



# HANDBOOK

on

## Categorisation of SADC Transfrontier Conservation Areas

*SADC TFCA Listing Processes July 2023*



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#### **About SADC**

The SADC is an organisation founded and maintained by countries in southern Africa that promotes the socio-economic, political and security cooperation among its Member States and foster regional integration to achieve peace, stability, and wealth. The Member States are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

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## Abbreviations

FANR	Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GKG TFCA	Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Conservation Area
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GLC	Greater Lubombo's Conservancy
GLTP	Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park
GLTFCA	Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area
ICP	International Cooperating Partners
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JMB	Joint Management Board
JMC	Joint Management Committee
KAZA TFCA	Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area
KNP	Kruger National Park
KPA	Key Performance Areas
KTP	Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park
MDTFCA	Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation Area
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-government Organisations
PAT	Performance Assessment Tool
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANParks	South African National Parks
TFCA	Transfrontier Conservation Area
TP	Transfrontier Park
TMC	Transfrontier Management Committee
TOC	Theory of Change



## SECTION 1

# Introduction and Background

Ecosystems globally are divided by political boundaries that are subjected to many different policy, legal and institutional structures, complemented by management and governance systems which are impacted by diverse social, cultural, and economic contexts. Given this, transboundary conservation emerged as a practical solution to overcome complex relationships and differences as well as to encourage cooperation across international boundaries to achieve shared conservation goals<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore, Transfrontier Conservation and the establishment and development of Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) are strategically poised as a mechanism to execute various SADC Protocols that relate to the conservation and sustainable utilisation of natural resources.

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this user-friendly handbook details stepwise processes on how to be listed as a Category C TFCA, how to progress towards a Category B and ultimately Category A TFCA, and to provide typical key success factors for Category A TFCAs.

It therefore creates direction for TFCA practitioners and related stakeholders from the identification of a potential TFCA to expansion in size and scale of the current TFCA estate, to develop the TFCA from a concept into a feasible opportunity and to provide some case studies that inspired the institution and success of some TFCAs.

<sup>1</sup> SADC Transfrontier Conservation Guidelines: The establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States. Kevan Zunkel. 2014

### 1.2 AUDIENCE FOR THIS HANDBOOK

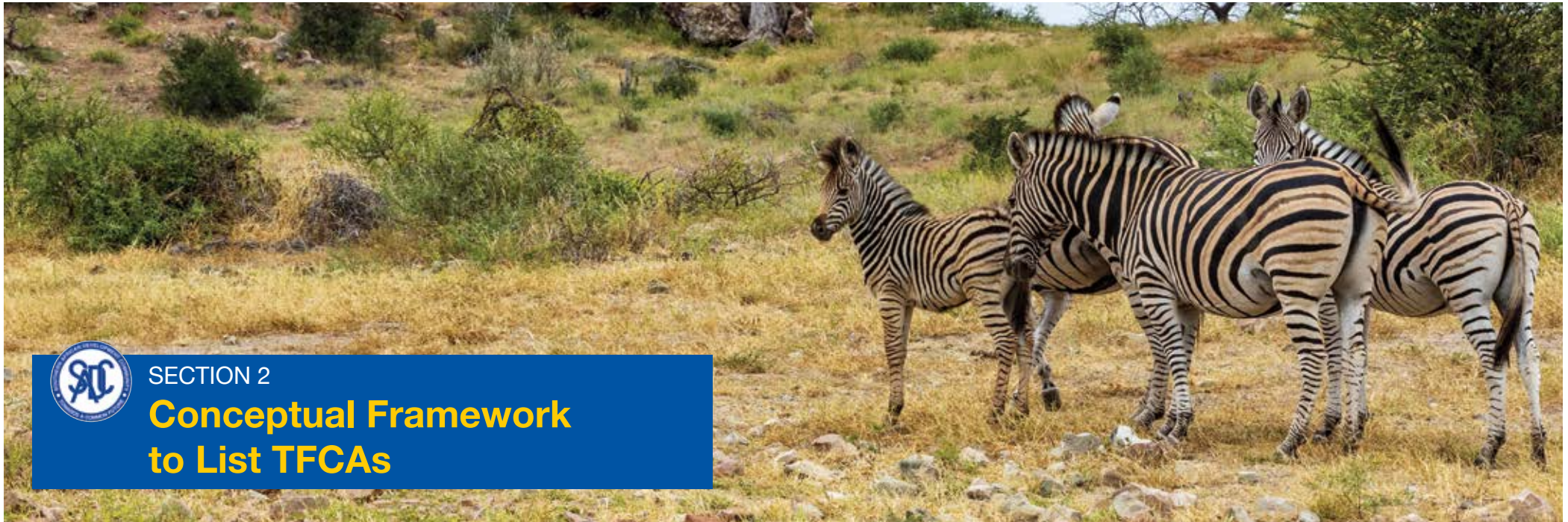
This handbook is intended for use by any practitioner, stakeholder or proponent from Member States, non-government organisations (NGOs), International Cooperating Partners (ICPs), Academia, communities or individuals that are active in SADC TFCA landscapes to provide access to valuable and practically inclined information on the categorisation of TFCAs, specifically what to do when during any of the following stages of TFCA development:

- Initiation stage – Towards Category C
- Establishment stage – Towards Category B and/or A
- Development stage and towards implementation –Category A

### 1.3 STRUCTURE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook consists of three core sections, namely:

- Section 1** provides background information about the purpose and the intended audience(s) that will use this handbook;
- Section 2** details brief information related to the contextual framework related to listing of TFCAs, whilst providing a snapshot of the global categories and an overview of the revised 2023 – 2033 SADC TFCA Programme; and
- Section 3** entails the essence of this handbook whereby the categorisation and listing processes are defined, process steps detailed, recommendations of the most appropriate coordination mechanism provided, as well as case studies that display what a successful TFCA resembles.



## 2.1 GLOBAL CATEGORIES

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas proposed the following classification of transboundary conservation areas<sup>2</sup>:

- **Type 1: Transboundary Protected Area** is a clearly defined geographical space that includes protected areas that are ecologically connected across one or more international boundaries and involve some form of cooperation.
- **Type 2: Transboundary Conservation Landscape(s) and/or Seascape(s)** are ecologically connected areas that include both protected areas and multiple resource use areas across one or more international boundaries and involve some form of cooperation.
- **Type 3: Transboundary Conservation Migration Areas** are wildlife habitats in two or more countries that are necessary to sustain populations of migratory species and involve some form of cooperation.
- **Special designation – Park for Peace** is a special designation that may be applied to any of the three types of Transboundary Conservation Areas mentioned above, and is dedicated to the promotion, celebration and/or commemoration of peace and cooperation.

<sup>2</sup> <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-023.pdf>

## 2.2 SADC TFCA PROGRAMME (2023 -2033)

The key objectives of SADC<sup>3</sup> are to achieve development, peace and security, economic growth, to alleviate poverty, to enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa, as well as to support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration which is built on democratic principles as well as equitable and sustainable development. To this effect, the SADC Secretariat is accountable for the entire SADC TFCA Programme (2023 -2033), through the Directorate of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), which has a mandate of supporting the implementation of the SADC Protocols on natural resources management through the TFCA Programme (2023 -2033).

The three pillars of SADC TFCAs are therefore constructed based on the following premise:

- To foster regional integration between two or more states to manage shared natural resources, to achieve progress towards legal harmonisation and to actively cooperate in resolving matters related to transfrontier conservation in the region;
- Environmental protection and conservation.
- Socio-economic development based on the sustainable use of natural resources by communities living in and alongside TFCAs<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int)

<sup>4</sup> Monitoring and Evaluation of TFCAs: Situational Analysis Report (SADC), Gaborone, Botswana, 2020

An overview of the revised programme, its vision, goals, cross-cutting issues, and guiding principles are graphically depicted below.

2023 - 2033 SADC TFCA Programme				
Vision Statement: A world-class network of sustainably managed transboundary landscapes and seascapes across and for the benefit of the people of SADC and the world.				
Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
Integrated and effective management of transboundary landscapes and seascapes	Improved well-being and livelihoods of people through agriculture, wildlife, fisheries, forestry, tourism and other sectors	Strengthened Governance, Multi-Sector Partnerships and Regional Integration	Long-Term Sustainable Finance for TFCAs secured	Enhanced skills and capacity development and improved knowledge management
<b>Cross-Cutting Themes</b>				
(i) Climate Change Mitigation, Adaption and a Just Transition (ii) Transboundary Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Use (iii) Nature benefiting Local Communities, in particular Women and Youth				
<b>Guiding Principles</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental and social justice</li> <li>• Multi-sectoral and inclusive approach</li> <li>• Accountability and Transparency</li> <li>• Evidence-based adaptive management</li> <li>• Harnessing innovation and technology</li> <li>• Sustainable use of natural resources</li> </ul>				

MONITORING & EVALUATION

### 2.2.1 TEXT BOX 1 SADC TFCA CATEGORIES

In the SADC context [historically] the status of TFCAs was categorised based on the extent to which international agreements have been signed. The categories were revised and is now defined as:

- **Category A – Formalised:** These are TFCAs with a legal mandate with clearly defined boundaries and established through a binding Agreement for the development of the TFCA by Member States.
- **Category B – Proposed:** TFCAs with a signed MOU and with a description of the proposed location. The MOUs provide for an interim arrangement that facilitates negotiations towards the signing of a binding Agreement to formally establish the respective TFCA.
- **Category C – Conceptual:** These are TFCAs where Member States have an official letter of intent to establish a TFCA, but no binding Agreement or interim MOU is in place.

**The categorisation is important because it:**

- Assigns a specific status to different TFCAs; and
- Implies a certain level of achievement in its formalisation. There are various direct and indirect implications, for example categorisation such as international or regional recognition as well as funding opportunities and allocation.

### 2.2.2 TEXT BOX 2 GUIDELINE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND ESTABLISHMENT OF TFCAs

The Guideline for the Establishment and Development of TFCAs<sup>5</sup> in SADC presents various over-arching principles against which the initiation, establishment and development of SADC TFCAs may be measured. These are:

- 1 The principles of sustainability must demonstrate ecological sustainability and the persistence of biodiversity features related to the ecosystems being conserved, delivering tangible benefits to affected communities and having broad socio-economic relevance in terms of the ecosystem goods and services that are produced, delivered, and being managed efficiently whilst optimising its economic relevance and income generating opportunities.
- 2 Objective feasibility assessments must test the viability of potential TFCAs in order to ensure that where initiatives are found to be potentially viable, that their establishment process should contribute to the development of a robust business case.
- 3 TFCA engagement processes must strive to be fully inclusive of all relevant stakeholders and should foster strong and trusting relationships through the facilitation of open, transparent, and full disclosure processes, taking cognisance of the challenges

<sup>5</sup> SADC Transfrontier Conservation Guidelines: The establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States. Kevan Zunkel. 2014

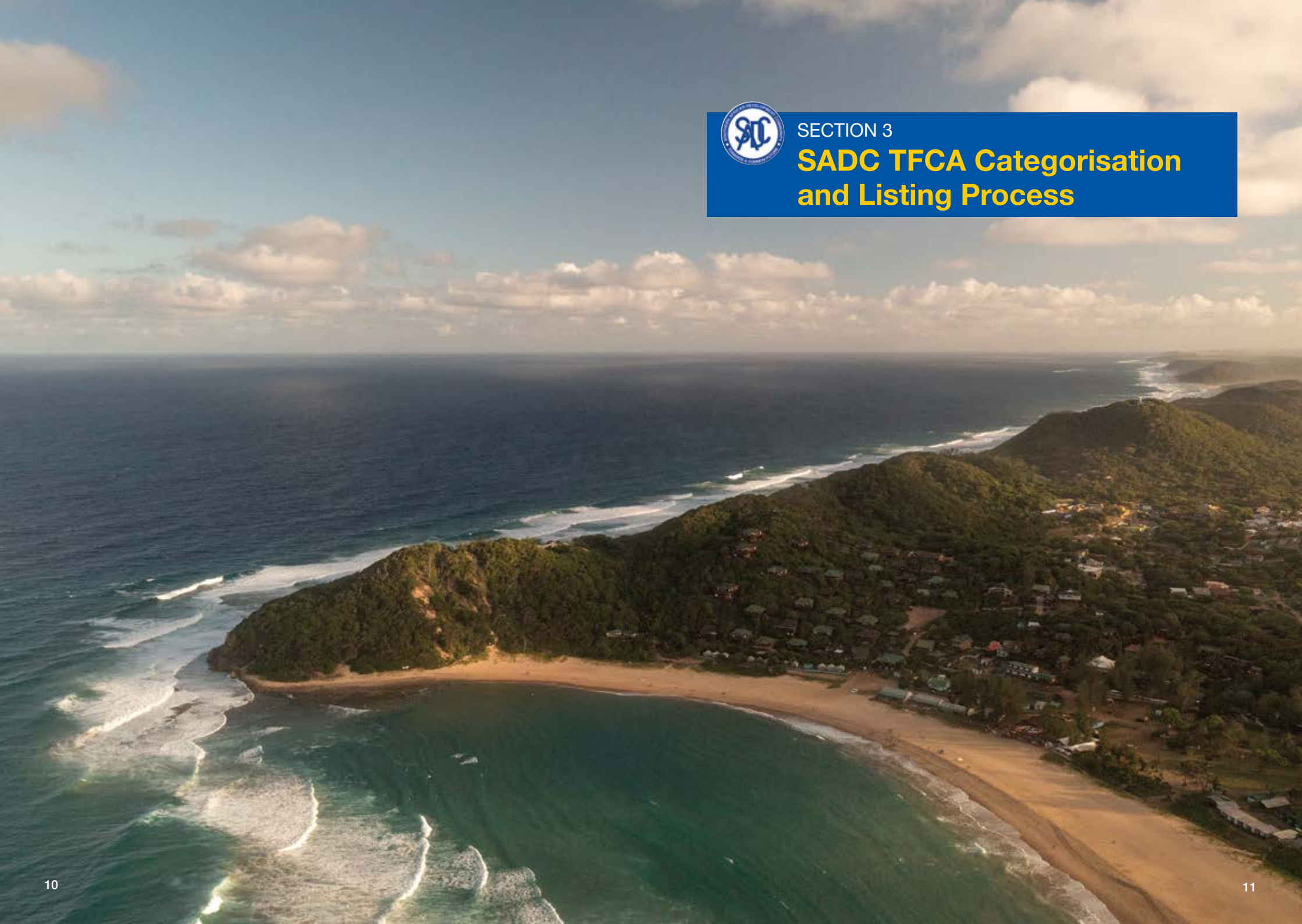
of communicating across differences in languages, cultures, perceptions, historical backgrounds, and political regimes.

- 4 Sovereignty, land rights and access to resources both natural and cultural, must be respected at all times.
- 5 An assessment of the legal and policy framework within which the potential TFCA will need to fit into is required – with particular reference to where there may be conflicting laws and policies between participating countries, and where harmonisation of laws is required as well as the domestication of TFCAs into national legal and policy frameworks.
- 6 The final development outcomes should include a shared vision and a list of prioritised joint management planning objectives.
- 7 TFCAs offer attractive opportunities for donor funding, however this is not sustainable, and every effort is required to work towards income generating initiatives.
- 8 Financial planning and management must aim for optimum operational efficiencies in order to boost investor confidence.
- 9 Monitoring and evaluation are essential in respect of TFCA management and implementation and needs to derive from and be integrated into the joint management plan and related processes.



SECTION 3

## SADC TFCA Categorisation and Listing Process



# SADC TFCA Categorisation and Listing Processes

## 3.1 CATEGORY C TFCAs

### 3.1.1 Process to identify and plan for the Listing of Category C TFCA

The planning, design, implementation, and management of TFCAs involve aspects of complex and interactive processes from a diverse range of stakeholders. It is a process that should be guided by the SADC TFCA Guidelines (SADC, 2014). Processes necessary for the initiation of the planning and design of a TFCA refer specifically to pre- and feasibility assessments, and what is required to design an implementation process if the proposed TFCA seems to be a feasible opportunity. Based on the SADC Guidelines for the establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States (2015), the TFCA initiation Process consists of the following key steps<sup>6</sup>:

- **Step 1:** Identifying and mapping key stakeholders and role players.
- **Step 2:** Assessing the enabling environment, including commissioning of pre-feasibility assessment.
- **Step 3:** Assessing the feasibility of the TFCA.
- **Step 4:** Designing the implementation process.

The steps highlighted above would lead to an agreement by Members States and key stakeholders to officially pursue the formalisation, planning, and development of the TFCA through the signing of a Binding Agreement or interim MOU. The process portrayed below details the steps to be followed to formalise a TFCAs and its respective categories.

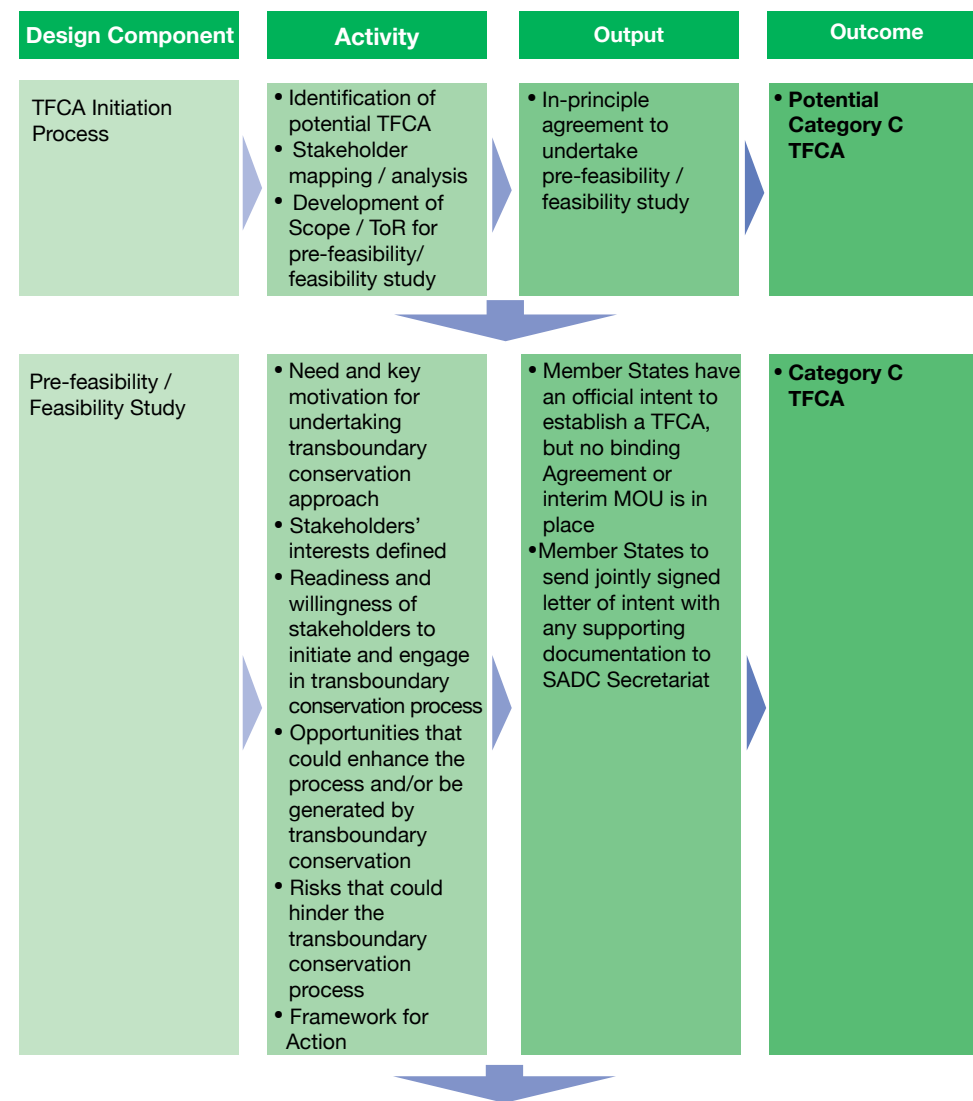
#### 3.1.1.1 STEP 1: Identifying and Mapping Key Stakeholders and Role Players

As part of the TFCA initiation process, it is prudent to identify the relevant role players and stakeholders, including but not limited to the following<sup>7</sup>:

- SADC Directorate for FANR
- National conservation agencies
- Other relevant national government agencies (including academic sector)
- Indigenous People and Local Communities
- Private landowners
- NGOs and donors.

#### 3.1.1.2 STEP 2: Assessing the Enabling Environment

To assess the potential of a TFCA, proponents need an understanding of what is required to create an enabling environment for a new TFCA initiative. This is often guided by the key



<sup>7</sup> SADC Transfrontier Conservation Guidelines: The establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States. Kevan Zunkel. 2014



findings of a pre-feasibility assessment or a scoping exercise.

Key considerations to assess the enabling environment include the following<sup>8</sup>:

- A pre-feasibility or scoping study is necessary to test the extent to which the receiving environment may be receptive of a TFCA initiative and capable of driving it forward.
- Key elements to guide the TFCA pre-feasibility process and to ensure that it is implemented as objectively as possible, include the following:
  - The catalyst: What is it that is significant enough to pull people out of their comfort zones, institutional silos, and/or sovereignty?
  - Leadership: What type of leadership is required to initiate, drive, and sustain a TFCA initiative?
  - Representation: Who are the stakeholders and how do we ensure that all stakeholders associated with the desired outcome are able to be represented in the process?
  - Regional fit: How do we define the region large enough to capture the problem, and small enough to get traction among people whose interests are with stakeholders?
  - Governance: How do we define the degree of decision-making authority, and mechanisms for funding and dispute resolution that exist within and associated with the area of interest, and how do we assemble these resources and organise them in a way that will ensure collaborative effort is achieved?
- Assessment of the legal and policy context within which the potential TFCA will need to fit in, is required.
- A thorough stakeholder analysis is required to provide a credible platform from which to launch further work towards assessing TFCA feasibility.

### Pre-feasibility and Feasibility Studies

- Pre-feasibility and feasibility studies are undertaken as part of the initial design phase of a TFCA to objectively determine the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed initiative. These studies can help to identify and assess the opportunities and risks present, key issues that need to be addressed, the resources required, and the prospects for success.
- Typically, undertaking a pre-feasibility will be the first step in the process. This is a high-level screening or scoping process aimed at identifying preliminary issues, risks, challenges, and opportunities. It also helps to develop and screen the number of options and / or alternatives that are identified to be subjected to a more detailed feasibility study.
- A feasibility study usually consists of the following components:

<sup>8</sup> SADC Transfrontier Conservation Guidelines: The establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States. Kevan Zunkel. 2014

### Defining the Project

- Size, location, and other relevant details for each project site.
- Institutional assessment.
- Understanding the relevant legal and policy environment.
- Strategic objectives and individual institutions' scope and deliverables.
- Preliminary assessment of any areas where capacity building may be required.
- Identification and mapping of key stakeholders.

### Technical Assessment

- Understanding the environmental conservation and tourism development plans for the potential projects, including conservation management, funding, land use rights, infrastructure, water shared courses, community role, public and private partnerships schemes, resettlement, etc.

### Financial Assessment

- Understanding budgets available for conservation, tourism infrastructure development, community development, resettlement, etc.
- Capital expenditure estimates: develop a preliminary overview of the financial impact(s) of the potential project(s).
- A preliminary assessment of any plans or studies which define the cost of other infrastructure necessary to ensure the success of the project for example roads, water, power etc.
- Payment mechanisms: develop a preliminary view of possible payment mechanisms for potential projects and initiatives.
- Risk: a preliminary assessment of total project risks and potential for allocation of risks to private operators, government and other stakeholders.

### Legal Assessment

- High-level understanding of the procurement legislation and regulations.
- High-level understanding of the legislation and regulations for the tourism / conservation sector.
- High-level understanding of environmental legislation and regulations.
- Preliminary understanding of site issues [if relevant]: ownership, land use rights, zoning rights, resettlement, and potential environmental issues.
- High-level understanding of the practice, legislation and regulation of labour issues generally and in the tourism sector specifically.
- High-level understanding of local economic empowerment policies or legislation.

### Market Assessment

- Availability of local, regional and international sponsors and an assessment of potential interest.
- Opportunities for local economic empowerment.

### 3.1.1.3 STEP 3: Assessing TFCA Feasibility

The feasibility or scoping study will provide guidance on the recommended approaches and prevailing dynamics associated with the area in question and the potential suitability of a TFCA approach. To assess the feasibility of a potential TFCA, the following should be considered<sup>9</sup>:

- Based on the findings of the pre-feasibility assessment or scoping study, a feasibility assessment process must be designed and undertaken.
- To test feasibility of the proposed TFCA, the IUCN diagnostic tool could be applied either directly for a feasibility assessment, or to be used as a guideline in the formulation of a terms of reference for an external service provider to execute the process<sup>10</sup>.
- The full value of the potential TFCA must be assessed of its potential to provide a range of ecosystem goods and services. The assessment must include a mapping exercise where the linkages between the production and consumption of ecosystem goods and services are identified.

### 3.1.1.4 STEP 4: Designing the Implementation Process

If the pre-feasibility, scoping, and feasibility processes indicate that pursuing a TFCA approach is appropriate and applicable, the outcomes of these processes and the insights gained should be applied to design and plan for implementation. Key points for consideration include :

- It is essential that proponents objectively reflect on the outcomes of the pre-feasibility, scoping and feasibility assessments and allow these to guide them further, prior to spending more time and resources on the process. If these assessments clearly show that it is not feasible to take the potential TFCA forward, the initiative must be 'parked' until circumstances become more conducive. However, if they show that it is feasible, then the findings from these processes should be used to inform the design of an implementation process, including an implementation framework.
- Often circumstances and on-the-ground realities may require a flexible approach to the further planning and design of the proposed TFCA.
- If the TFCA is found to be feasible by the Partner States and the stakeholders have come to the conclusion that there is a joint letter of intent to establish a TFCA, it is essential that an appropriate coordination mechanism is chosen between the Partner Countries (see Section 3.3), to ensure that processes such as the implementation framework is brought forward, and that the nomination of a coordinating country is documented in joint meeting minutes and/or a Notification of Intent (See Annex A: example letter).

<sup>9</sup> SADC Transfrontier Conservation Guidelines: The establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States. Kevan Zunkel. 2014

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.tbpa.net/page.php?ndx=22>

<sup>11</sup> Ditto

### 3.1.1.5 STEP 5: Officially communicate the Joint Intent to establish a TFCA

Once the Partner States have agreed on their intent to establish a TFCA, Member States can draft and jointly sign a notification letter of Intent (see Annex A: example letter) and submit the letter to SADC Secretariat. Once the letter is received, the TFCA will be officially listed as Category C under SADC. Official listing will also enable Partner States to commence with resource mobilisation through, for example, the SADC TFCA Financing Facility.

Partner States may also decide to move straight towards to Category B or A by signing an MoU or a binding agreement, respectively, without Category C listing. Text Box 3. The steps outlined in Section 3.2 outline the steps towards progressing towards Category B and A TFCAs.

#### 2.2.1 TEXT BOX 3: LOWER ZAMBEZI – MANA POOLS TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA (STRAIGHT CATEGORY B LISTING)<sup>12</sup>

- The Government of the Republic of Zambia and the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe signed a MOU for the development of the Lower Zambezi-Mana Pools Transfrontier Area in 2023.
- The signing of the MOU created a platform for collaboration and secured partnerships to support the further conservation and development of the TFCA.
- Whilst the signing of the MOU was done just before the official Ministerial approval of the TFCA Programme 2023-2033, the final draft programme was already in place and did not list this TFCA in any of the Categories. Technically, therefore, this TFCA can be considered a good example of a TFCA which skipped Category C listing and straight to Category B listing



<sup>12</sup> <https://www.undp.org/zimbabwe/announcements/zimbabwe-and-zambia-sign-historic-collaborative-agreement-serve-mana-pools-and-surrounding-areas>

KTP is also an interesting case which, if it had been established after the development of the TFCA Programme in 2013, would, most likely, have not followed the listing categories as it followed a more natural evolution process. (Text Box 4, below)

#### TEXT BOX 4: **KGALAGADI TRANSFRONTIER PARK (CATEGORY A) – FOLLOWING A MORE NATURAL (EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS)<sup>13</sup>**

Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (KTP) is widely considered to be Africa's first Transfrontier Park<sup>14</sup>.

- A verbal agreement was reached in 1948 which formed the basis of the management of the Gemsbok National Park in Botswana and the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park in South Africa as a single ecological unit.
- Plans to formalise the joint development and management of the two contiguous parks were proposed in 1989, following a fact-finding study on tourism developments in southern Africa. The study was commissioned by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Botswana, and, as a result, in May 1991 the Department of Wildlife and National Parks of Botswana received a mandate to consult further on the matter with South African National Parks (SANParks). Initial meetings between the two conservation agencies led to the establishment of a joint transfrontier management committee (TMC).
- The TMC has been responsible for the coordination of the management of the two parks and has worked towards the formal establishment of a transfrontier park. A management plan for the area has been drafted by the TMC, and the policies and actions necessary to maintain the cohesiveness and unity of the park have been agreed on. It provides the policies for joint management of the area as a single ecological unit and the basis for the promotion of tourism. This plan is now being implemented and will be regularly revised and updated.



- In June 1992 a joint management committee comprising representatives from the conservation authorities of South Africa (SANParks) and Botswana (Department of Wildlife and National Parks) was established to work on formalising a bilateral agreement to formally establish the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park.
- A bilateral agreement between the Government of the Republic of Botswana and the Government of the Republic of South Africa on the recognition of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park was signed in 1999. The bilateral agreement in 1999 formalised previous arrangements to ensure that no barrier to wildlife movement exists along the international boundary that separates the two components.
- KTP was officially opened by the presidents of the two countries in 2000.

KTP is not only unique for being Africa's first TP but also following a more natural evolutionary process of never having a fence between the two protected areas and being initiated and functioning through a verbal agreement.

## 3.2 **CATEGORY B AND A TFCAs**

### 3.2.1 **Process to plan and develop Category B and A TFCAs**

The process to facilitate the formalisation, development, and management of TFCAs include obtaining buy-in from stakeholders, designing and operationalising the appropriate governance and coordination model, confirming the delineation of the TFCA, working towards a shared vision and a joint management and/or integrated development plan, planning for financial sustainability, and lastly monitoring and evaluation to inform adaptive management and improved reporting<sup>15</sup>.

Based on the SADC Guidelines for the establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States (2015), TFCA Establishment and Development include the following key steps:

- **Step 1:** Securing buy-in from stakeholders and building legitimacy through the following:
  - At the political level.
  - With peers and related organs of state.
  - With interested and affected communities.
- **Step 2:** Select an appropriate governance model, including:
  - Governance instruments, such as development and signing of MOUs and Agreements.
  - Governance mechanisms, and establishment of relevant institutional arrangements.
- **Step 3:** Defining the geographical extent in an open and transparent manner with all relevant stakeholders.

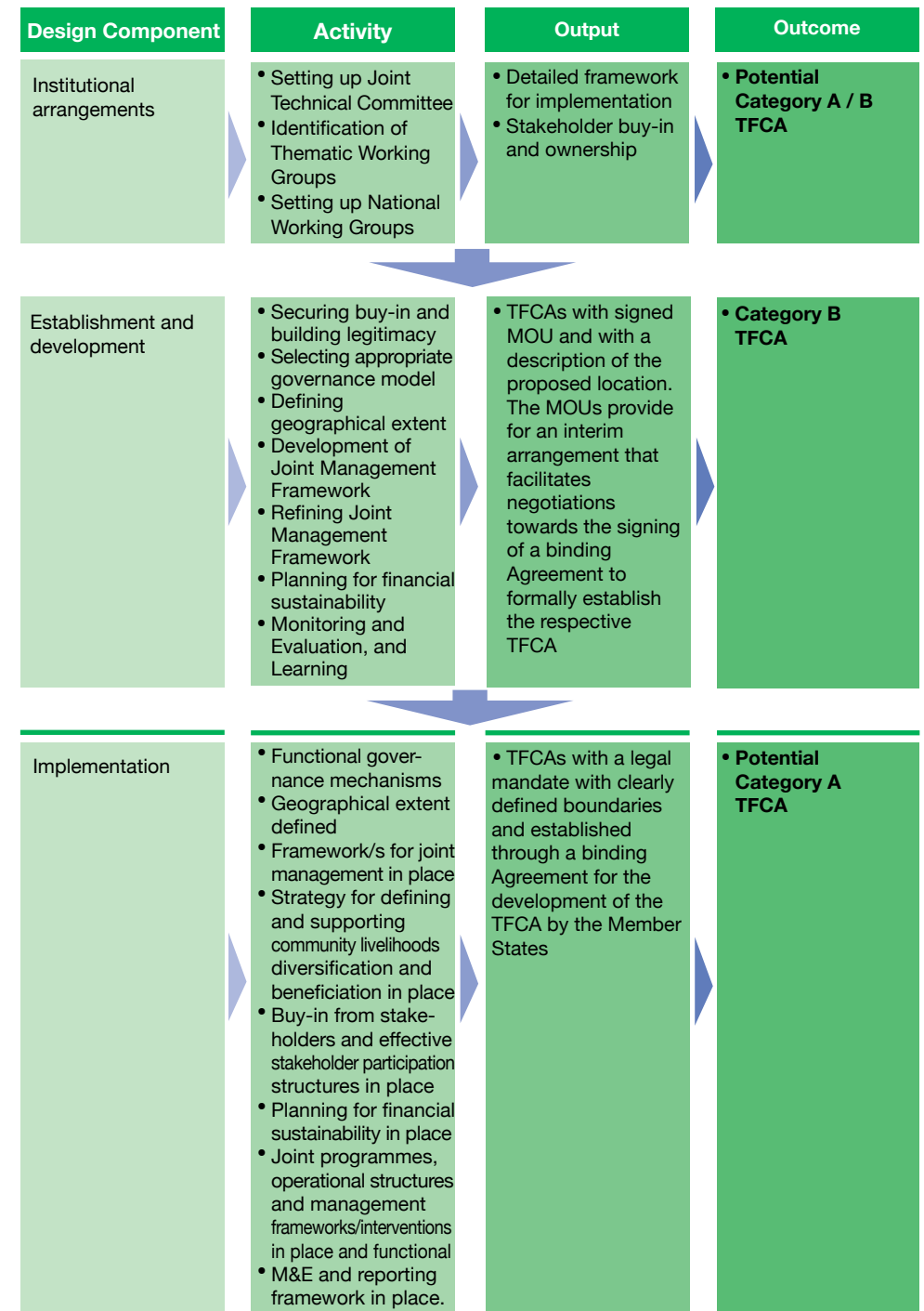
<sup>13</sup> Bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Botswana and the Government of the Republic of South Africa on the Recognition of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (1999)

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.dffe.gov.za/legislation/international\\_agreements/bilateral\\_agreement\\_kgalagadi\\_transfrontierpark](https://www.dffe.gov.za/legislation/international_agreements/bilateral_agreement_kgalagadi_transfrontierpark)

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.dffe.gov.za/legislation/international\\_agreements/bilateral\\_agreement\\_kgalagadi\\_transfrontierpark](https://www.dffe.gov.za/legislation/international_agreements/bilateral_agreement_kgalagadi_transfrontierpark)

- **Step 4:** Developing the framework for joint management such as a joint management / integrated planning.
- **Step 5:** Refining the joint management framework through implementation, including working towards the more refined management actions that would be undertaken in a collaborative manner.
- **Step 6:** Planning for financial sustainability through the development of a sustainable financing / resourcing strategy.

The evaluation of management effectiveness is recognised as a critical step for measuring the success of protected area management. Protected Areas receiving funding from the World Bank or from the Global Environment Facility and are tasked to complete a performance assessment (using Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)) as part of the assessment of project activities. Similarly, Protected Areas which are also designated under international conventions such as the World Heritage Convention and Ramsar Convention are also being asked to undertake convention specific reporting<sup>16</sup>. TFCAs, with collaborative, participatory, and equitable governance, are said to yield significant conservation and socio-economic benefits far beyond their boundaries, and contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable development, and regional integration. To ensure these benefits are realised, and that all other aspects of transfrontier conservation management are implemented effectively, monitoring and evaluation is essential<sup>17</sup>. Monitoring and evaluation of TFCAs are achieved through designing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the effectiveness of the implementation of the joint frameworks and plans.



<sup>16</sup> <https://www.conservationgateway.org/externallinks/pages/mett-management-effective.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> K. Zunckel (2014). SADC TFCAs Guidelines: The establishment and development of TFCAs initiatives between SADC Member States

### 3.2.1.1 STEP 1: Securing buy-in from stakeholders and building legitimacy

Securing buy-in from key stakeholders is a fundamental part of the TFCA development and implementation process. Apart from building legitimacy, it is also critical for all key interested and affected parties to be included in the process of designing and implementing TFCA programmes, strategies, and initiatives. Key considerations include the following<sup>18</sup>:

- Stakeholder engagement processes must be carefully designed and sufficiently resourced to ensure that buy-in to and legitimacy for the TFCA initiative is secured.
- Different engagement strategies are required for the various stakeholder groupings, including defining the role they can play, the influence they can bring to the process and their potential contribution and benefits.
- Primary stakeholder groupings include those at a political, institutional and community level, which are all essential to the success of the initiative. Other affected groupings include NGOs, donor agencies, private sector, and academia.
- Stakeholder engagement processes must be underpinned by the principles of honesty, transparency, and objectivity.

### 3.2.1.1 STEP 2: Selecting an appropriate governance model

Transboundary conservation governance is defined as the interactions between structures, processes and traditions that influence and determine how power, authority and responsibility are exercised and how decisions are taken. The establishment of effective governance instruments and mechanisms are essential components to ensure functional and sustainable TFCAs.

The SADC TFCA Guidelines (SADC, 2014) recognise that there is no one option that is recommended above the others and that the unique circumstances of each TFCA initiative must be allowed to dictate that which is and will be the most effective governance hierarchy. Generally, the governance mechanisms that are relevant, and which may be known or referred to by different names, include the following:

- Ministerial Committee:** a high level multi-national political structure;
- Joint (Park) Management Board or Committee:** a high level multi-national technical structure; and
- Management Committees or Task Groups:** a number of discipline-specific or sectoral multi-national structures relevant to the variety of aspects that require specific management focus.

All of the above will always include representatives from the participating countries, however in addition to the governance mechanism, it is also critical that a coordinating mechanism is chosen by the TFCA (see Section 3.3). In some instances, it may be determined that a single entity be established to provide coordination, facilitation and secretarial support to all the participating countries. Such an entity may be known as a Secretariat or a Coordination or

<sup>18</sup> K. Zunckel (2014). SADC TFCA Guidelines: The establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States

Implementation Unit and may be headed by an International Coordinator. The number and diversity of staff attached to such an entity may reflect the complexity of the TFCA initiative. Key factors to consider include the following<sup>19</sup>:

- Ensure strong collaboration between all relevant stakeholders in all aspects of planning and implementation at all scales.
- Provide effective vertical and horizontal feedback mechanisms necessary for the flow of information between the various stakeholders.
- Allow for adaptability and flexibility to respond to new information, threats and / or opportunities, as well as change.
- Measure, track performance and put strategies in place to ensure continuous progress.
- Measure, monitor and ensure tangible benefit flow(s) to beneficiaries in a transparent and equitable manner.
- Maintain open channels of communication to ensure stakeholder buy-in and legitimacy.
- Secure financial and human resources necessary to ensure that the TFCA can function optimally.

### 3.2.1.3 STEP 3: Defining the geographical extent

The process to identify the geographic reach of TFCA initiatives needs to be consultative, flexible, adaptive, and iterative. This is based on the recognition that delineation and mapping processes need to inform each other and agreed to by the participating countries and stakeholders. Key factors to consider include the following<sup>20</sup>:

- For Category A TFCAs boundaries need to be clearly defined, while for Category B TFCAs, the location needs to be described but does not yet have to be completely defined.
- The process of defining the geographic extent of a TFCA and mapping the associated detailed spatial information within and adjacent to it must be seen as an ongoing and evolutionary process.
- Caution must be applied in the presentation of maps to stakeholders, particularly in the early stages of TFCA processes. TFCA practitioners also need to acknowledge that it may be necessary to adjust boundaries and spatial information as the TFCA development and implementation processes evolve.
- Techniques used to develop the TFCA maps must be aligned to the financial and human resources available. Where possible, systematic conservation planning processes must be applied using geographic information system (GIS) or other spatial planning tools.

<sup>19</sup> K. Zunckel (2014). SADC TFCA Guidelines: The establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States

<sup>20</sup> Ditto

#### 3.2.1.4 **STEP 4: Developing the Framework for Joint Management**

Formulating a shared vision, mission, and objective through the development of a joint management framework for the joint planning and establishment of a TFCA initiative is crucial to define the strategic direction of the TFCA. These are what are known as the Joint Management Plan, Integrated Management Plan or Integrated Development Plan. Irrespective of their name, it is the instrument that captures the long-term vision for the initiative and the detail of the short to medium term shared management actions necessary to achieve the vision, all within the framework provided by the over-arching agreement. Key factors to consider, include the following<sup>21</sup>:

- The process followed to develop a framework for a joint management plan or integrated development plan must be stakeholder driven and as inclusive as possible.
- Stakeholders invited to participate in the process must be given every opportunity to be fully prepared. In certain cases, a series of preparatory meetings and workshops may be required to provide for a better understanding and build the capacity of stakeholders to effectively participate in the process.
- It is often preferable to obtain the services of an external and objective facilitator to drive the process and to provide stakeholders with the assurance that their inputs will be taken seriously and integrated into the final outcomes.
- The process must be transparent and rich in information so that all stakeholders are given an opportunity to provide inputs into the process wherever necessary.
- Components of sustainability must underpin the categorisation of information being gathered and to assist with its analysis, synthesis, and packaging.
- The process is an important starting point to build trust between the stakeholders, which is an important requirement for a successful TFCA.

#### 3.2.1.5 **STEP 5: Refining the Joint Management Framework**

The framework for joint management provides the basis for the development of frameworks, plans and strategies that will inform planning at a finer scale and for shorter-term implementation, often on a thematic and / or joint operational level. Key factors to consider include the following<sup>22</sup>:

- Thematic and / or thematic planning teams, which are mutually acceptable to all the stakeholders, must be selected to take these processes forward.
- The joint management objectives serve as the basis from which the more refined joint operational planning is achieved.
- Refinement of the objectives further develops the hierarchy of management statements by cascading them down into more specific and shorter-term statements that include Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound (alternatively known as

<sup>21</sup> K. Zunckel (2014). SADC TFCA Guidelines: The establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States

<sup>22</sup> Ditto

SMART) operational goals and actions.

- It is important to demonstrate the ability to achieve the set objectives, and identify gaps and resources needed for effective implementation.
- The refined plans and frameworks provide the basis from which implementation and performance can be tracked, monitored, and evaluated.
- Joint plans and frameworks should be subjected to frequent revision and updating with a minimum frequency of five years with the optimal frequency being annual.

#### 3.2.1.6 **STEP 6: Planning for Financial Sustainability**

TFCAs are well positioned to yield multiple agricultural, livelihood, conservation, and climate related benefits at a landscape level to achieve inclusive green growth. However, the lack of sustainable funding for the establishment, development and management activities remains a critical challenge for TFCAs. Member States and ICPs are key funders of programmes in TFCA landscapes. A variety of innovative financial mechanisms are emerging that are particularly relevant in the context of integrated landscape and seascape management approaches that form the heartbeat of TFCAs. Some TFCAs have set-up a joint fund to be able to finance TFCA overheads including governance and coordination. (Text Box 5, overleaf).

TEXT BOX 5: **KAVANGO ZAMBEZI TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA (CATEGORY A) – WITH FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY PARTNER STATES** <sup>23, 24</sup>

Covering nearly 520,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) is the largest transfrontier conservation area in the world<sup>25</sup>. The KAZA TFCA comprises more than 20 National Parks, 85 Forest Reserves, 22 Conservancies, 11 Sanctuaries, 103 Wildlife Management Areas and 11 Game Management Areas. This gives a total of 371,394 km<sup>2</sup> under some form of wildlife management, leaving 148,520 km<sup>2</sup> for agricultural use including rangelands.



- A Pre-Feasibility Study was commissioned to formulate an Agenda of Action for taking the KAZA TFCA development process forward.
- Upon review of the study and resolutions arising from the deliberations that started in 2003, the five partner countries signed a MOU on 7 December 2006. This created the necessary platform for formal negotiations to establish the KAZA TFCA.
- The Organisational and Operational Structure Document and the Strategic Plan for the KAZA TFCA, which were approved/ratified by the Committee of Ministers, formed the basis for drafting the KAZA TFCA Treaty, which was signed by the Presidents of the five partner countries on 18 August 2011 in Luanda, Angola, alongside the SADC Heads of State Summit.
- KAZA happens to be the only SADC TFCA with a Secretariat as a Coordinating structure which is fully functional and funded through partner states contributions. Annexure C also confirms the effectiveness of the Secretariat as the TFCA has the highest weighted score.

<sup>23</sup> Memorandum of Understanding made and entered by and between the Governments of The Republic of Angola, The Republic of Botswana, The Republic of Namibia, The Republic of Zambia, and The Republic of Zimbabwe concerning the Establishment of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (2006)

<sup>24</sup> Treaty between The Government of the Republic of Angola, The Government of the Republic of Botswana, The Government of the Republic of Namibia, The Government of the Republic of Zambia, and The Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe on the establishment of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (2011)

<sup>25</sup> Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area Master Integrated Development Plan (2016)

Planning for financial sustainability is therefore a critical component for the effective development and establishment of TFCAs. Key factors to consider include the following<sup>26</sup>:

- TFCAs are attractive options for donor funding, but this is not sustainable, and every effort is required to work towards funding streams that are innovative and sustainable.
- Financial planning and management must aim for optimum operational efficiencies to provide ‘investor’ confidence.
- Careful assessment of a TFCAs full value within the broader biodiversity, ecosystems and socio-economic landscape or seascape must be carried out to identify every opportunity for income generation and financial support.
- TFCA practitioners must link in to the local, regional, and global networks where financing tools can be accessed, requests for specific solutions posted and lessons learned shared.

### 3.3 SELECTING THE MOST APPROPRIATE COORDINATION MECHANISM FOR THE TFCAs IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

**Coordination mechanisms** are those governance mechanisms primarily responsible for facilitating the day-to-day management and implementation of joint actions and which may be recognised as Secretariats, International Coordinators or Coordination Units, Coordinating state parties, national coordination/implementation units, and any other structures that are responsible for providing support to and coordinating the functions of the TFCA governance mechanisms.

A separate assignment was carried out to assess the effectiveness of different coordination mechanisms in different TFCAs and make recommendations for the most appropriate mechanisms for TFCAs in different categories. Below is a summary of the findings and recommendations from that assignment.

#### 3.3.1 The Effectiveness of Current Coordinating Mechanisms

A survey was carried to assess the effectiveness of current coordination mechanisms applied in the eleven SADC TFCAs assessed for this assignment and the results are illustrated in Annexure C, below, where the TFCAs have been listed in order of the weighted scores derived from the assessment. The TFCAs have also been listed irrespective of their categories although it is only the Greater Mapungubwe TFCA that is a Category B, while all the others are Category A.

From the weighted scores those TFCAs with clearly defined coordination mechanisms, established to support the hierarchy of governance mechanisms, have been the most effective over the 2022/23 period of implementation. More specifically these are the KAZA TFCA and GLTFCA, whose weighted scores were 85% and 79% respectively. The common denominator for these two TFCAs is a history of a dedicated coordination mechanism. In the case of the KAZA TFCA, it is a Secretariat (Text Box 5, above), while for the

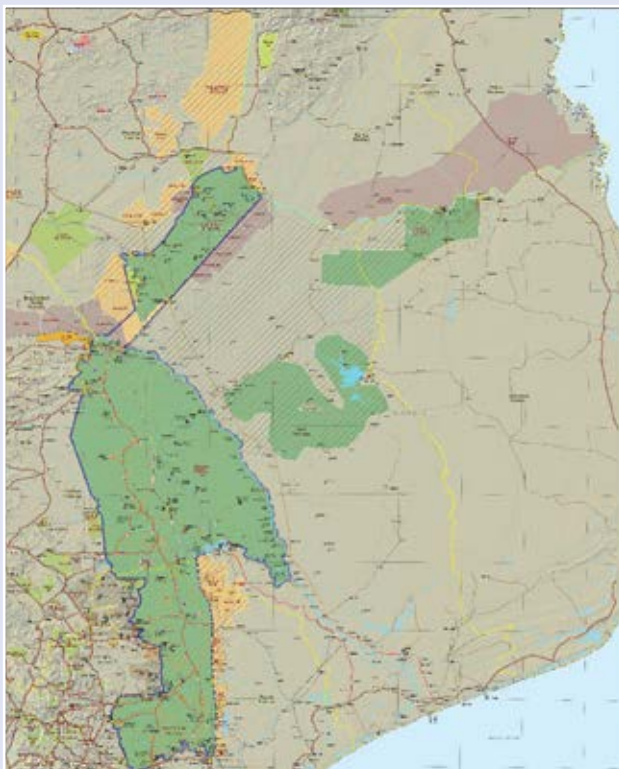
<sup>26</sup> Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area Master Integrated Development Plan (2016)

GLTFCA; an International Coordinator is currently fulfilling the role of a Secretariat and is working towards the formal establishment of one (Text Box 6, below). Both of these TFCAs are complex, involving five and three countries, respectively, and cover large areas with varying land use and tenure systems linking protected areas.

**TEXT BOX 6: GREAT LIMPOPO TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA (CATEGORY A) WITH A FUNCTIONAL ROTATIONAL INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION ARRANGEMENT** <sup>27</sup>

- Discussions around the possible creation of the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Conservation Area (GKG TFCA) began in 1990.
- In 1991 the Mozambican Government used Global Environment Facility (GEF) funds to undertake a feasibility study towards the implementation of a TFCA pilot project. The 1992 Peace Accord in Mozambique and the South African democratic elections of 1994 paved the way for the political processes to proceed toward realising this idea.

- Feasibility studies initiated by the World Bank culminated in a pilot project that was launched with GEF funding in 1996. This process led to the signing of a Trilateral Agreement in Skukuza, South Africa on 10 November 2000. The Skukuza Agreement signalled the three nations' intent to establish and develop a transfrontier park and surrounding conservation area that, at that time, was still



<sup>27</sup> Treaty between the Government of the Republic of Mozambique the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe on the establishment of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park

called GKG TFCA.

- A Treaty between the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, the Government of the Republic of South Africa, and the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe on the establishment of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park was signed in 2002. The geographical delimitation was clearly outlined for the three countries.
- The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) Treaty makes provision for a phased approach to the development on TFCA.
- The Treaty also stated that areas forming part of the TFCA shall include various privately-owned, state-owned, and community-owned conservation areas directly bordering the Transfrontier Park which shall be identified in future. Mozambique initiated the process of the development of the GLTFCA by the formal inclusion of the 240,000 hectares (ha) of the Greater Lubombo's Conservancy (GLC). South Africa followed with signing of the GLTFCA Cooperative Agreement between SANParks / Kruger National Park (KNP) and adjacent state, privately and community owned conservation areas which resulted in the inclusion of the 366,000 ha Greater Kruger area.
- The Joint Management Board (JMB) has now initiated the process to investigate the feasibility of the development of corridors and wildlife disbursement areas, mainly focusing on areas between protected areas (Limpopo, Banhine and Zinave National Parks) within the GLTFCA in Mozambique, and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe.
- A GLTFCA Corridors Task Team has been constituted under the JMB to discuss the potential development of linkages between Limpopo, Banhine, Zinave and Gonarezhou National Parks. The purpose of this task team would be the following: (i) Provide for a platform to align and discuss the methodology and approach to the identification, planning and development of wildlife corridors in the GLTFCA; (ii) Align activities and provide ongoing support to the planning and development of wildlife corridors in the GLTFCA; (iii) Share in-country experiences especially related to the work done on corridors to date in Mozambique and Zimbabwe; (iv) Mobilise resources to support the planning and development of wildlife corridors in the GLTFCA; and (v) Gauge on an ongoing basis progress made with the planning and development of wildlife corridors in the GLTFCA.
- The GLTFCA has maintained a fairly functional rotational International Coordination arrangement which has benefited from continued financial support from the Peace Parks Foundation. The TFCA is currently working on modalities to establish a Secretariat.

Two Transfrontier Parks, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (KTP) and the Ai-Ais/Richtersveld TP (ARTP), scored relatively well with weighted scores of 65% and 63%, respectively; but being TPs involving only two countries each, they do not require complex



coordination mechanisms to sustain themselves and to be effective, but rather park managers that are dedicated to establishing and maintaining close collaborative linkages with their neighbours, and government agencies who ensure an enabling environment for implementation of joint activities.

Following the above analysis, Table 2 below shows the recommended Coordination Mechanisms per Category, noting that some of these recommended structures, like National Coordination Units will be highly dependant on availability of financial resources, particularly for member states involved in more than one TFCAs.

Table 1: Recommended coordination mechanisms per TFCa category and type.

TP/TFCa	COORDINATING MECHANISMS PER CATEGORY		
<b>TP</b>	<b>CATEGORY C</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National TFCa Focal Points coordinating rotationally</li> <li>Joint Park Liaison Committee.</li> </ul>	<b>CATEGORY B</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National TFCa Focal Points coordinating rotationally</li> <li>Joint Park Management Committee.</li> </ul>	<b>CATEGORY A</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotational International Coordinator</li> <li>Joint Park Management Committee</li> </ul>
<b>TFCa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National TFCa Focal Points coordinating rotationally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotational International Coordinator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secretariat</li> <li>National Coordination Units</li> </ul>

### 3.3.2 Summary of the key recommendations for the establishment of effective coordination mechanisms for TFCAs in any category.

- 1 Ensure that realistic budgets required to support coordination and implementation** are included in the high-level political Governance Instruments with commitments from Partner Countries as sustained funding support is crucial to ensure that the governance and coordination mechanisms have the resources necessary to carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- 2 Acknowledge that the establishment of the appropriate Coordination Mechanisms is an evolutionary process** and can start with a mechanism that is relatively informal but that has a clear development path to that which is formalised/institutionalised and effective for the purposes and character of the TFCa. This principle recognises that there are varying levels of complexities associated with each of the SADC TFCAs and that if they are to be effectively coordinated, they need to be allowed to grow into the coordination mechanisms that will be appropriate and best suited to their particular circumstances.
- 3 Ensure that each of the Partner Countries establishes dedicated National TFCa**

**Units** to facilitate national coordination across sectors within countries, as a critical success factor for effective TFCa coordination and implementation, as well as establishing, depending on availability of financial resources, national TFCa Coordination Units, for each TFCa, which will support International Coordination or Secretariats while facilitating essential linkages and relationships across sectors at the national level. Even though it does

#### TEXT BOX 7: MALOTI-DRAKENSBERG TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AREA (MDTFCA) CATEGORY A, WITH NATIONAL COORDINATION UNITS AND NATIONAL TFCa UNIT ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN SIDE <sup>28, 29</sup>

- A MOU was signed between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho in respect of the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Area in 2008. Two Annexures to the MOU contained a broad description of the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation Area and a map of the MDTFCA.
- The MOU outlined the Objectives, Competent Authorities, Institutional and Implementation Framework of the MDTFCA.
- The MOU was preceded by an earlier MOU, signed in 2001, which sought to strengthen cooperation between the two countries and was supported through financial assistance from the World Bank through a grant from the Global Environmental Facility Trust Fund. Through this support a 20 Year Conservation and Development Strategy and a Five-Year Action Plan was developed to guide the long-term cooperative efforts and sustainable management of the MDTFCA.
- A unique feature of the MDTFCA is that it has established National Coordination Units that report to the National Coordination Committees, chaired by the National TFCa Unit in the case of South Africa and the Ministry responsible for Environment in the case of Lesotho. The two National Coordination Units also jointly report to the Bilateral Coordination Committee comprised of all the members of the National Coordination Committees.



<sup>28</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho in respect of the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Area (2008)

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.dffe.gov.za/legislation/international\\_agreements/maloti\\_drakensberg\\_tfca](https://www.dffe.gov.za/legislation/international_agreements/maloti_drakensberg_tfca)

not have an international coordination arrangement in place, the MDTFCA is a good example of a TFCA with fairly functional National TFCA Coordination Units. (Text Box 7, previous page).

- 4 **Aim for the establishment of a Secretariat to transition the role of International Coordination** and which will include an appropriate staff structure that reflects the size and complexities of the TFCA for which it has been established. The rationale for this recommendation is based on the relative autonomy such a structure will be given and that it has the potential of minimising staff turnover and the loss of institutional memory, as is the case with a rotational International Coordinator.
- 5 Work towards ensuring that the Secretariat Operates as the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for the TFCA. Work towards conferring the appropriate legal status and autonomy for the Secretariat to become an SPV for the TFCA. An SPV is a separate legal and autonomous entity with its own assets and liabilities,. Usually, SPVs are created for a specific objective, often to mobilise financial resources but at the same isolating financial risk for the company, in this case, the TFCA. This is essential as a mechanism to seek and secure innovative finance solutions that will make up the funding shortfall between that provided by the partner countries and that which is required to support the coordination mechanism and implement the joint management actions on a long-term basis.
- 6 As and when Partner States deem it necessary, review, revise and update their TFCA Governance Instruments in order to make sure that they are providing the clarity and support needed to put the required and appropriate governance and coordination mechanisms in place.

### 3.4 TFCA LISTING PROCESS

The SADC Secretariat has an important Secretariat role to keep track of the progress of TFCA establishment. As part of the listing process, the SADC Secretariat will therefore request an update from Member States at least every two (2) years before the Joint Ministerial meeting for Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism request the submission of any new TFCA Agreements, interim MOUs, or Letters of Intent.

*Member States are required to observe the following:*

#### Category A and B:

- Member States to submit any new Agreement or Interim MOU to SADC Secretariat, either on own initiative or following an information request from SADC Secretariat.

#### Category C:

- Member States to send jointly signed Letter of Intent with any supporting documentation (e.g., Concept Note, TFCA Diagnostic Tool, Implementation Plan etc.) either on own initiative or following the information request from the SADC Secretariat. Following the submissions by Member States, the list of SADC TFCAs will be updated by the SADC Secretariat before every Joint Ministerial Meeting for the Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism.



## Annexures



## Annexure A

### Template letter to SADC Secretariat advising of Category C listing

Ref: [add reference number]

Date: [add date]

The Executive Secretary  
SADC Secretariat  
Private Bag 0095  
Gaborone  
Botswana

Email to: registry@sadc.int

Email cc'd to: [add email addresses]

SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO ESTABLISH A TRANSFRONTIER  
CONSERVATION AREA

Reference is made to the above subject matter.

The SADC TFCA Programme (2023–2033) was approved by the Ministers responsible for the Environment, Natural Resources and Tourism at their meeting held on 22 June 2023.

The Programme makes provision for three categories of Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA). Category C TFCAs are defined as conceptual TFCAs, where Member States have an official intent to establish a TFCA, but no binding Agreement or interim Memorandum of Understanding is yet in place. The SADC Secretariat is recognised as having an important Secretariat role to oversee the progress of TFCA establishment and implementation.

The Government of [insert name] as the nominated coordinating Partner State is hereby submitting, to the SADC Secretariat, the jointly signed letter of intent to establish the [enter name] TFCA, following initial engagements with partner state Governments of [insert name] and the Government of [insert name, if a third or more Member State is party to the new TFCA establishment initiative].

Please find herewith supporting documentation to this effect [supporting documentation could be a Concept Note, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Diagnostic Tool for Transboundary Conservation Planners Version 2.0<sup>30</sup>, Implementation Plan etc.].

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signatories

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.tbpa.net/page.php?ndx=22>

## Annexure B

### Characteristics of a Functional TFCA

#### Background and Introduction

TFCAs constitute some of the most exciting, and ambitious conservation projects in the world today. These projects aim to establish large conservation and wildlife areas not only through the integration of vast landscapes and re-connecting ecological systems, but also through development of cross-border tourism linkages, ensuring sustainable benefits to local communities through socio-economic upliftment, and the promotion of peace and stability in the region. The establishment of TFCAs is an exemplary process of partnerships between governments, NGOs, communities, and the private sector. While the main players are the relevant governments and implementing agencies, donors and NGOs also greatly contribute towards the creation and management of TFCAs.

#### Key Objectives for the Establishment of TFCAs

In terms of the IUCN Best Practice Guidelines<sup>31</sup> on Transboundary Protected Areas for Peace and Cooperation, there are a range of objectives for countries to embark on a transboundary conservation initiative. These usually include the following:

- Supporting long term cooperative conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem services, natural and cultural values across boundaries;
- Promoting landscape-level ecosystem management through integrated bio-regional land use planning and management;
- Building trust, understanding, reconciliation and cooperation between and among countries, communities, agencies and other stakeholders;
- Sharing biodiversity and cultural resource management skills and experience, including co-operative research and information management;
- Promoting more efficient and effective cooperative management programmes; and
- Enhancing the benefits of conservation and promoting benefit sharing across boundaries among stakeholders.

*In so doing, transboundary initiatives have the potential to realise a wide spectrum of benefits including, but not limited to, the following:*

- Promoting international cooperation at different levels and in different fora;
- Enhancing environmental protection across ecosystems and international boundaries;
- Facilitating more effective research;
- Bringing economic benefits to local and national economies; and

<sup>31</sup> Sandwith, T., Shine, C., Hamilton, L., and Sheppard, D. (2001). Transboundary Protected Areas for Peace and Cooperation. IUCN.

- Ensuring better cross border control of matters such as fire, pests, poaching, marine pollution and smuggling.

In the SADC context, TFCAs are usually underpinned by the following objectives which are outlined in various International Agreements and / or Treaties between the countries involved in the project:

- Fostering transnational collaboration and cooperation among the Parties which in turn facilitates effective ecosystem management in the TFCA area;
- Promoting alliances in the management of biological natural resources by encouraging social, economic, and other partnerships among stakeholders, including the private sector, local communities and non-governmental organisations;
- Enhancing ecosystem integrity and natural ecological processes by harmonising environmental management procedures across international boundaries and striving to remove artificial barriers impeding the natural movement of wildlife;
- The establishment and maintenance of a sustainable sub-regional economic base through appropriate development frameworks, strategies, and work plans;
- Fostering regional socio-economic development by the creation of transborder ecotourism; and
- The exchange of technical, scientific, and legal information for the joint management of the ecosystem.

In achieving the above, several key role players are involved including national government departments, conservation agencies and inter-conservation agency departments, NGOs, the private sector, donors, and funders etc.

### The Theory of Change: From Design to Impact

Various factors directly and / or indirectly determine the actual functionality of a TFCA, notwithstanding the International Agreement or Treaty that has been signed to establish a particular TFCA. There are significant implementation complexities that need to be considered in the context of TFCAs. Factors such as the lack of enforcement mechanisms, weak provision for implementation and poorly defined objectives have been identified<sup>32</sup>.

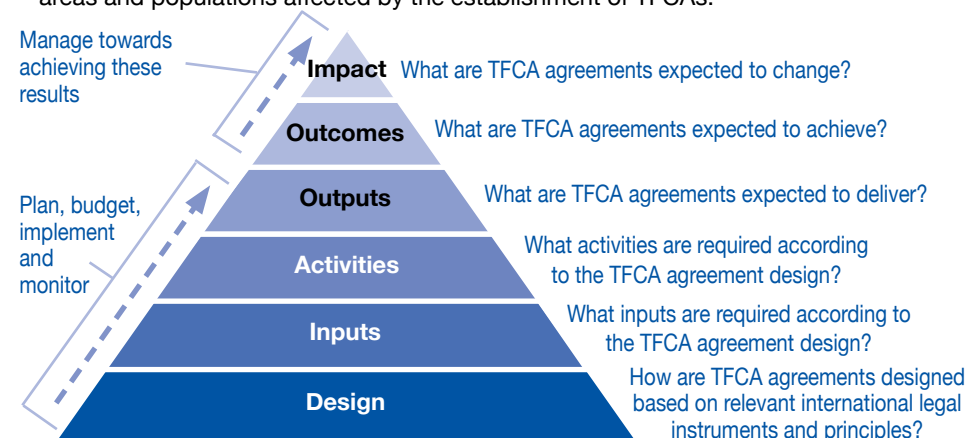
For TFCA practitioners, it is important to consider the elements of the Theory of Change (ToC) to be able to critically and collectively reflect on the functionality of the processes and programmes of each TFCA. This includes identifying certain key assumptions and risks to the intervention delivering intended outcomes and / or functioning as intended.

The planning, budgeting, implementing, and monitoring aspects of TFCA management are captured in four components of the ToC, these being the design, inputs, activities, and output components respectively. At a higher level, the outcomes and impact components of the ToC are focused on management processes towards achieving the intended results.

<sup>32</sup> Lubbe, N. 2023. A critical evaluation of international agreements towards a revised categorisation for Transfrontier Conservation Areas

The following considerations are useful to be made when deliberating on the various components of the ToC, namely:

- **Design component:** How are TFCA agreements designed based on relevant international legal instruments and principles? It is important to consider legal instruments and principles within which TFCAs are embedded. Various SADC Protocols, Programmes, Strategies and Guidelines have relevance.
- **Input component:** What inputs are required according to the TFCA agreement design, to achieve prescribed outputs, outcomes and impacts? Inputs could include the conservation value of adjoining land (biodiversity, species, landscapes, heritage, wilderness, etc); regional enforcement mechanisms; infrastructure to provide TFCA access and services; skills and competencies of conservation authorities and scientific services as well as a budget for implementation and management of the TFCA.
- **Activities component:** What activities are required according to the TFCA agreement design, to achieve the prescribed outputs, outcomes and impacts?
- **Output component:** What are TFCA agreements expected to deliver?
- **Outcome component:** What are TFCA agreements expected to achieve? Intermediate outcomes include Ecological; Socio-Economic; Cultural; Political and Security; Conservation; Management; Legal Policy; Framework Harmonisation etc. Outcomes should also be aligned to SADC Objectives of Development; Peace and Security and Economic Growth.
- **Impact component:** What are TFCA agreements expected to change? Three broad impact categories have been identified: (i) Environmental Conservation which refers to ecosystem conservation and sustainable use; (ii) Regional Integration which refers to the process, first, bringing together two or more states to manage shared natural resources and, secondly, progress towards legal harmonisation and active cooperation in resolving other matters related to Transboundary conservation, (TBC); (iii) Socio-economic development which refers to the process of using Transboundary Conservation to provide opportunities for socio-economic development primarily to the areas and populations affected by the establishment of TFCAs.



## Governance Arrangements

Once agreement by the respective countries involved in the establishment of the proposed transfrontier conservation areas is reached, the next step will be to sign the International Agreement or MOU for the establishment of the identified TFPs / TFCAs. The International Agreement or MOU is a statement of intent by all parties involved in the process to be a partner in the establishment of the area. In terms of this agreement each party has a period of two to three years to act as coordinating party in the process, taking the responsibility of maintaining momentum in the planning and development process.

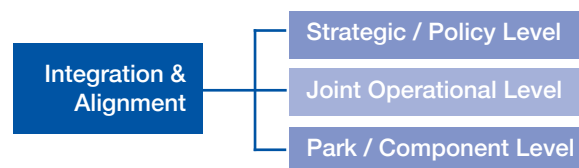
After the signing of the International Agreement or MOU, appropriate institutions should be created to facilitate the planning and development process. These institutions generally consisted of the following:

- A **Ministerial Committee** which is ultimately the top decision-making authority in the planning and development process. The Minister(s) of Environment and / or Tourism of each of the countries involved sits on the Ministerial Committee.
- A **Technical / Joint Management Committee**, which advises the Ministerial Committee on issues relating to the planning and development of TFCAs. Members on the Technical / Joint Management Committee are either high ranking government officials, technical experts, or both.
- **Various Working Groups** advise the Technical Committee on issues relating to the planning and development of the TFPs / TFCAs. The Working Groups comprise of technical experts of the countries involved and would typically be dealing with issues such as safety and security, joint management of the area, tourism development, community issues, harmonisation of legislation, and funding requirements.
- **Joint Operational Structures** which facilitate the implementation of the TFCA on a landscape or nodal level.

## Implementation Arrangements

TFCA implementation occurs at different scales, which include supporting horizontal transboundary initiatives that occur between countries, different nodes, different institutions, different ward, or district boundaries as well as vertical transboundary initiatives between different tiers of government. Integration and alignment between these different levels are critical to support the establishment and implementation of functional TFCAs.

There are three tiers of key stakeholders involved in supporting integration and alignment, namely:



Function	Institutions	Responsibility
Accountability and Support	TFCA Joint Management Structures, together with its implementing agencies, are accountable for developing and supporting the implementation of the initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the framework, plans and strategies to guide the implementation of the TFCA and monitor its implementation and impacts.</li> <li>• Provide guidance and support to the nodes / TFCA components.</li> <li>• Identify, plan, and execute a range of interventions which unlock opportunities between nodes / components and at a transboundary scale.</li> </ul>
Political Will and Coordination	National TFCA Focal Points and Implementing Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the legal and policy framework to guide TFCA implementation on a national level.</li> <li>• Establish mechanisms for effective monitoring and reporting.</li> <li>• Identify, plan, and execute a range of mechanisms to ensure cross-sectoral integration and coordination.</li> </ul>
Implementation (per node / TFCA component)	Protected Areas all have formal responsibilities toward achieving conservation and socio-economic objectives. They share this mandate with other stakeholders including the communities themselves as well as organisations such as local and regional government, civil society, and the private sector. Together these stakeholders will drive implementation at the nodal / component level through existing forums or otherwise identified platforms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop implementation / joint operational plans for each node / component through engagement with key local stakeholders.</li> <li>• Implement interventions and monitor and report on these.</li> </ul>

## Evaluation of Management Effectiveness

The evaluation of management effectiveness is recognised as a critical step for measuring the success of protected area management. Protected Areas receiving funding from the World Bank or from the Global Environment Facility are tasked to complete a performance assessment (using METT) as part of the assessment of project activities. Similarly, Protected Areas which are also designated under international conventions such as the World Heritage Convention and Ramsar Convention are also being asked to undertake convention specific reporting<sup>33</sup>. TFCAs, with collaborative, participatory, and equitable governance, are said to yield significant conservation and socio-economic benefits far beyond their boundaries, and contribute to poverty reduction, sustainable development, and regional integration. To ensure these benefits are realised, and that all other aspects of transfrontier conservation management are implemented effectively, monitoring and evaluation is essential<sup>34</sup>.

## SADC TFCA Performance Assessment Tool

The TFCA Performance Assessment Tool (PAT) was developed in 2013 to gauge the level of implementation of respective TFCAs. It provides a framework for affected communities, public authorities, resource managers, development partners and other key stakeholders to assess the effective delivery of interventions aimed at attaining the objectives set for the TFCA. In this manner an accountability instrument was developed for all stakeholders to robustly assess policy outcomes and ensure optimal allocation of resources. The main objectives of the PAT are to:

- Establish the progress in the establishment and development of TFCAs;
- Establish best practices from TFCAs that have progressed;
- Share experiences with other TFCAs; and
- Identify factors that have retarded progress in establishing and developing TFCAs.

## Summary of key Thematic Areas

Key thematic areas that define a functional TFCA have been identified. These are listed below along with a description of each theme.

	Theme	Description
1	<b>Institutional arrangements / governance model</b>	Functional governance mechanisms, including establishment of relevant institutional arrangements.
2	<b>Geographical extent</b>	Geographical extent defined in an open and transparent manner with all relevant stakeholders.
3	<b>Integrated / joint planning and management</b>	Framework/s for joint management and integrated planning in place.
4	<b>Benefit flow and community beneficiation</b>	Strategy or Programme clearly defining and supporting community livelihoods diversification and beneficiation in place.
5	<b>Stakeholder buy-in and participation</b>	Buy-in from stakeholders and effective stakeholder participation structures in place.
6	<b>Financial sustainability</b>	Planning for financial sustainability through the development of a sustainable financing / resourcing strategy in place.
7	<b>Integrated development and implementation</b>	Joint programmes, operational structures and management frameworks / interventions in place and functional.
8	<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation and Reporting</b>	M&E and reporting framework to track the effectiveness of the implementation of the joint frameworks and plans in place.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.conservationgateway.org/externallinks/pages/mett-management-effective.aspx>

<sup>34</sup> SADC (2015). SADC Guideline on the establishment and development of TFCA initiatives between SADC Member States

## Annexure C

### The Effectiveness of Current Coordinating Mechanisms across Categories

Table 1: SADC TFCA's listed in order of the effectiveness of current coordination mechanisms.

TFCA	CURRENT COORDINATING MECHANISMS	WEIGHTED SCORES
Kavango-Zambezi TFCA	Secretariat and rotational country coordination.	85%
Great Limpopo TFCA	Coordinating Party, International Coordinator.	79%
Greater Mapungubwe TFCA	Project Coordinator.	65%
Malawi-Zambia TFCA	JMC.	66%
Maloti Drakensberg TFCA	National Coordinating Unit (only functional in South Africa at present).	64%
Kgalagadi TFP	JPMC.	65%
Ai-Ais Richtersveld TFP	JMB and Thematic WGs	63%
Lubombo TFCA	JPMCs.	57%
Chimanimani TFCA	Thematic WGs and JMC	57%
Niassa-Selous	Coordination Unit.	49%
Iona-Skeleton Coast TFCA	JMB, Coordinating Countries.	17%





# A SADC HANDBOOK

## Categorisation of SADC Transfrontier Conservation Areas



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