

Call for proposals for a consultancy to conduct an audit of two border posts and formulate a best-practice guideline and improvement plan for tourist-friendly border post facilities, processes and services for the SADC region.

1. Background

The SADC Common Agenda is the attainment of the SADC Mission to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth to fight poverty and achieve deeper regional cooperation and integration. It aims at ensuring good governance, strengthened regional capacity, and durable peace and security in the region. SADC Secretariat ensures alignment, harmonization and streamlining of operational procedures, rules, and practices in the delivery of development assistance to SADC and guarantees synergies and complementariness of support at the national and regional levels.

To coordinate the development of a sustainable tourism industry in the region and to facilitate the removal of barriers to tourism development and growth, SADC with support from SADC/GIZ Transboundary Use and Protection of Natural Resources (TUPNR) Programme, developed the SADC Tourism Programme 2020-2030 that was approved in 2019. The Programme pursues five core strategic goals with specific programmes and activities to be carried out at international, regional, and national levels in the support of development of Tourism across the region. The five goals of the SADC Tourism Programme 2020-2030 are:

- Goal 1: Stimulating visitor movement and flows to and within the region
- Goal 2: Improving and defending the tourism reputation and image of the region
- Goal 3: Developing tourism in Transfrontier Conservation Areas
- Goal 4: Improving the quality of visitor experiences and satisfaction levels
- Goal 5: Maximising tourism partnerships and collaboration

Improving the tourism friendliness of SADC border posts is a key element of the SADC Tourism Programme 2020-2030 and forms part of activities to be implemented to achieve Goal 1 “Stimulating Visitor Movement and Flows to and within the Region.” Tourism friendly border posts can also contribute to achievement of Goal 2 “Improving and Defending the Tourism Reputation and Image of the Region”; as well as Goal 4 “Improving the Quality of Visitor Experiences and Satisfaction Levels”.

2. Brief Overview of Tourism Friendliness of SADC Border Crossings

Cross-border tourists often travel long distances on tight time frames. In planning a trip and deciding on routings and which countries to include, tourists (especially independent travellers) consider the time and effort required to cross borders and tourist facilities at such crossings. Key tourist border crossings need to provide easy and hassle-free processes and adequate facilities.

While comprehensive data specifically evaluating the tourist friendliness of SADC border crossings is limited from official sources, a brief overview of selected border crossings can be provided based on available information and anecdotal evidence collated using artificial intelligence (AI) programme

ChatGPT. Using “tourist friendliness of SADC border posts” as a prompt, the programme generated the following outputs:

“Beitbridge Border Post (Zimbabwe/South Africa):

Beitbridge serves as the busiest land border crossing in the SADC region, connecting Zimbabwe and South Africa. Due to its high traffic volume, it can be crowded and experience long queues, particularly during peak travel periods. Reports have highlighted delays and inefficient processes, posing challenges for tourists. However, ongoing efforts have been made to enhance infrastructure and streamline operations.

Kazungula Border Post (Botswana/Zambia):

Situated near the Victoria Falls, the Kazungula crossing is a vital link between Botswana and Zambia, attracting tourists to the region. While specific data on tourism friendliness is limited, the border post has recently undergone significant upgrades to improve efficiency and ensure smoother travel. The completion of the Kazungula Bridge has further enhanced connectivity and reduced waiting times.

Lebombo/Ressano Garcia Border Post (South Africa/Mozambique):

The Lebombo/Ressano Garcia border crossing connects South Africa and Mozambique, serving as a popular route for tourists visiting Mozambique's beaches and the Kruger National Park. While congestion can occur during peak travel periods, endeavors have been made to streamline processes and enhance infrastructure. Introduction of e-visas and electronic border clearance systems has contributed to smoother travel experiences.

Victoria Falls Bridge (Zimbabwe/Zambia):

Although not a traditional border crossing, the Victoria Falls Bridge is noteworthy due to its significance for tourism, linking Zimbabwe and Zambia. Immigration and customs procedures are generally efficient, although queues can form during peak tourist seasons. The nearby Kazungula Border Post can serve as an alternative crossing point.

Chirundu Border Post (Zimbabwe/Zambia):

Chirundu is an important crossing between Zimbabwe and Zambia along the Great East Road. While catering to both commercial and tourist traffic, reports suggest that the infrastructure and facilities can be limited. Delays and congestion have been reported, although efforts are being made to improve the situation.

Ngoma Border Post (Botswana/Namibia):

The Ngoma border crossing connects Botswana and Namibia, facilitating travel for tourists visiting Botswana's Chobe National Park and Namibia's Caprivi Strip. While specific data on tourism friendliness is limited, anecdotal evidence suggests that the border crossing generally operates efficiently. However, during peak tourist seasons, increased waiting times may be encountered.

Mananga Border Post (South Africa/Swaziland):

This border crossing connects South Africa and Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) and serves as an essential transit point for tourists traveling between the two countries. Recent upgrades to infrastructure and streamlined processes have enhanced the border post's efficiency. While congestion and delays may occur during peak travel periods, efforts have been made to improve the overall tourism experience.

Ramokgwebana/Plumtree Border Post (Botswana/Zimbabwe):

Located between Botswana and Zimbabwe, this border crossing is frequented by tourists heading to destinations like Victoria Falls and Hwange National Park. The tourism friendliness of the border crossing can vary, with occasional reports of delays and congestion. Nevertheless, infrastructure upgrades and improved processes have been implemented to enhance efficiency and visitor experience.

Nakonde/Tunduma Border Post (Tanzania/Zambia):

Nakonde/Tunduma serves as a key crossing point between Tanzania and Zambia, commonly used by tourists visiting renowned destinations such as the Serengeti and Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and the Victoria Falls in Zambia. Although limited data exists regarding its tourism friendliness, reports suggest that congestion and delays can occur, particularly during peak travel seasons. Adequate planning and allowing for additional travel time are advisable” (ChatGPT, 2023).

It is crucial to note that the tourism friendliness of border crossings can evolve over time due to infrastructure developments, government policies, and staffing levels. A SWOT analysis from the SADC Tourism Programme 2020-2030 notes the following conditions as weaknesses for tourism growth in the region:

- No consistency of visa regimes and costs – Member States have their own policies
- Inconsistency in terms of how regulations are applied, i.e., a lag in implementation of the member state’s own policies at border posts or inconsistent application thereof.
- Cumbersome visa application procedures for many countries
- Lack of collaboration and understanding between tourism and immigration authorities
- Cumbersome cross-border immigration processing, congestion, poor visitor facilities and inconsistent procedures and entry forms at various border posts
- Variety of taxes for moving around in region – inconsistent, poor communication – leads to visitor confusion and reluctance to visit
- Poor service, corruption, and bribery by some immigration officials
- Lack of accurate or inaccurate information on requirements amongst travel trade and travellers.

Tourists are not the only road users affected by challenges at SADC border crossings. The 2022 Annual Report of South Africa’s Cross Border Road Transport Agency (CBRTA), for example, describes challenges that undermine the efficiency of the cross-border road transport industry in SADC as follows:

- **Inadequate road infrastructure** – due to insufficient investment and the absence of road maintenance programmes in some MS, road conditions in the SADC have deteriorated. Currently, missing links along regional road transport corridors and inefficient land borders hinders connectivity and increases distances for cross-border operators and traders;
- **Inefficient border posts** – ineffective border management systems, paper-based systems in some MS, on-site execution of customs clearance procedures (instead of pre- clearance), lack of ICT systems for data exchange and repetitive processes and procedures result in lengthy delays for commercial road transport operators at border posts;

- **Customs documentation and administrative procedures** – the non-standardised of customs rules and procedures at several border posts in the SADC result in excessive time delays at border posts and increased costs for cross-border operators;

The CBRTA Annual Report goes on to indicate that most strategic border posts in the SADC still operate as traditional two-stop border posts. These borders are characterised by several impediments that are documented and well-known. Inadequate approach roads to inland borders, lack of signage, too many stakeholders working in silos, lack of systems integration and misaligned working hours on either side of the border serve as examples of inefficiencies that materialise in lengthy delays at border posts in the region.

The CBRTA report explains that SADC's response to border post inefficiencies lies in the establishment of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs), but laments the fact that, although the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP) released in 2012 prioritises the transformation of 18 traditional (two-stop) borders into OSBPs, to date, only a few borders (e.g. Chirundu, Tunduma/Nakonde and Kazungula) have so far been operationalised as functioning OSBPs.

3. Rationale for the Consultancy

From the review above, there is a lack of consistency with regards to traveller experience at border crossings in the SADC region, which constitutes a major impediment to tourism growth. The rationale for the consultancy, therefore, is to conduct an audit of tourist facilities, services and procedures at two SADC border posts and using the outcomes of the audit to develop a best practice guideline, including a remedial action programme to address shortcomings.

Internal discussions around guidelines and criteria for selecting border posts to target for an audit from a tourism friendliness perspective have suggested the following:

- Select one border involving two countries from the KAZA UniVisa pilot countries (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana)
- Select one border involving two countries from the SADC UniVisa Pilot Countries (Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe)
- There should be no duplication of Member States, i.e., one member state cannot have more than one of its border crossings audited at this stage of the audit
- Member States sharing the selected border posts must indicate their interest in participating in the project
- The selected border post must have high tourism volumes
- There must be an indication of border posts being challenging to cross as a tourist.

Based on the guidelines and criteria outlined above, the SADC border posts identified for possible participation in this project are:

- The Kazungula One Stop Border Post (OSBP) between Botswana and Zimbabwe
- The Kazungula OSBP between Botswana and Zambia
- The Beitbridge Border Post between South Africa and Zimbabwe
- The Lebombo/Ressano Garcia Border Post between South Africa and Mozambique

- The Kosi Bay/Ponta do Oura Border Post between South Africa and Mozambique

Taking into consideration the overview of the tourism friendliness of SADC border crossings in Section 2 above, the following two border posts emerged as the ideal candidates for the audit:

- The Kazungula OSBP between Botswana and Zambia
- The Beitbridge Border Post between South Africa and Zimbabwe

As the review of the Kazungula OSBP in Section 2 above suggests, this crossing is a vital link between Botswana and Zambia, attracting tourists to the region. The facility has recently undergone significant upgrades to improve efficiency and ensure smoother travel. The completion of the Kazungula Bridge has further enhanced connectivity and reduced waiting times. The Kazungula OSBP could, therefore, serve as a model border post for other SADC border posts to emulate.

On the other hand, Beitbridge Border Post, the busiest land border crossing in the SADC region, connecting Zimbabwe and South Africa, is known to be a challenging border post. Due to its high traffic volume, Beitbridge Border Post can be crowded and experiences long queues, particularly during peak travel periods. Reports have highlighted delays and inefficient processes, posing challenges for tourists. However, ongoing efforts have been made to enhance infrastructure and streamline operations, particularly on the Zimbabwe side with the recently completed USD300M border redevelopment project by Zimborders.

Recent infrastructure improvements of the Zimbabwe side of the Beitbridge Border notwithstanding, recommendations emanating from this audit project could still contribute to enhancing and improving the tourist-friendliness of this border post, on both the Zimbabwe and South Africa sides.

It is against the rationale above that the SADC-GIZ Climate Resilience Natural Resource Management (C-NRM) programme is looking to appoint a consultancy firm (hereafter called “The Consultant”) to conduct an audit of the **Kazungula OSBP between Botswana and Zambia** and the **Beitbridge Border Post between South Africa and Zimbabwe** and formulate a best-practice guideline for tourist-friendly border post facilities, processes, and services. A benchmarking of border post conditions in high quality, comparable countries will contribute greatly to the formulation of best-practice guidelines.

4. Tasks/Deliverables for The Consultant

The tasks and deliverables of the consultancy are described in the following table. The responsible units for this project/consultancy are the Tourism Coordinating Unit (TCU) of the SADC FANR (Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources) Directorate, the SADC Infrastructure Directorate, and the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security.

Conduct an audit of Kazungula and Beitbridge border posts to formulate guidelines and design examples of minimum standards for tourist-friendly border post facilities, processes and services for SADC Border Posts		
Activity	Due by	Expert Days

<p>1. Prepare an inception report on how the assignment will be conducted, including a list of stakeholders to be consulted (Participating Member States departments, ministries, or agencies responsible for immigration and borders; Participating Member States departments, ministries, agencies responsible for cross-border transport, infrastructure; Participating Member States departments, ministries, agencies responsible for cross-border trade; Participating Member States departments, ministries, agencies responsible for tourism; Participating Member States departments, ministries, agencies responsible for health; other relevant stakeholders such as cross border traders).</p> <p>The Inception Report should outline the structure of the assignment and the methodological approach, including a comprehensive situational review of SADC border posts tourist friendliness, benchmarked against best practice (from a comparable country/region). The Inception Report must provide timelines for the audit, the development of guidelines and design examples of minimum standards for tourist-friendly border post facilities, processes and services for SADC region. Finally, the Inception Report should include a personnel concept indicating the key-experts who will be working on the project and their qualifications and experiences.</p>	<p>Within 2 weeks of signing contract</p>	<p>5 days</p>
<p>2. Present the Inception Report to a virtual Inception Meeting chaired by SADC Secretariat and agree upon the logistical arrangements necessary for implementation of the assignment. SADC Secretariat in close collaboration with Member States will determine who will attend the Inception Meeting.</p>	<p>Within 3 weeks of signing contract</p>	<p>1 day</p>
<p>3. In collaboration with Member States and with the support of the relevant units within SADC Secretariat, other relevant regional agencies and stakeholders, formulate an approach for auditing the Kazungula OSBP between Botswana and Zambia and Beitbridge Border Post between South African and Zimbabwe. Based on the audit results, and the benchmarking against international or regional best practice, develop a best-practice guideline and design minimum standards for tourist-friendly border post facilities, processes, and services for SADC. The development of the best-practice guideline and design examples, which must be benchmarked against border post conditions in high quality and comparable countries, could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possibilities and conditions for shared premises and 	<p>Within 8 to 11 weeks of signing contract</p>	<p>15 days</p>

<p>“one stop” border posts and no stop border posts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tourist facilities and services - Procedures, forms, technologies employed by immigration officials - Consistent queuing policy for foreign and regional residents - Effective information and signage for travellers - Immigration officials’ conduct and speed of operation - Ongoing training for immigration officials - Possibilities for the deployment of tourism monitors to help guide the tourism flow - Health checking procedures and facilities - Integration of border management systems to facilitate electronic data interchange, sharing of intelligence and paperless transactions for tourists - Any other relevant aspects of border operations and management, including an assessment of the Coordinated Border Management system with respect to facilitating the movement of tourists. 		
<p>4. Based on the guidelines and design examples of minimum standards for tourist-friendly border posts, prepare a remedial action plan to be piloted at the Beitbridge Border Post between South Africa and Zimbabwe. The aim of the pilot is to address shortcomings and improve the tourist friendliness of the identified border post. The remedial action plan should include budgets and timeframes and a monitoring and evaluation framework to determine success. If proven successful, and dependent on resource availability, the border post improvement plan will be extended to other SADC border posts within a timeframe to be determined by the Member States.</p>		12 days
<p>5. Present the findings of the Audit, the guidelines, and the design examples of minimum standards for tourist-friendly border post facilities, processes and services for SADC at the Joint Immigration Implementation Committee or a suitable forum and promote adherence and improvements by Member States.</p>	Within 11 to 12 weeks of signing contract	2 days
Total Expert Days		35 days

6. Duty station and travel

The consultancy firm will work from its home base and will be expected to make its own logistical arrangements if travel is required. The proposed maximum cost for travel should be included in the financial bid and will be reimbursed upon presentation of proof of travel.

7. Deliverables

- Inception Report which includes a roadmap and annotated structure of the approach to the study
- A first draft of the Border Posts Audit Report (Kazungula and Beitbridge Border Posts), including the best practice guidelines and the design examples of minimum standards for tourist friendly borders, to be presented at a consultative meeting of the relevant Member States and regional stakeholders to be called by SADC Secretariat and to be facilitated by the Consultant
- A Final draft of the border posts audit report, the best practice guidelines and the design examples of tourist friendly border post facilities, processes, and services incorporating feedback and inputs from the consultative meeting of relevant SADC Member States and regional stakeholders (including trade involved in cross-border travel)
- Based on the final draft of the audit report, a Remedial Action Plan for improving the tourist friendliness of SADC border posts facilities, processes, and services with suggested budgets, and timelines for implementation by Member States
- A PowerPoint presentation with the main highlights of the Audit Report as well as the Improvement Plan with suggested timelines and budget to be submitted to SADC Secretariat and GIZ for communication, advocacy, and resource mobilisation purposes.

8. Time schedule and period of the consultancy

The consultant will work for up to 35 days spread over a period of four months, starting from the date of signing the consultancy contract, to complete the tasks and deliverables described in Section 5 above.

9. Reporting

The selected consultant will report to the SADC Secretariat's Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Directorate through the Senior Programme Officer: Tourism Coordination Unit (TCU). Output documents of this assignment will be submitted in English and in electronic format.

10. Qualifications and expertise

Performing an audit of the tourism friendliness of an international border post and proposing improvements requires a combination of skills and expertise. The successful consultancy firm will need to have the following mix of skills and experience to be able to perform the task at hand:

1. **Knowledge of Tourism Industry:** A thorough understanding of the tourism industry, its dynamics, trends, and customer expectations is essential. Familiarity with the specific requirements and challenges related to international border crossings for tourists is crucial.
2. **Audit and Assessment Skills:** Proficiency in conducting audits and assessments is important to evaluate the existing facilities, processes, and services at the targeted border posts. This includes developing audit frameworks, collecting relevant data, analyzing findings, and identifying areas for improvement.
3. **Research and Analytical Skills:** The ability to gather and analyze data, statistics, and information related to the border post's tourism friendliness is crucial. This involves conducting surveys,

studying traveller feedback, examining best practices in other border posts, and identifying trends and patterns.

4. **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** Effective communication skills are necessary to interact with stakeholders at the border post, including immigration authorities, customs officers, security personnel, and health officials. The auditor should be able to build rapport, gather insights, and convey recommendations clearly and persuasively.
5. **Cross-cultural Competence:** Dealing with international border posts requires sensitivity to different cultures, customs, and languages. Understanding the needs and preferences of tourists from various countries and regions is important for proposing improvements that cater to diverse traveller profiles.
6. **Knowledge of Regulatory Requirements:** Familiarity with relevant regulations, policies, and legal frameworks related to border management and tourism is essential. This includes understanding visa processes, security protocols, health and safety regulations, and other compliance requirements.
7. **Problem-solving and Critical Thinking:** The ability to identify challenges, analyze root causes, and propose innovative solutions is crucial for enhancing the tourism friendliness of a border post. This involves thinking strategically, considering multiple perspectives, and addressing complex issues effectively.
8. **Project Management Skills:** To implement improvements, project management skills are valuable. This includes developing action plans, setting timelines, coordinating with different stakeholders, monitoring progress, and ensuring the proposed changes are successfully implemented.
9. **Knowledge of Technology and Infrastructure:** Understanding the role of technology in border management and familiarity with relevant infrastructure requirements (such as signage, information systems, queue management, etc.) can help identify areas where technological solutions can enhance tourism friendliness.
10. **Adaptability and Flexibility:** The ability to adapt to different environments, work in diverse settings, and adjust audit methodologies based on specific border post characteristics is important for conducting effective audits.

The skills above, along with experience and expertise in auditing, tourism, and border management, will form an important component of the assessment of bids. Bidding firms must be resident in the SADC region, and must possess an excellent command of the English language. Portuguese and/or French will be an advantage.

10. Confidentiality

The consultant shall comply with GIZ Terms of Contract and shall be mindful of its duty of loyalty and confidentiality connected to this contractual relationship.

11. Procurement procedure

Candidates must submit the following documentation in English:

- Proposal (not exceeding 5 pages in total) which includes information on how the firm's qualifications and experience match the requirements of this project. The proposal should be inclusive of a methodology and road map that includes timelines;
- Resume of the Lead Consultant;
- Company Profile;
- Contact details of two previous clients for reference purposes; and
- Financial proposal based on the set number of days at a specified rate per day. The financial proposal MUST be submitted as a separate document.

Applications should be sent by email by no later than **Monday 16 October 2023** to the following email address: rorly.sherwen@afci.de. The selection procedure will be done based on the documents submitted.