



PRESS RELEASE

KAZA launches Regenerative Nature-Based Tourism Initiative in Maun to strengthen conservation and sustainable livelihoods

24 September 2026 | Maun, Botswana - The Kavango Zambezi Trans Frontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA), in partnership with the European Union and the German Government, has officially launched the Joint Action on Regenerative Nature-Based Tourism (R-NBT) during the Regional Stakeholder Roundtable taking place from 22-24 September 2026 in Maun, Botswana.

The initiative aims to strengthen regenerative, inclusive and competitive nature-based tourism across the KAZA landscape by supporting Micro, Small and Medium tourism Enterprises (MSMEs), particularly businesses led by women, youth and communities living near protected areas. It will provide support through capacity building, access to finance, business development, and stronger market integration.

Covering Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, KAZA is the world's largest terrestrial transfrontier conservation landscape. The launch reinforces a shared commitment to ensuring that tourism not only protects biodiversity, but also creates jobs, strengthens local businesses, and delivers greater benefits for communities across the region.

The initiative forms part of Germany's and the European Union's broader support to the SADC Tourism Programme, which promotes sustainable and inclusive tourism development across Southern Africa. Through this cooperation, SADC Member States are supported in strengthening regional tourism integration, improving the enabling environment for tourism businesses and unlocking the economic potential of the region's rich natural and cultural assets.

Speaking at the launch, Hon. Wynter Boipuso Mmolotsi, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Botswana, represented by Mr Charles Kabo Mojalemotho, Acting Deputy Permanent Secretary, said: "Regenerative tourism is about ensuring that tourism growth strengthens the nature and communities it depends on. Through this initiative, we want to build more resilient and competitive local enterprises while ensuring that the benefits of nature-based tourism reach communities and MSMEs across the KAZA landscape."

"We are especially encouraged by the project's focus on women-led, youth-led and community-based enterprises. By investing in these businesses, we are investing directly in the resilience and prosperity of the KAZA landscape," said Dr Nyambe Nyambe, Executive Director of the KAZA Secretariat.





Speaking at the launch, Simone Goertz, Head of Economic and Development Cooperation, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany to Botswana said: "Today's launch is not the beginning of a conversation; it is the next step in a long-standing partnership. Germany's cooperation with KAZA reaches far beyond tourism, bringing together transboundary natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, climate resilience and sustainable economic development. Nature-based tourism has long been recognised as a driver of sustainable development. But the challenge before us now is greater: it is not only to sustain what exists, but to regenerate the systems on which tourism depends. This means strengthening ecological, social and economic systems together."

Fahari Marwa, Director, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), SADC Secretariat, added: "The ambition is simple: tourism should not merely take from nature; it should give back. Let this initiative mark a shift from tourism that uses nature to tourism that restores nature, from communities at the margins to communities at the centre, and from short-term gains to long-term resilience and shared prosperity."

Catalin Gherman, Head of Partnerships at the EU Delegation to Botswana and SADC highlighted that "The EU, through its Global Gateway Strategy and NaturAfrica provides overarching support around landscapes that are crucial for conservation and human development, targeted to boost job creation and improve security and livelihoods while also protecting ecosystems and biodiversity. He added that "changing global tourism markets increasingly reward businesses that demonstrate positive environmental and social impact, positioning KAZA as a model for sustainable tourism in Southern Africa. To create real opportunities at the local level, it is important to particularly focus on micro and small enterprises and to strengthen the enabling business environment."

The Regional Stakeholder Roundtable brings together representatives from the five KAZA Partner States, the SADC Secretariat, financial institutions, private sector stakeholders, conservation organisations and MSMEs to validate tourism value chain findings and jointly shape implementation priorities for the programme.

This Joint Action component on R-NBT is funded by the Federal Republic of Germany and the European Union and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, in partnership with the KAZA Secretariat and SADC Secretariat. It forms part of a broader Multi-Partner Contribution Agreement promoting regenerative nature-based tourism also in Colombia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Implemented by:





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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 transformed into SADC in August 1992. SADC's mission is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through 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 global 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.

KAZA TFCA in Brief

The Kavango Zambezi Trans Frontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA), spanning approximately 520,000 km², is a partnership of the Governments of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. This ambitious conservation, development, and tourism initiative lies within the Okavango and Zambezi river basins. It operates as an official SADC programme, uniting five nations under a shared vision of regional cooperation in transboundary conservation and sustainable development.

Germany in Brief

Germany has been a longstanding partner in Southern Africa's regional integration agenda, with development cooperation dating back to 1961. Since 1985, 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 support towards sustainable management of transboundary natural resources and climate resilience. Germany supports mitigating human-wild life conflicts and sustainable tourism as economic opportunities. Germany has supported KAZA since 2009 with over 40 million Euros. Germany has committed over 50 million Euros to the TFCA Financing Facilities. Through the R-NBT initiative, Germany supports KAZA in strengthening regenerative tourism, improving MSME competitiveness, expanding access to finance and creating inclusive economic opportunities for local communities.

European Union in Brief

EU's Global Gateway strategy promotes, amongst others, sustainable investment in green and resilient infrastructure, strengthens local value chains, and fosters inclusive economic growth. Nature-based tourism contributes directly to these objectives by supporting livelihoods, regenerating ecosystems, and enhancing climate resilience in and around protected areas. Implemented where possible in a Team Europa approach, the global Gateway flagship programme Naturafrica, with a SADC region budget of EUR 33 million, is the overarching programme structuring support around landscapes that are crucial for conservation and human development, targeted to boost job creation and improve security and livelihoods while also protecting ecosystems and biodiversity.

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