



**Veyrl Adell**

# **NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2013 - 2016**

## **PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE**



## **Acknowledgements**

This strategy has been produced as a result of several consultative processes with stakeholders in the informal cross border trade sector in Swaziland. It involved meetings, deliberations and numerous data collection activities. This whole process was made possible through the assistance of UN Women Southern Africa Regional Office, in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade (Small Micro Medium Enterprise - SMMEs Unit) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade (SMMEs Unit) is grateful for all the efforts from all the participants who contributed to making this possible.

## **ACRONYMS**

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICBT	Informal Cross Border Trade
ICBTs	Informal Cross Border Traders
IOM	International Organisation of Immigration
NWICBT	The National Women in Informal Cross Border Trade Strategy
PRSAP	The Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SHIES	Swaziland Household Income and Expenditure Survey
SMMEs	Small Micro Medium Enterprises
SRA	Swaziland Revenue Authority
SRO	Southern Regional Office
SWASA	Swaziland Standards Authority
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

WICBT Women in Informal Cross Border Trade

WICBTs Women in informal Cross Border Traders

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This strategy has been developed through a consultative process with key stakeholders including Government Policy Makers, Regional Cross Border Trade Associations, the Royal Swaziland Police and Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force as well as local leaders and traders at various border posts and trade points. It has been designed to complement the six pillars defined under the Poverty Reduction Policy Framework. These include:

1. Macro-economic stability and Accelerated Economic Growth based on Broad Participation
2. Fair Distribution of the Benefits of Growth Fiscal Policy
3. Empowering the Poor to Generate Income and Reduce Inequalities
4. Human Capital Development
5. Improving the Quality of life of the Poor
6. Improving Governance and strengthening Institutions.

It seeks to promote a more equitable pattern of growth where the marginalized are able to participate in economic development by expanding their opportunities. It is generally acknowledged that interventions that can reduce poverty among the most vulnerable groups in the society, and WICBT being one of the groups, will go a long way in contributing towards the achievement of Swaziland's Poverty Reduction Goals as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

This strategy addresses five broad pillars namely:

1. Advocacy
2. Networking and policy dialogue
3. Capacity building
4. Research
5. Partnerships

### **1.2 KEY FINDINGS**

Various research methodologies (Desk Reviews, Focus Group Discussions, Semi Structured Interviews and Site Visits) were applied to generate the following findings:

### **1.2.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CROSS BORDER TRADE**

Apart from challenges highlighted by women and stakeholders, there are opportunities that exist and can promote participation of women in cross border trade and eventually move women from informal to formal trade. The document outlines opportunities for women in the following areas:

- Knowledge and Information
- Tariffs and Coding
- Financial Facilities for SMEs and Exporters

### **1.2.2 CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CROSS BORDER TRADE**

Despite the above-mentioned opportunities, there are numerous challenges that women in informal cross border trade face. These include:

- Lack of adequate knowledge and information
- Unfriendly systems, structures and regulation
- Unfriendly tariffs and coding systems
- Difficulty of movement for traders to and from points of trade
- Language barriers and discrimination
- Lack of finances
- Poor or limited storage facilities
- Time constraints especially with long hours of travel and several days on the road
- Poor safety and sanitation systems
- Lack of health services especially for malaria and those affected and infected by HIV and AIDS

## **1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations are as a result of various studies, interviews and meetings held with stakeholders to generate a set of solutions that will address the identified challenges.

### **1.3.1 Knowledge and Information**

There is need to generate information and build the capacity of women traders and stakeholders in risk assessment, business management and all cross border related topics.

### **1.3.2 Systems, Structures and Regulation**

Systems, structures and regulations should be reviewed and redesigned to accommodate women in informal cross border trade.

### **1.3.3 Tariffs, Taxes and Coding**

Tariffs, taxes and codes should be reviewed and where possible, harmonized.

### **1.3.4 Trade Permits**

There is need to provide long-term permits especially for women in cross border trade.

### **1.3.5 Language**

Introducing special Portuguese language training aimed at women in cross border trade should begin in major trading regions.

### **1.3.6 Finance**

The public and private sector need to work with women in cross border trade to develop microfinance products.

### **1.3.7 Storage Facilities and Safe spaces**

It is important to create storage facilities and safe spaces for women in cross border trade at their trading and purchase points. This can be made possible through regional agreements and national policies.

### **1.3.8 Health Services**

Women should be provided with affordable medical insurance, which covers them at point of purchase in South Africa and Mozambique.

## **2 STRATEGY FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This strategy has been developed as part of the Kingdom of Swaziland and UN joint programmes commitment to reduce poverty to 50% by 2015 and eradicate it by 2022. It is aligned to article 17.1 of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development which states that 'States and parties shall by 2015, adopt policies and enact laws which ensure access, benefit and opportunities for women and men in trade and entrepreneurship, taking into account the contribution of women in the formal and informal sectors'<sup>1</sup>. It also responds to the overall goal of the Government of Swaziland and UN Joint Programme on Gender.

This strategy has been developed through a consultative process with key stakeholders including Government policy makers, members of regional and national cross border trade associations, the Royal Swaziland Police and Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force as well as local leaders and traders at various border posts and trade points. It has been designed to complement the six pillars defined under the poverty reduction policy framework to address poverty. These include:

1. Macro-economic stability and Accelerated Economic Growth based on Broad Participation
2. Fair Distribution of the Benefits of Growth Fiscal Policy
3. Empowering the Poor to Generate Income and Reduce Inequalities
4. Human Capital Development
5. Improving the Quality of life of the Poor
6. Improving Governance and strengthening Institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> SADC Gender and Development Protocol page 9

The National Women in Informal Cross Border Trade (NWICBT) Strategy contributes to the above goals by providing a platform for wealth creation and poverty reduction through promotion of Women in Informal Cross Border Trade (WICBT). This will be made possible by:

1. Strengthening Leadership
2. Increasing commitment and accountability of government institutions to integrate WICBT issues in policies or legislations, programmes, plans and budgets.

## **2.2 BACKGROUND**

UN Women Southern Regional Office (SRO) is collaborating with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade (Small Micro Medium Enterprise – SMMEs Unit) to implement the project “Women in Informal Cross Border Trade in Swaziland.” The overall goal of the project is to create wealth, reduce poverty and minimise exclusion of WICBT. Swaziland was selected as a pilot country for the project following a research study commissioned by UN Women<sup>2</sup> on women involved in informal small-scale cross border trade (WICBT) in Zimbabwe and Swaziland. South Africa, Mozambique and Botswana were covered as countries of destination for WICBT. Furthermore, in 2009, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted a Regional Assessment on HIV prevention needs of Migrants and Mobile Populations in Southern Africa which included examining the challenges faced by female informal cross border traders in Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland and Zambia.

UN Women research revealed that the WICBT sector has been largely ignored by policymakers and faces very serious challenges. The obstacles include the lack of finance, information and management skills, unfair competition from larger businesses, lack of storage facilities, cross border problems, lack of proper trading places/markets and capital equipment. IOM research highlighted the following challenges: extended periods of time spent in high HIV transmission areas; lack of

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/fact-sheet-african-women-traders-en.pdf> - No date or author

accommodation; lack of HIV prevention services at locations frequented by informal cross border traders; gender inequalities and transactional sex with those who may facilitate their migration; difficulty in reaching informal cross border traders due to their transient nature and lack of money to access health care services at places of destination. ICBT is important because it creates employment opportunities, source of income, food security and the general wellbeing for families of the majority of ICBTs resulting in poverty reduction.

The WICBT Strategy and Action Plan provides multi-dimensional responses to challenges faced by WICBTs through implementation of innovative economic empowerment approaches as well as collaborating with various development partners in order to create wealth for women.

This strategy therefore seeks to promote a more equitable pattern of growth where the marginalized are able to participate in economic development by expanding their opportunities. This and other interventions that can reduce poverty among the most vulnerable groups in the society will go a long way in contributing towards the achievement of Swaziland's Poverty Reduction Goals as well as the Millennium Development Goals. Thus this strategy aims to ensure that:

1. Key Government departments integrate WICBT issues in policies, legislation, programmes, strategies, plans and budgets.
2. WICBT strategies and action plans enhance wealth creation, employment, poverty reduction and regional integration.

The targeted group for the programme will be women and stakeholders in Informal Cross Border Trade. This strategy addresses five broad pillars, namely:

- Advocacy
- Networking and policy dialogue
- Capacity building
- Research
- Partnerships

## 2.3 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Of the 2000 women informal cross border traders surveyed by UNIFEM (now UN Women) in 2007-2009 in Cameroon, Liberia, Mali, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zimbabwe,<sup>3</sup> a great majority stated that: the proceeds from their trading activities is the main source of income for the family; women traders use their income to buy food and other items for the household, pay for school fees, health care services and rent, save in Voluntary Savings and Loans Clubs (commonly referred to as Susu Clubs) and banks and reinvest in their businesses.

**In Sub-Saharan Africa, informal cross border trade features prominently among women’s individual strategies for self-employment, poverty reduction and wealth creation.**

A 2004 study by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) showed that trade is the most important source of employment among self-employed women of Sub-Saharan Africa providing 60% of non-agricultural self-employment.

Official sources report an average value of informal cross border trade in the SADC Region of US\$ 17.6 billion per year. Informal Cross Border Trade contributes 30-40% to intra-SADC Trade. Seventy percent of informal cross border traders are women. The main foodstuffs traded in 2006/7 are maize (97,000 MT), rice (6,500 MT) and beans (10,000 MT).

In West and Central Africa, women informal cross border traders “employ 1.2 people in their home businesses; support on average 3.2 children as well as 3.1 dependents who were not children or spouses.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/fact-sheet-african-women-traders-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> (Oculi n.d.: 8).

**Women informal cross border traders make an important contribution to economic growth and government revenues.**

The contribution of women informal traders to national GDP amounts to 64% of value added in trade in Benin; 46% in Mali and 41% in Chad (Charmes 2000, cited in ILO 2004).

In Zimbabwe, 84% of the traders interviewed in the UNIFEM (now UN Women) studies (89% of men and 78% of women) said that they paid the required duties for the goods they imported into the country.

**Women's informal cross border trading activities have cushioned the effects of the financial crisis and the food crisis on African countries.**

A 'Rapid Impact Assessment of the Global Economic Crisis on Uganda' conducted by ILO in 2009 has shown a dramatic increase in informal exports from Uganda to neighboring countries (DRC, Kenya and Sudan) while official exports declined from US\$ 854 million to US\$ 714 million between the first half of 2008 and the first half of 2009, a reduction of 16%. The report notes that informal exports of industrial products rose from US\$ 475 million to US\$ 963 million between the first half of 2008 and the first half of 2009, and that agricultural exports including beans, maize, sugar, and other grains also expanded across the board.

Women informal cross border traders address vital issues of livelihoods such as food and income security, yet they are neglected by mainstream trade policies and institutions, thus undermining the profitability and visibility of their activities.

#### **2.4 THE SWAZILAND CONTEXT**

According to the Swaziland MDG report of 2012, the prevalence of poverty as measured by the proportion of people living under the poverty line shows a decrease by 6% from 69% to 63%. The Swaziland Household Income and Expenditure Survey (SHIES) 2010 also reflects that, while modest, this decline is still a significant indicator showing that the absolute number of people defined as poor has fallen from 678,500 to 641,000.

The SHIES report, however, notes that the decline was not evenly distributed nationally being concentrated in the southern region of Shiselweni and the central Manzini, while Hhohho and the Eastern region of Lubombo saw no decline.

Lubombo and Shiselweni, however, continue to be the poorest regions. The report further shows that an estimated 30% of people in Swaziland live in extreme poverty, defined as food poverty where people are unable to meet their daily dietary needs. Over the past decade, Lubombo has experienced a significant proportion of people who are food poor, an increase from 32 to 37%. On the other hand, Shiselweni realized a decline of 11%.<sup>5</sup>

The Kingdom approved and adopted a National Gender Policy in 2010, significantly strengthening the environment for attaining MDG Goal 3. The policy lays out a roadmap for addressing impediments for women's advance in society.

The 2010 MDG report shows that this target is one of the five which the country has the greatest potential of meeting. In Swaziland, women are still subject to various inequalities through discriminatory civil laws and cultural practices. Women are regarded as "minors" and are unable to take independent actions and decisions over various aspects of their lives. This gender gap often widens later in life, limiting women's opportunities for meaningful work, fair pay and accumulation of assets. The subjugation of women disempowers them, thus reducing the welfare of their households and that of their communities.

Women are in the majority of the population most affected by poverty. Poverty and gender are strongly correlated as 63% of female-headed households are poor and lack productive assets compared to 52% of their male counterparts.

The Constitution (2005) attempts to address the issue of gender equality by providing for equality before the law, the rights of women and an affirmative action clause for Parliamentary positions as well as the right to access land. Progress is

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<sup>5</sup> MDG Report 2012 – UNDP Swaziland

being made to improve gender sensitivity in the policy and legal environment. The country has ratified Convention on the Elimination All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) into Swaziland Laws. A draft Gender Policy has been developed and a number of pieces of legislation have been reviewed to enhance gender related provisions.

Despite the above progress, findings from site visits and focus group discussions held with women and stakeholders show that Informal cross border trade is one of the ignored sectors of the Swaziland economy and yet it contributes significantly to economic growth and development.

A previous study conducted by UN Women<sup>6</sup> and a more recent set of focus group discussions held in April 2013<sup>7</sup> continue to confirm that there is no policy governing the WICBT sector and that there is no structured flow of information within this sector. Most WICBTs have minimal education, and are usually marginalized groups of people in the global and local socio- economic and political power relations. They lack operating space and are largely relegated to the tail end of the international production networks and global value chains.

Informal cross border trade is vibrant in Swaziland and the UN Women study indicated that a majority of traders are women. The women engage in informal cross border trade for various reasons such as the poor economic performance of the Swaziland economy because of structural rigidities and high macroeconomic instability. Another factor is high poverty levels as a result of inequalities in income distribution in the country. Some women are involved in cross border trade because of the need to augment their income from formal employment.

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<sup>6</sup> UN Women, ICBT Report- Swaziland 2009.

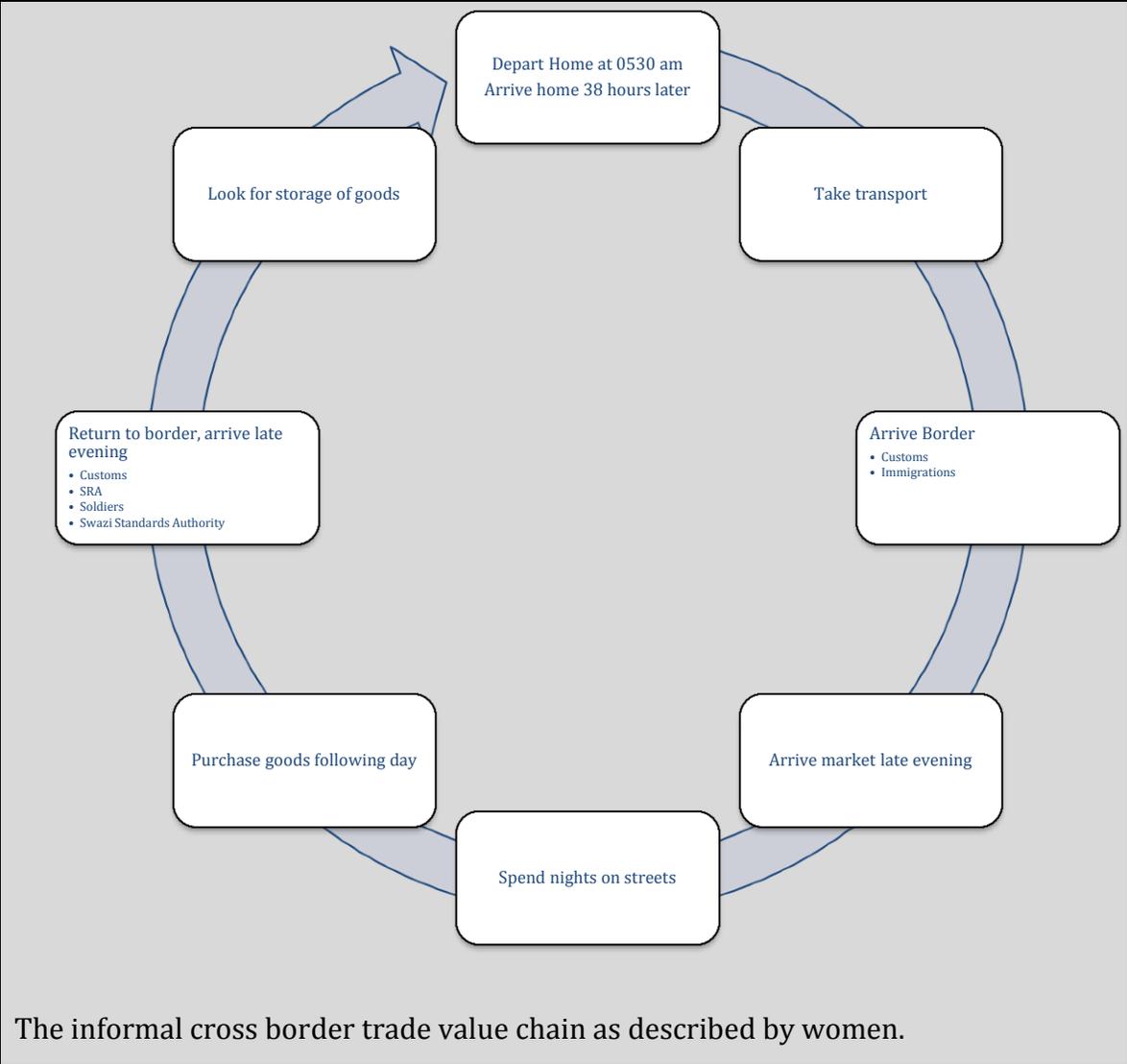
<sup>7</sup> See Annex 1

## **2.5 THE WOMEN IN INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE VALUE CHAIN**

Various women were interviewed and contributed to the strategy development. Women traders on the - Lavumisa – Durban corridor trade mainly in mattresses, blankets, pillows, shoes, and buckets. Usually, the women leave their homes and cross the border by 6am on Mondays, commute to Durban and spend nights on the streets as they await businesses to open. When the shops open for business the women purchase the required goods and when they have finished embark on their return journey arriving at the border on Tuesday evening. The situation with women who cross to Maputo and Johannesburg is slightly different, with similar challenges at point of purchase, import and trade.

The Maputo corridor proves to be the most challenging since Mozambique does not belong to the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) and also presents a language barrier. Women trading in Maputo encounter people who claim to be customs officials without proper identification and are at times coerced into paying fraudulent custom duties to these individuals. Women mentioned that they can count up to three various points where these individuals pose as customs officials and make them pay various fees.

Other commodities that are purchased by the traders include fruits and vegetables, handicrafts and second-hand clothing.



### **2.5.1 Case Study from a Trader – Durban corridor**

Ms. Futhi Dlamini is a middle-aged woman, married, with two young children aged 13 and three (3). On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013, she left her home at 5.30 am, and crossed the Lavumisa border to Durban at 6.30 am. At the border, she went through the normal checks and received the required permit to travel. She pays E350.00 for a return trip on a communally hired van with 10 other women. She arrived in Durban at 7.30 pm and spent the night on the streets with the other women. The following day, she went and purchased goods at the Durban market, and made sure she was ready by 12.00 noon to board the hired transport that would take her back home. They travelled and arrived at the border at 5.30pm where they went through the South African side of the border; their goods were verified and allowed to cross over to the Swazi side within a period of half an hour. Ms. Dlamini and her fellow traders then went through the process of immigration and goods declaration. The main challenge they faced here was that the goods purchased did not have receipts and so both the customs officials and the women had a difficult time proving the value of the goods. She and the other women spent an extra hour with the customs officials trying to verify the goods and their value. By the time they were cleared and allowed to pass the border, it was already dark. Her goods, she says, were worth about E1,000.00. Goods valued below E1,000.00 are tax exempt, but for anything higher than that, a 14% Value Added Tax is paid on the total value of the goods. Ms. Dlamini does not belong to any particular association. In her own words; “I am married but life is too difficult, so I have to work”.

### **3 STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING WOMEN IN CROSS BORDER TRADE**

#### **3.1 GOAL OF STRATEGY**

The strategy aims to create wealth and reduce poverty and exclusion of Women in Informal Cross Border Trade (WICBT).

##### **3.1.1 Overall goal**

It seeks to enhance the participation of women in cross border trade through strengthening leadership and increasing commitment and accountability of Government institutions to integrate WICBT issues in policies or legislation, programmes, plans and budgets. The strategy has also been developed to strengthen the capacities of service providers to improve WICBTs access to key services such as health, finance and infrastructure. It creates a platform for capacity building on all matters related to WICBT.

##### **3.1.2 Rationale**

This strategy contributes to the overall poverty reduction goals of Swaziland, with a focus on women in cross border trade. For economies to prosper in trade, capacity must be developed to promote trade and increase incomes. Women in cross border trade play a crucial role in promoting the country's economic status throughout the trade value chain. We, however, note that there are challenges and opportunities for these women that must be addressed for the former and harnessed for the latter.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2011 to 2015 outcomes highlight the following gender inequalities, which this strategy seeks to address for the sake of improved business and greater economic gain:

1. Women are worse-off in terms of poverty prevalence due to their low participation in formal sector employment. A significant proportion of women are employed in the informal sector.
2. Women continue to be considered minors before some laws and in practice, and their access to Swazi Nation Land (SNL) remains a challenge. Access to Title Deed Land (TDL) is equally a challenge for women.

3. Gender-based violence is a major problem affecting mainly women and children. In the lifetime of a woman, about a third experience some form of sexual violence.

## **3.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY**

### **3.2.1 Overall Objective**

The main objective of this strategy is to support key Government departments to integrate WICBT issues in policies, legislation, programmes, strategies, plans and budgets.

### **3.2.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the National Strategy on WICBT will be to:

1. Create more wealth
2. Generate employment
3. Reduce poverty
4. Improve regional integrations

## **3.3 KEY PILLARS FOR PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE**

The Project Document generated by UN Women to promote women in informal cross border trade highlights the following pillars as key in ensuring women's successful participation in cross border trade:

### **3.3.1 Advocacy**

Advocacy is a political process by an individual or group, which aims to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions. Advocacy can include many activities that a person or organization undertakes including media campaigns, public speaking, commissioning and publishing research or polls or the filing of an amicus brief.

Lobbying (often by lobby groups) is a form of advocacy where a direct approach is made to legislators on an issue, which plays a significant role in modern politics.<sup>8</sup>

Through this strategy and action plan, advocacy reaches different levels in policy and legislation. This ensures the promotion of women in informal cross border trade and engages various leaders in an effort to enhance accountability to support WICBT. This strategy also provides a lobbying platform for service providers in the financial, health and infrastructure sectors to provide the necessary services for WICBTs.

### **3.3.2 Networking and Policy Dialogue**

The National Strategy for WICBT facilitates the establishment of organised structures/networks for WICBT to access raw materials, produce products, process, and package and export their products. This strategy also lays a platform for the formation of an apex body for WICBT. This body will generate and enhance improved networks between WICBT and established businesses for the purpose of mentorship, training and entrepreneurship development.

### **3.3.3 Capacity Building**

The strategy provides recommendations and an action plan for capacity building of all stakeholders in the Cross Border Trade Value Chain. It identifies key stakeholders who must be trained within a certain period to ensure successful promotion of WICBT. Capacity building, also referred to as capacity development, is a conceptual approach to development that focuses on understanding the obstacles that inhibit people, governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations from realizing their developmental goals while enhancing the abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advocacy>

<sup>9</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capacity\\_building](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capacity_building)

### **3.3.4 Research**

Research is necessary in creating a baseline and better understanding of the WICBT value chain. It generates accurate information to ensure the strategy delivers in the most appropriate and sustainable way.

### **3.3.5 Knowledge Management**

Since this is a pilot project, a number of knowledge products will be developed and/or collected (videos, pamphlets, newsletters, booklets, CDs, newspaper clips, checklists, guidelines, strategies), in order to share knowledge with the rest of the countries.

### **3.3.6 Partnerships**

The importance of public, civil society and private sector partnerships is recognized as one way of ensuring the promotion of WICBT. This strategy lays out a formula for the engagement of the public and private sector in ensuring the success of WICBT. Various NGOs, private institutions, and the public sector have been identified as important partners in the advancement of the proposed programme.

## **3.4 KEY FINDINGS**

These findings have been generated from previous documentation of the situation of women in cross border trade, focus group discussions with various stakeholders, semi structured interviews and site visit observations.

### **3.4.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CROSS BORDER TRADE**

Apart from challenges highlighted by women and stakeholders, there are opportunities that exist and can promote participation of women in cross border trade and eventually move women from informal to formal trade.

#### ***3.4.1.1 Knowledge and Information***

There is a commitment through the SMME Unit and UN Women to develop platforms that enhance the knowledge of women and stakeholders in WICBT.

### ***3.4.1.2 Tariffs and Coding***

Allowance for importation of goods free of tariff has increased from goods worth E 250.00 to E 1,000.00. This, however, does not consider women traders and is a general tariff for any citizen crossing the border. There are also codes provided for various types of goods.

### ***3.4.1.3 Financial Facilities for SMEs and Exporters***

The Government introduced the SME guarantee fund for Small and Informal traders. The fund covers up to 95% collateral for new traders. There is also the Export Credit Guarantee scheme, which promotes the country's export trade. Both schemes provide very low interest rates of between 0.53% and 2%.

## **3.4.2 CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN CROSS BORDER TRADE**

### ***3.4.2.1 Knowledge and Information***

Women involved in cross border trade and some key stakeholders do not have enough knowledge and information on the systems and frameworks of the trade. They are not educated on various systems and how they work such as taxes, transport, the value chain or even their rights. Due to lack of knowledge and information, women have been exploited both socially and economically along the trade corridors. Examples have been given of multiple tariff collections; misappropriate handling of women and their goods, and various stakeholders imposing rules and regulations, as they feel necessary.

### ***3.4.2.2 Systems, Structures and Regulation***

Systems and structures have not taken into consideration the needs and interests of women in cross border trade as different from those of regular formal traders. Women in informal cross border trade thus have to put up with systems and regulations that are in place for all kinds of businesses. This puts women at a disadvantaged position. Women, in particular and service providers should be made aware of the country's counterfeit policies.

#### ***3.4.2.3 Tariffs and Coding***

The coding of goods is a challenge for women. There are instances when women have filled in the wrong codes resulting in them paying higher tariffs.

#### ***3.4.2.4 Movement of Traders***

The current trade permit is provided for a period of one month. This permit is not sufficient for women to trade freely. Given that most of the time they buy and sell on credit basis. By the time the permit expires, women are at a disadvantaged position especially when they have debtors across the border. In the case of Mozambique, there is an importation permit requirement imposed on all traders exporting goods to Mozambique.

#### ***3.4.2.5 Language and Discrimination***

There is a language barrier for the women who trade in Mozambique. But all women traders experience some form of discrimination when they cross the border. For instance, in South Africa they are referred to as foreigners. They are not recognized as part of a wider regional trade platform that allows free and fair trade. They also face exploitation since they are regarded as foreigners and thus good prices at times are hiked to suit a foreigner's economic status. Foreigners are perceived to have a lot of money, and this at times works against women traders.

#### ***3.4.2.6 Finance***

Women do not have access to finances that improve their businesses. There are no products developed by financial institutions to specifically target these women. It is, however, publicly acknowledged that women are better payers of debt compared to men. There is no platform that seeks to address women's financial needs or design financial products that provide financial capability and capacity for women.

### **3.4.3 Storage Facilities**

Women are constantly struggling with space to store their goods at the point of purchase and point of trade. In Manzini, for example, women pay E35.00 to rent space outside shops.

### **3.4.4 Time Constraints**

Women travel long hours and, in most cases, have to spend a night away from home. This has challenges in terms of the time they spend with their families and children. It also puts constraint on their businesses since most of the time they will have to close shop for the whole duration of time they are away.

#### **3.4.4.1 Safety**

Women do not feel safe, especially when they cross into Mozambique, where they encounter false officers who require them to pay irregular fees for various services. In both South Africa and Mozambique, women spend the night on the streets, exposing them to violation, robbery and gender-based violence. There should be a regional agreement that seeks to provide accommodation with sanitary facilities for women as part of the gender protocol.

#### **3.4.4.2 Health Services**

There is no type of medical insurance provided for women trading across the borders. Women are in danger of not receiving any treatment, especially when they are across the border. There are also no affordable health facilities which women can use, thus they end up self-medicating through drugs provided over the counter.

Women infected with HIV and AIDS are disadvantaged if they have to stay longer periods away from home especially those on Anti-Retroviral Treatment should they run out of their supply. The traders are at risk of exposure to malaria and have no access to treatment or drugs when they return home, since most health facilities do not stock malaria related drugs nor recognize malaria.

### **3.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN IN CROSS BORDER TRADE**

These findings have been generated from previous documentation by UN Women (2009) on the situation of women in cross border trade, focus group discussions conducted in April 2013 with various stakeholders, semi structured interviews held in April 2013 and through site visit observations. These groups of stakeholders

were engaged using participatory approaches to provide possible practical solutions from their own experiences.

### **3.5.1 Knowledge and Information**

There is need to generate information and build the capacity of women traders as well as stakeholders on the various topics suggested below. This can be done through various methodologies, which are defined in the National Strategy Action Plan in the section, which follows:

#### ***3.5.1.1 Cross Border Trade Value Chain***

Women in Informal Cross Border Trade do not have a clear understanding of the trade value chain. This makes it difficult for new traders to be successful in the sector. The cross border trade value chain should be defined, and then training developed for women to comprehend the chain, people involved and their roles, opportunities and possible challenges. This will empower the traders and stakeholders resulting in successes.

#### ***3.5.1.2 Cross Border Trade policies, regulations and procedures***

Women and stakeholders should be trained on trade policies, regulations and procedures on cross border trade. They need to have knowledge on the various institutions and relevant positions within those institutions that deliver for their needs.

#### ***3.5.1.3 Creativity and Innovation***

Women traders should be trained to think differently and better in terms of new areas of business and launching of new products.

#### ***3.5.1.4 Risk Assessment and Management***

Women should be trained to understand business risk through assessment and then being provided with tools to manage some of the risks they may encounter in trade.

#### **3.5.1.5 Business Management**

Women in informal cross border trade need to be trained on business management. This would include topics on life skills, which cover reproductive health and rights, as well as financial literacy and business planning.

#### **3.5.2 Systems, Structures and Regulations**

Systems, structures and regulations should be reviewed and redesigned to accommodate women in informal cross border trade.

#### **3.5.3 Tariffs, Taxes and Coding**

Tariffs, taxes and codes should be reviewed and where possible, harmonized or new areas that promote WICBT should be introduced. This will include reviewing some of the goods and tariffs against each and providing special codes and tariffs for women's goods. Taxes should be reviewed and special rates provided for women in informal cross border trade.

#### **3.5.4 Movement of Traders**

There is need to provide long term permits, especially for women in cross border trade. A special permit should be created for women in informal cross border trade to allow access to markets and clients. The current one-month permit is not enough for women and puts them at a disadvantage. A six-month permit for starters would be useful, and subject to review, with the possibility of a longer-term trade permit issued specifically for WICBT. In the case of Mozambique, it is necessary to review and harmonise the importation permit.

#### **3.5.5 Language**

Women face language barriers in Mozambique. A special Portuguese language training aimed at women in cross border trade should be started in major trading regions.

### **3.5.6 Finance**

The public and private sector need to work with women in cross border trade to generate banking/financing products that provide financial capability and accessibility for women in cross border trade.

### **3.5.7 Storage Facilities**

It is important to create storage facilities and safe spaces for women in cross border trade at their trading and purchase points. This can be made possible through regional agreements and national policies.

### **3.5.8 Safe Space**

Women require safe accommodation with proper sanitation at point of purchase and trade. They also need to be trained on safety and how to protect themselves from any form of gender-based violence. Other stakeholders must also be trained on their role in ensuring that women in informal cross border trade are safe.

### **3.5.9 Health Services**

Women should be provided with affordable medical insurance, which covers them at point of purchase in South Africa and Mozambique. This will enable women to receive the treatment they need from professional health workers. Women should also be trained on sexual reproductive health and rights and equipped with basic tools like condoms and contraceptives.

Regional agreements should contain accessibility to health services. There should be a regional medical plan that allows women to get treatment whenever they are in a country of trade. This must include the supply of Anti-Retroviral Treatment and malaria prevention and treatment drugs.

### **3.5.10 Disability Accessibility**

It is necessary to include disability accessibility points and procedures and where possible, provide disability support. It is necessary to have separate access points for women with disability.



## **4 ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN CROSS BORDER TRADE (JUNE 2013 TO MAY 2016)**

### **4.1 PROPOSED ACTION PLAN ACTIVITIES**

The following action plan outlines activities to be carried out over the next three years to implement the national strategy recommendations for women in informal cross border trade. It outlines specific interventions on:

1. The formation of an apex body of all coalitions and organizations of women informal cross border traders to amplify their collective voice into national, sub regional and regional trade forums and strengthen their advocacy platforms for:
  - Promotion of a favorable tax regime to promote fair trade and promote participation of women in cross border trade.
  - Provision of entrepreneurial, negotiation and advocacy skills to both women and service providers.
  - Recognition of WICBTs economic contribution of women's trading activities to the overall national economy.
  - Graduation of women from informal to formal sector and better access to market opportunities such as trade fairs, skills building, and trade related services.
  - Service delivery such as: credit, health care, transport, water and sanitation, foreign currency exchange, infrastructure for storage of goods and refrigeration of agricultural commodities in cross border markets and transport facilities.
  - Access to social safety nets such as health insurance.
  - Inclusion of women's priorities in national poverty reduction strategies, national development plans, national budgets and mainstream trade processes.
  - Fulfillment of women's 'Right to information' on regional trade agreements and protocols on movement of persons, goods and services.

- Building solidarity networks in support of women's issues, involving eminent African leaders, women lawyers' organizations, civil society organizations working on trade and regional integration, and the women's movement.
2. Networking and policy dialogue with Regional Economic Platforms such as SADC and SACU in trade agreements and processes. This includes:
- Supporting the efforts of SADC and SACU in harmonizing their trade policies with their gender policies ;
  - Simplifying and popularizing the provisions of regional protocols and agreements from a gender perspective;
  - Advocating for gender sensitive border control procedures and taxation systems; and
  - Systematizing collection and analysis of gender disaggregated data on informal cross border trade.
3. Advocacy to:
- Leverage support to gender divisions of Regional Economic Platforms so that they can enhance their influence in policy making, implementation and monitoring in relation to intra-African trade and regional integration processes.
  - Include priorities of women in informal cross border trade in national poverty reduction strategies, national development plans and national budget allocation.
4. Production and dissemination of cutting edge knowledge products to:
- Ensure visibility of the contribution of women cross border traders to wealth creation, poverty reduction, employment creation and regional integration;
  - Disseminate best practices in supporting women in informal cross border trade.
  - Fight stigmatisation and violence against women in informal cross border trade.



#### 4.2 ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY OUTLINE

PILLAR	ACTIVITIES	TARGET	DURATION	TIMELINE	COST	RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION	RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL
1. Advocacy	1.1. Develop a communications strategy and advocacy plan for promotion of women in cross border trade, with inclusion of women with disability needs.	All stakeholders in WICBT	2 months	July 2013 to September 2013	30,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	1.1.1 Resource Mobilization for Operationalization of Strategy	All Stakeholders	6 months	June to December 2013	30,000	UN Women	
	1.2. Develop advocacy and communications tools and materials	Women in Cross Border Trade	1 month	September 2013	50,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	

	and include messaging on women with disability.						
	1.3. Promote WICBT through various media channels such as print, audio and visual channels.	Customs, SRA, National Police, Defense service, UN, Civil Society, Private Sector	2 years	June 2013 to May 2016	180,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	1.4. Develop and implement advocacy strategy targeted specifically at policy makers	Cabinet, Principal Secretaries and heads of units	2 years	June 2013 to May 2016	50,000	SMME Unit and UN Woman	
2. Networking and Policy Dialogue	2.1. Organise regular dialogue conferences between women in cross border trade and policy makers	Cabinet, Principal Secretaries and heads of units	Twice a year	July and February every year	150,000	SMME Unit, UN Women	

	2.2. Review various trade and gender policies to include promotion of women in informal cross border trade.	Cabinet, Principal Secretaries and heads of units	6 months	June 2013 to December 2013	30,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	2.3. Organise a meeting with women in informal cross border trade and government service providers like SRA, Immigration and Royal Police, to review existing mechanisms, tariffs and taxes, and develop recommendations for a specific framework for WICBT.	Cabinet, Principal Secretaries and heads of units	Twice a year	July and February	50,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	2.4. Facilitate Maputo	Women in	One year	June 2013	20,000	SMME and UN	

	Corridor Dialogue and Agreement to Facilitate Smooth Trade for Women in Mozambique	Cross border trade		to May 2014		Women	
	2.5. Develop a WICBT policy	Cabinet, Principal Secretaries and heads of units and women in informal cross border trade	6 moths	January 2014 to June 2014	40,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	2.6. Launch an apex body for Women in Cross border Trade	Women in cross border trade and stakeholders	1 Month	July 2013	5,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	2.7. Review major trade policies (Regional and	Women in cross border trade and	3 months	July 2013 to September	30,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	

	National) with a gender lens and provide recommendations to include the promotion of WICBTs.	stakeholders		2013			
	2.7. Review National budgets to include WICBT.	Women in cross border trade	6 months	September 2013 to February 2014	20,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	2.8. Launch the WICBT policy with special services, taxes and tariffs.	Cabinet, Principal Secretaries and heads of units and women in informal cross border trade	1 year	July 2014	20,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
3.Capacity Building	3.1. Design Training on Cross Border Trade	All women in informal cross	3 months		30,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	

	Value Chain.	border trade					
	3.2. Deliver Training on Cross Border Trade Value Chain. Covering topics in taxation, protocol and procedures, women's rights, safety, livelihoods, business planning, budgeting and money management.	Women in Informal Cross Border Trade	Twice a year	March and August	150,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	3.3. Design and deliver training in Portuguese for women trading in the Mozambique corridor.	Women in informal cross border trade	Twice a year	April and September	150,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	3.4. Design and deliver Training for the various stakeholders	Customs, SRA, National Police,	Twice a year	May and October	150,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	

	in order to sensitize them on WICBT issues.	Swaziland Standards Authority, SWASA, Defense service, UN, Civil Society, Private Sector					
4. Research	4.1. Design a monitoring and evaluation framework for the implementation of WICBT action plan	All stakeholders	3 months	June 2013 to September 2013	30,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	4.2. Conduct midline and end line studies to analyse the situation of WICBT	All stakeholders	Twice in duration of strategy	June to September 2014  January to March 2016	100,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	

5. Knowledge Management	5.1. Develop and implement a sharing framework for lessons learnt from research to educate various stakeholders locally, regionally and internationally	All stakeholders	3 months	January to March 2014	60,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	5.2. Produce a promotional documentary for women in cross border trade to be distributed in major trade departments and displayed at various Swazi embassies across the globe.	International, regional, and local communities	3 months	October-December 2013	100,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	5.3. Develop knowledge products	International, regional, and	3 months	January to March	30,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	

	such as videos, pamphlets, newsletters, booklets, CDs, newspaper clips, checklists, guidelines, strategies, in order to share knowledge with the rest of the countries.	local communities		2014			
6. Partnerships	6.1. Form a steering committee to facilitate the implementation of the strategy and action plan, include persons with disability.	All stakeholders	3 years	June 2013 to May 2016	50,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	6.2. Develop a partnerships Strategy that includes the Government, Civil Society and private	All stakeholders	2 months	October to November 2013	30,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	

	sectors.						
	6.3. Facilitate women to work with financing institutions to develop loan products for WICBT	Finance Industry and WICBT	Once a year	March 2014, March 2015 March 2016	150,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	6.4. Develop and implement a loans package for WICBT with various financing institutions	Women in cross border trade	6 months	January 2014 to June 2014	60,000	SMME Unit and UN W0men	
	6.5. Facilitate regional frameworks such as SACU and SADC to include safe space structures for women in cross border trade.	Women in informal cross border trade	1 Year	January 2014 to December 2014	50,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	6.6. Facilitate women in cross border trade	Women in informal cross	6 months	January 2014 to	30,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	

	and insurance companies to develop a special insurance package for WICBT	border trade Insurance agencies		June 2014			
	6.7. Launch a special medical and safety insurance package for Women in Cross border trade	Women in informal cross border trade	1 year	July 2014	5,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	6.8. Revive and operationalise The Trade House framework nationally and regionally to ensure successful trade mechanisms and opportunities	All stakeholders	1 year	June 2013 to May 2014	100,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	
	6.9. Facilitate women to identify public/government	Women in informal cross border trade	3 months	July to September 2013	15,000	SMME Unit and UN Women	

	<p>owned areas of safety within their trade locations and facilitate regional bodies to initiate special rates for accommodation for WICBT.</p>						
<b>TOTAL COST OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION OVER THREE YEARS</b>					<b>USD</b>		

## **ANNEX 1: LIST OF ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTED IN CONSULTATIVE PROCESS FOR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

1. Association of Swaziland Business Community (ASBC)
2. Swaziland Cross Border Traders Association (SWA C BTA)
3. Emakhono khono
4. Butimba Bemamswati
5. Phandzela Umfwana
6. Federation of Women Business Association
7. Coalition of informal Economy Association of Swaziland
8. Fruit and Vegetable Association
9. Coalition of Non Governmental Organisations (CANGO)
10. Lutsango
11. Swaziland Young Women's Network