

CASE STUDY 05

SADC Univisa: Why the Lack of Progress?

Problem description

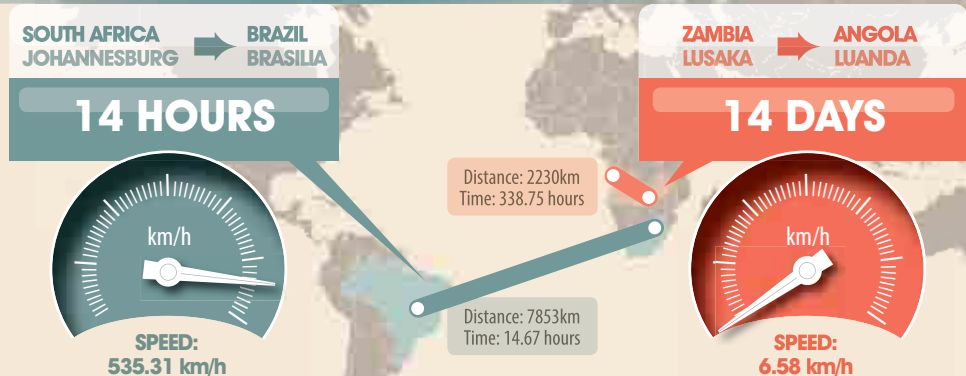
The tourism industry is a very important growth sector in Southern Africa, especially as it can create numerous direct and indirect jobs in various sectors and thereby contribute to poverty alleviation and economic development. The UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) argues that tourism contributes to sustainable development and targets poor communities otherwise left out of economic activity given distances to markets and poor resources.

HOW CLOSE ARE OUR SADC NEIGHBOURS?

R&B REGIONAL BUSINESS BARRIERS
UNLOCKING ECONOMIC POTENTIAL
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

TIME TO TRAVEL

How long does it take to travel from Zambia to neighbouring Angola?
How about from South Africa across the Atlantic Ocean to Brazil?
(Time is calculated as flying time plus visa processing time)



VISA MATRIX FOR SADC COUNTRIES

Do you need a visa?
When you don't need a visa, how long can you stay?

	TRAVELLING TO...														
	Angola	Botswana	DRC	Lesotho	Madagascar	Malawi	Mauritius	Mozambique	Namibia	Seychelles	South Africa	Swaziland	Tanzania	Zambia	Zimbabwe
CITIZENS OF...	Angola	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Botswana	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	DRC	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Lesotho	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Madagascar	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Malawi	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Mauritius	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Mozambique	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Namibia	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Seychelles	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	South Africa	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Swaziland	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Tanzania	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Zambia	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED
	Zimbabwe	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED	VISA REQUIRED

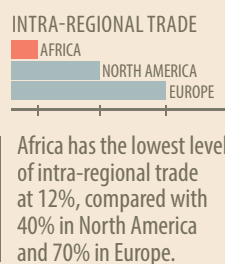
HOW DOES SADC COMPARE TO OTHER REGIONS?

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) produces an "openness to tourism scale" which gives regions a score out of 100 based on the ease of getting a visa. The higher the score, the easier it is to get a visa.



IMPACT?

According to the UNWTO, visa policies are among the most important governmental formality to influence international tourism. Tourism contributed 8.9% to Africa's GDP and 5.8% to SADC's GDP on average. The introduction of a SADC uni-visa would allow international and regional entry and travel of visitors to occur much more smoothly, boosting tourism in Southern Africa and adding an estimated 3-5% more annual growth. It would also allow business travel to occur more easily, boosting intra-regional trade.



SOLUTION?

SADC's Protocol on the Development of Tourism, signed in 1998, creates the provision for a uni-visa for the region. This would allow foreign tourists and business people to move easily between SADC states, especially within the Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs). Despite many calls for its introduction, little progress has been made in implementing the uni-visa.



Tourism's ability to contribute to development is based on its potential for diversification, the opportunity for the poor to sell their produce and services directly to tourists, and its labour intensiveness. In South Africa, tourism accounts for around 4% of direct employment. According to the World Council on Travel and Tourism, tourism contributed an average of 8.9% to Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) and 1 in 14 jobs.

In SADC it contributed 5.8% to GDP in 2013. For island states such as the Seychelles and Mauritius, tourism contributes between 30 and 50% of GDP.¹

According to the UNWTO, 'visa policies are among the most important governmental formalities influencing international tourism. The development of policies and procedures for visas ... is closely linked to the development of tourism. With the swift growth of international tourism in the last six decades, the quality, reliability, and functionality of visa and other travel documents has evolved.'² However, in the same study, the UNWTO points out that Southern Africa is lagging in terms of opening up its visa regulations and scores only 29/100 in an 'openness to tourism' scale. None of the Southern African states has implemented an e-visa and only a few Southern African states offer visas upon arrival. This is in contrast to East Africa, which scores 49/100, offers visas upon arrival to most tourists and launched a Univisa for Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda in 2014.³ Mozambique has also made great strides in opening up its visa process.

Table 1: Travel and tourism contribution to the SADC economy

Country	Receipts 2013 (billion)	Contribution to GDP %	Contribution to employment %*
Angola	\$5.0	3.4%	3.6%
Botswana	\$1.7	8.4%	9.9%
DRC	\$0.5	2.2%	1.8%
Lesotho	\$0.3	11.7%	10.0%
Malawi	\$0.4	8.9%	7.6%
Mauritius	\$3.0	25.3%	23.9%
Mozambique	\$1.1	7.6%	6.4%
Namibia	\$1.6	14.8%	19.4%
Seychelles	\$0.6	56.6%	56.0%
South Africa	\$33.4	9.5%	10.1%

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- 1 WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council), *Travel and Tourism: Economic Impact 2014, Africa*, 2014.
 - 2 Glaesser D & J Kester, *UNWTO Visa Facilitation: Growth and Development through Tourism*, 2013, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/TTCR/2013/TTCR_Chapter1.3_2013.pdf.
 - 3 Other regions that do offer Univisas permanently or for a specific sporting event include the Schengen states, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations region, the Caribbean Community for the Cricket World Cup and Central America with its Central American Single Visa.

Country	Receipts 2013 (billion)	Contribution to GDP %	Contribution to employment %*
Swaziland	\$0.2	4.8%	4.2%
Tanzania	\$4.0	12.9%	11.2%
Zambia	\$1.1	5.2%	3.6%
Zimbabwe	\$0.9	11.4%	8.2%

* These figures include all induced jobs as well as direct jobs.

Source: *Travel and Tourism: Economic Impact 2014, Africa*, World Travel and Tourism Council

In an effort to attract more tourists to Southern Africa and to market SADC as a tourism destination on a regional scale, SADC member states signed the Protocol on the Development of Tourism in 1998. The protocol made provision for a Univisa for the region, which would allow visitors' international and regional entry and travel to occur smoothly, with an operational date set for 2002. The Univisa would allow foreign tourists to move between SADC states, especially within the transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs), and it is estimated that the SADC tourism industry should see an annual growth rate of between 3–5%,⁴ although the effects will be felt more in some member states than in others.

Proponents of tourism development, including the Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (Retosa), have called for a special focus on the industry in the SADC services negotiations in order to set industry standards in the region and ensure reliable and secure service delivery. This should be accompanied by tourism education.⁵

The SADC Univisa Working Group's work is ongoing and aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Univisa system by the pilot group of countries (Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Angola, Lesotho, South Africa and Zimbabwe). Activities completed by the group include the following:

- harmonisation of rules, regulations, and operational procedures;
- budget allocation/resources mobilisation;
- information and communications technologies procurement; and
- administration and corporate communications (marketing of the concept to overseas embassies and agreement on a revenue-sharing model).

Despite the working group's efforts to determine the feasibility of the Univisa and its advocacy by organisations such as Retosa, little progress has been made recently. In the

4 GRF Tourismusplanung, SADC Univisa: An Economic Case Study, 2010 prepared on behalf of Retosa and circulated to author in unpublished format.

5 SADC, GFA Consulting Group, *Liberalisation of Trade in Tourism Services*, (STE Report), 31 July 2013, https://tis.sadc.int/files/8613/8432/6244/Study_Report-Tourism_Services_in_the_SADC_Region_-_20.10.13.pdf.

absence of the region-wide Univisa, some member states with transfrontier parks have made internal bilateral or trilateral agreements to allow tourists to clear customs in one country and move freely within the park and across the national borders of participating countries without additional visa procedures, as long as the tourists exit via the same entry point. Although bilateral agreements between member states have resulted in the general liberalisation of visa regimes for SADC citizens, this is not comparable to the expected benefits of a Univisa.

Very few studies model the impact of visa regime change on tourism receipts. However, a recent study done for the EU on the Schengen visa regime shows that relaxing the visa regime for visitors from just five countries could result in a EUR⁶ 130 billion direct spend increase within the Schengen area.⁷ Although the study focus is clearly on the cumbersome application process for a Schengen visa, the study does point out that unfavourable visa regimes can have a significant inhibiting impact on tourism.

Political economy analysis

A political economy analysis of the lack in progress in establishing a SADC Univisa and the exclusion of local tour operators from the process should focus on the 'rules of the game' in terms of the governing structures of the visa process. A number of state departments have an interest in formal visa application processes and first among these are foreign affairs, home affairs and security agencies.

Although the benefits of tourism are clear and there is general agreement that a Univisa would boost tourism flows to the region, civil servants stationed at embassies and within the home affairs departments that manage and implement visas have had little or no exposure to the benefits of tourism. Their primary concern is safety and security. Recent moves by South Africa requiring biometric data for all visa applications and for parents to travel with their children's full birth certificates show that security concerns over the movement of terrorists and child traffickers have become paramount. In effect, there is little drive and few advocates encouraging civil servants to think differently about tourist visas without seeming 'slack' about security measures.

In South Africa, the Department of Environmental Affairs has an official dedicated to promoting Southern Africa as a tourism investment destination under the 'Boundless Southern Africa' brand, involving eight other SADC countries with TFCAs. The official and her counterparts in other SADC countries have also lobbied for the SADC Univisa, but thus far their impact has been limited.

⁶ EUR is the three-letter currency code for the European Union euro.

⁷ European Commission, DG Enterprise and Industry, *Study on the Economic Impact of Short-Stay Visa Facilitation on the Tourism Industry and on the Overall Economies of EU Member States Being Part of the Schengen Area*, August 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/visas_study_2013/final_report__visa_facilitation_en.pdf.

The ultimate beneficiaries of a Univisa would be those communities that are poor and excluded from economic activity and traditionally have no voice in political economy processes. Retosa seems unable to drive the process, despite its advocacy efforts through commissioned studies. This could be due to the fact that its political status is lower than that of the security clusters. Progress in the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) TFCA in promoting a single visa for visitors has been more effective in drawing attention to the lack of SADC-wide progress. The KAZA TFCA will soon launch a pilot Univisa for the five participating member countries.

Tourism boosts GDP and employment figures, and should be championed by the various ministries responsible for economic growth and tourism. However, their interests clash with those of the revenue authorities, which have an interest in maintaining visa fees that contribute to the national coffers, and security and immigration ministries, which have traditionally used visa control to stem the flow of illegal immigrants and fight cross-border crime. Security concerns will always trump economic and tourism interests within the political economy context. Again, few studies have examined the impact of strict visa control on national security, but some work has been done in this regard in the US after the 9/11 tightening of visa controls and on the impact of the Schengen visa on European security. These could be used to illuminate the alternatives to visas and the options available to SADC member states. Further surveys of tourism companies and private sector associations could add voice to the work already done by Retosa in order to boost its advocacy campaigns.

A regional Univisa will also require extensive co-operation among neighbouring countries at various bureaucratic levels, including revenue authorities, embassies and border control, and within regional policing efforts. Thus far, bureaucratic co-operation in SADC has been weak in the absence of political will to drive such co-operation.

Box 1: Business visas

Travel for business purposes is treated differently to travel for leisure, with some countries actively seeking out such business travellers by relaxing entry requirements for them and others charging a higher visa fee, seeking to benefit financially from the business community. In Southern Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Malawi and Tanzania offer business visas on arrival for foreign business travellers visiting the SADC region.

Angola is by far the most difficult country for which to secure a business visa. A number of cumbersome and costly requirements have to be completed before travelling, and this is compounded by the confusion over where visas can be applied for and a lack of resources at visa processing centres. The processing fee for an Angolan business visa is about ZAR⁸ 1,000 (\$100). The authorities require a personal interview with the

8 ZAR is the three-letter currency code for the South African rand.

traveller, sometimes in Johannesburg and sometimes in Pretoria, in order to collect biometric data. The traveller's passport is held for up to two weeks, preventing other travel during this time. Language is an additional barrier, as Angolan visas are printed in Portuguese and all non-Portuguese documents have to be translated. These delays are compounded by a lack of resources and poor management – severe delays have been caused by a shortage of visa stickers at the visa-processing centre.

The situation is similar for the DRC, which also requires foreign travellers to secure a business visa. In addition to biometric data, business travellers need a letter of invitation from the host company in the DRC. The visa-processing fee is slightly lower at ZAR 750 (\$75), but cash payments are not allowed. This means that travellers have to go to the bank and secure a cheque, incurring additional cheque fees.

South Africa and Mozambique also require business visas to be processed before arrival, but this process is far easier and more efficient than in the Angolan and DRC cases. There is, however, some confusion about the requirements for Mozambique, with some travellers being able to secure a business visa on arrival when they were told by other sources that this would not be possible.

The way forward

Tourism's unique potential to contribute to the region's economic development should receive much greater attention at various levels, from the media to cabinet meetings and regional summits. The South African Institute of International Affairs will take an in-depth look at the process within the KAZA TFCA to find lessons for the broader SADC community. Research and exposure to data on the benefits of visas on arrival and e-visas could also encourage those SADC officials using the KAZA case as a model to move the SADC process along towards implementing the Univisa. The special dispensation necessary for local tour operators should also be highlighted. A starting point could be to escalate ongoing work within various TFCAs, where civil servants across numerous disciplines are already co-operating effectively. A process of lesson learning from and within the wildlife parks could heighten awareness of and create impetus to introduce the Univisa.

In the interim, while the Univisa is being finalised, it would be useful to develop alternatives to the Univisa. For example, joint research by the UNWTO and the World Travel & Tourism Council, presented to the 4th T20 Tourism Ministers' Meeting in May 2012, demonstrated that improving visa processes alone could generate an additional \$206 billion in tourism receipts and create as many as 5.1 million jobs by 2015 in the G-20 economies. The analysis identified five important areas of opportunity for entry visa facilitation: delivery of information, current processes, differentiated treatment, the use of e-visa programmes, and regional agreements. The first four could be implemented as interim measures in the pre-Univisa period.

Closer co-operation with the TFCA governing bodies and the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF), a non-governmental organisation that is deeply involved in the TFCAs' establishment and management, could also produce some results, given the funding constraints cited by many civil servants. PPF, with its strong private sector funding base, has been able to help overcome numerous obstacles in the establishment of the TFCAs and would be a natural champion of the Univisa.



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