

Proposed Study Outline (Annex 2)

Value of SADC TFCAs in the Post Pandemic World

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Introduction

Biodiversity loss has been identified as one of the main threats to global prosperity and this has been highlighted under the current COVID-19 crisis. Besides the threat of the emergence of disease, the loss of biodiversity will cause extensive and deadly flooding, climate change, clean water shortages, loss of crop pollination, decline in productivity and numerous other risks. The creation of conservation areas is one of the main policy instruments to slow the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of nature.¹ Essential to this is the ever-increasing role that communities play in conservation and protected area management.

There are 18 Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) in the SADC region, covering an area of nearly one million square kilometers. These are high biodiversity transboundary landscapes covering different land uses with a common objective for biodiversity conservation underpinned by community development and ecosystem management through a collaborative inter-regional governance framework. Many of these TFCAs are covered by formal agreements between the participating countries. SADC has committed to the development of TFCAs and regard them as a critical to the overall objective of attaining sustainable development in the region.

The network of SADC TFCAs represents a significant proportion of global biodiversity and has immense existing and potential values for addressing the threats arising from biodiversity and ecosystem loss. It is imperative that at both the global and SADC level that the full values of TFCAs are recognized and that decisive action is taken to ensure the viability of the SADC TFCAs as well as their continued expansion.

The TFCA concept was influenced and inspired by Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) initiatives coming out of Zimbabwe in the late 1980s and early 1990s, especially that of CAMPFIRE. TFCAs are defined in the SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement (1999) as:

a component of a large ecological region that straddles the boundaries of two or more countries encompassing one or more protected areas as well as multiple resource use areas. TFCAs are founded with the aim of collaboratively managing shared natural and cultural resources across international boundaries for improved biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development

More information can be found on the following link:

<https://www.sadc.int/themes/natural-resources/transfrontier-conservation-areas/>

While TFCAs are potential engines of sustainable development in SADC, the sustainability of the TFCAs in themselves has been questionable. Member states do provide the budget for the protected areas, but besides these core contributions, TFCAs remain largely dependent on support from donors and large international NGOs and on tourism as their main economic driver. It is of great concern that TFCAs have not achieved sustainability after 20 years of implementation and that this still appears a distant goal.

¹ The Waldron Report. Protecting 30% of the planet for nature: costs, benefits and economic implications Working paper analysing the economic implications of the proposed 30% target for areal protection in the draft post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

It is generally recognized that while some TFCAs have had some impressive successes, they have generally not met their full potential in realizing the broad spectrum of values that they contain. While the philosophy underpinning TFCAs incorporates inclusivity and participation, this has been difficult to achieve in practice, leaving many local stakeholders disillusioned with the lack of benefits. Furthermore, there are perceptions of inequality between the participating states themselves.

The advent of COVID-19 and the collapse of tourism has laid bare further weaknesses of TFCAs in this regard. TFCAs now find themselves under an existential threat as tourism revenues and the state and donors fail to mobilize sufficient emergency funds to sustain the industry. The substantial gains from the past are threatened as nations try to define recovery plans and stimulus packages while straining under the pressures of struggling health systems and failing economies. At this stage, the SADC TFCAs need to mobilize their substantial intellectual resources (e.g. as represented by the TFCA Experts Network) to define a strategy that will take it through the COVID crisis and beyond.

The strategy requires a value system for the TFCAs that recognizes both the diversity of stakeholder interests as well as the broad spectrum of values which characterize these landscapes. A methodology will be developed to holistically measure and assess these values to establish the basis of a strong business case for investing in the TFCAs. The strength of the business case will depend on its ability to demonstrate sustainability and resilience. The major deficiencies identified in the TFCAs are consistent with those identified with conservation in the region as a whole: lack of diversity (e.g. dependence on tourism revenues) and lack of equity (inadequate social and economic inclusion). The central theme of the strategy can be encapsulated as “Resilience through Diversity and Equity”.

Globally, there is a growing movement towards greater equity and equality (including environmental justice) while demanding structural transformation and systemic change leading to a world which fully recognizes and supports the need for balance between natural and human systems, as represented, for example, in the planetary ‘One Health’ approach.

This demand for transformation requires that TFCAs must provide evidence that they will be relevant in this changing world – that they can contribute to a more just society while helping to provide the much-needed environmental goods and services that underpin the health and resilience of the planet and its people.

“The Value of SADC TFCAs in the Post Pandemic World” (referred to as ‘the Study’) will provide the business case for investing in TFCAs to all stakeholders, decision makers and the international community. In the context of the Study, the term ‘investment’ applies to all stakeholders and covers not only financial resources but other inputs into enabling conditions, such as the policy environment, capacity building, monitoring and research and collaboration and participation processes. The definition of TFCA values needs to be determined in a participatory and objective manner to ensure that these values are fully representative. These values in turn should strongly influence management plans and strategies that strengthen the linkages between TFCAs and beneficiaries.

The proposed structure of the Study is as follows:

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary should summarize the process in which a methodology for assessing the value of SADC TFCAs was selected and applied and briefly present the main points of the business case for investing in the SADC TFCAs. This should be accompanied by an outline of a resource mobilization strategy. The Executive Summary is targeted mainly to the decision makers and potential funders. While the Executive Summary should be compelling and encourage readers to continue on to the full report, it should also serve as a stand-alone document.

Objective and Scope of the Study

The objective of the Study is to establish the business case for comprehensive and long-term investment in the SADC TFCA based on a holistic assessment methodology that incorporates the full spectrum of TFCA values. This will be inclusive of both natural and social (including cultural and political) capital. Specifically, in the COVID-19 context the Study will raise the profile and significance of the TFCA for the health of the planet. The methodology of the Study should not be biased towards any stakeholder groups but represent to the greatest extent possible the value systems of the wide range of stakeholders and citizens of the TFCA. As such it needs to be implemented at various scales from the local to the global as and where values related to beneficiaries will dictate.

The Study represents an opportunity to fully appraise the TFCA in the present context of COVID-19. Our contemporary world is characterized by a profound sense of urgency to rectify the systemic causes of the pandemic which has been attributed to current economic models that encourage consumption at the expense of planetary health. It is imperative that the Study understands and becomes aligned with these demands for profound transformation. Like all business cases, it needs to be contemporary in order to be relevant and credible.

Study Outputs

The outputs of the Study are described in the following sections which form the proposed structure of the Study:

1. SADC TFCA Situational Analysis
2. Present State of Play
3. Methodology for Assessing the Values of the SADC TFCA
4. Findings of the Assessment: A Holistic Interpretation of SADC TFCA values
5. Pathways to Sustainability and Resilience
6. Rationale for Investing in the SADC TFCA

The Study should furthermore provide the basis for:

- improved participatory management plans based on an increased awareness of the values of biodiversity, ecosystem services and governance structures
- a clear path for strengthening equity among the more marginalized of the TFCA land custodians (e.g. local communities) and
- a support and background document for the network of SADC TFCA and beyond.

SADC TFCA Situational Analysis (SA)

The proposed SA will ideally assess the development of the SADC TFCA initiative from its origins and trace its evolution in the context of the objectives as stated by SADC. There is extensive literature and research associated with the TFCA much of which will be made available to the Consultant on Dropbox. Key documents are listed in Annex 1.

A significant amount of research has highlighted deficiencies of TFCA implementation to date, especially regarding community participation and benefits. A frank and honest appraisal is expected, as this is essential to assess the different values attributed to the TFCA by the stakeholders. Furthermore, an objective and balanced approach is necessary as the basis for establishing a credible business case. The TFCA initiative should be given an overall assessment which can be backed by evidence from specific areas.

The SA should provide a broad stakeholder analysis which can help clarify roles and responsibilities in the TFCA. This will include an assessment indicating the extent of communal, state and private land

within the TFCAs, describing land use and governance mechanisms for the management of biodiversity and ecosystems.

Within the stakeholder assessment the institutional setting for the TFCAs must also be examined. TFCAs represent broad landscapes covering many sectors and land uses yet are driven by conservation and environmental institutions which are often among the weakest sectors.²

Present “State of Play”

This section presents the broader contemporary context in which the TFCAs are now situated and against which they must be found relevant. The pre COVID-19 world was immensely complex and characterized by huge pressures for systemic changes to address poverty, climate change and biodiversity loss. The economic model which did not account for natural capital was regarded as the main cause for these major crises. While a number of solutions have been mooted, many of these have been criticized as paradoxical and unsustainable, located as they are within the market-based paradigm.

Western conservation strategies have been criticized for inadequately recognizing local knowledge and management practices. For many, biodiversity conservation in Southern Africa has long been synonymous with deep inequality and historical injustice.³ In order to achieve a balanced assessment, the study must take into consideration these various perspectives on conservation.

Yet with the advent of COVID-19 there has been a common call across the conservation spectrum – including traditional large NGOs and international platforms and institutions such as IPBES and the GEF - for transformative change to ensure that the balance between natural and human systems be restored within planetary boundaries. Science driven initiatives such as the “One Health” approach has come to the forefront as the critical strategy to take humanity forward. Globally, the trend for landscape wide, ecosystem-based approaches consistent with TFCA objectives is growing. Furthermore, questions of equity and equality are increasingly at the forefront for systemic change, either as the result of social and environmental injustices or as part of humanity’s survival strategy.

There is a growing emphasis and demand for a global ‘Green Recovery’ and a potential “New Deal between Nature and People” which is reflected in the increasing commitments and strategies towards this at national and regional levels (e.g. UK, EU). Most recently, the Waldron Report which is a working paper in the draft post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework advocates for protecting 30% of the planet for nature. There is a growing consensus around the idea that the global economy needs to be reimagined to account for nature, but there are many different ideas on how this should be done.

The challenge is to find a value system that accommodates the TFCA stakeholders. The validity of the concepts of the Biodiversity Economy and the Wildlife Economy may need to be reviewed in this context, and the extent to which these concepts will prosper in the post COVID world.

While present times pose immense challenges for TFCAs it is also a world of enormous opportunities considering 1) the new value system evolving around people and nature is eminently suited to the TFCA model in its ‘ideal’ sense⁴ and 2) the growing number of initiatives and institutions calling for change which represent a broad array of potential partnerships and funding mechanisms from which TFCAs can significantly benefit.

² Other global multi-use landscape initiatives are managed through collaborative partnerships and the role of the conservation or environmental agencies tends to be more of a coordinating one.

³ PLAAS, University of Western Cape. June 2020

⁴ E.g. Resilient, sustainable, diverse, equitable.

This chapter should also describe the state of conservation as directly impacted by environmental and social shocks, such as COVID-19, including the consequences of the collapse of tourism and response by SADC countries and the global community.

Additionally, the chapter will provide a global overview of:

- the present context of conservation and landscape initiatives
- the context of policies and international conventions and agreements
- the response to COVID-19 regarding environmental strategies (e.g. Green Recovery strategies). An indicative table is given in Annex X and this should be further elaborated in this chapter

Methodology for Assessing the Values of the SADC TFCAs

The previous chapters on the TFCA Situational Analysis and the State of Play will provide the basis for establishing a contemporary and innovative methodology for assessing the values of TFCAs that encompasses the potentially many stakeholder value systems. This chapter will carry out a review of valuation techniques and facilitate a process of selecting and developing one that is suitable for application across SADC.

This is in line with an increasingly expressed need for valuing and managing nature as captured in this statement:

“Re-orienting our understanding of natural capital as an asset class is the first step towards incentivizing management of natural resources for resilience.”⁵

This concept is furthermore elaborated in the idea that in order to have the greatest impact for policy makers (who have no time for complexity) the consultant should consider developing a “metric to aggregate things and convert everything in one single measure that is easy to sum up and which can be complemented with alternative approaches – we can’t escape the need for a single unit of measurement.”⁶

The Waldron Report⁷ gives compelling evidence that protecting 30% of the planet for nature is the best option for mitigating the enormous economic risks of climate change and biodiversity loss. The report presents both economic (including non-monetary ecosystem service values) and financial analyses demonstrating the substantial gains to be accrued through achieving the 30% targets. The total-economy or ‘multi-sector’ framework approach is consistent with the requirements for this Study, but it does not include the incorporation of the wider set of values that are likely to exist within the TFCA stakeholders.

Capturing the range of TFCA values in a methodology that is user friendly and impactful is the major challenge for this Study. While the Study should be scientifically sound, it must be remembered that the target audience is also comprised of policy makers needing to make quick but informed decisions, as well as many who will need guidance to understand the complex concepts related to the production

⁵ Building Back Better. A Marshall Plan for Natural Capital: Reversing the decline in Sub-Saharan African GDP in Nature-Based Tourism Sector from COVID-29. Planet Tracker, June 2020.

⁶ University of Geneva

⁷ Protecting 30% of the planet for nature: costs, benefits and economic implications

Working paper analysing the economic implications of the proposed 30% target for areal protection in the draft post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. July 2020

and delivery of ecosystem goods and services. The extraordinary diversity of cultures found in the TFCAs also provides a critically important value element.

A standard approach should be formulated that can be used as a benchmark against which future impacts can be measured and be applied to all the SADC TFCAs in future to allow for

- results to be comparable
- the assessment is repeatable so that it can provide trend analysis into the future.

The consultant should consult closely with the TFCA network to identify any existing tools that are being applied and which may be referred to in the determination of a suitable approach for the valuing of the SADC TFCAs. COVID-19 is driving an already growing demand for 'rethinking economics' and a general 'global re-set' and new models for the valuation of Ecosystem Goods and Services.

The Study should give a strong general sense of the critical values that the TFCAs deliver while giving a picture of the wide range of benefits that form a comprehensive and diverse investment portfolio. The methodology should give both a sense of monetary values but also identify values that cannot be monetized and identify other means for valuation.

The following broad categories of values have been identified for inclusion into this diverse portfolio:

- Climate change. A transformation in the management of ecosystems has been identified as one of the key nature-based solutions to climate change.⁸ The contribution of TFCAs to climate resilience, including through carbon sequestration and storage, should be evaluated
- Disaster Risk Reduction. This covers the wide range of risks, such as pandemics and the value of an interconnected systemic approach to DRR (e.g. Ecosystem-based DRR).⁹
- Ecosystem Goods and Services, e.g. water provision and quality, clean air, soil conservation and maintenance, flood protection, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, Non-Timber Forest Products, other sustainable livelihoods (including a general analysis of the TFCA contribution to food security)
- Contribution to the Biodiversity Economy through game ranching, ecotourism and bioprospecting
- Value of governance systems established under TFCAs from local to regional (social¹⁰ and political capital) including added value of transboundary collaboration (communities, private sector, government) and the establishment and maintenance of peaceful relations between participating countries.
- Added value of 'scale' approaches e.g. TFCA wide tourism marketing and product development, enhanced value chains
- Mental and health benefits of nature (considering the increased value given to nature and health because of COVID-19)¹¹
- Other value propositions such as intact habitats, ecological corridors and intrinsic values
- Values for land restoration and Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)
- Values in terms of potential to meet the targets of International Conventions and Agreements

⁸ Nature Climate Change, June 2018.

⁹ Despite the devastating costs of COVID-19 no attempt has yet been made to quantify the value of ecosystem services in mitigating this risk

¹⁰ Including Indigenous Knowledge or Traditional Knowledge systems which are considered "the essence of social capital of the poor and the source of their survival strategies" (World Bank)

¹¹ A recent study estimated the economic value of protected areas on the improved mental health of visitors to be \$6 trillion annually

Once defined, this methodology should be applied to develop a Scenario Analysis. The selected technique, inclusive of resource economic applications will be used to derive values and illustrations of values according to three scenarios, i.e. status quo, high road and low road. TFCAs will be in a status quo that is not ideal and therefore will be delivering Ecosystem Goods and Services at a sub-optimal rate. The high road scenario will provide suggestions on what needs to be done to address the prevailing issues that prevent optimal delivery and an indication of what this optimal picture would be. The low road will show what could happen to the capacity to deliver if the prevailing issues are allowed to continue or get worse, and the consequences to the potential for delivery. The scenario analysis should address the issues of ‘ecosystem disservices’ which are known to negatively affect local communities.

Considering the short time frame of the Study, it will need to establish the methodology and give a rapid assessment based on existing data laying the groundwork for a longer-term valuation based on the defined methodology. It is recommended that the Study will capitalize on the extensive knowledge and experience of the TFCA network, the International Coordinators and TFCA Secretariat and others who have been long associated with the initiative.

Findings of the Assessment: A Holistic Interpretation of SADC TFCA Values

This section presents the results of the application of the methodology giving a description of the total asset value of SADC TFCAs encompassing the wide portfolio of values that they present. This overall ‘big picture’ holistically describes the asset base in a manner that has not been captured in the past and provides a new perspective of what the TFCAs represent in the changed value context of COVID-19. Such a major This description of the ‘big picture’ should be strengthened using powerful visual images, graphs and maps.¹²

Pathways to Sustainability

The business case will be based on

- the assessment of TFCA Values which redefines or ‘reimagines’ the total value of TFCAs with consideration of the new global context
- the identification of the potential ‘pathways’ that can strengthen the sustainability and resilience of the TFCAs thereby improving the overall appeal of the TFCA ‘product’ for investment.

In the context of the business case, the application of some of these sustainability pathways can also be viewed as *risk mitigation factors*.

The following are given as potential examples.

Participatory planning and the Landscape Approach

Effective spatial planning has long been identified as a critical element of establishing sustainable and integrated multi-functional landscapes. TFCAs are consistent with other landscape initiatives that have the objective of sustainable development through wise use of natural resources and effective ecosystem management. These initiatives tend to have multi-sector and multi-stakeholder governance frameworks that may provide lessons for TFCAs. Participatory planning including mapping

¹² For example, the total size of the TFCAs is not well understood and this could be highlighted by the creation of a ‘TFCA-land’ where all TFCAs are amalgamated into one spatial area and superimposed on various maps (continental Europe, U.S.A., Southern Africa) to help demonstrate the global significance and potential value

at the community level of ecosystem services, accompanied by the appropriate capacity building is an essential component of sustainability and resilience. Participatory planning can also play a key role for a TFCA wide business plan by helping to establish an enabling investment environment through ensuring buy-in from stakeholders and effective zonation protecting landscape qualities. Genuine participation in planning and implementation helps ensure that those who have the most direct dependence on Ecosystem Goods and Services have a strong voice in decision-making that affects their lifestyle and livelihoods.

Addressing poverty and inequality and strengthening equity

TFCAs should ideally benefit poor people and address the social and economic causes of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation. The way inclusivity can be strengthened in the COVID-19 context should be described, for example the need for greater access to technology, especially regarding tourism marketing and revenue retention for smaller ecotourism operators. The valuation process should be able to lead to practical recommendations for access to finance and equity for local biodiversity stewards through credit schemes.

Strengthening Ecosystem management

The resilience of the TFCAs will require a transformation in the way that ecosystems are managed. Part of this can be addressed through participatory planning process (e.g. ecosystem mapping, complemented by ecosystem services management training) but a broader and more inclusive framework identifying all the main actors should be established.

Sustainable livelihoods and food security

This theme needs separate focus though some of it may be captured in other sections. The COVID-19 crisis has devastating implications for food security in the region. Based on the analysis of values and benefits, this section can highlight the different options for diversifying livelihoods and improving food security (e.g. community-based game ranching) and reducing the vulnerability of communities. A local economic development (LED) approach in the TFCA context could be explored.

Partnerships and Collaboration

COVID-19 has highlighted the need for partnerships and collaboration. The TFCA initiative has tended to work collaboratively in the conservation field without proactively engaging broader multi-sectoral partnerships. The Study should identify potential partnerships at all levels taking into account the landscape approach. For instance, the Global Landscapes Forum, which highlights the nexus between humans, wildlife and landscapes that provide food and livelihoods.¹³ The UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme represents another potential partnership. Both of these examples can add considerable value to the TFCA knowledge base and help identify funding partners. Resource mobilization should identify not only financial resources but leverage existing technical resources across sectors.

TFCAs as a social safety net

Social safety net programs have relieved an estimated 36% of the world's most vulnerable people from extreme poverty.¹⁴ Social safety nets are crucial to the COVID-19 response to cushion local communities from the worst effects of the pandemic as well as reduce risk of short-term over-exploitation of wildlife and natural resources and the sale of productive assets. Often social protection programs are based on cash transfers. The Study offers the possibility of articulating a credit scheme

¹³ Global Landscapes Forum, Bonn Outcome Statement 2020. One of the key messages is "Human and Planetary Health are inextricably connected. The "One Health" approach is needed to prevent zoonotic diseases."

¹⁴ World Bank website.

based on the value of custodian assets translated into a form of 'eco-currency' that can support local communities based on a structured incentive and performance-based program – one which strengthens capacity for ecosystem management while building skills for enterprise development based on sound natural resource management.

Identifying genuine transformation

As has been mentioned throughout these TORs, COVID-19 is accelerating demand for transformational change. The pandemic has demonstrated the degree to which human beings and economic activity depend on the planet's ecological balance and the extent to which a 'global re-set' is required. It is likely that major donors and institutions will require evidence on how TFCAs will use its assets within a programmatic framework of activities to support this transformation. This in turn may require transformative thinking of the TFCA concept itself. For example, to what extent does the TFCA concept or implementation program to date reflect the increasingly outdated paradigm from which the world must rapidly evolve?

Some of the examples of the pathways to sustainability mentioned above may be tools for transformation. For example, participatory planning should be a process that genuinely empowers local communities with knowledge and incentives to manage and economically thrive from their landscapes. This may require a comprehensively different planning process than those implemented in the past.

Rationale for Investment into the SADC TFCAs (Business Case)

The above chapters provide the essential components of the business case and this chapter should summarize in compelling terms the reasons why stakeholders should invest and commit to the TFCAs. The business case should provide a summary assessment of the status quo of the SADC TFCAs in terms of their financing models, budget requirements and deficits with particular reference to trends and COVID impact as defined in the Study. To have greater impact, this business case will address the various stakeholders separately, identifying why and how they should invest their resources, be it money or time, into the TFCAs. These stakeholders include:

- Global level institutions such as international financing and developing agencies
- Regional level institutions such as SADC
- National level – natural resource and other relevant sectors
- Private sector (international, national and local)
- Local communities and
- Local and international NGOs

The business case should outline a resource mobilization strategy for the each of the identified stakeholder groups. Recommendations for the implementation of the business case should be provided, including strategies for building more sustainable funding models.