



# THE SADC REGIONAL FISHERIES MONITORING, CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE COORDINATION CENTRE – THE MCSCC

**Strengthening cooperation and capacity to stop illegal  
fishing: working towards a common future**



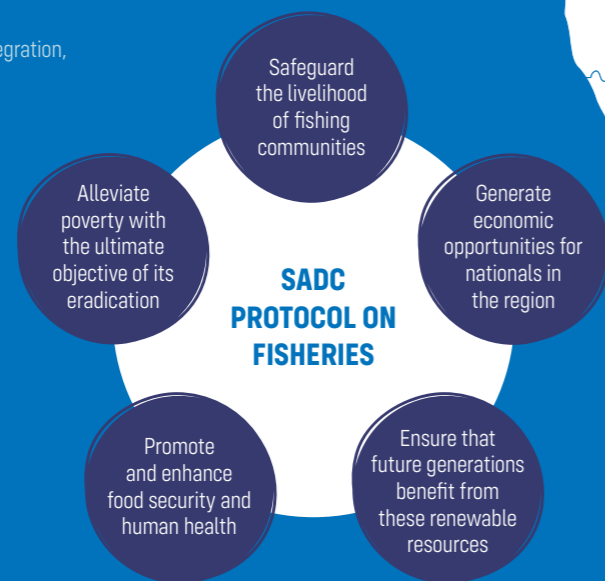
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“With the signature of the Charter by Botswana, we now have the means to move to the full collaboration model of working together, to ensure the sustainability of all our fisheries and promote blue growth. This includes tackling entrenched issues such as regional fisheries management and IUU fishing, a plague that SADC Ministers of fisheries have pledged to fight. The foundation we are building on is solid and now we can grow stronger and go further.”

Ms. Angele Makombo N'tumba  
Deputy Executive Secretary, Regional Integration,  
SADC Secretariat



## A MILESTONE FOR SADC FISHERIES

### The SADC Regional Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Coordination Centre (MCSCC)

On the 8 April 2023 the Charter Establishing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) MCSCC, known as the MCSCC Charter entered into force. With this, the State Parties to the Charter namely, Republic of Angola, Republic of Botswana, Kingdom of Eswatini, Kingdom of Lesotho, Republic of Madagascar, Republic of Malawi, Republic of Mozambique, Republic of Namibia, Republic of South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Republic of Zambia established the MCSCC as an international organisation and an autonomous and self-accounting institution of the SADC.

The establishment of the MCSCC is a long awaited and historical milestone for the SADC fisheries sector. It is the culmination of over two decades of regional commitments to improving cooperation and promoting responsible and sustainable use of all fisheries resources in the SADC region – both inland and marine resources.

In 2001, the Heads of State or Government of the SADC signed the Protocol on Fisheries, in which they marked their conviction of the ‘necessity for joint-cooperative and integrative actions at the regional level to optimise the sustainable use of the living aquatic resources of the Region for the continued benefit of the people of the Region’. This landmark Protocol has been a steppingstone for region-wide commitment to fisheries cooperation, with fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as one of the main targets.

In Namibia, in 2008, the SADC Ministers of Marine Fisheries Statement of Commitment to Combat IUU Fishing highlighted the growing concern on the harmful consequences of IUU fishing and called for the creation of a regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) Centre. This commitment materialised in 2017 through the MCSCC Charter which was approved by the SADC Council of Ministers in Pretoria, South Africa.

The establishment of the MCSCC builds on the SADC Common Agenda and will deepen the integration agenda with a view to accelerating poverty eradication and the attainment of economic and sustainable development goals. By developing shared policies, regulations and controls the MCSCC is feeding into SADC integration milestones to develop a free trade area, customs union and a common market.

# ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“As the role of the blue economy has gained prominence over the last few years our relationship with the ocean and our inland waterways has come under a new spotlight. We have long known that fisheries are important in the SADC region: they provide food and nutrition, generate employment and income, and provide livelihoods for millions of our people. But for many, fishing is more than an occupation: their lives depend on successful catches. Fishing is how our children are fed and education and medical bills are paid. Protecting this must be a priority.”

His Excellency, Mr Elias Mpedi Magosi  
Executive Secretary, SADC Secretariat

## SADC fisheries provide multiple benefits



**2.6 million tonnes**

of fish are produced annually



Contributing **2%** to the SADC GDP



Generating **\$152 million** worth of exports



Employing **145,000** and providing benefits for over one million people



Providing **11 kg** of fish per person each year, contributing to nutritional security

## Our fisheries help to secure our future

Globally, the sustainable development goals (SDGs) set the priority actions required for sustainable development. Target 14.4 calls for an end to IUU fishing and destructive fishing practices by 2020, and this priority is reflected in the objectives of the MCSCC. By protecting our fisheries, the MCSCC is also contributing to the SDGs linked to poverty, hunger, decent work, responsible consumption and production and partnership.



The MCSCC is helping to:

- Use our fisheries resources sustainably



- Stop IUU fishing



- Implement our policies



- Generate wealth from our fisheries

The MCSCC is benefiting the SADC region to:

- Enhance food security.
- Generate economic opportunities.
- Alleviate poverty.
- Protect biodiversity and the environment.
- Cooperate and share information.
- Coordinate and share MCS assets.
- Reduce costs and increase effectiveness.
- Agree MCS procedures.
- Develop common operational standards for fisheries MCS.
- Operate efficiently.
- Harmonise conditions of access, licensing and operations of foreign fishing vessels.
- Unite to ensure regional equity.

The MCSCC is helping to achieve sustainable development goals:

<b>SDG 1</b>	<b>SDG 2</b>	<b>SDG 8</b>	<b>SDG 12</b>	<b>SDG 14</b>	<b>SDG 16</b>	<b>SDG 17</b>
No poverty	Zero hunger	Decent work and economic growth	Responsible consumption and production	Life below water	Peace, justice and strong institutions	Partnership for the goals

# OVERCOMING THREATS TO OUR FISHERIES

The challenges that fisheries are facing are rapidly evolving. The threats faced by fisheries managers and decision makers today, are not the same as those faced in the 1990s when the Protocol on Fisheries was negotiated. Today, however strong national fisheries management is – external threats that fisheries managers and decision makers are not in control of – are having enormous and negative impacts on the region’s fisheries.

They include the impacts of climate change, growing demand for low cost, nutritious food from a growing global population, unjust competition from financially subsidised fleets, pressure on our resources from over ambitious blue expectations and IUU fishing.



## IUU fishing

IUU fishing occurs when illegal operators show no respect for laws, regulations or conservation and management measures.

IUU fishing is taking place across the SADC region:

### Coastal fisheries

suffer from dynamite fishing, use of nets with small mesh size, and fishing in marine protected areas. These result in damage to vulnerable habitats and biodiversity which are essential for protection of the land-water interface, provision of nursery grounds for fish breeding, and for the wellbeing of coastal communities.

### Offshore marine fisheries

experience violation of fishing zones and underreporting of catches, while document and vessel fraud, modern day slavery and other illegal business practices and crimes also occur. These result not only in damage to the fish stocks but also contribute to transnational organised crime and social and economic losses.

### Inland fisheries

suffer particularly from the use of unsustainable fishing gear and limited reporting of catches, while informal cross-border trade is used to circumvent customs and tax controls, denying governments revenue.

IUU fishing results in unfair competition for fisheries resources with depleted resources available to bona fide fishers, which can lead to the collapse of local fisheries, with small-scale fisheries proving particularly vulnerable. Products derived from IUU fishing can find their way into markets outcompeting local food supply. IUU fishing is a global challenge, with one estimate putting IUU fishing losses worldwide at between USD 10 and 23.5 billion annually, representing between 11 and 26 million tonnes of fish.

While ignorance of rules and regulations causes illegal fishing that can be addressed by awareness and sensitisation, more serious and organised illegal activities require a more systematic and cooperative region-wide response. The MCSCC is providing the framework for this response, enabling the region to tackle IUU fishing with a united and harmonised response. By working together through the MCSCC, the region will be better able to counter IUU fishing, and more able to work with other SADC sectors to provide a united and integrated response to protect SADC fisheries, our oceans and our inland waters.

## WHAT THE MCSCC IS ACHIEVING

In the coming years, the work of the MCSCC will contribute towards four objectives.

The first is an overarching objective that aligns the Centre to the objective of the SADC Protocol on Fisheries:



To promote the responsible, sustainable use and protection of living aquatic resources and marine biodiversity to enhance food security, generate economic opportunities and alleviate poverty.

The three other objectives set out the purpose for the Centre, which will be accomplished through the implementation of the fourteen functions. The objectives focus on coordination and cooperation, establishing common procedures and policies and harmonising conditions for accessing resources and services:



To promote regional cooperation, information sharing and cost-effective coordination and shared use of MCS assets to eliminate IUU fishing in the SADC Region.



To establish common operational standards and policies for fisheries MCS throughout the SADC Region.



To harmonise, to the extent possible, conditions of access, licensing and operations of foreign fishing vessels in the marine and inland waters of State Parties.

*"In the last ten years, many have dedicated their efforts to see the vision of our own Fisheries MCSCC become a reality. The realisation of the Centre marks a turning point, from which we now have the means to facilitate our full collaboration to protect our fisheries for our common future."*

His Excellency, Mr Elias Mpedi Magosi  
Executive Secretary, SADC Secretariat

## WHAT THE MCSCC IS DOING

The MCSCC is an important step for the SADC to increase its ability to tackle IUU fishing and organised fisheries crimes. By working together, across sectors and countries, the region is better able to provide a united and integrated response to illegal activity and to protect SADC fisheries.

The MCSCC provides a cost-effective mechanism to support this operational cooperation. By coordinating national, regional and international efforts the MCSCC is bringing real value to the whole SADC region.

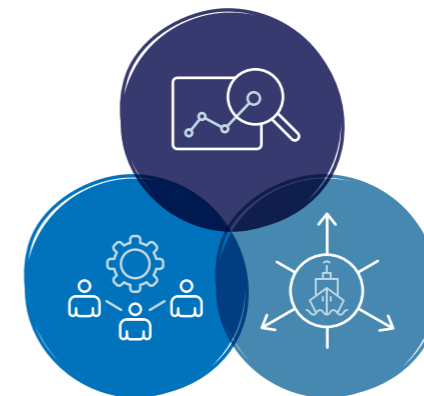
By focussing on the three core areas of information sharing, capacity building and coordination of activities the MCSCC is increasing national and regional effectiveness in fighting IUU fishing and helping to compile evidence required to contribute meaningful arguments into regional and international policy formulation.

### The MCSCC, its members and partners focus on three key areas of work:

Support the collection and exchange of information

Develop human and institutional MCS capacity

Coordinate and harmonise regional MCS activities





## Work area 1: Support the collection and exchange of information

MCS officers need easy access to readily available, good quality information to conduct MCS activities and to validate information in an efficient and effective manner. The great benefit of up-to-date readily accessible, reliable information is that it is useful both as a fisheries management decision support system, as well as for compliance and enforcement decision-making. The MCSCC is:



### Developing the SADC Regional Register of Fishing Vessels

This tool is one of the first steps towards regional compliance monitoring, such as pre-licence inspections, port state measures and conducting enforcement investigations, leading to harmonised conditions of access, licensing and operations of fishing vessels. Through the systematic sharing of information, the MCSCC is building a powerful database of vessels, their operators and agents, accessible to all members, that can support decision making and enforcement action.



### Monitoring fishing vessel activity

To provide oversight and a regional understanding of fishing activity, to identify illegalities and suspicious behaviour, and to contribute to improved maritime domain awareness. To support this a regionally harmonised fishing vessel monitoring system (VMS) is planned to facilitate the sharing of national VMS information under agreed protocols.



### Hosting and facilitating an information and communications portal

This tool provides a single web-based place where fisheries MCS information can be readily accessed. It supports routine and systematic collection and sharing of MCS related information, including contact points to facilitate requests and share alerts and to make communication with key contact points easy and to speed up response times.



## Work area 2: Develop human and institutional MCS capacity

Capacity is essential to both national and regional activities to enhance MCS and is key to stopping IUU fishing. By providing training and technical support throughout the SADC region, immediate and long-term benefits are being achieved, for example through developing the human capacity and institutional processes to conduct thorough and effective risk assessment and inspections, and to support decisions making to act against IUU fishing operators. The MCSCC is providing support nationally and opportunities regionally to strengthen human and institutional capacity for MCS, this includes:



### Supporting institutional and human capacity building

A lack of MCS capacity has been identified as a national weakness in many countries, with the need for improved professionalism, confidence and good conduct of inspectors and officers identified as priority needs. The MCSCC supports national trainings in operational MCS and the development of systematic procedures, based on a common regional MCS toolkit.



### Establishing and delivering regional MCS training aligned to international standards

International best practice aligned to the regional context can help guide operations when dealing with complex IUU fishing cases. The sharing of experience between countries is beneficial for regional integration of international best practice and enables the development of our own best practice based on home grown evidence, experiences and interpretation.



### Building capacity to implement port state measures (PSM)

Improved capacity is required to facilitate wide and effective application of regional standards to implement the international PSMA. Cooperative and systematic application of PSMs across all SADC ports helps to protect the entire region, including landlocked countries, from the importation of illegally caught fish, and disincentivise IUU operators from our region.



### Work area 3: Coordinate and harmonise regional MCS activities

Cooperation between national agencies and between neighbouring countries is at the heart of stopping IUU fishing. The MCSCC provides a cost-effective mechanism and support for operational cooperation within the region. This includes coordination of assets and resources which can provide real financial and strategic benefits based on regionally harmonized procedures and standards. The impact of MCS actions are amplified when they are coordinated so, e.g. when all ports in the region deny access to IUU-listed or high-risk vessels, or when all coastal States deny licences. The MCSCC is:



#### Providing support for fisheries law enforcement and legal activities

SADC countries have different levels of expertise in specific areas required for MCS, such as legal and technical expertise to support investigations and law enforcement. Many of the skills required and expertise needed, depend on specific training, in-depth knowledge, and access to databases and analysis that may not be cost effective for each country to maintain separately, but rather for the region to pool.



#### Promoting the establishment of common regional fisheries MCS standards and policies

Harmonised standards and policies are at the heart of the SADC integration agenda, providing the foundation for regional cooperation. Building on the spirit and guidelines provided in the SADC instruments, and the sector specific SADC Protocol on Fisheries, SADC Statement of Commitment against IUU fishing, and the MCSCC Charter, will support the provision of evidence and analysis, and facilitate discussions to enable recommendations for regional minimum standards and policies to be negotiated and tabled for approval by the Committee of Ministers.



#### Promoting regional fisheries governance through capacity building and harmonisation of standards for operations

Harmonising standard operating procedures (SOPs) which are step-by-step instructions that outline how a particular task or activity should be performed, enable consistent and standardised fulfilment of routine tasks, provide comparable information in a way that complies with legal obligations. They also minimise human errors, risks and variability and therefore help to both raise the bar and standardise regional fisheries governance.



#### Coordinating regional fisheries surveillance and utilisation of MCS assets

However good our land-based controls and checks are, there is no substitute for being able to see where vessels are operating, what they are catching and how they are operating. High investment, running and maintenance costs of patrol assets make them unaffordable for many countries. Therefore, coordinating the utilisation of regional or international MCS assets can be a cost-effective alternative that also facilitates wider capacity building and cooperation.



#### Coordinating regional fisheries observers

Fisheries observers on industrial fishing vessels are able to make observations at the point of catching that cannot be detected later on. They can document and interpret many at-sea activities that other monitoring systems are unable to provide, for example, catch composition, discarding activity and bycatch handling. However, there is currently regional variability in the kind and quality of information that observers collect, and the way that this information is collated. Therefore, the MCSCC will coordinate and harmonise the regional standards for observers and observer reporting.



#### Preparing regional guidelines and standards for importation and introduction of exotic aquatic life

The importation of exotic species, if not controlled and monitored, can cause major disruptions to indigenous populations. The MCSCC facilitates discussion and supports the gathering of evidence in respect to the legal and illegal importation of exotic aquatic life in the SADC region, to prepare regionally harmonised guidelines and standards.





### Facilitating cooperation with other stakeholders in fisheries MCS activities and other efforts geared towards the fight against IUU fishing

The MCSCC develops and manages cooperation with other stakeholders, including regional fisheries management organisations, regional fisheries bodies, regional economic communities, non-government organisations, the fishing industry and funding partners to share information in the fight against IUU fishing and to develop partnerships to support the MCSCC and its MSC activities.



### Developing mechanisms for financial sustainability of the MCSCC

Funding regional MCS activities and the work of the MCSCC will require resources from a range of sources. Options to be considered include income from the SADC Regional Register of Fishing Vessels, from services the Centre provides, from members contributions and support of funding and philanthropic partners.



# HOW THE MCSCC OPERATES

The institutional arrangements for the MCSCC are set out in the MCSCC Charter. They embed the Centre within the decision-making processes of the SADC through the SADC Committee of Ministers Responsible for Fisheries. The operational autonomy is secured through the MCSCC Board of Directors that oversees the work of the MCSCC Secretariat.





The Southern African Development Community (SADC) prioritises fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing to protect the region's people, oceans and economy from its devastating impacts. The SADC is coordinating and driving regional monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) collaboration through the SADC Regional Fisheries MCS Coordination Centre (MCSCC).

For more information go to:

[www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int)

[www.sadcmcscc.org](http://www.sadcmcscc.org)

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December 2023

The Supporting Partners of the MCSCC are greatly appreciated, and they include:



**Bloomberg  
Philanthropies**



**the waterloo  
foundation**



The Technical Partners of the MCSCC are greatly appreciated, and they include:

**FishFORCE**



**TMT**

