



PRESS RELEASE

SADC to Host First Regional Leather Forum to Boost Industrialisation and Regional Trade in the Leather Value Chain.

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe | 22 July 2025 – The Southern African Development Community (SADC), with the support from German government, will host the inaugural SADC Regional Leather Forum in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. This landmark event aims to accelerate regional industrialisation by strengthening the leather value chain across SADC Member States.

The Forum will bring together approximately 50 participants, including policymakers, industry leaders, entrepreneurs, researchers, development partners, and private sector representatives. It will serve as a dynamic platform to facilitate policy and regulatory harmonisation, assess progress on the implementation of the SADC Leather Regional Model Policy Framework, and promote innovation, investment, and trade across borders.

The SADC Regional Leather Forum is a key step under the broader SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (2015–2063), which aims to transform the region from a resource-based economy into one driven by value addition and high productivity. The Forum will provide a space to explore how aligned policies, regional cooperation, and private sector engagement can improve competitiveness and sustainability in the leather sector.

The one-day event will feature presentations on the current state of the regional leather sector and a continental outlook by the African Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI). In line with the decision of the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration (MTF), representatives of Member States will be providing an update on their respective implementation of the Regional Leather Model Policy and Framework.

The support is part of SADC-German cooperation's aim to promote value chain development, trade facilitation, and industrialisation across the region by strengthening institutions and fostering private sector engagement. In the leather sector specifically, Germany has supported upgrades in tanneries, improved production standards, and business linkages in countries such as Botswana and Namibia. The project is implemented by GIZ, under the Cooperation for the Enhancement of SADC Regional Economic Integration (CESARE) programme.

By facilitating strategic dialogue and cross-sector collaboration, the Forum is expected to produce actionable insights and a roadmap for the continued development of the leather sector. Outcomes from the Forum will contribute to harmonising policies, improving product quality, and unlocking new export opportunities across the continent and globally.



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