

# MOMENTUM

Stories of Success, Seeds of Tomorrow



A PUBLICATION OF THE SADC DIRECTORATE OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat  
SADC House, Plot 54385 New CBD  
Private/Bag 0095  
Gaborone, Botswana  
Tel: +267 395 1863  
Email: [registry@sadc.int](mailto:registry@sadc.int)  
Website: [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int)  
Twitter: @sadc\_news  
Facebook: @sadc.int  
YouTube: [youtube.com/sadc.int](https://www.youtube.com/sadc.int)

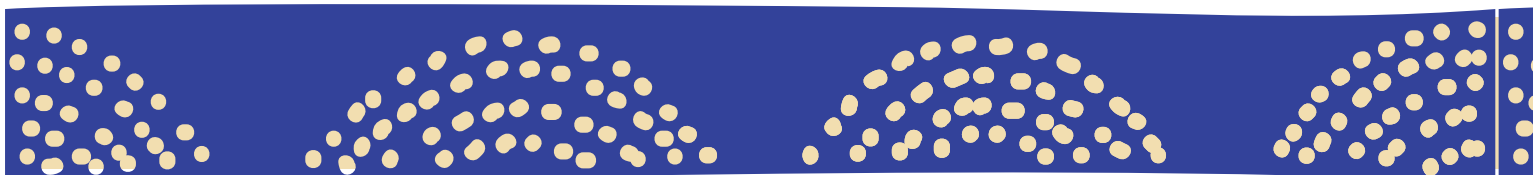
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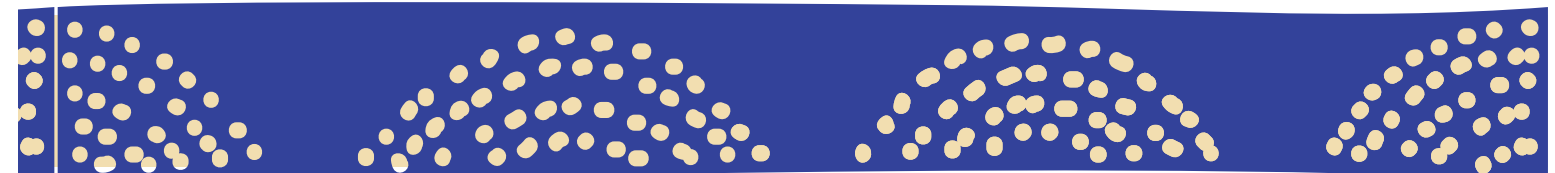




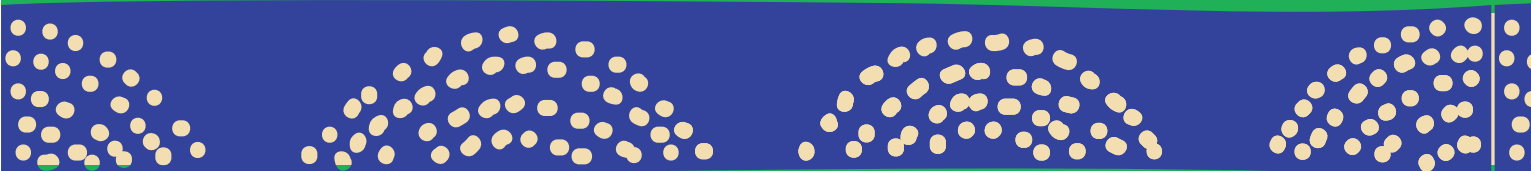
## **MOMENTUM**

### **Stories of Success, Seeds of Tomorrow**

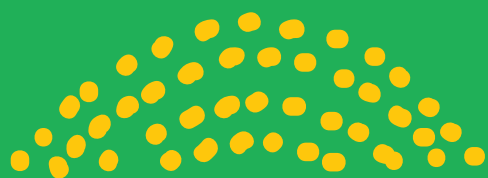
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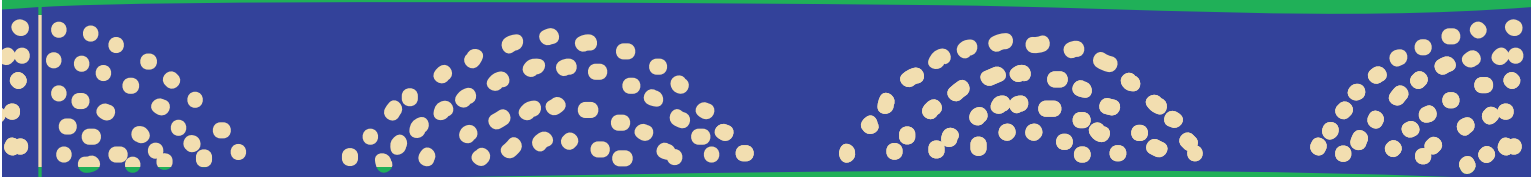






# CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| FOREWORD  | 6  |
| INTRODCUTION                                    | 7  |
| ABOUT SADC                                      | 8  |
| VISION, MISSION AND MANDATE                     | 9  |
| DIRECTORATE OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE | 10 |
| PARTNERSHIPS                                    | 12 |
| IMPACT STORIES                                  | 14 |





# FOREWORD

I am delighted to introduce this new Southern African Development Community (SADC) magazine, setting out our key achievements in the areas of trade and industrial development, which is one of the SADC regional economic integration pillars.

In an era defined by rapid economic change and globalisation, SADC stands at a pivotal crossroads in its journey towards industrial development and trade enhancement. As we navigate the complexities of the global marketplace, it is essential to foster resilient industries that not only drive economic growth but also create sustainable employment opportunities for our people, especially for women and youth, consistent with the ambitions in the SADC Vision 2050.

The SADC regional integration operational programmes are, in addition to the SADC Treaty and Protocols, guided by the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Programme (RISDP) 2015-2025 and the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (SISR) 2015-2063; aligned to Africa's Development Agenda 2063. These key policy documents set targets for different regional integration areas, including the industrial development and market integration pillars. SADC recognises that industrial development is crucial for economic growth, job creation, and the overall prosperity of our region.

By promoting regional value chains that are backed with technology and innovative solutions, and prioritising strategic sectors, including agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, leather and services, we can harness our abundant resources and skilled workforce to build resilient economies. As we know, trade facilitates regional integration and ensures that our markets are interconnected. The implementation of trade agreements and the reduction of trade barriers are essential steps in creating a more competitive and dynamic trading environment.



The Secretariat has the task of coordinating regional programmes towards the achievement of SADC Vision 2050, and the RISDP and SISR targets. Therefore, this first issue of the SADC magazine highlights the key SADC initiatives and moments, success stories and main achievements of the industrial development and market integration programme in 2024/2025.

In future editions, I hope to use this column to express some opinions on global, continental and regional developments that impact our region. I welcome comments and suggestions on issues that our readers and the business community would like to see covered.

**Ms Angèle Makombo N'tumba**  
**SADC Deputy Executive Secretary for**  
**Regional Integration**







# INTRODUCTION

The Directorate of Industrial Development and Trade (IDT) leads SADC's work on economic integration by developing policies aimed at enhancing the region's production of value-added goods and making it easier for businesses to find markets for their products.

This can be achieved through industrial and trade programmes implementing the instruments and preferences agreed in the context of the SADC Free Trade Area (FTA), the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

It is with great pride that, as the IDT Director, I present the industrial development and trade success stories and milestones achieved over the past year. The 2024/2025 period is marked by remarkable initiatives and collaborations that have not only strengthened our regional economies, but have also fostered resilience and innovation.

We welcome Angola to the SADC FTA, following the completion of its accession and adoption of Angola's tariff liberalisation offer under the SADC Protocol on Trade. Also, Angola's ratification of the COMESA-EAC-SADC TFTA brought the TFTA into force in July 2024. The FTA represents about 60% of African gross domestic product, about US\$1.4-trillion, and will allow SADC-based traders to access a larger combined market of some 700-million people.

We continue to see some progress by Member States in trade facilitation measures, for example the electronic exchange of data between the customs authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia; the two countries have taken bold steps to resolve challenges encountered at the Kasumbalesa border, which processes about 800 vehicles and about 5 000 people crossing the border daily.

The Secretariat continues to support and build the trade capacities of small and medium enterprises in the leather and agro-processing value chain, and export opportunities under the AfCFTA.

The SADC Committee of Ministers of Trade, in June 2025, adopted two regional strategies, i.e. the 15-year Strategy on Trade in Services and its five-year Action Plan, and the Small

and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Competitiveness Strategy, marking an essential milestone in the SADC industrialisation and trade agenda. The CMT also adopted a new annex on resolution of non-tariff barriers, showing a commitment to improving the SADC's business environment for the prosperity of its people.

These achievements were made possible through our strong partnerships with international cooperation actors. I acknowledge the valuable support provided by the government of the Federal Republic of Germany, whose contribution through the CESARE programme has been instrumental, not only in the production of this magazine but also in advancing key elements of our work across trade and industrialisation.

We also wish to acknowledge the further support of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany through the Strengthening Quality Infrastructure for Trade and Consumer Protection in the SADC Region II (QI II) project, implemented by the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB). This partnership has played a key role in enhancing quality infrastructure to support trade and safeguard consumers in the region.

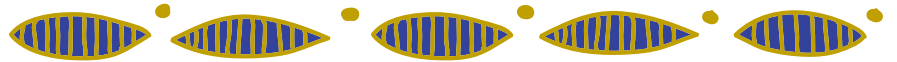
We look forward to continuing the good work in the areas of value chain development, quality infrastructure, market access, boosting start-ups and SME development through the ATCMA Project, a €25-million project funded by the EU and implemented jointly by the UN Industrial Development Corporation and International Trade Centre for the SADC region.

**Mr Dhunraj Kasse**

**Director, Directorate of Industrial Development and Trade**



# ABOUT SADC



## SADC VISION 2050

The main objectives of SADC are to achieve economic development, peace, security and growth; alleviate poverty; enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa; and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration.

These objectives are to be achieved through increased regional integration, built on democratic principles and equitable, sustainable development.

## THE OBJECTIVES OF SADC, AS STATED IN ARTICLE 5 OF THE SADC TREATY (1992), ARE TO:





# SADC SECRETARIAT

## VISION, MISSION AND MANDATE

The SADC Secretariat is the body that facilitates the implementation of SADC programmes and activities to meet its objectives and overall goal of poverty eradication and regional integration.



### VISION

A reputable, efficient and responsive enabler of regional integration and sustainable development



### MISSION

Provide strategic expertise and co-ordinate the harmonisation of policies and strategies to accelerate regional integration and sustainable development



### MANDATE

The mandate of the SADC Secretariat, as outlined in the SADC Treaty, is to provide the following:

- Strategic planning and management of the programme of SADC
- Implementation of the decisions of the Summit and Council
- Organisation and management of SADC meetings
- Financial and general administration
- Representation and promotion of SADC
- Promotion and harmonisation of policies and strategies of Member States

*“These projects will translate into tangible and impactful solutions and related projects.”*

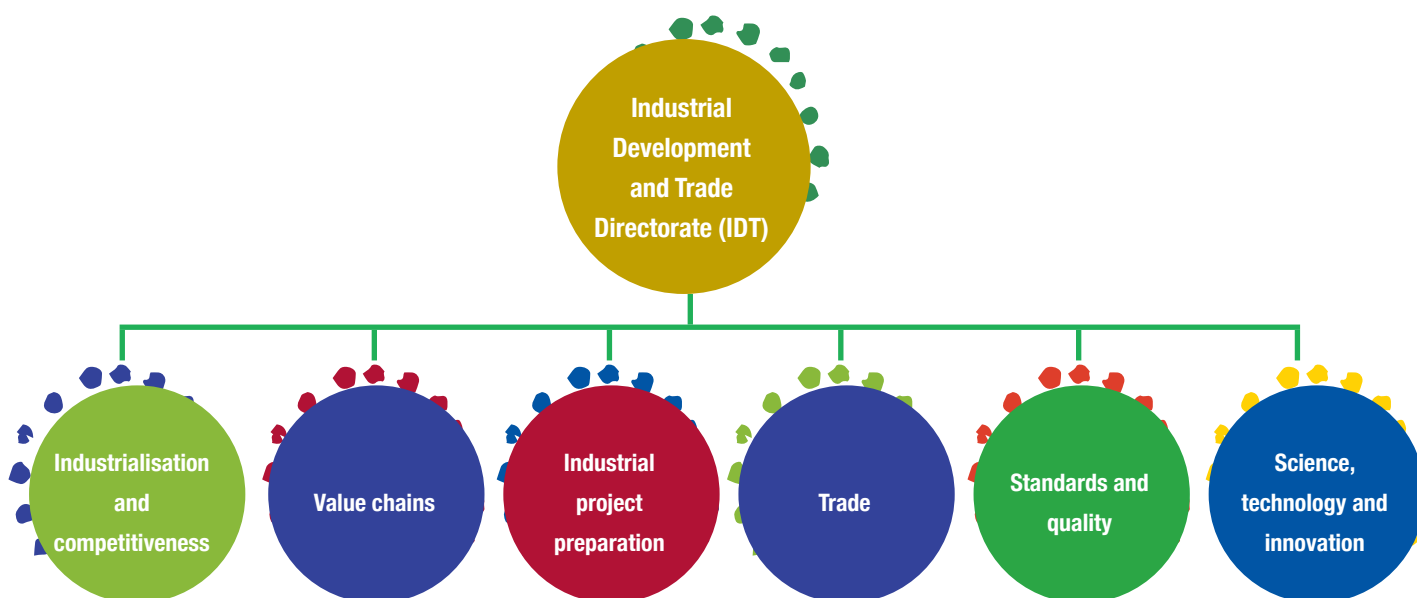
– His Excellency Mr Elias Mpedi Magosi, SADC Executive Secretary



# DIRECTORATE OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Within the SADC Secretariat, the Directorate of Industrial Development and Trade (SADC IDT) is responsible for industrial development and market integration.

The SADC IDT is one of 10 directorates – the others are Policy, Planning and Resources Mobilisation; Finance, Investment and Customs; Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs; Infrastructure; Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources; Social and Human Development; Internal Audit and Risk Management; Finance; and Human Resources and Administration.



## WORK AREAS

### TRADE IN GOODS

- Enhancing regional and global trade, including through the Tripartite and African Continental Free Trade Areas
- Promoting the SADC Free Trade Area under the SADC Protocol on Trade
- Reducing import tariffs
- Removing unnecessary import restrictions by addressing non-tariff barriers
- Harmonising and standardising technical standards for goods and services
- Promoting quality infrastructure
- Promoting science and technology, and fostering innovation

### TRADE IN SERVICES

- Enhancing regional and global trade, including through the Tripartite and African Continental Free Trade Areas
- Reducing market access restrictions and discrimination in all categories of services under the SADC Protocol on Trade in Services
- Removing unnecessary services trade restrictions by developing regional frameworks to align regulation and enhance compliance
- Promoting mutual recognition of professional and other qualifications
- Promoting digital trade in services
- Implementing the SADC Trade in Services Strategy 2025-2040



## INDUSTRIALISATION AND COMPETITIVENESS

- Implementing the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap
- Promoting ratification and implementation of the SADC Protocol on Industry
- Ensuring SADC regional industrial competitiveness
- Engaging with the private sector to implement regional industrialisation objectives
- Developing the SADC SME Competitiveness Strategy
- Organising the annual SADC Industrialisation Week
- Supporting the Tripartite Industrial Development Pillar and African continental industrialisation initiatives

## TRADE FACILITATION AND CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT

- Resolving border challenges between SADC Member States by promoting simplified procedures and documents (working closely with Finance, Investment and Customs Directorate)

## DIGITAL TRADE/E-COMMERCE

- Supporting SADC programmes to exploit the Fourth Industrial Revolution (digital era), artificial intelligence, space science
- Supporting digital trade and e-commerce (working closely with Infrastructure Directorate)

## REGIONAL VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

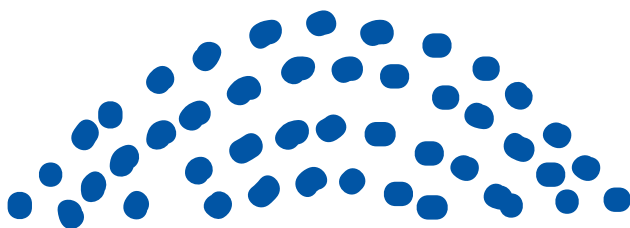
- Developing regional value chains
- Domesticating regional model policies for production of leather goods, and antiretroviral products used in treating HIV/AIDS
- Mapping and analysis of regional agro-processing value chains for wheat, rice, soybean and cotton production
- Promoting regional investment in mineral beneficiation value chains
- Promoting regional value chain clusters through training

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

- Promoting science, technology and innovation to drive sustainable development and regional integration
- Addressing regional challenges through strengthened national systems of innovation
- Supporting regional cooperation under the SADC Protocol on Science, Technology and Innovation
- Advancing indigenous knowledge systems and protecting intellectual property rights
- Enhancing science and mathematics education, with a focus on gender equality
- Building institutional capacity, networks and public awareness



# PARTNERSHIPS



## DRIVING REGIONAL INTEGRATION THROUGH STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Behind every major step in regional integration lies a network of strong partnerships. In the SADC region, two key partners – the German government and the European Union – are playing a vital role in advancing economic integration and industrialisation.

Their support is channelled through the Cooperation for the Enhancement of SADC Regional Economic Integration (CESARE) programme, which is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

The CESARE programme supports the SADC Secretariat and Member States in advancing regional economic

integration through trade and industrial development. In close collaboration with the SADC IDT, the programme provides strategic technical advice, facilitates high-level dialogue, and strengthens the implementation of regional policies aligned with the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and the RISDP 2020–2030. CESARE delivers practical, results-oriented support across several areas: from trade facilitation and the removal of non-tariff barriers to the implementation of regional and continental agreements such as the AfCFTA and TFTA, as well as support for trade in services.

It also promotes private sector participation in priority value chains – including leather, Pharma and MedTech, and agro-processing – by enhancing product quality and market access. Through its engagement with the SADC Business Council, CESARE strengthens public-private dialogue, while ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women and youth are integrated throughout its interventions.



As part of its comprehensive approach, CESARE includes two major Joint Actions that are advancing regional integration, trade and inclusive growth across the SADC region:

Trade in Services (TIS) in the Southern African Development Community and the Lesotho Economic Growth, Job Creation and Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) Implementation Support Programme (RVCL+).

## TRADE IN SERVICES IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

Co-financed by the EU and the German government and implemented by GIZ in partnership with the SADC IDT, this Joint Action is unlocking the potential of services trade as a key driver of regional integration.

It supports the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Trade in Services, which entered into force in 2022. The Joint Action assists SADC Member States in liberalising six key sectors – communication, construction, energy, financial services, tourism and transport – and developing tailored national implementation plans.

It also promotes inclusive and harmonised regulatory frameworks and raises awareness among private sector stakeholders, particularly women- and youth-led businesses,

ensuring broad-based participation in the regional services economy.

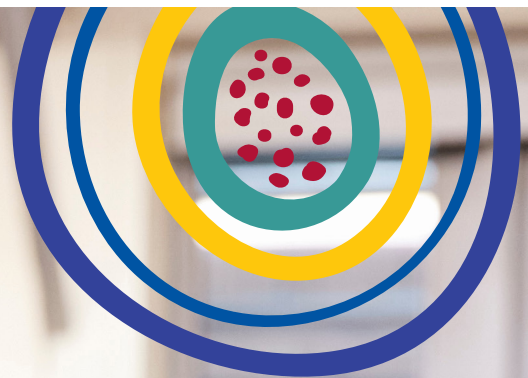
## LESOTHO ECONOMIC GROWTH, JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME (RVCL+)

Also co-financed by the EU and the German government, RVCL+ is implemented by GIZ under the CESARE framework to support the implementation of the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in Lesotho.

This Joint Action promotes trade within the SADC region and internationally through the development of value chains in agro-processing and light manufacturing. By strengthening regional linkages (e.g. private sector linkages in Lesotho to SADC and international markets) and enhancing the export readiness of local businesses, RVCL+ contributes to job creation, inclusive economic growth and deeper regional integration.







# IMPACT STORIES



## ANGOLA ACCEDES TO THE SADC TRADE PROTOCOL – A MILESTONE PROMISING BENEFITS FOR THE SADC FTA

Angola has become the 14<sup>th</sup> member of the SADC FTA, a milestone that holds great promise for the region – and closer to home, for women-led Angolan businesses in particular.

As the second-largest economy in SADC (behind South Africa), Angola's entry to the region's FTA is a key step forward in deepening economic integration and enhancing SADC's attractiveness as a dynamic trade and investment destination.

“For the SADC region, this marks a new era of enhanced economic cooperation, reinforcing its position as a thriving trade and investment destination on the African continent,” says Dhunraj Kasseer, Director of IDT SADC.

When the FTA was launched in 2008, Angola did not join immediately as it was focused on strengthening its domestic trade systems and policy frameworks, and nurturing its emerging market economy. It was concerned that opening the market too soon would expose domestic industries, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to competition they were not yet equipped to face.

However, while this careful approach offered short-term protection to the local economy, it also restricted Angola's ability to access broader regional markets. Women-led and informal businesses, in particular, were disproportionately affected by high tariffs and complex trade barriers when trading within the SADC bloc.

When the time was right Angola launched a formal process to prepare and finalise its tariff offer to accede to the SADC Protocol on Trade, with technical support from the German Government.

This process entailed in-depth national policy reviews, broad stakeholder consultations led by the SADC Secretariat's Directorate of Industrial Development and Trade. It culminated in the Trade Negotiating Forum held in Luanda from 17-21 February 2025, marking the successful conclusion of negotiations. Angola's tariff offer was formally approved by SADC Member States, paving the way for its integration into the FTA.



From left to right: Anatólio Domingos, Director for Integration and Economic Development, and Alcides Luís, Head of the International and Cooperation Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Angola during the negotiations for Angola to accede to the SADC Protocol on Trade in February 2025 in Luanda, Angola.





Delegates from SADC Member States in attendance to negotiate the Angola's tariff offer to the SADC Protocol on Trade, in Luanda, Angola, in October 2024.

Phased tariff reductions are expected to begin in 2025. Angola's approved tariff offer covers 90% of product lines, exceeding the minimum requirement of 85% for FTA participation.

This important development is expected to boost regional trade, attract investment and strengthen Angola's role in cross-border value chains. Women-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, many of whom engage in cross-border trading, stand to benefit significantly from duty-free access to new markets, helping them scale and expand their operations.

“**Angola's accession to the SADC Trade Protocol is a strategic move, creating new trade opportunities for the country,” says Dr Augusta Fortes, Secretary of State for Trade and Services in the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Angola.**



Dr Augusta Fortes, Secretary of State for Trade and Services in the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Angola, representing the ministry and the Angolan government, delivers her opening remarks at the SADC meeting to negotiate Angola's tariff offer in Luanda, Angola, in October 2024.

# TRIPARTITE FREE TRADE AREA UNITES 700-MILLION AFRICANS IN A SINGLE MARKET

The historic Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) Agreement, between SADC, the East African Community, and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, links businesses in one market that literally stretches from Cape to Cairo.

The TFTA, stemming from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tripartite Summit of Heads of State and Government in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, in 2015, came into force in July 2024 when it was ratified by Angola, bringing the number of countries needed for its activation to the required 14. The other countries are Botswana, Burundi, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

A further nine countries have signed the TFTA Agreement, signifying their intention to accede to it. This will be achieved when negotiations on tariff and other trade liberalisation commitments are concluded and ratified through national processes.

The TFTA aims to establish a single market for 29 African countries with a combined population of around 700-million people – comprising 57% of Africa’s population – and an

estimated gross domestic product (GDP) of more than US\$1.4-trillion, once fully implemented.

It aims to achieve this by reducing existing trade obstacles hindering the movement of goods, services and people, as well as promoting industrial growth in the Tripartite region. Negotiations have so far focused on the liberalisation of trade in goods, through removal or reduction of trade tariffs and non-tariff barriers.

There have also been negotiations covering the movement of businesspersons, under a parallel track. A further phase of negotiation includes trade in services, trade and development, competition policy and intellectual property rights.

The advantage of the TFTA over individual trade agreements established by the three regional economic communities is that it will enable businesses in one region to enjoy reduced trade barriers with customers in another region – for example, a trader located in South Africa engaging in commerce with a customer in Egypt.



Source of photo: Kenya presents ratification instrument for the Tripartite FTA - Africa Business Communities





## TRADE IN SERVICES STRATEGY REVS UP SADC'S REGIONAL ECONOMY

Services are vital to the SADC regional economy, contributing over 60% of GDP and more than 30% of employment. But like a car's engine, trade in services between Member States have to be fine-tuned to unlock optimal performance.

Trade in services between countries was previously limited owing to challenges such as uneven digital infrastructure, regulatory barriers, low levels of investment and the restricted mobility of skilled professionals. A coordinated regional approach – that trade in services tune-up – was needed to address these barriers and unlock the region's full potential.

To do this the SADC Secretariat, with support from the German government and the European Union, developed the Trade in Services Strategy in close collaboration with all SADC Member States.

This inclusive, consultative process aims to make SADC services more competitive and assist SADC businesses to take advantage of market opportunities across the African continent,

The key strategic priorities focus on:

- Policy and regulatory harmonisation
- Digital infrastructure development
- Skills mobility and mutual recognition of qualifications
- Investment facilitation
- Inclusive trade opportunities for women, youth, and micro, small and medium enterprises

The strategy provides a blueprint for improving the regulatory environment for trade in services; promotes closer coordination, regulatory cooperation and investor-friendly conditions across SADC; and supports greater stakeholder engagement, improved awareness and fostering improved negotiations for, and implementation of, trade commitments

The strategy, which was subsequently officially adopted by the SADC Committee of Ministers of Trade on 5 June 2025, also aligns with broader continental initiatives such as the AfCFTA and existing regional frameworks.







## SADC DEVELOPS A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE PRODUCT QUALITY AND TRADE

Good quality products do not just build consumer confidence – they open doors to regional and global markets.

That's why the SADC region is developing a new quality infrastructure (QI) strategy aimed at strengthening industrial competitiveness, reducing technical barriers to trade and supporting sustainable economic growth. This initiative is in partnership with the German government through the Strengthening Quality Infrastructure for Trade and Consumer Protection in the SADC Region II project, implemented by Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB).

QI refers to the systems that ensure products and services meet accepted standards. This includes standardisation, metrology (measurement), accreditation, technical regulations and conformity assessment – all essential to protecting public safety, improving product quality, and boosting trade within and beyond the region.

Recognising these benefits, the SADC IDT is leading the development of a regional strategy that will serve as a blueprint for improving QI across the SADC Member States.

An interim report has already been prepared. It draws on:

- A review of global and regional QI strategies
- A survey of key stakeholders

- Interviews with Member States and institutions across SADC

The report outlines four strategic objectives:

- Resource optimisation – modernising infrastructure and developing skilled personnel
- Stakeholder awareness and support – improving small and medium enterprise access to QI services, and building political and private-sector buy-in
- Reducing technical barriers to trade – aligning standards and improving mutual recognition of compliance
- Global recognition – strengthening accreditation systems and aligning with international norms

It also highlights two cross-cutting areas: better coordination across sectors and the inclusion of gender, youth, digital transformation and language accessibility.

The final strategy, once endorsed, will provide a clear roadmap for a stronger, more integrated QI system across SADC. It will help ensure that the region's products are safe and recognised globally – and that SADC's trade and industrial systems are aligned with the AfCFTA the Pan African Quality Infrastructure and the African Union's industrialisation agenda.



## EVIDENCE-DRIVEN APPROACH HELPS SADC TO HIT ITS INTRA-REGIONAL TRADE TARGET

Intra-SADC trade has remained below 20% – well short of a 30% target – despite the SADC Member States removing import duties on 85% of goods. The question is, why?

In 2024, amid growing concern about slow progress toward the 30% target enshrined in the SADC RISDP 2020-2030, the Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government decided to find out, by analysing the region's top imports and exports by country.

The objective of this exercise was to identify opportunities for import substitution, strengthen regional production and boost intra-SADC trade.

They initiated a comprehensive analysis of regional trade flows using data provided by the International Trade Centre, identifying the top 10 import and export products of SADC Member States over the past decade.

The analysis aimed to uncover trends, shifts in trade flows and actionable areas for strategic policy intervention, by producing

a detailed report comparing trade patterns both within the region (intra-SADC) and with global partners (extra-SADC).

With technical coordination led by the SADC IDT, and supported by the German Government, a comprehensive analysis of trade flows was launched using data from the International Trade Centre. The study focused on the top 10 import and export products for each SADC Member State over the past decade.

Importantly, the analysis has identified a preliminary list of high-potential products that could be prioritised in bilateral trade discussions, and targeted through strategic import substitution policies and regional value chain development.

This evidence-driven approach equips policymakers with the insights needed to shape effective trade interventions, and will contribute directly to SADC achieving its goal of raising intra-regional trade to 30% by 2030.





## SADC IDT DRIVES REGIONAL INDUSTRIALISATION THROUGH SIW



The SADC Directorate of Industrial Development and Trade (IDT) continues to spearhead regional industrialisation by supporting the organisation of the SADC Industrialisation Week (SIW) – the region’s premier platform for dialogue on industrial development.

In 2024, the 7th SIW was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, under the theme “*Promoting Innovation to Unlock Opportunities for Sustainable Economic Growth and Development*”. Over 3 500 participants from government, business, academia and civil society convened to discuss investment, innovation and private sector-led growth.

The week concluded with the Harare Declaration, calling for increased financing, regional value chain development, support to MSMEs and more inclusive industrial policies.

The SADC IDT played a key role in shaping the agenda – hosting sessions on women and youth entrepreneurship, trade

in services and quality infrastructure. The SADC Quality Awards 2024 were also facilitated in partnership with the German government through the CESARE programme.

This year, the 8th SIW is being hosted in Antananarivo, Madagascar (28 July to 1 August 2025), under the theme, “*Advancing Industrialisation, Agricultural Transformation and Energy Transition for a Resilient SADC.*” The programme includes high-level sessions on the circular economy, just energy transition and empowering women in agriculture.

With ongoing support from the German government and the European Union, the SADC IDT reaffirms its commitment to accelerating regional industrialisation and inclusive economic growth through strong public-private partnerships.





## NEW PROGRAMME SET TO UNLOCK SADC'S TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL

Trade within SADC is on the rise – but unlocking its full potential still requires serious work. A new regional programme aims to do just that.

Between 2021 and 2022, intra-SADC trade rose from 19% to 23%, a sign that implementation of the SADC Protocol on Trade is moving in the right direction. However, the region still faces major constraints.

SADC Member States continue to trade mostly in raw materials while importing finished goods. Many produce similar commodities, limiting the scope for complementary trade. Industrial capacity also varies widely across the region, making it harder for economies to integrate or scale up production.

At the same time, transport bottlenecks, energy shortages and high trading costs continue to slow things down. Businesses face non-tariff trade barriers, inconsistent border and customs procedures, varying regulatory standards, and protectionist policies that make intra-SADC trade more difficult and less predictable.

To address these challenges, the SADC IDT is launching a new initiative: the Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access

(ATCMA) programme, covering the period 2025 to 2028.

The programme will help SADC Member States to:

- Identify and reduce barriers to market access
- Strengthen quality compliance and harmonise standards
- Review and enhance regional value chains
- Promote value addition and diversification
- Build the capacity of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to trade and export

By tackling these issues, the ATCMA programme is expected to improve the competitiveness of SADC's economies, support industrial development and expand opportunities for businesses – especially SMEs – to access new regional and global markets.

It's a bold step forward in shaping a stronger, more connected Southern Africa – one where trade is a tool for shared growth and industrial transformation.



## SADC MOVES TO BREAK DOWN TRADE BARRIERS

Trade in Southern Africa is set to become faster, cheaper and easier.

On 5 June 2025, the SADC Committee of Ministers of Trade approved a new annex on non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to the SADC Protocol on Trade – a major step toward removing the hidden costs and delays that continue to limit regional trade. NTBs are trade restrictions that are not tariffs, but still make it hard to move goods across borders. These include border delays, technical rules, customs bottlenecks, roadblocks and extra charges. For traders across SADC, they result in higher costs, longer timelines and reduced competitiveness.

When the SADC Protocol on Trade was first signed in 1996, it set the foundation for creating a Free Trade Area. While tariff reductions have been successful, NTBs remain a key challenge. Despite using an online NTB reporting tool (developed for the COMESA-EAC-SADC TFTA), Member States needed a dedicated legal instrument to address NTBs more directly and effectively.

In response, the SADC IDT developed the new Annex 12 to the Protocol on Trade Concerning Non-Tariff Barriers, which creates a clear institutional structure for identifying, categorising, reporting, resolving and eliminating NTBs. It will also streamline how Member States work together to remove barriers and improve the regional business climate.

The annex was cleared by the Committee of Ministers of Justice/Attorneys General – the final step before full adoption by the Committee of Ministers of Trade.

Once in force, it will give SADC stronger tools to tackle NTBs and unlock greater trade, investment and regional integration. Businesses across Southern Africa will benefit from smoother border processes, fewer delays and lower trading costs







## SADC'S CHARTER USHERS A NEW ERA FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE

Women across the SADC region are breaking boundaries in science, engineering and technology – and they are not doing it alone.

Despite women remaining underrepresented in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields, a powerful regional shift is under way. The SADC is closing the gender gap by driving inclusive policies that position women and girls as key players in innovation and technological progress.

The catalyst? A growing set of regional frameworks that put gender equity in STEM at the heart of policy.

SADC's Protocol on Science, Technology and Innovation, adopted in 2008, laid the foundation. It promotes gender equity in the teaching and learning of basic science and maths across the education system.

In 2017, this vision took a big step forward with the approval of the SADC Charter on Women in Science, Engineering and Technology, which became effective in 2022 when Botswana became the 11<sup>th</sup> signatory.

Zimbabwe joined in June 2025, making a total of 12 Member States that have joined.

These frameworks are driving real change on the ground. Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia and South Africa have already established national chapters to implement the charter. These platforms provide local support for young women entering STEM careers and create professional networks for women scientists to thrive.

These efforts are aligned with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, revised in 2016, which tasks Member States with increasing girls' participation in STEM and ICT by 2030. From new curricula to mentorship networks, the momentum is growing.

SADC's commitment is clear: the region's future of science, engineering and technology will be inclusive.





## SADC HELPS SMALL BUSINESSES TO NAVIGATE THE COMPLEXITY OF AfCFTA

The AfCFTA promises enormous opportunities – but navigating it can be bewildering. Help is at hand for small businesses in the SADC region, however.

Many businesses across the region – particularly micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) – remain unaware of the trade preferences, simplified rules of origin and market access opportunities offered under AfCFTA. This lack of knowledge prevents them from fully benefiting from the Agreement.

In addition, persistent trade-related obstacles such as non-tariff barriers, customs delays and regulatory inconsistencies continue to undermine private sector participation in cross-border trade. Without a clear and trusted way to report and resolve these issues, confidence in regional trade remains low, particularly among smaller businesses.

To respond to these challenges, SADC, in collaboration with the SADC Business Council (SADC BC) and national business associations, is delivering training workshops across the region.

These workshops aim to raise awareness in the private sector, particularly MSMEs, about opportunities under the AfCFTA. Topics include export readiness, compliance with rules of origin and navigating trade-related procedures. They also provide structured national and regional channels for businesses to



SADC Business Council board members, representing national and regional business associations from across SADC Member States, pictured at the annual SADC BC AGM held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in August 2024.



Vicente Soares, outgoing President of the SADC Business Council and President of the Angolan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (standing left), congratulates Dr Mucha Mkanganwi, incoming President of the SADC Business Council and President of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (standing right), during the annual SADC BC AGM held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in August 2024.

raise trade-related challenges, including NTBs.

Support has also been provided to enable MSME participation in trade fairs and expos, helping them increase visibility and expand market access. The institutional capacity of the SADC BC is also being strengthened to enhance its role in representing private sector interests and supporting AfCFTA implementation.

SADC BC chairperson Sekai Kuvarika says,

**“Through the SADC Business Council’s collaboration with SADC and the German Government, we are witnessing a shift in how MSMEs engage with the AfCFTA. Awareness is growing, barriers are being addressed, and more businesses are now equipped to take their goods and services across borders.**

**“We remain committed to building a stronger, more competitive private sector that is actively contributing to regional integration and inclusive economic growth.”**

Preparations are under way to relocate the SADC BC Secretariat from Johannesburg to Gaborone, to facilitate closer coordination with the SADC Secretariat and reinforce its role in advancing inclusive and competitive regional trade.

# SADC'S ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN LEADS TO SAVED TIME AND TRADE COSTS

Manual processing of certificates of origin was creating bottlenecks in trade across the SADC region. Paper-based systems were time-consuming, costly, and prone to error and fraud, delaying trade transactions and increasing the administrative burden on both businesses and customs authorities.

In September 2022, the SADC region launched the Electronic Certificate of Origin (e-CoO), a digital platform replacing traditional paperwork with a more efficient, electronic system. The SADC Secretariat was supported by the German Government.

Between 2022 and 2024, Eswatini, Namibia and Zambia –

all three countries supported by the German Government – adopted the e-CoO system. Technical support, capacity building and regional coordination was provided to ensure smooth implementation.

The results speak for themselves: by December 2024, the three pilot countries had issued a total of 15 505 e-CoOs, leading to estimated trade cost savings of over €11-million. The system has also proven effective in reducing administrative hurdles, accelerating customs clearance and enhancing trade efficiency.

In short, the e-CoO marks a major step towards more integrated and competitive regional value chains, by eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy and costs.





# KASUMBALESA BORDER POST VITAL TO STRATEGIC CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE SADC REGION

Persistent challenges at the Kasumbalesa border post hindered smooth flow of trade for not only the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia, but for the rest of the SADC region.

Persistent challenges at Kasumbalesa border manifest themselves in form of severe and recurring traffic congestion, insecurity especially on the part of truck drivers, and unwanted delays in clearing and release of goods consignments. The causes of these challenges include inadequate border infrastructure, the presence of unregulated informal cross-border traders, and the absence of sanitary and health protocols.

“The biggest challenge we encounter at the Kasumbalesa customs office is processing the documents we receive, because we process about 800 vehicles per day and about 5 000 people crossing the border on both sides per day,” says Mariano Pitta Lukeso, a DRC customs inspector, explaining that a lack of correct information slowed up processes.

Both DRC and Zambian customs officials complained that they had been unable to receive reliable information from each other, which was exploited by unscrupulous people and impacted the accurate calculation of taxes and duties on goods.

These problems not only disrupted bilateral trade between the DRC and Zambia, however; they also negatively impacted regional trade flows: Kasumbalesa is one of the SADC region’s most strategic border posts.

SADC thus facilitated a high-level inter-ministerial meeting between the DRC and Zambia; this was later expanded to

include representatives from 10 affected Member States.

These engagements, held at both senior official and ministerial levels, advanced the implementation of long-standing bilateral and regional commitments. Gaining political traction and coordination among multiple stakeholders would be a key step in addressing long-standing border inefficiencies.

While interventions are still taking place, the first phase has already delivered tangible progress. SADC, with technical support provided by GIZ, helped implement the electronic exchange of customs data between the DRC’s General Directorate of Customs and Excise and the Zambia Revenue Authority, improving customs automation and efficiency at the border.

Additionally, the Inter-Ministerial Task Force agreed on a Framework of Collaboration, paving the way for further initiatives. These include:

- Implementation of customs interconnectivity, with technical support from the World Customs Organization
- Capacity development for stakeholders involved in the design and future implementation of a one-stop border post
- Harmonising procedures across the impacted trade corridor

A major outcome has been SADC’s adoption of a corridor-wide approach to infrastructure development, transport and trade facilitation – in which Kasumbalesa is positioned as a central hub.





## SKILLS IN ACTION: PREPARING SADC'S PHARMA PROFESSIONALS FOR INDUSTRY

Producing quality medicines locally requires more than just infrastructure and investment. It depends on a skilled workforce. Across the SADC region, however, manufacturers have long struggled to find the technical specialists they need. That is starting to change.

Across SADC, this critical shortage of skilled industrial pharmacists has limited the region's ability to produce medicines of the highest production and quality standards, meet regulatory requirements or develop new products.

The upshot is that medicines have to be imported, driving up what they cost and making the subcontinent increasingly reliant on external suppliers. In turn, this undercuts regional health security and pharmaceutical sector resilience.

A key reason for this situation has been outdated and misaligned tertiary training curricula that do not fully equip Southern African industrial pharmacy graduates with up-to-date knowledge and skills.

To address this challenge, the SADC Directorate of Industrial Development and Trade supports the development of the SADC Industrial Pharmacy Fellowship Programme (IPFP) in collaboration with partner universities, a training centre and the private sector.

The shortage of skilled industrial pharmacists has been a significant challenge for the SADC IDT, whose mandate includes promoting regional market integration, industrial investment and development, and the adoption of international best practices and standards across the subcontinent.

In response, the IPFP has been developed to:

- Enhance academic and research collaboration among regional universities, including the University of Zambia (UNZA), South Africa's University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), and the Kilimanjaro School of Pharmacy (KSP) in the United Republic of Tanzania
- Develop and harmonise an industry-focused postgraduate curriculum
- Provide graduates with hands-on research experience and industrial exposure



These UNZA graduates are among the first students to benefit from SADC's Industrial Pharmacy Fellowship Programme, which is enhancing training quality and helping to strengthen pharmaceutical production standards across the region.

- Strengthen infrastructure through laboratory construction and equipment support

The IPFP promotes strengthened research and training capacity for the partners, through collaboration and sharing resources, and the creation of a curriculum relevant to the region and that meets industry needs.

A lack of local research facilities at UNZA was overcome by Industrial Pharmacy master's students being given exchange placements at Wits. Students were also successfully prepared for the workplace with practical training at KSP, gaining hands-on industry exposure. The new laboratory facility currently under construction at UNZA will further enhance local training and research capacity.

One of them, UNZA student Adron Mweshi Chimbala, says that "thanks to the regional SADC Industrial Pharmacy Fellowship Programme, I was able to conduct my three-month research in South Africa, an essential part of completing my master's in Industrial Pharmacy".

He adds: "I am looking forward to shaping the local pharmaceutical manufacturing sector in the region."



## NEW MEDICAL CONSUMABLES FACILITY IS SET TO DRIVE SADC SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Necessity is the mother of invention – and a brand-new manufacturing facility in Namibia means that it and other SADC countries will no longer be as reliant as before on importing vital laboratory resources.

On 23 May 2025 the Namibia Institute of Pathology (NIP) officially opened a state-of-the-art injection moulding facility in the coastal town of Swakopmund, allowing it to produce laboratory consumables necessary for its 36 labs to function smoothly – and for export to other SADC countries.

“One of the challenges we faced during the Covid-19 pandemic was really the procurement of laboratory consumables because suppliers were actually just prioritising countries with larger populations. Namibia only has a three million population, so we were not prioritised,” says Project Lead Dr Iyaloo Konstantinus, NIP’s Head: Research and Development.

“There was a time where we had scarcity and we had to settle for what was there. This is really when we saw the opportunity to say, ‘Look, there is a need to localise manufacturing so that we do not have to suffer, during a pandemic or even just every day.’”

Medicines and medical equipment supply chain disruptions during the pandemic exposed the risks of heavy dependence on foreign suppliers and underscored the urgent need to strengthen local production capacity. Many countries, such as Namibia, faced critical supply gaps that threatened health system resilience and response capability.

To help address these challenges, the SADC IDT enlisted the support of the German government.

They provided NIP with a grant of €155 000 (more than N\$3.2-million), enabling it to acquire a state-of-the-art injection moulding machine, making it possible to begin local production of plastic-based laboratory consumables for the first time in Namibia.

In addition, they provided comprehensive technical assistance, helping the company work toward compliance with regulatory and quality standards for the products it will make. NIP is also benefiting from regional business networking opportunities that







promote knowledge exchange, partnerships and learning from best practices.

Demonstrating strong co-investment, NIP CEO Kapena Tjombonde committed an impressive N\$12-million (more than €575 000) to construct the state-of-the-art cleanroom and manufacturing facility.

In its first phase it will produce essential laboratory consumables, including virus specimen tubes and urine/stool cups. The second phase will expand into more advanced products, such as serum separators, and focus on exports into SADC by 2030.








## FOR THE SADC LEATHER INDUSTRY, COMPLIANCE WITH ESG IS AS EASY AS 1-2-3



Environmental, social and governance (ESG) sustainability pillars are the keys to a cleaner planet, thriving communities and ethical businesses. To the leather industry, regarded as one of the most polluting industries globally, they are increasingly vital.



As consumers all over the world become more conscious of the impact they have on our planet through their purchasing choices, they demand more sustainable practices from the companies they support. Those companies, in turn, hold their suppliers to a higher standard.

For the global leather industry, whose activities have traditionally had significant impacts on water, soil and air quality, as well as on workers' well-being, ESG compliance can very well be the difference between success and failure – but achieving it is easier said than done.

In response to this pressing need, the SADC IDT has launched a transformative initiative to support tanneries across the SADC region.

As part of this effort, the SADC IDT with support of the German Government recently conducted training workshops in Namibia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe for more than 30 participants from 10 large-scale and seven small-scale tanneries. The training focused on enhancing understanding of ESG standards and the practical steps they needed to take to achieve compliance – and for the tanneries, it was an eye-opener.

According to Tatenda Katai, production manager at Zimbabwe's Prestige Leathers, "We gained valuable knowledge and exposure on international trends through the implementation of the ESG project. In addition, we managed to optimise our production processes using the knowledge we received. The project helped us to focus on social aspects of ESG, to which we had been giving minimal attention."

Importantly, the CESARE Programme also partnered with the UK-based Sustainable Leather Foundation (SLF) on behalf of the German Government, to conduct preliminary audits of six tanneries in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Madagascar. Tailored guidance was then provided, enabling each tannery to take corrective actions. All six then achieved certification in selected modules on SLF's ESG standards, following full audits. The programme continues to support the tanneries with hands-on training to further achieve compliance with additional modules on the SLF's ESG modular spectrum.

Their ESG certification status is publicly available via the SLF's Dashboard, improving transparency and credibility.

Their commitment to sustainable practices better positions these tanneries to access new regional and international markets, integrate into responsible supply chains and contribute to a greener, more competitive leather industry in Southern Africa.



## FEEDLOT HOTELS – THE COOPERATIVE SOLUTION TO PRODUCING MARKET-READY LIVESTOCK



For smallholder farmers in Namibia, producing healthy, market-ready livestock primarily for meat but also leather is a difficult challenge. The solution: feedlot hotels.

Namibia is, famously, a dry country, and smallholder farmers struggle in the face of recurring droughts and limited resources.

The SADC IDT with support of the German Government piloted the feedlot hotel model in Okakarara, a cattle-farming area in north-central Namibia, providing a practical solution to enhance livestock productivity and strengthen farmer resilience

A group of smallholder farmers organised themselves into a cooperative and began using a shared feedlot facility on a rotational basis. Over a 90-day period, each of the farmers was able to fatten their cattle and implement minor hide improvements, optimising both meat and leather outputs. This approach not only introduced a sustainable fattening method to them, but also demonstrated the economic benefits of integrated livestock management.

The results were encouraging: an average daily weight gain of one kilogram per animal, ultimately generating an average profit of N\$6 600 per head for the farmers.

In fact, based on these outcomes, the Namibia National Farmers Union (NNFU) has formally integrated the feedlot hotel model into its broader support portfolio, ensuring the concept can be scaled up and sustained beyond this pilot phase.

**“The introduction of the feedlot hotel concept has been a game-changer for local farmer organisations such as the Namibia National Farmers Union and our regional unions. It has provided a practical solution for local farmers to raise weaners [young animals that no longer drink their mother’s milk] to market weight locally, reducing the need for export. This addresses a long-standing challenge faced by our members,” says NNFU CEO Kuniberth Shamathe.**

**“With the support of SADC IDT and the German Government, the concept was successfully piloted and a sustainable framework established. We are now able to carry it forward on our own. This is a good example of how development initiatives should operate, by strengthening local capacity and enabling continuity. For us, this project has been both relevant and effective.”**





# BUILDING CAPACITY CLEARS BARRIERS FOR THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA'S SISAL-EXPORTING INDUSTRY

Knowledge is power, and it also drives business success – so United Republic of Tanzania (URT) sisal exporters have discovered to their delight, following a much-needed SADC training intervention.

Many small and medium-sized businesses across Southern Africa are unfamiliar with how to trade across the continent under the AfCFTA requirements such as rules of origin, preferential tariffs, export documentation and compliance standards, hindering their ability to access new markets and take advantage of opportunities offered by the agreement.

In April 2024 a two-day training workshop took place in Korogwe, URT, led by the SADC IDT in collaboration with the Tanzania Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, and supported by the German Government.

The workshop aimed to equip sisal-exporting companies with the knowledge and tools to effectively trade under the AfCFTA, covering key topics including AfCFTA documentation, export procedures, preferential tariffs, NTBs and product quality standards. Participating businesses were enabled to better understand compliance requirements, export regulations, applicable industry standards and certifications needed to access new markets.

A specific NTB – a bill of exchange requirement – affecting sisal exports from URT to Ghana was identified and officially registered with the support of the SADC Secretariat. Thanks to follow-up stakeholder engagements, facilitated by the SADC IDT and backed by German Government, the issue was successfully addressed. The resolution process was led by the AfCFTA Secretariat's Non-Tariff Measures Unit, resulting in the removal of a key trade barrier and enabling smoother cross-border transactions for URT exporters.

The AfCFTA training had a tangible impact on participating businesses. AJA Ltd, for example, increased its sisal fibre exports from one to six containers per month following the workshop. This expansion in trade under the AfCFTA not only boosted the company's revenues but also contributed to job

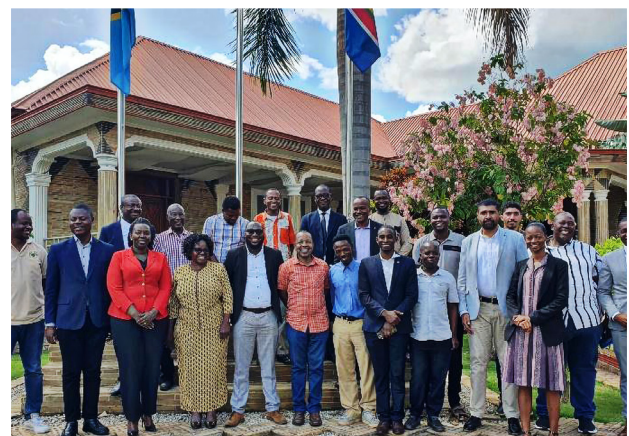
creation, with a notable increase in opportunities for women and youth.

AJA Ltd managing director Happiness Nyiti says, "Since we started trading under the AfCFTA preferential rates, part-time employment has increased from 100 to 150 workers. Of these, approximately 80% are women and 60% are classified as youth."

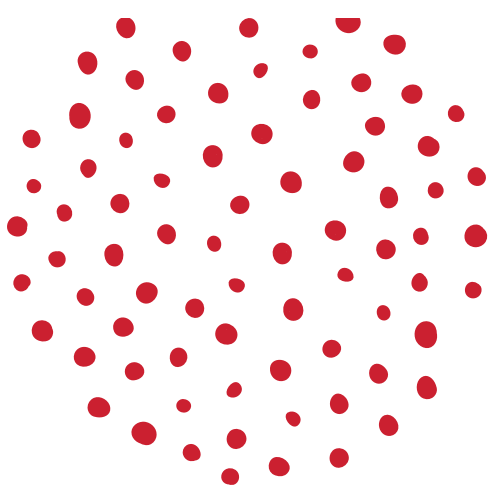
Also, the removal of the NTB has led to significant cost and time savings for sisal exporters. This change is expected to save the industry approximately US\$144 432 annually in courier fees. It has substantially improved payment timelines, too, reducing the waiting period for the initial 70% of payments from 21 to three days, and for the remaining 30% from 63 to 21 days – greatly enhancing exporters' cash flow and operational flexibility.

Nanona Agrocare Ltd managing director Nicholas Noa comments that "business with my Ghanaian customers is running smoothly following the quick resolution of the NTB".

These outcomes underscore the crucial role of capacity building and targeted NTB resolution in unlocking real trade benefits for the private sector and supporting more inclusive participation in intra-African trade.



These participants in a SADC-led workshop on how to trade under the AfCFTA are reaping substantial benefits.



## LESOTHO UNITES TO GROW ITS HERBAL AND MEDICINAL PLANT SECTOR

The Kingdom of Lesotho is home to a wide variety of herbs and medicinal plants. Despite this natural advantage, however, the sector has lacked coordination, consistent quality standards and access to export markets.

Producers, processors and researchers have mostly worked alone, unable to meet international demands for volume, quality and price.

This became clear at the Dubai Trade Fair in November 2024, where several businesses saw first hand how fragmented the industry was. They also recognised deeper structural challenges: poor logistics, limited research and documentation, and weak links between indigenous knowledge and commercial applications.

At the same time, demand for organic and plant-based products is growing worldwide.

Lesotho's climate supports organic farming, but scaling up requires a more unified approach. Supported by the European Union and the German Government, key agro-processors in Maseru and Leribe formed MASHIAL – the Medicinal Plants, Aromatic Plants, Spices, Herbs and Industry Association Lesotho.

MASHIAL brings together producers, researchers, doctors, agro-processors, academics and government stakeholders, with the aim of creating a stronger, better-organised sector.

A study tour in October 2024, organised with the South African Essential Oil Producers Association, showed the benefits of working together across the value chain – from production and transport to regulation, branding and digital tools. Participants returned with a clear message: collaboration, not competition, is the way forward.



RVCL+ followed up with technical training in plant propagation, branding and market trends. Members also began work on a national herbarium to protect indigenous species and preserve traditional knowledge.

MASHIAL has already improved access to market data, price information and export requirements. For the first time, businesses can coordinate production and meet international quality and quantity standards.

Lesotho now has the foundations of a national industry, built on cooperation and a shared goal to grow. This industry looks at unlocking the potentials of its integration into the region of the SADC market and it's ready to take advantages of international export opportunities – such as those offered under the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union.





