



PRESS RELEASE

SADC to Convene the 2nd Regional Leather Forum in Durban, South Africa from 23-24 July 2026 to review progress in the implementation of SADC Regional Leather Value Chain Model Policy Framework

17 July 2026, Gaborone, Botswana – The Southern African Development Community (SADC) with support from the German Cooperation, will convene the 2nd SADC Regional Leather Forum from 23-24 July 2026 in Durban, Republic of South Africa.

The Forum builds on the successful inaugural SADC Regional Leather Forum and Business-to-Business (B2B) Workshop held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in July 2025 and forms part of the ongoing implementation of the SADC Regional Leather Value Chain Model Policy Framework, which was endorsed by the SADC Council of Ministers in August 2023. The Forum also responds to the directive of the 24th Meeting of the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration, held in Harare, Republic of Zimbabwe, in June 2025, for Member States to provide annual feedback on the implementation of the Model Policy.

Since the endorsement of the Model Policy Framework, significant progress has been made in translating regional commitments into national action. With technical support from the SADC Secretariat and its partners, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe have developed National Leather Strategic Work Plans to address country-specific challenges and guide implementation of the Framework. The Secretariat has also supported the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Mozambique in preparing similar implementation plans, thus bringing the total number of Member States with nationally aligned implementation processes to six (6).

The 2nd Regional Leather Forum will provide an important platform for Member States and stakeholders to review progress made in implementing the Model Policy Framework on regional leather value chain, assess commitments arising from previous regional engagements and generate evidence to inform reporting to relevant SADC policy and decision-making structures.

The Forum will further promote knowledge exchange and collaboration among governments, private sector representatives, industry associations, development partners, financial institutions, researchers, regional organisations and other leather value chain development players. Discussions will focus on identifying priorities and practical interventions to strengthen regional cooperation, improve competitiveness, promote value addition and unlock investment opportunities across the leather value chain.

By bringing together key stakeholders from across the region, the Forum aims to accelerate the development of a competitive, inclusive and sustainable regional leather industry that contributes to regional integration through industrialisation, job creation, intra-regional trade and economic transformation in line with the SADC Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap (SISR) 2015-2063.

The SADC Secretariat remains committed to working closely with Member States and strategic partners to promote regional value chains that enhance economic resilience, increase value addition and improve livelihoods across the region.

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SADC in Brief

SADC is an organisation of 16 Member States established in 1980 as the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) and later, in August, 1992 transformed into the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The mission of SADC is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper cooperation and integration, good governance and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy. Member States are Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Germany in Brief

Germany has been a longstanding partner in Southern Africa's regional integration agenda, with development cooperation dating back to 1961. Since 1992, the German Government has supported the work of the SADC Secretariat with more than EUR 500 million. One of the key pillars of SADC–German cooperation is Regional Economic Integration, which includes strengthening regional value chains, promoting industrialisation, supporting trade facilitation, and enhancing private sector competitiveness. Within this framework, Germany supports the development of the regional leather value chain by fostering value addition, improving market access, strengthening skills and enterprise development, and creating opportunities for investment, employment and intra-regional trade. Other areas of cooperation include Transboundary Water Management and the Transboundary Use and Protection of Natural Resources.

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