

STRATEGIC PLAN



SOUTHERN AFRICAN COUNCIL
OF
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

2023 - 2026



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Executive Summary

VISION

An integrated regional community characterised by meaningful people's participation in all aspects of development; commitment to eradicating poverty; ensuring peace, democracy, good governance and constitutionally protected human rights; and, respecting the values and identity of each member of the community.

MISSION

To empower businesses with cutting-edge digital marketing tools and strategies, enabling them to achieve their marketing goals and stay ahead in the competitive landscape.

VALUES

- People-centred development and integration;
- Transparency and accountability;
- Integrity;
- Respect for human rights;
- Democratic governance;
- People's self-determination and right to participate in issues that affect them, and;
- Gender equality and equity.

STRATEGIC GOAL

The overall goal for the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan is to strengthen meaningful civil society participation in key aspects of regional development for post COVID-19 economic recovery, poverty eradication, peace, democracy, good governance, and the respect of human rights in constitutionally protected environments.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. By 2026, SAf-CNGO has contributed to the promotion of democracy, peace, and good governance in SADC and beyond in line with national, regional, and continental instruments.
2. By 2026, SAf-CNGO has strengthened and consolidated its Public Policy Research and Advocacy in the region for poverty reduction and sustainable development programmes at regional and national levels.
3. By 2026, SAf-CNGO members and civil society partners have strengthened their partnership and networks for influencing SADC Member States towards inclusive, equitable and people-centred regional integration and development.
4. By 2026, SAf-CNGO engagement on SADC programmes is institutionalized, and coordinated in order to fulfil objectives contemplated by Articles 16a, 5 (2b), 21 & 23 of the SADC Treaty.
5. By 2026, SAf-CNGO institutional capacity is strengthened for effective facilitation and coordination of its members.

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

The Southern African Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (SAf-CNGO), formerly SADC-CNGO, is a regional umbrella body of national associations of civil society organizations operating in all the Member States of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). SAf-CNGO was formed in 1998 and is headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. The organization was established in line with the fundamental provisions of Articles 16A, 5(2b), 21, and 23 of the SADC Treaty, whereby SADC Member States pledge their solemn commitment to, inter-alia, involve fully the peoples of the region and key stakeholders, including the civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in the process of regional integration, cooperation, and support for the initiatives of the peoples of the region and key stakeholders, contributing to the fostering of closer relations amongst the communities, associations and peoples of the region; The SAf-CNGO exists to facilitate effective and meaningful engagement between civil society in the region and SADC institutions at both national and regional levels, governments in member states, as well as other strategic partners and stakeholders in the work of regional development and integration.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

SAf-CNGO encountered a series of formidable challenges during the quinquennial period spanning from 2019 to 2023. This period, notably exacerbated by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, was marked by a discernible decline in institutional support and a dearth of financial resources. Consequently, these constraints impeded our operational efficacy, resulting in the accrual of debts and an inadequate level of engagement with our national-level members. Moreover, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been compelled to grapple with the rapid contraction of the policy and civic space, alongside intensified competition for resources emanating from other civil society organizations and international non-governmental organizations. The pre-existing challenges that our organization had been confronting were further compounded by the pandemic's impact. Nonetheless, it is worth acknowledging that SAf-CNGO has managed to persevere, albeit under constrained financial circumstances for our activities. This resilience has been made possible through the invaluable support of benevolent organizations that have enabled us to sustain our presence and maintain visibility within the realm of our operations. It is our enduring commitment to serve as a dedicated and strategic partner within the region, steadfastly upholding our position as the preeminent apex body within the civil society and non-state actor sphere in the SADC region. SAf-CNGO draws its strength from the collective capabilities of our members, whose influence extends from the national level to the subnational and community tiers, facilitating the effective engagement of ordinary citizens in matters that directly impact their lives and the broader development landscape. In light of this context, SAf-CNGO has meticulously crafted this strategic plan as a comprehensive three-year intervention strategy. This strategy aims to fortify and consolidate our position in the facilitation of civil society engagement within the SADC integration and development processes, Pan-African development initiatives, and the broader global development landscape.

STRATEGIC VISION

As SAF-CNGO progresses towards formulating sustainable and enduring strategies aimed at, not only effectively servicing its members, but also establishing a robust organisational sustainability framework; it becomes highly imperative to strengthen its influence-building capacities, while concurrently enhancing the harmonization of its coordination mechanisms, reinforcing support structures for our membership base, as well as fostering and revitalising strategic partnerships. As such, intensifying this focus in the next three years from 2023-2026 is key. Unarguably, collective capacity development through the establishment and application of learning curves in SAF-CNGO to enhance influencing competencies holds great promise for a hugely rewarding outcome. A foundational principle for this endeavour is to anchor the capacity development programme firmly upon the findings of a membership capacity needs assessment exercise, so as to align the development of the programme with the specific needs and requirements of the members. This strategic approach would engender a more efficacious and prosperous trajectory for our capacity enhancement initiatives. It is an undeniable imperative for SAF-CNGO, operating within the dynamic environment of a rapidly changing world, to adopt an unwavering commitment to continuous learning. The aptitude and appetite of both individuals and groups constituting the "SAF-CNGO family," for continuous learning, is therefore crucial for organisational success, particularly as the organisation operates within a context that demands the delivery of transformational impacts in all developmental undertakings, especially in the post COVID-19 pandemic era. Within the purview of this proposed strategic plan, for the 2023-2026 period, the strategic imperatives in cultivating enhanced influencing capacity in SAF-CNGO will therefore include:

- Strengthening social mobilisation and organising capacity.
- Forming strategic partnerships with external like-minded institutions and individuals, especially within the thematic networks, intergovernmental organisations, pan-African organisations, SADC secretariat, and apex alliances, will not only be instrumental for building influencing capacity, but also for achieving impact.
- Improving coordination and harmonisation between the regional and national programmes within the identified priority areas will help to strengthen SAF-CNGO's capacities on influencing.

It is important for SAF-CNGO to be cognizant of the many challenges that beset its members and have the capacity to compromise their involvement, participation, and contribution to the development and/or influencing efforts. These include: restrictive policy and legal framework; targeted attacks, especially on human rights groups; restriction of fundamental freedoms of expression, association and assembly; lack of trust between civil society organisations and national governments; declining levels of funding to civil society organisations; and competition for visibility and resources which tends to negatively affect coordinated engagements.

STRATEGIC PATHWAYS: THEORY OF CHANGE

In order to achieve its strategic objectives, SAf-CNGO will focus on three Strategic Objectives, with a respective set of strategic interventions. These will be achieved through further defining and implementing a cost effective and efficient activities. As such, it will be imperative to develop annual operational plans, that will have more concise activities, inputs, outputs and outcomes. This will be essential for developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Strategic Plan, ensure progress is made in achieving the development objectives of the plan. To ensure that the Strategic Plan does lead to fulfilling the facilitatory role of the organisation to engage on SADC regional integration and development process, it is important to have a theory of change to transform the way of working. As such, the following pathways for facilitating this change must be followed;

- Increasing the inclusion of SAf-CNGO members in the development and implementation of different activities at all levels (national, regional and pan African)
- Establishing and creating spaces for thematic networks including marginalised and vulnerable groups (youths, women, disability and indigenous organisations);
- Spearheading implementation of various SADC and continental policies including RISDP and Agenda 2063 for improved understanding and advocacy purposes;
- Carrying out capacity building of members to strengthen their research and advocacy activities for improved contribution towards fulfilling the regional integration and development mandate;
- Carrying out necessary research across different priority themes as identified in this strategic plan.
- Mutual respect and recognition amongst the various levels of the organisation and its membership especially with regards to implementation of activities based on the principle of subsidiarity;
- Designing and implementing fundraising projects to ensure self-sustenance; and;
- Developing, strengthening and capacitating the use of communication and notably modern Information and Communication Technology in all areas.

VALUE PROPOSITION

- Coordination/convergence of Southern African civil society efforts to participate in SADC processes.
- Facilitating Civil Society participation in Official SADC Summits.
- Strengthening linkages civil society with SADC Secretariat and its organs.
- Fostering stronger participation of CSOs across member states in SADC platforms e.g. SNCs
- Fostering stronger participation of Southern African CSOs in continental and global civil society spaces.
- Strengthening inter country sharing of CSO challenges and finding common solutions to challenges such as, among others, shrinking civic spaces, lack of enabling environments for CSO work, anti-CSO/NGO laws and regulations, as well as weakened civil society ability to monitor SADC Member States adherence to regional, continental, and global signed protocols and commitments
- Facilitating stronger participation of civil society across the SADC region, in regional and continental process such, among others, as SADC Trade Agreements and the African Continental Free Area (AfCFTA), the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and others.
- Advocating for key socio-economic development issues such as, among others, Education, Gender Mainstreaming, Women & Youth development & Empowerment, Health, and citizen economic empowerment, for all people of the region.
- Advocating through strategic engagement and policy advice, for people participation in monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of regional integration processes.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Recognition of national umbrella bodies (SAf-CNGO members) by governments at the national level;
- Existence of SAf-CNGO structures at national, subnational, and community level through member organisations in 15 of the 16 SADC Member States;
- Convening power of meetings, policy dialogues, and other gatherings of NGOs and civil society organisations; Recognized convener of annual Civil Society Forum (CSF)
- Coordination of regional level activities in various sectors due to institutional memory and past engagements with SADC Secretariat, member States and other stakeholders;

WEAKNESSES

- Limited financial resources and institutional support to sustainably drive daily operations.
- High staff turn-over and capacity constraints as a result of funding uncertainties.
- Limited resourcing for national & regional coordination mechanisms of civil society, and fragmentation amongst civil society negatively impacting the ability of the sector to interface with partners and stakeholders;
- Consortium funding requirements that require time and resources to access.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Convener of the Regional Annual Civil Society Forum
- Pioneer and convener of regional level structures e.g. Civil Society Mediation Task Team, Anti-Corruption Task Team, Regional Economic Integration Reference Group
- Pioneer of some monitoring tools on regional integration programmes and plans such as the protocol tracker, hotspots tracker, and early warning system;
- Active Stakeholder in the NSA Accreditation Mechanism for effective engagement with SADC

THREATS


- Hostile and restrictive operating environments and increasing reduction of operating space for civil society, often led by governments and/or ruling parties;
- Limited engagement between CSOs and Regional Economic Commissions such as SADC;
- Limited support especially for regionally based CSOs by host governments (e.g. work permits for staff from neighbouring countries) and limited government financial support for local and regional NGOs.

RISK IDENTIFICATION, ANALYSIS, & MANAGEMENT

RISK AREA	RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK MANAGEMENT & INTERVENTIONS
<p>Political</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating environment occasioned by different situations such as legislative reforms, the elections in various countries etc • Inadequate coordination and consultations various stakeholders • Increased internal tension and fight for resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular analysis of the environment and engagement with SAF-CNGO members and relevant stakeholders • Consolidate coordination and engagement with all structures • Expand the engagement process to constantly bring in together different stakeholders
<p>Member State National Development Programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siloed National Development Programmes in Member States without due consideration for overall regional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement collaborative and complementary activities e.g. annual capacity building and national planning programmes co-organised by members and relevant stakeholders to emphasize an aligned regional outlook.
<p>Financial & Institutional Sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding exhaustion due to overcrowded projects requiring funding • Organisation failing to raise adequate funds required for implementation of the 2023-2026 strategic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritisation, streamlining and consolidation of projects by SAF-CNGO • Improvement of financial accountability by fully implementing organisational policies including (finance procedures manual, code of conduct, HR policy statutory compliance, auditing etc) • Strengthen implementation, monitoring and evaluation to promote confidence among the members, governments and funding partners

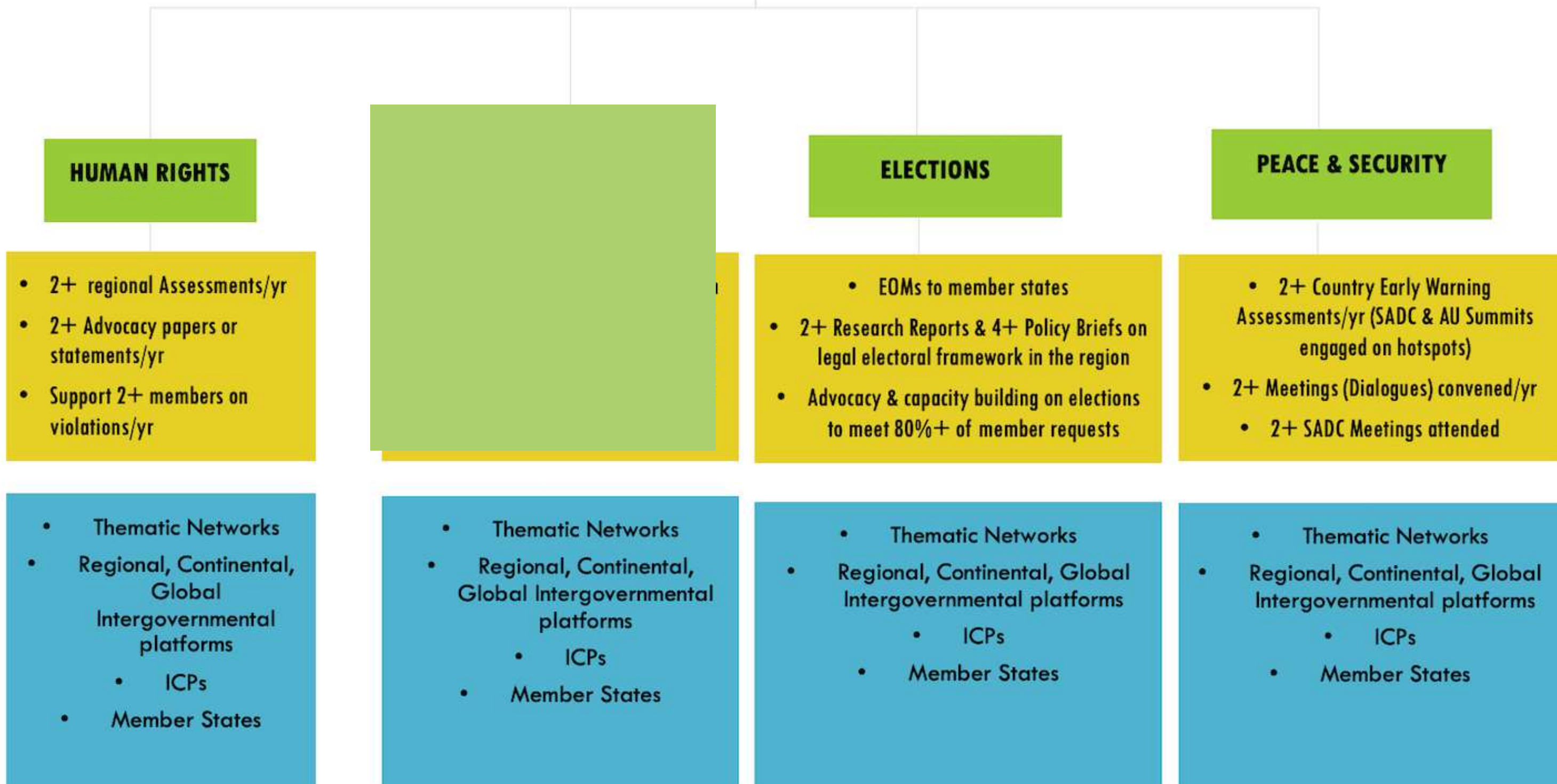
SAF-CNGO
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP & PROGRAMS PLAN OF ACTION 2023 - 2026

■ Strategic Action
 ■ Targets & Outcomes
 ■ Strategic Partners



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY, PEACE, AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN SADC AND BEYOND IN LINE WITH NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND CONTINENTAL INSTRUMENTS.




SAf-CNGO
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP & PROGRAMS PLAN OF ACTION 2023 - 2026

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RESEARCH

- 2+ discussion papers & 4+ policy briefs/yr from research on key thematic issues in the SADC region and beyond.
- 2+ regional and national dialogues (meetings) convened on key thematic areas/yr
- 2+ meetings attended on key thematic areas

- Thematic Networks
 - Regional, Continental, Global Intergovernmental platforms
 - ICPs
 - Member States



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

STRENGTHENED AND CONSOLIDATED PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY IN THE REGION FOR POVERTY REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AT REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS


SAf-CNGO
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP & PROGRAMS PLAN OF ACTION 2023 - 2026

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PARTNERSHIPS & MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Profiling of 10+ members [regional thematic organisations, IGOs, & thinktanks (database)]/yr
- 2+ outreach engagements with thematic organisations and think tanks/yr
- 3+ Organizational Capacity assessments of members to identify gaps and needs/yr
- 3+ Capacity development and support for members/yr

- Thematic Networks
 - Regional, Continental, Global Intergovernmental platforms
 - ICPs
 - Member States



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

MEMBERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY PARTNERS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR PARTNERSHIP AND NETWORKS FOR INFLUENCING SADC MEMBER STATES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE, AND PEOPLE-CENTRED REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

SAF-CNGO
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP & PROGRAMS PLAN OF ACTION 2023 - 2026

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4:

ENGAGEMENT ON SADC PROGRAMMES IS INSTITUTIONALIZED AND COORDINATED TO FULFIL OBJECTIVES CONTEMPLATED BY ARTICLE 23 OF THE SADC TREATY.

SAF-CNGO
INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY & ADMINISTRATION PLAN OF ACTION 2023 - 2026

■ Strategic Action
 ■ Targets & Outcomes
 ■ Strategic Partners

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- All Policies reviewed & implemented
- Reports produced & submitted
- Audit done every year
- Tax returns done when due
- 1 regional assembly every 2 years
- 1 executive committee meeting per quarter

- Member Organizations
- General Assembly
 - Board
 - ICPs
- Partner Networks & Alliances

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

- All Program pillars active
 - Website active
- Regular Materials & Content production
 - Regular Reporting
 - 2 meetings biannually
 - Quarterly Newsletter

- Member Organizations
- General Assembly
 - Board
 - ICPs
- Partner Networks & Alliances

CIVIL SOCIETY MOBILIZATION & COORDINATION

- Annual High-Level Stakeholder Symposium
- Civil Society Forum held every year

- Member Organizations
- General Assembly
 - Board
 - ICPs
- Partner Networks & Alliances



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5:

STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE FACILITATION AND COORDINATION OF MEMBERS.

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