Development (1–3 years) – "Make it work"

Focus: Operationalising wildlife economy value chains, expanding enterprise development, strengthening market access, and scaling investment to create inclusive and competitive wildlife economy systems.

Key outputs

- Priority wildlife economy value chains operationalised and strengthened across tourism, wildlife, forestry and fisheries sectors.
- SMMEs and community-based enterprises established and scaled.
- Access to finance expanded through blended finance, guarantees, credit facilities and financial inclusion mechanisms.
- Tourism, trade and logistics infrastructure investments initiated.
- Digital systems for permitting, traceability, certification and market access expanded.
- Skills development, entrepreneurship and business support programmes implemented across priority sectors.
- Local value addition and processing capacity strengthened.
- Regional and international market linkages enhanced.

DRAFT

Table 21 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 2, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 21: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Strengthen priority wildlife economy value chains and promote local value addition	Member States, private sector, producer associations, community organisations	Value chain development programmes; business partnerships; processing facilities; market linkage initiatives
Support SME and community enterprise development	Member States, SME development agencies, financial institutions, NGOs	Business incubation programmes; enterprise development services; mentoring and technical assistance
Expand access to finance through blended finance, guarantees and financial inclusion mechanisms	Ministries of Finance, commercial banks, Development Finance Institutions, development partners	Credit facilities; guarantee schemes; blended finance instruments; community finance programmes
Invest in tourism, transport and trade infrastructure	Member States, infrastructure agencies, private investors, SADC Secretariat	Public-private partnerships; infrastructure investment plans; tourism facility upgrades; logistics corridor development
Expand digital systems for permitting, traceability, certification and market access	SADC Secretariat, Member States, technology partners	Digital permitting systems; traceability platforms; e-commerce and market information systems; certification databases
Scale skills development and entrepreneurship programmes	Member States, training institutions, universities, private sector	Technical and vocational training; entrepreneurship programmes; business advisory services; leadership development

Key output: Functioning, competitive and inclusive wildlife economy value chains supporting sustainable livelihoods, investment and regional trade.

Phase 3: Scaling and Competitiveness (3–5 years) – "Make it globally competitive"

Focus: Scaling investment, strengthening regional and global competitiveness, fostering innovation, and embedding resilience to position the SADC wildlife economy as a globally recognised, sustainable and investment-ready sector.

Key outputs

- Regional and international market access expanded across priority wildlife economy value chains.
- Regional branding, certification and quality assurance systems established and widely adopted.

DRAFT V1

- Large-scale private sector investment mobilised across wildlife economy sectors.
- Innovative wildlife economy products, services and business models commercialised.
- Digital systems for traceability, certification and market intelligence fully operational and integrated.
- Strategic infrastructure fully leveraged to support trade, tourism and investment.
- Climate resilience, biodiversity safeguards and market risk management systems embedded.
- Investment aligned with long-term conservation, community and sustainable development outcomes.

Table** 22 **presents the implementation priorities for Phase** 3**, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action. .

Table 22: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Expand regional and international market access for wildlife economy products and services	SADC Secretariat, Member States, trade and investment promotion agencies, private sector	Regional trade agreements; export promotion programmes; trade missions; international marketing campaigns
Develop and implement regional branding, certification and quality assurance systems	SADC Secretariat, standards bodies, Member States, industry associations	Regional certification frameworks; quality standards; eco-labelling schemes; branding strategies
Scale digital innovation and technology across wildlife economy sectors	Member States, technology partners, research institutions, private sector	Integrated digital platforms; traceability systems; market intelligence platforms; innovation hubs
Mobilise large-scale private investment and expand blended finance instruments	Ministries of Finance, Development Finance Institutions, private investors, development partners	Investment promotion strategies; blended finance facilities; impact investment funds; public-private partnerships
Promote innovation in wildlife economy products, services and business models	Research institutions, universities, private sector, innovation hubs	Research and development programmes; technology transfer; business accelerators; innovation grants
Embed climate resilience, biodiversity safeguards and adaptive management	Member States, conservation agencies, SADC Secretariat, development partners	Climate adaptation plans; biodiversity monitoring systems; natural capital accounting; resilience financing

Key output: A competitive, resilient and export-ready wildlife economy that attracts sustained investment, delivers inclusive economic growth and strengthens biodiversity conservation across the SADC region.

Cross-cutting enablers (run throughout all phases)

These are continuous foundations (0–5 years):

- Policy coordination across sectors (wildlife, tourism, forestry, fisheries)
- Capacity building for government, private sector, and communities
- Governance and institutional strengthening
- Environmental and social safeguards
- Biodiversity monitoring
- Socio-economic data collection, analysis and reporting

DRAFT V1

- Social inclusion and benefit-sharing systems
- Risk management (political, financial, environmental)

Outcomes by year 5

- Increased investment flows into the wildlife economy
- Competitive, diversified value chains
- Expanded job creation and rural livelihoods
- Improved contribution to GDP and exports
- Stronger alignment between conservation and economic incentives
- Improved resilience to climate and market shocks
- Improved stakeholder participation and stewardship in conservation and wildlife-based economy

Flagship programme

SADC Wildlife Economy Enterprise & Investment Hub

Components

- Wildlife Economy Investment Pipeline
- Wildlife Economy Finance Facility
- Investment Readiness & Enterprise Accelerator
- SADC Wildlife Economy Intelligence Hub
- Enabling Environment Scorecard, linked to the ALU SOWC Wildlife Economy Investment Index (WEII)

Table 23: Additional resources/tools

Resource	Link	Relevance
ALU SOWC Wildlife Economy Investment Index (WEII)	https://sowc.alueducation.com/weii/	Investment-readiness scorecard explicitly referenced in the Roadmap.
BioTrade Africa Advisory Group	https://sowc.alueducation.com/our-partners/biotrade-africa/	
SADC TFCA Financing Facility	https://www.sadc.int/project-portfolio/sadc-tfca-financing-facility	Existing regional blended-finance mechanism to expand, not duplicate. Grants portal announced by SADC: https://sadctfcaff.praxisgms.co.za/
SADC TFCA FF open calls / livelihoods funding	https://www.sadc.int/latest-news/funding-opportunities-sustainable-livelihoods-and-conservation	Live example of wildlife-economy / green-livelihood finance windows.
SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap	https://www.sadc.int/document/sadc-industrialisation-strategy-and-roadmap-english	Align WBE investment with beneficiation, SMMEs and regional value chains.
World Bank – South Africa wildlife economy / Rhino Bond	https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2025/02/27/south-africa-s-wildlife-economy-generates-jobs-for-rural-communities	Outcome-based conservation finance model relevant to de-risking.

DRAFT V1

Resource	Link	Relevance
World Bank Global Wildlife Program context	https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2024/05/22/to-grow-strong-grow-green	Nature-as-asset and protected-area investment case.
UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative	https://unctad.org/topic/trade-and-environment/biotrade	Investment and trade standards for biodiversity-based businesses.
ALU SOWC Entrepreneurship in Conservation / Beyond Tourism Incubator	https://sowc.alueducation.com/entrepreneurship-in-conservation/	Non-tourism wildlife enterprise incubation model.
GEF Funding	https://www.thegef.org/who-we-are/funding	National-lelve funding available to support countries to meet the objectives of international agreements and conventions.

7. Step D: Developing value chains & wildlife economy enterprises

This step focuses on translating the Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework into practical economic opportunities by strengthening existing value chains and supporting the growth of new wildlife-based enterprises. It prioritises value addition across key sectors such as wild meat, wildlife products, tourism, and related services, while improving linkages between producers, processors, and markets. Targeted support is provided to community, private-sector, and public enterprises to enhance competitiveness, product quality, and market access. By building viable and inclusive value chains, Member States can generate jobs, increase local incomes, and strengthen the contribution of the wildlife economy to regional development.

Key issues in the region

- **Fragmented and informal value chains focused on raw exports:** Most wildlife-based economy activities in the region remain characterised by informal, uncoordinated value chains that prioritise primary production, the export of raw or minimally processed products, resulting in low value capture, limited industrialisation, and missed opportunities for local economic multipliers.
- **Limited local processing and value addition capacity**: There is insufficient investment in processing infrastructure, technology, and skills, leaving most wildlife products (game meat, skins, non-timber forest products, and insects) exported in raw form with minimal beneficiation, packaging, or branding within Member States.
- **Weak support for SMMEs and community enterprises in value chains**: Small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs), as well as community-based producers, face significant barriers in accessing markets, finance, technical support, and business development services, limiting their ability to participate meaningfully in higher-value segments of wildlife economy value chains.
- **Inconsistent metrics, data, and monitoring systems**: The absence of harmonised indicators, data collection frameworks, and monitoring systems for wildlife economy value chains hampers evidence-based planning, performance tracking, investment decisions, and regional comparability across Member States.

- **Inadequate market linkages and access**: Producers and enterprises, particularly in rural and community settings, struggle to connect to reliable domestic, regional, and international markets due to weak market information systems, limited buyer networks, and barriers to entry in formal supply chains.
- **Insufficient infrastructure for processing, storage, and logistics:** Critical gaps in cold-chain facilities, abattoirs, tanneries, storage, and transport infrastructure constrain the development of viable value chains, increase post-harvest losses, and raise costs for producers and processors.
- **Weak standards, certification, and quality assurance systems:** Inconsistent or absent standards, certification schemes, quality control and traceability mechanisms for wildlife products undermine consumer confidence, limit access to premium markets, and create non-tariff barriers to intra-SADC and international trade.
- **Poor coordination and governance among value chain actors:** Fragmented relationships between primary producers, processors, traders, exporters, regulators, and support institutions result in inefficiencies, information asymmetries, and weak collective action to upgrade and govern value chains effectively.
- **Limited access to finance and investment for value chain upgrading**: Wildlife economy enterprises, especially SMMEs and community initiatives, face severe constraints in securing affordable finance, blended capital, and patient investment needed for equipment, technology adoption, and scaling of processing and value addition activities.
- **Uneven distribution of benefits along value chains**: Benefits from wildlife economy activities are often concentrated among a few actors (mainly exporters and intermediaries), while primary producers and community-level participants capture only a small share of the final value, undermining inclusive growth and local livelihood outcomes.

The effective development of wildlife economy value chains across SADC is supported by the broader enabling architecture of the WBESF, which promotes value addition, trade facilitation, industrialisation, and inclusive socio-economic benefits through sustainable use of wildlife resources. The WBESF provides the strategic direction for strengthening value chains, reducing trade barriers, and enhancing competitiveness. Guiding strategies (non-binding) translate these protocols into actionable programmes and emphasise value chain development, local processing, SMME participation, and regional market integration. The guiding strategies provide implementation direction, focusing on upgrading primary production, building processing capacity, improving market access, and ensuring more equitable benefit distribution.

The overall SADC WBESF and this value chain development dimension are guided by, and aligned with, SADC Industrialisation Strategy and relevant protocols. However, there is a **"value chain and enterprise development gap"** that exists in terms of national policies and programmes often remaining focused on raw production and exports rather than being fully aligned with the value addition, industrialisation, and inclusive growth objectives of the WBESF. The **alignment of national value chain strategies, SMME support programmes, standards and certification systems, infrastructure investment,**

and data/monitoring frameworks with the SADC WBESF provides a significant opportunity to expand local processing, strengthen wildlife economy enterprises, create decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods (with particular emphasis on women, youth, and people with disabilities), improve benefit distribution, and enhance the contribution of the wildlife-based economy to industrialisation and socio-economic development locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Key requirements

Prioritise high-potential value chains (tourism, wildlife ranching e.g. game meat and by-products such as hides and bones; non-timber forest products (NTFPs) e.g. foods (mopane worms, marula, wild fruits, baobab), oils, resins, fibres, medicinal plants, crafts, termites; fisheries e.g. kapenta, sardines, mackerel. Support local beneficiation and enterprise development, using WBESF for localised metrics. This aligns with WBESF SO1 and SADC Industrialisation Strategy (value addition, regional chains).

Enterprise ecosystem development

- Business incubation.
- Market intelligence.
- Technical support services.

Production systems

- Sustainable resource management.
- Producer organisations.
- Quality assurance systems.

Value addition

- Processing facilities (including investments in).
- Product innovation.
- Technology transfer.

Trade facilitation

- Regional standards.
- Certification systems.
- Market information.

Roles and responsibilities

Value chain development and wildlife economy enterprises directly support WBESF SO2 (inclusion) and SO3 (enabling environment through alliances), as well as regional objectives for industrialisation, trade facilitation, and sustainable economic growth. Its aim is to **strengthen coordinated action among stakeholders to upgrade fragmented wildlife value chains, increase local processing and value addition, improve market access, support SMME and community enterprise development, and establish consistent standards and metrics.** This is in line with the SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, the SADC Industrialisation Strategy, and the Green Economy Strategy. Table 22 shows the most critical stakeholders as well as their roles and responsibilities in developing value chains and wildlife economy enterprises.

DRAFT V1

Table 24: Roles and responsibilities in value chain development and wildlife economy enterprises

Stakeholder	Key responsibilities
SADC Secretariat (FANR Directorate)	Regional coordination of value chain strategies; development of harmonised standards, metrics and monitoring frameworks; facilitation of cross-border trade and investment; regional knowledge management and peer learning platforms
SADC WBE Champions (Two per Member State)	National drivers of value chain upgrading; coordinate ministries, private sector and communities; identify priority value chains; support pilot projects and scaling; share lessons and tools through SADC WBE TFCA Community of Practice
Member States / National governments	Appoint focal points and value chain coordination units; integrate wildlife economy value chains into national industrial, trade, agriculture and tourism policies and plans; develop enabling regulatory frameworks and investment incentives for processing and SMMEs
SADC WBE TFCA Community of Practice	Cross-border peer learning and joint value chain initiatives; identification of transboundary opportunities; harmonisation of standards and market access approaches across TFCAs
Academic and training partners	Specialised training and research on value chain analysis, upgrading strategies, processing technologies and enterprise development; curriculum development and certification support; applied research and data generation
Private sector, industry associations and market actors	Lead investment in processing, branding and market linkages; provide mentorship, offtake agreements and technical support to SMMEs and community enterprises; participate in standards development and quality assurance
NGOs, CBNRM structures and community organisations	Mobilise and support community participation in value chains; facilitate benefit-sharing mechanisms; build local enterprise capacity and governance; link communities to markets, finance and technical support
Development partners and financial institutions	Provide blended finance, grants and technical assistance for value chain upgrading and infrastructure; support SMME access to finance; assist with standards, certification and market development programmes

Table 25 provides an overview of potential risks and the related mitigation strategies and Table 26 lists the required resources for Step D.

Table 25: Risks and mitigation

Potential risks	Mitigation strategy
Weak market demand - Many wildlife-based enterprises struggle with inconsistent or limited demand for their products and services, often due to poor market linkages, weak branding, lack of certification, and heavy reliance on a narrow set of buyers or export markets.	**Market diversification** involves actively developing multiple market channels (domestic, regional, tourism-linked, and certified export markets), improving product quality and packaging, obtaining relevant certifications, and strengthening marketing and distribution networks to reduce dependence on single markets and improve revenue stability.
Low enterprise survival - A significant number of community-based and SMME wildlife economy enterprises fail within the first few years due to weak business models, limited management and financial skills, cash-flow challenges, and insufficient ongoing support after initial training or startup.	**Business incubation** provides structured, hands-on support through mentoring, access to shared facilities and equipment, business development services, market linkages, and tailored technical assistance during the vulnerable early stages, significantly improving enterprise survival rates and long-term viability.

DRAFT V1

Elite capture - Benefits from wildlife economy enterprises and value chains are frequently captured by a small group of influential individuals or local elites, leading to inequitable benefit distribution, reduced community ownership, and weakened social sustainability of initiatives.	**Transparent governance** requires clear rules for benefit-sharing, participatory decision-making structures, independent oversight mechanisms, regular public reporting, and accountability systems that ensure broader community participation and more equitable distribution of income and opportunities.
Resource overharvesting - Unsustainable harvesting of wildlife resources (such as game, non-timber forest products, or edible insects) to supply enterprises can lead to resource depletion, habitat degradation, and long-term collapse of the natural resource base that underpins enterprise viability.	**Sustainable harvest protocols** involve the development and enforcement of science-based harvesting quotas, seasonal restrictions, community-based resource management plans, regular monitoring, and certification requirements that keep harvesting within ecological limits while supporting viable and responsible enterprises.
Limited finance - Wildlife economy enterprises, especially community-based and small enterprises, face major barriers in accessing affordable finance for startup capital, working capital, equipment, or value addition due to perceived high risk, lack of collateral, and limited tailored financial products.	**Dedicated enterprise funds** (such as blended finance facilities, revolving funds, or grant-loan combinations specifically designed for wildlife economy businesses) can reduce risk for lenders, provide patient and flexible capital, and improve access to finance for viable enterprises that would otherwise be excluded from conventional funding sources.
Environmental conditions - such as climate change and diseases which may affect movement of products nationally and cross-border, e.g. Foot and Mouth Disease	**Harmonisation in disease management regionally** - integrated and harmonised approaches to disease management and the One Health approach across the region.
Inadequate framework linking economic performance to biodiversity outcomes	A **simplified results framework** linking economic performance to biodiversity outcomes.

Table 26: Required resources

Type of resource	Examples
Human capital	Entrepreneurs and enterprise founders; business advisors and mentors; value chain specialists; market access and trade experts; processing and product development technicians; certification and quality assurance officers; community enterprise facilitators; investment readiness advisors; digital systems specialists
Institutional	Dedicated wildlife economy coordination units within government; SMME support agencies; investment promotion agencies; incubation and accelerator programmes; community governance and enterprise structures; public-private partnership platforms; value chain coordination mechanisms; national and regional enterprise development bodies
Finance	Blended finance facilities; wildlife economy investment funds; concessional finance and guarantee facilities; dedicated enterprise funds; impact investment funds; climate and biodiversity finance (PES, carbon, biodiversity credits); microfinance and community enterprise financing; first-loss capital and venture capital for early-stage wildlife enterprises
Technology	Processing technologies and equipment; traceability and blockchain-enabled product tracking platforms; digital permitting and compliance systems; market intelligence and e-commerce platforms; GIS and remote sensing for resource monitoring; digital monitoring and reporting systems for value chains; mobile applications for community enterprises and producers
Infrastructure and logistics	Processing facilities (abattoirs, tanneries, packing houses); cold-chain and storage infrastructure; transport networks and logistics systems; border posts and trade facilitation infrastructure; energy and water infrastructure supporting processing; rural connectivity and telecommunications for market access
Research, knowledge and evidence	Value chain assessments and mapping studies; market research and demand analysis; investment climate diagnostics; feasibility studies and business case development; baseline data and monitoring systems for value chains; applied research partnerships with universities and research institutions
Skills development and capacity building	Entrepreneurship and business development training; value chain upgrading and processing skills; financial literacy and investment readiness programmes; community enterprise training; quality control, certification and standards training; mentorship, coaching and incubation programmes

DRAFT V1

External expertise and technical assistance	Value chain development advisors; market access and trade specialists; certification and standards experts; blended finance and investment structuring advisors; legal and regulatory experts for trade facilitation; conservation finance and biodiversity economists; digital innovation and traceability partners
Market development resources	Investors, buyers and sellers networks and platforms; regional branding and trade promotion programmes; certification systems and quality standards; buyer-seller matching platforms and trade fairs; digital marketplaces; market intelligence systems; legislation, permitting processes and regulatory frameworks enabling intra-regional and international trade
Natural capital	Healthy and sustainably managed wildlife populations; protected areas, conservancies and Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs); fisheries, forests and other natural products; ecosystem services that underpin viable wildlife economy enterprises and investment opportunities

Recommendations

1. **Conduct value chain analyses -** Carry out participatory value chain mapping and analysis for priority wildlife products (e.g., wild meat, leather, tourism, and bioprospecting). This includes identifying key actors, product flows, bottlenecks, value addition opportunities, and market access barriers. This process should be led by the SADC Secretariat in collaboration with Member States, research institutions, NGOs, and the private sector, with strong involvement of communities to capture local realities and traditional knowledge. Use mixed methods (surveys, stakeholder workshops, and field assessments), disaggregate data by gender, youth, and disability, and regularly update analyses to reflect changing market conditions. Member States may initially prioritise a limited number of strategic wildlife value chains based on comparative advantage, market demand, conservation benefits and socio-economic impact before expanding to additional value chains.

2. Establish incubation hubs, business services, and credit access - Set up regional and national incubation hubs that provide business development support, technical training, mentorship, market linkages, and access to finance for wildlife-based enterprises. Member States (through relevant ministries and agencies) working with the private sector, NGOs, development finance institutions, and commercial banks. SADC WBE Champions can help coordinate and advocate for these hubs. To implement, there is a need to combine physical hubs with digital platforms; offer blended finance models (grants + loans + guarantees); partner with existing SMME support programmes; and ensure services are accessible to women, youth, and people with disabilities through targeted outreach and flexible delivery.

3. Promote local processing and public–private–community partnerships - Support the establishment of local processing facilities (e.g., for leather, meat, or crafts) and facilitate structured partnerships that allow communities to participate meaningfully in value addition and benefit-sharing. Communities (as resource owners and primary producers), the private sector (as investors and market players), and Member States (as regulators and enablers), with NGOs should play a facilitation and capacity-building role. This can be implemented by developing Public-Private-Community Partnerships (PPCPs) with clear agreements on benefit-sharing, equity, and skills transfer; support joint ventures and outgrower schemes; and use policy incentives (e.g., tax breaks or land access) to encourage local processing.

4. Develop localised metrics linked to SADC WBESF - Adapt the SADC Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework (WBESF) indicators into practical, country-specific and community-level metrics that track progress on value chain development, inclusion, and sustainability. SADC Secretariat should provide the overarching framework, while Member States and SADC WBE Champions lead national adaptation. NGOs and research institutions support data collection and monitoring, with input from communities. To implement, develop simple, measurable indicators (e.g., number of enterprises created, income generated, participation of women and youth); integrate them into national monitoring systems; and conduct regular participatory reviews.

5. Align with SADC Green Economy Strategy (BioTrade) and Industrialisation Roadmap - Ensure that wildlife-based value chain initiatives are explicitly integrated into national green economy strategies and industrialisation plans, while applying BioTrade principles (sustainability, equity, and value addition). SADC Secretariat to lead regional alignment and to provide technical guidance, while Member States are responsible for incorporating wildlife-based value chains into national policies, strategies, and budgets. Private sector and NGOs support implementation and innovation.

Priority actions - what must happen first

1. Strengthen production/processing in priority value chains.
2. Support SMMEs/communities through TFCA centres of excellence e.g. Leather tanning centres
3. Share pilot outcomes via SADC WBESF Champions and SADC WBESF TFCA CoPs.

Implementation roadmap

Phase 1 (0–18 months) – Diagnostics, bankable projects, pilots – "Establish evidence base and launch viable pilots"

Focus: Conducting comprehensive diagnostics of wildlife economy value chains, identifying and preparing bankable projects, and launching targeted pilot initiatives to generate evidence, build stakeholder confidence, and demonstrate viable models for enterprise development across selected Member States and TFCAs.

Key outputs

- Comprehensive value chain assessments and mapping completed for priority wildlife products and services.
- Pipeline of bankable wildlife economy projects developed and ready for investment.
- Pilot value chain initiatives launched in selected sites and TFCAs with active community and SMME participation.
- Baseline data and monitoring frameworks for value chain performance and enterprise development established.
- Stakeholder coordination mechanisms and public-private platforms for value chain development activated.
- Initial market linkages and offtake agreements secured for pilot enterprises.

- Lessons and evidence from pilots documented for scaling in subsequent phases.

Table 27 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 1, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 27: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Conduct national and regional value chain assessments and mapping for priority wildlife products	SADC Secretariat, Member States, academic partners (AWEI, SAWC), value chain specialists	Standardised value chain assessment tools; stakeholder mapping; market and economic analysis; diagnostic reports
Identify and prepare bankable wildlife economy projects and investment proposals	Member States, SADC Secretariat, development finance institutions, private sector partners	Project preparation facilities; feasibility studies; business case development templates; investor-ready project pipelines
Design and launch pilot value chain initiatives in selected sites and TFCAs	Member States, WBE Champions, community structures, private sector offtakers	Pilot project design guidelines; community enterprise selection criteria; partnership agreements; seed funding mechanisms
Establish value chain coordination platforms and public-private dialogue mechanisms	SADC Secretariat, Member States, private sector associations, NGOs	Terms of reference for coordination platforms; regular stakeholder forums; public-private partnership frameworks
Develop baseline data systems and monitoring frameworks for value chain pilots	SADC Secretariat, Member State focal points, research partners	Monitoring and evaluation frameworks; data collection tools; digital dashboards; reporting templates
Secure initial market linkages and offtake agreements for pilot enterprises	Private sector buyers, WBE Champions, enterprise support organisations	Buyer-seller matching events; offtake agreement templates; market linkage support programmes
Document lessons and evidence from pilots for knowledge sharing and scaling	SADC Secretariat, WBE Champions, academic partners	Documentation guidelines; case study development; regional learning workshops; knowledge products

Key output: Evidence base established, bankable project pipeline created, and viable pilot value chain initiatives launched to demonstrate workable models for wildlife economy enterprise development in the SADC region.

Phase 2 (18 months – 3 years) – Operationalise value chains, scale SMMEs – "Strengthen and expand wildlife economy enterprises"

Focus: Operationalising and strengthening priority value chains while scaling up support to SMMEs and community enterprises through improved processing capacity, market access, finance, and business development services.

Key outputs

- Functional processing facilities and value addition infrastructure operational in priority value chains.
- Increased number of viable and growing SMMEs and community enterprises participating in wildlife economy value chains.
- Improved market access and offtake arrangements for wildlife products and services.
- Enhanced access to finance and blended funding for wildlife economy enterprises.

- Strengthened business development support and incubation services for SMMEs.
- Improved standards, quality assurance, and certification systems adopted by enterprises.
- Expanded employment and income generation, particularly for women, youth, and people with disabilities.

Table 28 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 2, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 28: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Establish and operationalise processing facilities and value addition infrastructure	Member States, private sector investors, development partners, community enterprises	Infrastructure development plans; public-private partnership models; equipment procurement and installation support
Provide business development support, incubation and mentoring to SMMEs and community enterprises	Incubators, WBE Champions, business development service providers, NGOs	Incubation programmes; mentorship matching; business advisory services; enterprise growth support packages
Facilitate market access, buyer linkages and trade promotion for wildlife products	Private sector associations, SADC Secretariat, trade promotion agencies	Trade fairs and buyer-seller platforms; market linkage programmes; export readiness support; digital marketplaces
Develop and operationalise blended finance and dedicated enterprise funding mechanisms	Development finance institutions, SADC Secretariat, Member States, impact investors	Blended finance facilities; guarantee schemes; dedicated wildlife economy funds; investment readiness programmes
Strengthen standards, certification and quality assurance systems for wildlife products	Standards bodies, certification agencies, academic partners, private sector	Certification programmes; quality management systems; training on standards and compliance; mutual recognition arrangements
Expand processing, packaging and logistics capacity for selected value chains	Private sector, Member States, development partners	Technical assistance; technology transfer; cold-chain and logistics support programmes
Monitor enterprise performance and value chain outcomes and adapt support accordingly	SADC Secretariat, Member State focal points, WBE Champions	Enterprise monitoring systems; performance dashboards; regular review and adaptive management processes

Key output: Priority value chains operationalised with strengthened processing capacity, scaled SMME participation, improved market access, and enhanced enterprise performance across participating Member States.

Phase 3 (3–5 years) – Regional integration, innovation, competitiveness – "Achieve regional scale and global competitiveness"

Focus: Achieving deeper regional integration of wildlife economy value chains, driving innovation, improving competitiveness, and positioning SADC wildlife products and enterprises in regional and international markets.

Key outputs

- Harmonised standards, certification systems and regulatory frameworks supporting cross-border value chains.
- Regional value chain platforms and coordinated trade and investment mechanisms operational.

- Increased innovation, technology adoption and product development in wildlife economy enterprises.
- Stronger regional branding and competitiveness of SADC wildlife products and services in international markets.
- Sustainable financing models and investment flows into wildlife economy value chains established.
- Evidence of improved regional trade, industrialisation and inclusive economic benefits from wildlife economy activities.
- Institutionalised capacity for continuous value chain upgrading and innovation across Member States.

Table 29 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 3, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 29: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Harmonise standards, certification and regulatory frameworks for wildlife products across Member States	SADC Secretariat, Member States, standards bodies, certification agencies	Regional standards harmonisation processes; mutual recognition agreements; regulatory alignment workshops
Establish and operationalise regional value chain platforms and coordination mechanisms	SADC Secretariat, TFCA bodies, Member States, private sector associations	Regional value chain working groups; cross-border trade facilitation platforms; joint investment promotion initiatives
Promote innovation, technology adoption and new product development in wildlife value chains	Academic partners, private sector, technology providers	Innovation challenges and grants; technology transfer programmes; research and development partnerships; pilot innovation projects
Develop and implement regional branding and international market positioning strategies	SADC Secretariat, Member States, private sector, marketing agencies	Regional branding strategies; destination and product marketing campaigns; participation in international trade fairs and platforms
Mobilise and sustain long-term investment and blended finance for value chain upgrading	Development finance institutions, impact investors, SADC Secretariat, Member States	Sustainable financing frameworks; regional investment vehicles; public-private investment platforms
Strengthen monitoring, learning and adaptive management systems for regional value chain performance	SADC Secretariat, Member State focal points, research institutions	Regional monitoring frameworks; knowledge management systems; regional learning and exchange platforms
Institutionalise value chain development capacity within national and regional institutions	Member States, SADC Secretariat, training institutions	Policy integration; institutional mainstreaming; long-term capacity building and succession planning

Key output: Regionally integrated, innovative and competitive wildlife economy value chains that deliver sustainable economic benefits, increased trade, and inclusive growth across the SADC region.

Cross-cutting enablers

Link to Steps B (capacity), C (investment), E (markets), F (risks).

DRAFT V1

Outcomes by Year 5

- Diversified competitive chains
- More viable enterprises
- Higher local value retention, jobs, and GDP contribution.

Flagship programme

SADC Wildlife Enterprise Accelerator

Components:

- Incubation.
- Technical assistance.
- Market access.
- Finance readiness.

Table 30: Additional resources/tools

Resource	**Link**	**Relevance**
UNCTAD BioTrade Principles and Criteria	https://unctad.org/topic/trade-and-environment/biotrade/principles-and-criteria	Value-chain approach covering conservation, sustainable use, legality and benefit-sharing.
FairWild Standard 3.0	https://www.fairwild.org/fairwild-standard-overview	Certification standard for wild-harvested plants, fungi and algae (NTFPs, oils, resins, medicinals). Certification: https://www.fairwild.org/fairwild-certification
FAO SWM Programme	https://www.fao.org/in-action/swm-programme/en	Wild-meat, community harvest and legal-use models; relevant to game meat and rural protein chains.
AWEI Wildlife Economy Info Hub	https://wildlifeeconomy.info/	Research on wild foods, ranching, frankincense and community enterprise.
Namibia NACSO Business, Enterprise and Livelihoods	https://nacso.org.na/business-enterprise-and-livelihoods/	Working community enterprise architecture (joint ventures, hunting, crafts, NTFP).
SADC Industrialisation Strategy	https://www.sadc.int/document/sadc-industrialisation-strategy-and-roadmap-english	Local processing, SMME upgrading and regional chains.
SADC Protocol on Industry (2019)	via https://www.sadc.int/sadc-protocols	Legal hook for beneficiation of wildlife products.
IUCN SULi Species Use Database (SpUD)	https://www.iucnsuli.org/	Evidence on sustainability of specific wild-species uses.
IPBES Sustainable Use Assessment	https://www.ipbes.net/sustainable-use-assessment	Harvest, fishing, gathering and tourism use systems.
FAO agroecology knowledge hub	https://www.fao.org/agroecology/home/en/	Transferable guidance for mixed wildlife–livestock–NTFP landscapes and regenerative production systems.

DRAFT V1

Resource	Link	Relevance
Savory Institute (regenerative grazing, Holistic Management)	https://savory.global/	Relevant where wildlife ranching / mixed rangelands are a priority chain; use as a landscape-management tool, not a substitute for wildlife law.

8. Step E: Enabling market access, marketing and branding

This step focuses on connecting wildlife-based products and services to domestic, regional, and international markets. It supports Member States and enterprises in meeting market requirements, improving product standards, and overcoming barriers to trade. Targeted efforts also strengthen marketing and branding so that SADC wildlife products and tourism offerings are more visible, trusted, and competitive. By improving market access and brand positioning, the step helps translate production and value addition into sustained economic returns for communities and enterprises.

Key issues in the region

- **Limited market intelligence and information systems**: Wildlife economy enterprises and producers across SADC often lack access to reliable, timely, and comprehensive market data on prices, demand trends, buyer requirements, and emerging opportunities, resulting in poor decision-making, missed market opportunities, and continued reliance on informal or exploitative intermediaries.
- **Weak branding and product and service differentiation**: Most wildlife products and services like tourism from the region lack strong, coordinated branding and unique selling propositions, making it difficult to distinguish SADC products and services in competitive markets and capture premium prices for sustainably and responsibly sourced wildlife goods.
- **Persistent trade barriers (tariff and non-tariff):** Wildlife economy value chains continue to face high tariffs, complex customs procedures, inconsistent sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, and other non-tariff barriers that hinder the smooth flow of products and services across borders and limit access to regional and international markets.
- **Under-developed domestic markets:** Despite growing urban populations and tourism sectors, domestic markets for wildlife products (such as game meat, processed skins, and natural products) remain underdeveloped due to limited consumer awareness, weak distribution channels, and insufficient product and service adaptation to local preferences.
- **Under-developed regional markets and informal cross-border trade**: Significant informal trade in wildlife products occurs across borders and rivers, yet formal regional market integration remains weak, with limited structured platforms, harmonised regulations, and support systems to convert informal trade into organised, higher-value formal value chains.
- **Poor market linkages and buyer networks**: Producers and small enterprises, especially in rural and community settings, struggle to establish direct and reliable

linkages with buyers, processors, exporters, and retailers, resulting in low bargaining power and limited participation in higher-value segments of the market.

- **Limited marketing capacity and skills:** Many wildlife economy enterprises and support institutions lack the skills, tools, and resources needed for effective marketing, digital promotion, packaging design, and storytelling that can attract conscious consumers and premium market segments.
- **Inadequate certification and quality signals**: The absence of widely recognised and trusted certification schemes, traceability systems, and quality assurance labels undermines buyer confidence and restricts access to markets that demand verified sustainable, ethical, and high-quality wildlife products.
- **Lack of coordinated regional marketing and promotion**: There is no strong, unified regional branding or coordinated marketing strategy for SADC wildlife products and/or services, resulting in fragmented promotion efforts, weak visibility in international markets, and missed opportunities to position the region as a source of premium, sustainable wildlife-based goods and services.
- **Low consumer awareness and demand stimulation:** Limited public awareness and targeted demand-creation initiatives for responsibly sourced wildlife products constrain market growth, particularly in domestic and regional markets where potential demand remains largely untapped.

The effective development of market access, marketing, and branding for wildlife economy value chains across SADC is supported by the broader enabling architecture of the WBESF, which promotes trade facilitation, regional market integration, value addition, and inclusive socio-economic benefits. The WBESF provides the strategic direction for **reducing trade barriers, strengthening market linkages, and enhancing the competitiveness of wildlife products and services**. Guiding strategies (non-binding) translate these protocols into actionable programmes and emphasise market development, branding, certification, and improved access for SMMEs and community enterprises. The guiding strategies provide implementation direction, focusing on building market intelligence systems, strengthening branding and quality standards, facilitating trade, and expanding both domestic and regional market opportunities.

Finally, the SADC WBESF and this market access and branding dimension are guided by, and aligned with, the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and relevant protocols. However, there is a **"market access and branding gap"** that exists in terms of national policies and programmes often giving insufficient attention to market intelligence, coordinated branding, trade facilitation, and structured development of domestic and regional markets. The alignment of national market development strategies, branding initiatives, trade facilitation measures, certification systems, and market information platforms with the SADC WBESF provides a significant opportunity to unlock domestic and regional markets, improve market access for SMMEs and community enterprises, strengthen the competitiveness of SADC wildlife products and services, create decent jobs and sustainable livelihoods (with particular emphasis on women, youth, and people with disabilities), and enhance the contribution of the wildlife-based economy to industrialisation and socio-economic development locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

A key issue in SADC is limited market intelligence, weak branding, trade barriers, and under-developed domestic and regional markets despite potential (e.g., informal trade across borders/rivers).

Key requirements

Market intelligence

- Market data systems.
- Consumer research.
- Trade analytics.

Branding systems

- Regional brand architecture.
- Certification standards.
- Brand governance.

Trade facilitation

- Simplified permits.
- Border harmonisation.
- Digital trade systems.

Marketing systems

- Coordinated campaigns.
- Trade fairs.
- E-commerce platforms.

Roles and responsibilities

Effective implementation of market access, marketing, and branding strategies under the SADC Wildlife-Based Economy Roadmap requires clearly defined roles and responsibilities among public, private, and community stakeholders. Coordinated action is critical to address current weaknesses in market intelligence, product branding, trade facilitation, and structured market development. Assigning specific responsibilities ensures accountability, strengthens collaboration across the value chain, reduces duplication of effort, and accelerates the transition from fragmented, raw-export models toward competitive, well-branded, and inclusive wildlife economy markets at domestic, regional, and international levels.

Table 31: Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

Stakeholder	Primary role
SADC Secretariat (FANR Directorate)	Provide regional coordination and strategic leadership; develop and promote a unified SADC wildlife economy branding framework; harmonise standards and trade facilitation measures; facilitate regional market intelligence systems and cross-border trade platforms
SADC WBE Champions (Two per Member State)	Act as national champions for market access and branding; coordinate between government, private sector and communities; identify market opportunities; support pilot branding and marketing initiatives; share lessons through the SADC WBE TFCA Community of Practice

DRAFT V1

Member States / National Governments	Develop and implement national market access strategies and trade facilitation policies; support national branding and promotion of wildlife products; streamline permitting and regulatory processes for trade; integrate wildlife economy into national trade and tourism promotion programmes
Private Sector (Processors, Exporters, Industry Associations)	Lead product development, branding, packaging and marketing of wildlife products; establish direct buyer linkages and offtake agreements; invest in quality improvement and certification; participate in regional and international trade fairs and buyer platforms
SADC WBE TFCA Community of Practice	Facilitate cross-border market linkages and joint marketing initiatives; share market intelligence and successful branding models across TFCAs; support harmonisation of trade practices and standards in transboundary areas
Academic and Research Institutions (e.g. AWEI, SAWC, ALU SOWC)	Conduct market research, value chain studies and consumer analysis; develop branding strategies and market intelligence tools; provide training on marketing, digital promotion and export readiness; generate evidence to support policy and investment decisions
Standards, Certification and Quality Bodies	Develop and promote relevant certification schemes and quality standards for wildlife products; support traceability and compliance systems; build capacity of enterprises to meet market and buyer requirements
NGOs and CBNRM Structures	Support community enterprises in accessing markets; facilitate collective marketing and branding of community products; build local capacity in basic marketing and business skills; link communities to buyers and certification programmes
Trade Promotion and Investment Agencies / Development Partners	Provide market intelligence, export promotion support and trade facilitation services; support regional and international marketing campaigns; mobilise blended finance and technical assistance for market access and branding initiatives

Table 32 provides an overview of potential risks and the related mitigation strategies and Table 33 lists the required resources for Step E.

Table 32: Risks and mitigation

Potential risks	Mitigation strategy
Weak brand uptake - Many SADC wildlife products struggle to gain meaningful traction in target markets due to weak brand recognition, limited storytelling around sustainability and origin, and low consumer awareness of the quality and ethical attributes of regional wildlife products.	**Incentives and co-branding** involves governments and support institutions offering targeted incentives such as marketing grants, certification subsidies, or co-branding partnerships with established tourism operators, retailers, and international brands. This approach increases visibility, builds credibility, and helps emerging wildlife economy enterprises gain faster acceptance in competitive domestic and export markets.
Trade barriers - Tariff and non-tariff barriers, complex customs procedures, inconsistent sanitary requirements, and differing regulations across Member States continue to restrict the smooth movement of wildlife products, limiting market access for producers and small enterprises.	**Policy harmonisation** requires coordinated efforts among Member States to align standards, simplify trade documentation, reduce duplicative inspections, and harmonise regulatory frameworks for wildlife products. This reduces transaction costs, improves predictability for traders, and facilitates greater intra-regional and international market access for SADC wildlife economy value chains.

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Competition - SADC wildlife products face intense competition from well-established international suppliers who benefit from stronger branding, more developed supply chains, better market intelligence, and greater consumer trust in premium segments.	**Differentiation through sustainability** positions SADC wildlife products by emphasising credible sustainability certifications, ethical sourcing, biodiversity conservation outcomes, and unique regional stories. This strategy helps products stand out in crowded markets and appeals to growing segments of conscious consumers, tourism operators, and buyers seeking responsibly sourced wildlife goods.
Market volatility - Wildlife economy enterprises are highly exposed to fluctuations in demand, price changes, currency movements, and external shocks, which can quickly destabilise revenues and threaten the survival of small and community-based businesses.	**Market diversification** encourages enterprises to develop multiple market channels simultaneously, including domestic urban markets, regional trade, tourism-linked sales, and certified export markets. By reducing reliance on any single market or buyer, this approach improves revenue stability and builds greater resilience against market shocks and volatility.
Reputational risks - Negative incidents related to product quality, unsustainable harvesting, or unethical practices can quickly damage consumer trust and harm the overall reputation of SADC wildlife products, affecting both current and future market opportunities.	**Strong quality standards** involve the development and consistent enforcement of robust quality assurance, traceability, and certification systems across the value chain. These measures protect brand integrity, build long-term buyer confidence, reduce the risk of reputational damage, and support premium positioning of SADC wildlife products in discerning markets.

Table 33: Required resources

Type of resource	Examples
Human capital	Marketing specialists; trade experts; brand managers; digital marketers and content creators; market researchers and analysts; export promotion officers; customer relationship managers; packaging and product presentation specialists; community marketing facilitators
Institutional	National trade promotion agencies; export councils and marketing boards; dedicated wildlife economy branding and marketing units; investment and trade promotion agencies; regional marketing coordination bodies; public-private marketing partnerships; national quality and standards institutions supporting branding
Finance	Marketing budgets and promotional funds; trade promotion and export development funds; blended finance for market entry and branding initiatives; export credit and guarantee facilities; sponsorship and co-branding support funds; dedicated market development grants for SMMEs and community enterprises
Technology	E-commerce platforms and digital marketplaces; market intelligence and data analytics systems; Customer Relationship Management (CRM) databases; digital marketing and social media tools; traceability and blockchain platforms for brand credibility; online buyer-seller matching systems; virtual trade fair and exhibition platforms
Infrastructure and logistics	Trade facilitation infrastructure (border posts, logistics hubs); digital connectivity and broadband for e-commerce; packaging and labelling facilities; storage and distribution networks supporting market access; tourism-linked infrastructure for product showcasing and experiential marketing
Research, knowledge and evidence	Market research and consumer behaviour studies; branding and positioning research; market intelligence reports and demand analysis; competitor analysis; impact assessments of marketing and branding initiatives; buyer preference and willingness-to-pay studies
Skills development and capacity building	Training in digital marketing and e-commerce; export marketing and trade skills development; brand development and storytelling training; packaging and visual merchandising skills; market research and data analysis training; customer service and relationship management training for enterprises

DRAFT V4

External expertise and technical assistance	Branding and marketing strategy consultants; trade facilitation and export development advisors; digital marketing and e-commerce specialists; market intelligence and research partners; packaging and product presentation experts; international trade and market access advisors
Market development resources	Regional and national branding frameworks and guidelines; trade promotion programmes and export support services; certification and quality labelling systems that support branding; buyer-seller platforms and trade fairs; digital marketplaces and online promotion channels; market intelligence systems and databases; legislation and regulatory frameworks that enable trade and protect brands
Natural capital	High-quality, sustainably sourced wildlife products that form the foundation of credible and authentic branding; biodiversity assets and conservation stories that can be used to differentiate SADC wildlife products in the market

Recommendations

1. Develop and launch a unified SADC WBE brand - Create a strong, recognisable regional brand identity for SADC wildlife products and services (e.g., "SADC Wildlife Economy – Sustainably Sourced"). i.e. intra-SADC under trade protocols/AfCFTA), and international markets. This can be achieved through utilising regional branding workshops, developing brand guidelines, and rolling out the brand through packaging, digital platforms, trade fairs, and tourism marketing. Also, allow use of the regional brand by individual enterprises from the region including co-branding. The proposed 'Brand SADC Wildlife-based Economy (WBE)' should be developed in coordination with existing SADC tourism branding and destination-marketing initiatives. Consideration should be given to positioning the wildlife-economy brand as an umbrella or complementary product identity rather than establishing a separate and potentially competing regional tourism brand.

2. Establish regional market linkage platforms - Create physical and digital platforms that connect WBE producers (especially communities and SMMEs) directly with buyers, processors, and exporters. Member States need to organise regular regional buyer-seller meetings, develop an online WBE marketplace, and participate in major trade fairs (e.g., Africa's Big 7, ITB Berlin) under a coordinated SADC pavilion.

3. Improve product quality, standards and certification - Support producers to meet quality standards, obtain certifications (e.g., organic, fair trade, wildlife-friendly), and improve packaging and labelling. NGOs, training institutions working with Member States should provide training on quality control and certification processes, subsidise initial certification costs for community enterprises, and develop common SADC WBE quality standards. Member States and practitioners should look into "lessons from comparable initiatives", drawing on what existing certification schemes and regional marketing efforts have demonstrated: uptake barriers for community producers, the gap between certification and premium price realisation, and which market segments actually pay premiums for ethical sourcing.

4. Strengthen digital marketing and e-commerce capacity - Build the capacity of communities and SMMEs to use digital tools for marketing, branding, and selling WBE products and services locally and internationally. There is a need to roll out practical training on social media marketing, photography, storytelling, and e-commerce platforms.

Prioritise women and youth entrepreneurs and provide access to affordable internet and devices where possible.

5. Run targeted marketing and awareness campaigns - Promote the value and sustainability of WBE products through strategic marketing campaigns targeting both domestic and international consumers. Use of multi-channel campaigns (social media, radio, tourism platforms, and events) under the "Wildlife Pays" and "Brand SADC WBE" themes is recommended. Also highlight success stories, sustainability credentials, and livelihood benefits to build consumer trust and demand.

Priority actions - what must happen first

- Country level/Regional marketing strategy with strong domestic/regional focus.
- Leverage existing local brands for co-branding with traders/entrepreneurs
- Formalise existing cross-border trade.
- Certification, intelligence systems, and forums.

Implementation roadmap

Phase 1 (0–18 months) – Intelligence and branding (domestic/regional emphasis) – "Build market intelligence and establish a unified SADC WBE brand"

Focus: Strengthening market intelligence, digital marketing capacity, and branding foundations to improve domestic and regional market access for wildlife economy products and enterprises/services across Member States.

Key outputs

- Functional market intelligence and data systems established to support decision-making for enterprises and policymakers.
- Digital marketing and e-commerce capacity strengthened among SMMEs, community enterprises, and support institutions.
- Targeted marketing and awareness campaigns designed and launched in domestic and regional markets.
- Regional market linkage platforms established to connect producers, buyers, and traders across Member States.
- A unified SADC Wildlife-Based Economy (WBE) brand strategy developed (aligned with other existing SADC brand processes).
- Baseline data on market access, consumer awareness, and branding performance established.
- Initial coordination mechanisms between trade, tourism, and wildlife economy stakeholders operationalised.

Table 34 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 1, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 34: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Develop market intelligence systems and conduct consumer and market research	SADC Secretariat, academic partners (AWEI, SAWC), trade promotion agencies	Market research frameworks; digital market intelligence platforms; consumer surveys; demand analysis reports
Strengthen digital marketing and e-commerce skills among SMMEs and community enterprises	Training institutions, WBE Champions, digital marketing specialists	Training programmes; e-commerce toolkits; mentorship on digital platforms; online marketing support
Design and implement targeted marketing and awareness campaigns	Member States, WBE Champions, communications specialists, NGOs	Campaign strategies and toolkits; multi-channel promotion (digital, radio, community); tourism-linked marketing
Establish regional market linkage platforms and buyer-seller networks	SADC Secretariat, private sector associations, TFCA bodies	Online and physical linkage platforms; buyer-seller matching events; regional trade directories
Develop and launch a unified SADC WBE brand	SADC Secretariat, Member States, branding consultants, private sector	Brand strategy and guidelines; visual identity development; stakeholder consultations; official brand launch
Build baseline data and monitoring systems for market access and branding	SADC Secretariat, Member State focal points, research partners	Monitoring frameworks; key performance indicators; data collection tools; reporting systems
Strengthen coordination between trade, tourism, and wildlife economy stakeholders	Member States, SADC Secretariat, trade and tourism agencies	Inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms; joint working groups; public-private dialogue platforms

Key output: Market intelligence systems, digital marketing capacity, regional linkage platforms, and a unified SADC WBE brand established to improve domestic and regional market access and visibility of wildlife economy products.

Phase 2 (18 months – 3 years) – Pilot initiatives and trade facilitation – "Launch cross-border trade pilots and strengthen market linkages"

Focus: Implementing pilot cross-border trade initiatives for selected high-potential products and strengthening trade facilitation mechanisms to improve formal market access and value chain efficiency.

Key outputs

- A unified SADC Wildlife-Based Economy (WBE) brand (and the related strategy) developed, tested, and officially launched.
- Pilot cross-border trade initiatives operational for priority products (e.g. mopane worms, game meat, morula oil, baobab products).
- Improved trade facilitation processes and reduced non-tariff barriers for pilot products.
- Strengthened market linkages between producers, processors, and buyers across borders.
- Enhanced capacity of enterprises to meet quality, packaging, and regulatory requirements for trade.
- Documented lessons and evidence from pilot trade initiatives for scaling. Increased formalisation of informal cross-border trade in selected value chains.

Table 35 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 2, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 35: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Identify and select high-potential products for cross-border trade pilots	SADC Secretariat, Member States, WBE Champions, private sector	Product selection criteria; value chain analysis; stakeholder consultations; pilot product shortlist
Design and launch pilot cross-border trade initiatives (e.g. mopane worms, game meat, morula and baobab oils)	Member States, TFCA bodies, private sector, community enterprises	Pilot project designs; simplified trade procedures; partnership agreements; logistics support
Improve trade facilitation and reduce non-tariff barriers for pilot products	Member States, SADC Secretariat, customs and standards agencies	Regulatory review and simplification; one-stop border processes; harmonised documentation
Strengthen quality, packaging, and regulatory compliance capacity	Training institutions, standards bodies, private sector partners	Quality and packaging training; certification support; compliance toolkits
Facilitate buyer linkages and secure offtake agreements for pilot products	WBE Champions, private sector associations, trade promotion agencies	Buyer-seller platforms; trade missions; contract facilitation support
Monitor pilot performance and document lessons for scaling	SADC Secretariat, Member State focal points, research partners	Monitoring frameworks; case study development; regional learning workshops

Key output: Successful pilot cross-border trade initiatives implemented for selected products, with improved trade facilitation, stronger market linkages, and clear lessons to guide regional scaling.

Phase 3 (3–5 years) – Expansion, certification, international positioning – "Achieve international market competitiveness and brand recognition"

Focus: Scaling successful market access and branding initiatives, achieving international certification, and positioning SADC wildlife products competitively in global markets.

Key outputs

- Expanded market access for SADC wildlife products in regional and international markets.
- Increased adoption of international certifications and quality standards by wildlife economy enterprises.
- Strong global recognition and positioning of the SADC WBE brand.
- Sustainable export growth and improved competitiveness of SADC wildlife products.
- Institutionalised market development and branding capacity within Member States and regional bodies.

Table 36 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 3, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 36: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Scale successful market access and branding initiatives across more Member States and value chains	SADC Secretariat, Member States, WBE Champions, private sector	Scaling strategies; replication guidelines; expanded linkage platforms; regional rollout plans
Support adoption of international certifications and quality standards	Standards bodies, certification agencies, training institutions	Certification support programmes; training on international standards; cost-sharing mechanisms
Strengthen international branding and global market positioning of the SADC WBE brand	SADC Secretariat, branding consultants, trade promotion agencies	International branding strategy; global marketing campaigns; participation in major international trade fairs
Enhance export readiness and competitiveness of wildlife economy enterprises	Trade promotion agencies, business development service providers	Export readiness programmes; market entry support; export financing facilitation
Institutionalise market access, branding, and trade facilitation functions	Member States, SADC Secretariat, training institutions	Policy integration; institutional capacity building; long-term coordination mechanisms; knowledge transfer

Key output: SADC wildlife products and services achieve stronger international market access, certification recognition, and brand positioning, resulting in increased exports, improved competitiveness, and sustainable economic benefits for the region.

Outcomes by Year 5

- Increased sales across all markets
- Stronger Brand SADC
- Higher revenues, employment and private investment

Flagship programme

Brand SADC Wildlife-based Economy (WBE) Programme

Regional branding initiatives should be complemented by harmonised quality standards, traceability systems, certification mechanisms and market intelligence to improve competitiveness in domestic, regional and international markets.

Components:

- Regional branding.
- Trade promotion.
- Digital marketplace.
- Certification systems.

Table 37: Further guidance/tools/resources

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Resource	Link	Relevance
SADC Protocol on Trade (1996, as amended)	https://www.sadc.int/sadc-protocols	Intra-SADC tariff/NTB framework for legal wildlife products. Overview: https://www.sadc.int/fr/node/2862
SADC SPS Annex to the Protocol on Trade	listed at https://www.sadc.int/sadc-protocols	Critical for game meat, fish and wild-food movement.
SADC TBT Annex	listed at https://www.sadc.int/sadc-protocols	Standards, labelling and certification alignment.
AfCFTA resources (tralac compilation of official texts)	https://www.tralac.org/afcfta-resources.html	Continental market-access architecture sitting above SADC FTA.
CITES	https://cites.org/eng	Permits, legality and international market access for listed species. Livelihoods case studies: https://cites.org/eng/prog/livelihoods
UNCTAD BioTrade	https://unctad.org/topic/trade-and-environment/biotrade	Branding, sustainability claims and biodiversity-product trade data.
FairWild	https://www.fairwild.org/fairwild-certification	Market signal for ethical wild-harvested ingredients.
AWEI / ALU intra-Africa wildlife trade learning	https://wildlifeeconomy.info/study/learn/liberalising-intra-africa-trade	Practical course on NTBs and intra-African wildlife product trade.
SADC Tourism / RIDMP Tourism Sector Plan	listed under SADC strategic documents: https://www.sadc.int/sadc-strategic-documents	Align "Brand SADC Wildlife Economy" with existing destination marketing, not a competing brand.
Sustainable Tourism Destination Management Course	https://sowc.alueducation.com/sustainable-tourism-destination-management-course/	A self-paced eCornell course offered in collaboration with ALU SOWC to train hospitality and tourism students and professionals in managing destination assets.
TRAFFIC (wildlife trade monitoring)	https://www.traffic.org/	Market intelligence on legal vs illegal trade; use for risk and traceability design.
Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network	https://www.wildlifefriendly.com	Certification, advisory services and support for ESG strategies.

9. Step F: Monitoring, Learning, Adaptive Management and Scaling

The successful implementation of the SADC Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework (WBESF) requires more than effective policies, investments and capacity building. It **requires an integrated system that continuously measures progress, generates evidence, facilitates learning, enables adaptive management and scales successful approaches across the region.**

Monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptive management provide the feedback loop that allows Member States and regional institutions to improve implementation,

demonstrate impact, reduce investment risk and ensure that wildlife remains both a conservation asset and a driver of inclusive economic growth.

This Step establishes the mechanisms required to track implementation, evaluate outcomes, share lessons, strengthen accountability and support evidence-based decision-making across all components of the wildlife economy.

Key issues in the region

- **Fragmented and inconsistent data systems:** Wildlife economy data across SADC remains highly fragmented, with different Member States and institutions using varying definitions, collection methods, and reporting formats, making it difficult to generate reliable regional overviews or conduct meaningful comparisons.
- **Weak monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks:** Many wildlife economy initiatives lack robust, harmonised monitoring, evaluation and learning systems, resulting in limited ability to track progress, measure outcomes, and demonstrate impact at national and regional levels.
- **Inadequate risk identification and mitigation**: Political, climate, market, and social risks affecting the wildlife economy are often poorly identified, poorly understood, and inadequately mitigated, leaving enterprises, value chains, and investments vulnerable to shocks and disruptions.
- **Poor data quality and reliability:** Data collected on wildlife economy activities is frequently incomplete, outdated, or of low quality due to weak collection methodologies, limited capacity, and insufficient verification processes, undermining evidence-based planning and decision-making.
- **Low reporting compliance and timeliness:** Many stakeholders fail to submit timely, accurate, and complete reports on wildlife economy activities, resulting in significant gaps in information and weakening accountability and performance tracking across the region.
- **Absence of robust baseline data:** The lack of comprehensive and up-to-date baseline studies makes it extremely difficult to measure progress, attribute results, and evaluate the effectiveness of wildlife economy interventions over time.
- **Limited use of technology in data and monitoring:** Many monitoring and data collection processes remain manual and paper-based, with limited adoption of digital tools, dashboards, and real-time data systems, reducing efficiency and the ability to respond quickly to emerging issues.
- **Weak coordination and harmonisation of M&E across Member States:** There is limited regional coordination and harmonisation of monitoring, evaluation, and reporting frameworks, leading to duplication of efforts in some areas and major gaps in others.
- **Insufficient capacity for risk management and adaptive learning:** Institutions and enterprises often lack the skills, systems, and culture needed for proactive risk management, scenario planning, and adaptive management, resulting in reactive rather than strategic responses to challenges.
- **Poor integration of data, monitoring, and decision-making:** Even where data and monitoring information exist, they are rarely systematically used to inform policy

decisions, programme adjustments, or investment choices, limiting the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of the wildlife-based economy agenda.

Key requirements

- Implementation of the regional monitoring, evaluation and learning framework.
- Common wildlife economy indicators and reporting systems.
- Digital regional dashboards and data platforms.
- Periodic wildlife economy investment and performance reviews.
- Regional knowledge management platform.
- Independent evaluations and learning reviews.
- Adaptive management mechanisms.
- Regular policy and implementation reviews.
- Regional peer learning and Communities of Practice.
- Annual State of the Wildlife Economy reporting.

Table 38 provides an overview of potential risks and the related mitigation strategies and Table 39 lists the required resources for Step F.

Table 38: Risks and mitigation

Potential risks	Mitigation strategy
Poor data quality - Inconsistent data collection methods, lack of standardisation, and limited capacity often result in unreliable, incomplete, or inaccurate data, which undermines evidence-based decision-making and progress tracking in the wildlife-based economy.	**Standardised methodologies** involve developing and enforcing uniform data collection tools, definitions, and protocols across Member States. This ensures consistency, improves data reliability, and enables meaningful comparison and aggregation of information at national and regional levels.
Weak reporting compliance - Many stakeholders fail to submit timely and complete reports due to limited capacity, unclear requirements, or lack of accountability mechanisms, resulting in gaps in monitoring and performance tracking.	**Performance incentives** include introducing recognition, rewards, or conditional access to funding and support for institutions and teams that meet reporting standards and deadlines. This encourages greater compliance and improves the overall quality and timeliness of data and reporting.
Technology failure - Over-reliance on digital systems without adequate backup creates risks of data loss, system downtime, and disruption to monitoring and reporting processes, especially in areas with unstable connectivity or power supply.	**Redundancy systems** involve establishing backup databases, offline data collection tools, and alternative reporting channels. These measures ensure continuity of monitoring and data management even when primary digital systems fail or are inaccessible.
Insufficient baselines - The absence of comprehensive and timely baseline data makes it difficult to measure progress, attribute results, and evaluate the impact of wildlife economy interventions over time.	**Early baseline studies** require conducting robust baseline assessments at the start of programmes and initiatives. This provides a clear reference point against which future progress, outcomes, and impacts can be measured and reported.
Lack of learning uptake - Even when evaluations and lessons are generated, they are often not systematically used to improve programme design, decision-making, or adaptive management across the wildlife economy roadmap.	**Annual learning reviews** involve institutionalising structured reflection processes where stakeholders review progress, analyse lessons, and agree on adjustments. This strengthens adaptive management and ensures that knowledge is actively applied to improve implementation and results.

Table 39: Roles and responsibilities

Stakeholder	Key Responsibilities
SADC Secretariat (FANR Directorate)	Provide overall regional coordination and leadership on M&E frameworks; develop and maintain harmonised indicators, reporting templates, and data standards; manage the regional data repository and digital dashboards; coordinate regional risk assessments and scenario planning; facilitate regional learning and knowledge sharing
SADC WBE Champions (Two per Member State)	Coordinate national data collection and reporting on wildlife economy activities; support implementation of M&E frameworks at country level; identify and escalate key risks; facilitate feedback and learning from monitoring data to improve implementation
Member States / National Governments	Establish and maintain national M&E systems and databases for the wildlife economy; ensure timely and quality reporting to regional bodies; develop and manage national risk registers; integrate wildlife economy indicators into national planning and budgeting processes
Academic and Research Institutions (e.g. AWEI, SAWC, ALU SOWC)	Conduct baseline studies, impact evaluations, and applied research; support the development of monitoring methodologies and risk assessment tools; provide technical support for data analysis and evidence generation; contribute to independent evaluations and learning processes
SADC WBE TFCA Community of Practice	Facilitate cross-border data sharing and joint monitoring of transboundary value chains; identify and manage shared risks across TFCAs; support harmonised reporting and learning on cross-border wildlife economy activities
Private Sector and Industry Associations	Collect and report enterprise-level data on production, trade, and performance; participate in risk identification and mitigation planning; support the development of practical monitoring indicators relevant to business operations
NGOs and CBNRM Structures	Support community-level data collection and participatory monitoring; report on social and livelihood outcomes; identify community-level risks and vulnerabilities; facilitate feedback from communities into monitoring and learning processes
Development Partners	Provide technical and financial support for strengthening M&E systems and data infrastructure; support capacity building in monitoring, evaluation, and risk management; commission independent evaluations and contribute to regional learning platforms
Standards and Certification Bodies	Develop and monitor compliance with standards and certification requirements; contribute data on certified enterprises and value chains; support traceability and verification systems that feed into broader monitoring frameworks

Table 40: Required resources

Type of Resource	Examples
Human	M&E specialists; Data analysts; GIS experts; Risk specialists
Financial	Monitoring budgets; Evaluation funding
Technology	Dashboards; Mobile data collection; GIS systems; Cloud databases

Recommendations

- Establish a SADC Wildlife Economy Observatory and Knowledge Hub.
- Develop a regional wildlife economy dashboard.

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- Produce annual State of the Wildlife Economy reports for each country and possibly for SADC as a region.
- Undertake biennial regional implementation reviews.
- Strengthen biodiversity and socio-economic monitoring, evaluation and adaptive learning.
- Scale successful pilot projects across Member States.
- Facilitate peer learning through the WBE Champions Network.
- Establish adaptive management mechanisms to update implementation priorities.
- Integrate monitoring results into future policy, investment and budgeting decisions.

Priority actions - What must happen first

- Develop and adopt a harmonised country level M&E framework with core indicators, aligned with the SADC WBESF M&E Framework.
- Conduct baseline studies for priority value chains and key wildlife economy indicators.
- Establish basic national and regional data collection and reporting systems.
- Develop initial risk registers and risk management guidelines.

Implementation roadmap

Phase 1: Monitoring foundations (0–18 months) – "Measure progress"

Focus: Establishing harmonised monitoring systems, indicators, reporting mechanisms and knowledge management systems to track implementation of the Wildlife-Based Economy Strategy Framework (WBESF) at national and regional levels.

Key outputs

- Regional monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework integrated into national and regional implementation systems.
- Harmonised wildlife economy indicators agreed and consistently measured across Member States.
- National wildlife economy baselines established.
- Digital monitoring and reporting systems developed and piloted.
- Regional wildlife economy knowledge management platform established.
- Standardised annual reporting templates and guidance developed.

Table 41 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 1, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 41: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Develop a harmonised regional wildlife economy monitoring, evaluation and learning framework	SADC Secretariat, Member States, academia	Regional technical working groups; indicator development workshops; MEL framework and reporting guidelines

DRAFT V1

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Establish national wildlife economy baselines	Member States, WBE Champions, research institutions	Baseline assessments; biodiversity and socio-economic surveys; national data collection protocols
Develop digital monitoring and reporting systems	SADC Secretariat, Member States, ICT partners	Digital dashboards; integrated reporting platforms; interoperable databases; mobile data collection systems
Build national and regional monitoring capacity	Member States, SADC Secretariat, training institutions	Technical training programmes; monitoring toolkits; peer learning; capacity development workshops
Establish regional knowledge management and information-sharing systems	SADC Secretariat, WBE Champions, research institutions	Knowledge management platforms; Communities of Practice; online resource portals; annual knowledge-sharing events
Develop standardised reporting templates and monitoring guidance	SADC Secretariat, Member States	Reporting frameworks; data standards; reporting schedules; quality assurance protocols

Key output: Harmonised monitoring, reporting and knowledge management systems operational across Member States and at regional level.

Phase 2: Learning and adaptive management (1–3 years) – "Learn and improve"

Focus: Using monitoring information, knowledge exchange and evidence to improve implementation, strengthen decision-making and promote adaptive management across the SADC wildlife economy.

Key outputs

- Annual national and regional wildlife economy implementation reports produced.
- Regional peer-learning exchanges and Communities of Practice operational.
- SADC Wildlife Economy Observatory and Knowledge Hub established and functioning.
- Peer review and performance benchmarking mechanisms operational.
- Adaptive management processes institutionalised across Member States.
- Evidence routinely informing policy, investment and programme implementation.

Table 42 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 2, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 42: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Produce annual national and regional wildlife economy implementation reports	Member States, SADC Secretariat	Annual reporting processes; regional synthesis reports; performance dashboards
Conduct regional implementation reviews and peer learning exchanges	SADC Secretariat, WBE Champions, Member States	Regional review workshops; Communities of Practice; peer review missions; study tours

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Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Establish and operationalise the SADC Wildlife Economy Observatory	SADC Secretariat, research institutions, academia	Regional data platform; market and biodiversity intelligence systems; analytical reporting tools
Strengthen evidence-based policy and investment decision-making	Member States, Ministries, investment agencies	Policy review processes; investment review forums; evidence briefs; technical advisory groups
Institutionalise adaptive management across Member States	Member States, SADC Secretariat	Adaptive management guidelines; implementation review cycles; corrective action plans; policy feedback mechanisms
Capture and disseminate lessons learned and best practice	SADC Secretariat, WBE Champions, academia	Case studies; knowledge products; learning events; digital knowledge repositories

Key output: Adaptive management, knowledge sharing and evidence-based decision-making functioning across the SADC wildlife economy.

Phase 3: Scaling and continuous improvement (3–5 years) – "Sustain and grow"

Focus: Embedding continuous improvement, regional benchmarking and long-term learning while scaling successful wildlife economy models across the SADC region.

Key outputs

- Fully operational regional wildlife economy monitoring and reporting system.
- Annual national and SADC State of the Wildlife Economy reports published.
- Benchmarking and performance comparisons across Member States established.
- Successful wildlife economy models replicated and scaled across the region.
- Continuous policy, investment and programme improvement embedded.
- Regional learning culture institutionalised across wildlife economy stakeholders.

Table 43 presents the implementation priorities for Phase 3, lead actors involved and the relevant implementation mechanisms for each action.

Table 43: Implementation priorities

Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Scale successful wildlife economy models across Member States	SADC Secretariat, Member States, development partners	Replication programmes; regional investment support; technical assistance; Communities of Practice
Develop regional benchmarking and performance assessment systems	SADC Secretariat, academia, Member States	Benchmarking frameworks; comparative performance reports; regional scorecards
Publish annual State of the Wildlife Economy reports	SADC Secretariat, Member States, research institutions	Regional reporting processes; economic and biodiversity assessments; communication strategies
Strengthen regional research, innovation and knowledge partnerships	SADC Secretariat, universities, centres of excellence	Collaborative research programmes; innovation networks; regional research grants

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Action	Lead actors	Implementation mechanisms
Review and update the WBESF implementation framework using evidence and lessons learned	SADC Secretariat, Member States, WBE Champions	Independent evaluations; strategic reviews; stakeholder consultations; framework revision processes
Strengthen wildlife economy intelligence and investment information systems	SADC Secretariat, investment promotion agencies, research institutions	Integrated intelligence platforms; market forecasting; investment dashboards; decision-support tools

Key output: A learning-driven, adaptive and continuously improving regional wildlife economy system that supports long-term conservation, investment, resilience and inclusive economic growth across SADC.

Flagship programme

SADC Wildlife Economy Observatory and Knowledge Hub

Components:

- Regional dashboard.
- Data repository.
- Risk monitoring.
- Annual State of the Wildlife Economy reporting.

M&E framework: Key Performance Indicators

To minimise reporting burden, implementation monitoring should, as far as practicable, utilise existing indicators contained within the approved SADC WBESF Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and existing national reporting systems.

Table 42 provides practical, measurable indicators aligned with WBESF SO1–SO4, SADC Green Economy Strategy, and ALU SOWC WEII. SADC WBE Champions and Member States should customise baselines nationally and report progress quarterly/annually.

Table 44: Key Performance Indicators

No.	WBESF SO / Step	Indicator	Year 5 Target (Regional)	Means of Verification	Responsible	Frequency
1	SO3 / Step A	Number of Member States with domesticated WBESF-aligned policies/legislation	12–16 Member States	National policy audits & reports	Member States + SADC Secretariat	Annual
2	SO2 / Step B	Number of trained WBE practitioners & Champions (disaggregated by gender/youth)	≥5,00 practitioners + 16 Champions	Training records & certificates	Champions + SAWC/ALU SOWC/AWEI	Quarterly
3	SO2 / Step B	% of communities with active WBE awareness programmes	≥60% of target communities	Survey / campaign reports	Champions + National focal points	Annual

DRAFT V1

No.	WBESF SO / Step	Indicator	Year 5 Target (Regional)	Means of Verification	Responsible	Frequency
4	**SO3 / Step C**	Number of bankable WBE investment projects developed	≥32 regionally	Investment pipeline registers	Member States + AWEI	Biannual
5	**SO1 / Step D**	Number of active community & SMME WBE enterprises	≥500 viable enterprises	Enterprise registries & audits	Champions + Ministries	Annual
6	**SO1 / Step D**	Value added from local processing in priority chains (e.g., mopane worms, game meat)	30% increase in local value retention	Value chain reports	Champions + Trade Ministries	Annual
7	**SO1 / Step E**	Revenue generated from WBE (domestic + regional + international markets)	≥USD 5 billion additional contribution	National statistics & SADC reports	Member States + SADC Secretariat	Annual
8	**SO1 / Step E**	Number of domestic/regional market linkages formalised (e.g., mopane worm trade)	≥20 formalised cross-border initiatives	Trade records & agreements	Champions + TFCA CoP	Biannual
9	**SO3 / Step F**	Number of countries with operational national risk registers & digital M&E systems	12–16 Member States	Risk register & dashboard reports	Champions + SADC Secretariat	Quarterly
10	**SO2 / Cross-cutting**	Number of jobs created in WBE (disaggregated by gender/youth/PWD)	≥50,000 new jobs	Employment surveys & CBNRM reports	Champions + Labour/Environment Ministries	Annual
11	**SO2 / Cross-cutting**	% of benefit-sharing agreements with equitable community participation (incl. women/youth)	≥70% of enterprises	Benefit distribution audits	Champions + CBNRM structures	Annual
12	**SO1 / Cross-cutting**	Wildlife population trends in key WBE areas (stable/increasing)	Stable or positive trends in monitored areas	Wildlife census / monitoring data	Wildlife authorities + NGOs	Biannual

Expected outcomes by Year 5 (WBESF SO3)

- Effective risk mitigation
- Transparent data-driven implementation
- Clear evidence of progress toward WBESF goals.

Table 45: Further guidance/tools

Resource	Link	Relevance
WBESF CAP and M&E Tool	https://tfcaportal.org/repository/repository373.pdf	This is the approved regional M&E system.
ALU SOWC WEII	https://sowc.alueducation.com/weii/	Country-level investment and enabling-environment dashboard; useful observatory input.

Resource	Link	Relevance
IPBES Sustainable Use Assessment	https://www.ipbes.net/sustainable-use-assessment	Methods and indicators for sustainability of use.
CBD GBF monitoring framework	https://www.cbd.int/gbf	Align national WBE indicators with GBF Targets 5, 9, 21 and headline indicators.
FAO SWM community monitoring guidance	https://www.fao.org/forestry/newsroom/news-detail/sustainable-wildlife-management-programme-defines-key-principles-for-community-monitoring-of-wildlife-populations/en	Community-level wildlife and harvest monitoring principles.
CITES trade database	https://trade.cites.org/	Official legal-trade statistics for listed species.
Namibia State of Community Conservation reports	https://communityconservationnamibia.com/	Worked example of annual national wildlife-economy / CBNRM reporting.
SADC TFCA Portal repository	https://tfcaportal.org/repository	Knowledge management home for regional case studies and tools.
IUCN Red List	https://www.iucnredlist.org/	Species-status layer for biodiversity outcome indicators.
SEEA Ecosystem Accounting (UN)	https://seea.un.org/ecosystem-accounting	If Member States want to link WBE accounts to national statistics / natural-capital accounts.

Successful implementation of this Roadmap will depend on sustained political commitment, adequate resource mobilisation, effective regional coordination, and adaptive implementation that reflects the differing capacities and priorities of SADC Member States. The Roadmap should therefore serve as a flexible implementation guide that supports, rather than prescribes, national implementation pathways.

10. Cross-cutting sources & References

Resource	Link	Why it belongs
SADC Wildlife-based Economy Strategy Framework	https://www.sadc.int/document/southern-african-development-community-wildlife-based-economy-strategy-framework	Parent strategy for the Roadmap. Also PDF: https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2024-04/Wildlife%20Strategy%20Engl_low-res.pdf
WBESF Costed Action Plan and M&E Tool	https://tfcaportal.org/repository/a-costed-action-plan-cap-and-monitoring-and-evaluation-m-amp-e-tool-for-the-sadc	Operational companion to the Roadmap. PDF: https://tfcaportal.org/repository/repository373.pdf
SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law	https://www.sadc.int/document/protocol-wildlife-conservation-and-law-enforcement-1999	Binding legal foundation for sustainable use, TFCAs, community mechanisms and regional cooperation.

DRAFT

Resource	Link	Why it belongs
Enforcement (1999)		
SADC TFCA Programme 2023–2033	https://www.sadc.int/sites/default/files/2024-04/TFCA%20English%20low-res.pdf	Implementation platform for cross-border enterprises, tourism circuits and community livelihoods.
SADC TFCA Network / Portal	https://www.tfcaportal.org/	Regional repository, peer learning and TFCA practitioner network.
Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework	https://www.cbd.int/gbf	Aligns WBESF with GBF Targets 5, 9, 10, 14 and 21 (sustainable use, benefit-sharing, mainstreaming, data). Official text: https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222
IPBES Assessment of the Sustainable Use of Wild Species	https://www.ipbes.net/sustainable-use-assessment	Authoritative evidence base for legal, sustainable use of wild species.
CITES Secretariat	https://cites.org/eng	Legal international trade framework for listed wildlife products. Livelihoods programme: https://cites.org/eng/prog/livelihoods
FAOLEX / Ecolex environmental law database	https://www.fao.org/faolex/en/ and https://www.ecolex.org/	Policy/legal audit tool for national wildlife, forestry, fisheries and trade laws.

DRAFT VI