MEDIA STATEMENT

SOUTH AFRICA HOSTS SADC TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREAS NETWORK MEETING IN KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

9 NOVEMBER 2026

South Africa will host the 2026 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA) Annual Network Meeting from 10 - 12 November 2026 at the Nombolo Mdhluli Conference Centre in Skukuza Rest Camp, within the Kruger National Park.

The meeting is held under the theme, *"Investing in People, Nature and Partnerships: Scaling Impact Across SADC TFCAs"*, the meeting will bring together representatives from SADC Member States, TFCA management structures, regional and international conservation partners, civil society organisations and local community representatives to strengthen regional collaboration in the management and sustainable development of Transfrontier conservation areas.

South Africa's hosting of the meeting reflects its continued commitment to advancing regional cooperation in biodiversity conservation and strengthening partnerships that promote ecological connectivity, sustainable livelihoods and inclusive economic opportunities across shared conservation landscapes.

The 2026 meeting comes at an important milestone in the implementation of the revised SADC TFCA Programme (2023–2033) and the SADC Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) Strategy (2022–2032). Discussions will focus on progress in implementing the regional programme, mobilising sustainable financing models for conservation, strengthening cooperation against wildlife crime, promoting community participation and benefit-sharing, and improving the management of shared ecosystems and natural resources which will lead to positive conservation outcomes

Hosting the meeting in Skukuza, within the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area, provides an opportunity to showcase practical examples of transboundary conservation and the contribution of protected landscapes to regional development.

As part of the programme, delegates will participate in field visits showcasing initiatives linked to the wildlife-based economy, including the Bushbuck Tannery community enterprise and the SANParks Game Processing Plant. These initiatives demonstrate opportunities to connect biodiversity conservation with enterprise development, skills transfer, community beneficiation and sustainable use of wildlife resources.

The meeting will also see the launch of the Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching (LEAP) project in the SADC region, supported by the German Government. The initiative seeks to strengthen regional cooperation in addressing wildlife crime, recognising that effective law enforcement requires coordinated responses across national borders.

The outcomes of the meeting are expected to inform regional priorities and strengthen collective action towards the effective implementation of the SADC TFCA Programme, with recommendations and commitments to be presented to the SADC TFCA Steering Committee.

Through its hosting of this regional gathering, South Africa reaffirms the importance of collaborative approaches to conserving biodiversity, supporting communities and ensuring that transfrontier conservation areas contribute meaningfully to sustainable development across the SADC region and these will go a long way in strengthening regional cooperation

For media enquiries, please contact Dikeledi Mokgokolo on 082 888 2355 / dmokgokolo@dffe.gov.za

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

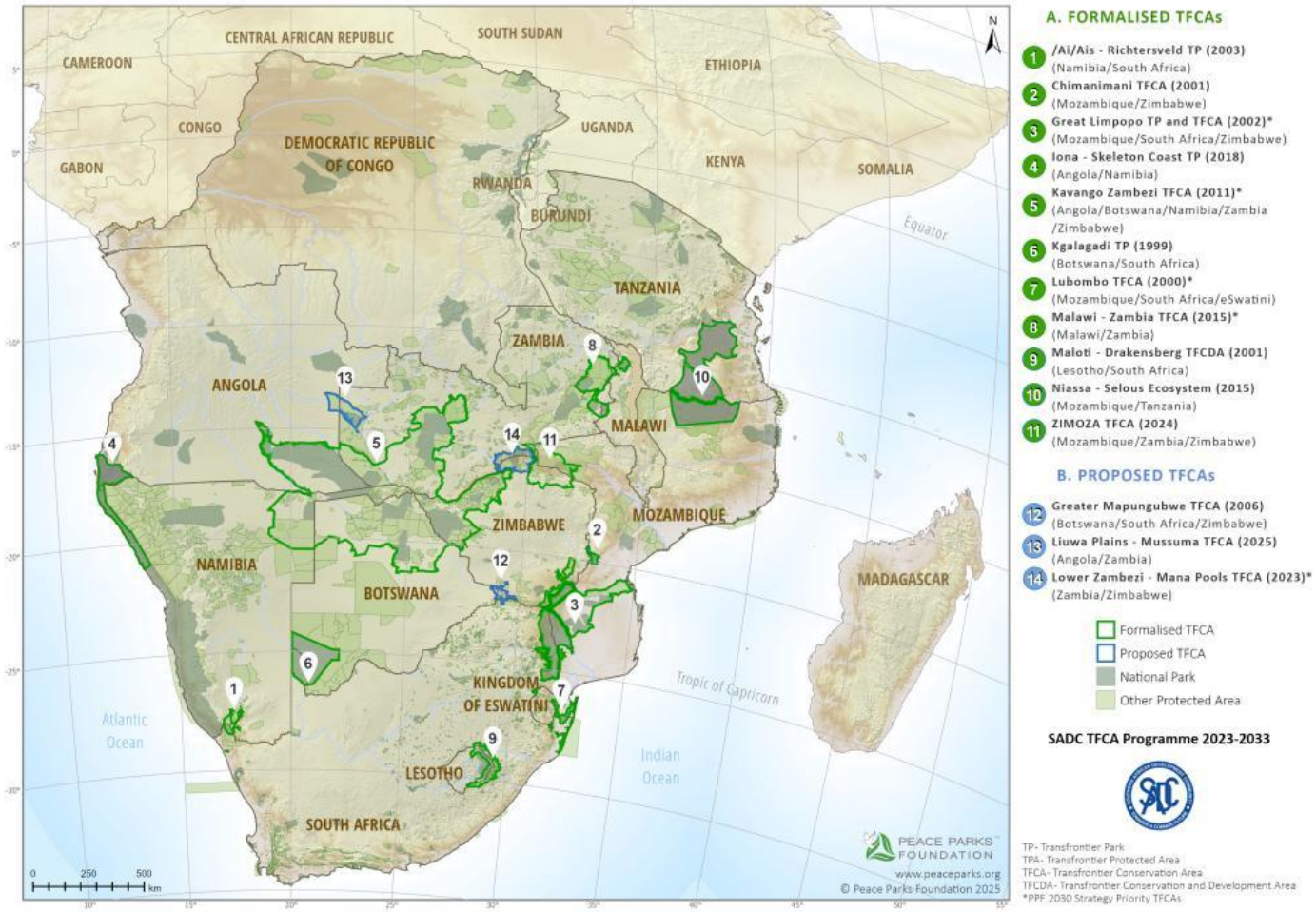
EDITORS NOTE:

Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) in SADC

There are more than 220 Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) around the world, each at different stages of development and implementation. Governments have been working together to create these cross-border conservation areas since the early 1930s. The aim is to connect natural landscapes across country borders, to improve conservation of ecosystems and support peaceful relationships between communities' that are split by political boundaries.

Currently, there are 14 TFCAs in the SADC region, covering both land and marine environments. These TFCAs are all at different stages of development. South Africa is subscribed to 6 TFCAs with their neighboring partner member states, with Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park between South Africa and Botswana being the first to be established in the region in 1999.

SADC TFCAs vary in form. Some are Transfrontier Parks (TPs), made up of two or more connected, formally protected areas—for example, the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park. Others, like the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) TFCA, are more complex and include a mix of land uses such as communal lands, tourism concession areas, and protected areas.



Source: [TFCA Network]

Why TFCAs Matter: The Rationale for the SADC TFCA Programme

A range of regional policies and laws supports the development of TFCAs in SADC. These include:

- The SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement (1999)
- The SADC Protocol on Forestry (2002)
- The SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourses (2002)
- The SADC Regional Biodiversity Strategy (2006)

The Revised SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) also highlights sustainable development, wildlife conservation, and cooperation on shared natural resources as regional priorities. To support this, SADC launched the Programme for Transfrontier Conservation Areas in 2013. This programme was revised in 2023 and now guides TFCA efforts for the period 2023–2033.

TFCAs are seen as important tools for:

- Regional cooperation and integration
- Boosting rural economies

- Protecting shared natural and cultural heritage

The current SADC TFCA Programme (2023–2033) focuses on five main goals:

1. Effective management of shared landscapes and seascapes
2. Improving livelihoods through sustainable use of agriculture, wildlife, fisheries, forestry, tourism, and more
3. Strengthening governance, partnerships, and regional cooperation
4. Securing long-term funding for TFCAs
5. Building skills and knowledge for better decision-making and management

For more information: https://tfcaportal.org/