



**Roadmap to improve
supply-side gender-
disaggregated data on
selected banking and
mobile indicators and
improve demand-side data
through enhancing
women's economic
empowerment for financial
inclusion indicators
collected through FinScope
Consumer surveys.**

Enhancing the use of gender
disaggregated data by SADC
regulators and FSPs to
mainstream gender in regional
development

July 2024

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List of Acronyms

AFI	Alliance for Financial Inclusion
BSA	Banking supervision applications
CRM	Customer relationship management
DFS	Digital financial services
FAS	Financial Access Survey
FI	Financial inclusion
FSPs	Financial service providers
GDD	Gender-disaggregated data
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KYC	Know your customer
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MIS	Management information system
MNO	Mobile network operator
NFIS	National Financial Inclusion Strategy
NSO	National Statistics Office
RSDS	Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDD	Sex-disaggregated data
S-GDD	Supply-side gender-disaggregated data
SGSS	SADC Gender Statistics Strategy
WEE	Women's economic empowerment

Supply-Side Gender-Disaggregated Data

Introduction

In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, financial inclusion is considered a vital means of promoting economic growth and reducing poverty. To achieve sustainable development and equitable growth, it is essential to ensure that all population segments, including women, have access to and can use financial services. In this context, closing the gender gap in financial inclusion is especially important because women often encounter obstacles that impede their economic and social advancement.

To further understand the nuances of this gender gap and to create successful interventions, accurate and thorough data is crucial. Specifically, gender-disaggregated data (GDD) acquired from administrative sources such as financial institutions (the supply side) is necessary for identifying inequalities in the availability and use of essential banking and mobile money services. As proxies that supplement the data obtained from demand-side surveys, such as FinScope surveys that record individual experiences, this supply-side viewpoint provides direct insights into the clientele and operational realities of financial service providers (FSPs). Policymakers and FSPs can track progress and make timely strategy adjustments thanks to the supply-side gender disaggregated data (S-GDD)'s continuous monitoring mechanism.

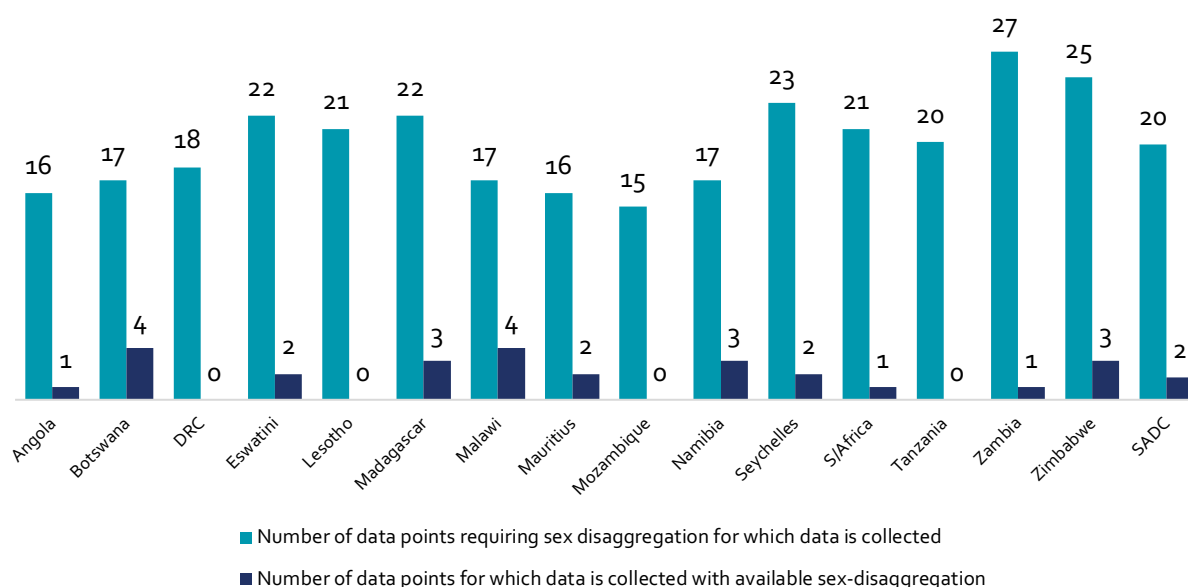
The purpose of this roadmap is to provide a comprehensive and practical framework for enhancing the availability, quality and utilisation of S-GDD on banking and mobile money indicators across all SADC member states. It is an extension of the S-GDD gap assessment exercise and capacity-building workshop conducted by FinMark Trust and the SADC Secretariat. The report provides a comprehensive roadmap of important actions and steps that countries in the SADC region should consider taking to improve S-GDD. It also highlights the focus indicators and challenges related to S-GDD in the SADC region that were identified during the gap assessment exercise.

Background

The S-GDD gaps assessment report, conducted by FinMark Trust to assess the availability of sex-disaggregated data (SDD) on banking and mobile money indicators in the SADC region between October and December 2024, revealed that member countries are lagging behind in ensuring the availability of GDD. During the S-GDD gap assessment, 37 data points were assessed using data reported on the SADC Financial Inclusion (FI) Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) portal and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) annual Financial Access Survey (FAS). The assessment provided a comparison of the number of data points requiring sex disaggregation for which data is collected versus the number of those data points for which data is collected with available sex disaggregation, across various countries and the SADC region. Of the 37 indicators, only 20 are presently being reported and available in the SADC region, with only two data points having sex-disaggregated data.

At the country level, variations exist, with only eight countries (Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe) reporting at least 50% of the banking and mobile money-related indicators through the SADC FI M&E portal or FAS. SDD is not being reported by certain countries (DRC, Lesotho, Mozambique and Tanzania) in relation to the focus indicators. These findings revealed that countries are facing numerous challenges regarding the collection, analysis and reporting of SDD, which may be driven by the following: lack of processes and procedures; low GDD awareness levels; lack of guiding policies and strategies to support SDD in financial inclusion; and lack of comprehensive protocols to guide SDD data collection and reporting.

Figure 1: Data availability for banking and mobile money indicators in the SADC region



Challenges in supply-side gender-disaggregated data in the SADC region

The S-GDD gap assessment further revealed that several significant barriers impede the effective collection and reporting of S-GDD, which are faced by both central banks and FSPs operating within the SADC region. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the collection, analysis and dissemination of GDD. Table 1 presents a synthesis of the challenges as extracted from the GDD Gap Assessment Report.

Table 1: Selected supply-side gender-disaggregated data challenges faced in the SADC region

SN	Identified challenge	Description
1	Lack of awareness and necessary resources	Despite most central banks being members of the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI) (all SADC countries, except Botswana and DRC) and signatories to the Denarau Action Plan, appointing gender champions at senior levels to oversee gender-inclusive finance in accordance with AFI requirements, challenges persist regarding GDD at the technical and operational level. There is an inconsistency in GDD awareness among key departments at central banks, such as national payments and bank supervision, which are expected to be primary actors in GDD. This lack of awareness is also prevalent in FSPs (banks, mobile money operators, etc.)
2	Absence of policies and strategies to support GDD	There is no policy or legislation in any of the SADC countries that supports GDD, despite central banks relying on several general provisions within existing legislation. This, in turn, has led to the voluntary collection, analysis and sharing of GDD, which explains the presence of numerous data gaps. Additionally, none of the SADC member states has developed a specific gender action plan to prescribe how the recommendations from the SADC gender action plan will be implemented.
3	Data quality issues (absence of well-defined protocols, and the use of flawed data collection and analysis)	The absence of detailed protocols, in the form of toolkits, that should be in place to identify indicators and prescribe data collection and analysis for priority banking and mobile money indicators.
4	Lack of disaggregation by sex or other characteristics at the source	A significant challenge faced by central banks is the unavailability of GDD at its source, since they are merely aggregators and not the primary source of information. Consequently, although some indicators may be incorporated into returns templates shared with FSPs for the collection of GDD, the absence of data explains why numerous indicators are neither collected nor reported by most central banks (as can be confirmed by Figure 1).
5	Limited staff capacity among primary actors from FSPs	There is a significant knowledge divide regarding GDD, both within and among FSPs, due to a lack of awareness and appreciation for the value proposition that GDD brings. The primary obstacle is that the data analytics frameworks presently in place for the majority of FSPs are not tailored to address gender-related issues. Consequently, capacity development may be inadequate, as gender is not a priority and is not included in the key performance benchmarks.
6	Limited technical systems to support GDD	Some FSPs continue to encounter obstacles associated with data management systems that fail to facilitate the seamless collection, storage, and analysis of data. For instance, certain FSPs continue to conduct manual data collection, in which the know your customer (KYC) records are maintained in the form of ledgers without the individual records being transcribed into the Management Information System (MIS).
7	Lack of guidelines on GDD analytics	Added to staff capacity and systems challenges, there is also a lack of detailed guidelines (protocols covered under central banks) that should further guide FSPs in collecting, analysing and utilising the insights from GDD.

Proposed roadmap to improve supply-side gender-disaggregated data

Key finding from S-GDD gap assessment	Recommended key steps and actions	Proposed time frame	Implementing stakeholders or institutions	Priority countries
SADC member states (country-level)				
Not all data points requiring GDD are collected among member states. Additionally, there is a persistent lack of sex-disaggregated data from currently available data (General observation from Figure 1)	<p>To understand the driving factors related to this finding at the SADC level, a broader Gap Assessment exercise was conducted. Similarly, given the available resources, it is highly recommended that member countries institute or plan to conduct a gender gap assessment at the national level. The gap assessment activity may not be limited to only banking and mobile money subsectors, but may extend to other financial sector segments such as pensions, insurance and capital markets</p> <p>For countries that have undertaken gender audits/baselines in the financial sector, the activity may not be necessary if they understand the key factors and processes inhibiting the collection, analysis and reporting sex sex-disaggregated data in the financial sector.</p> <p>Key activity: Conduct gender gap assessment/gender audits in the financial sector.</p>	Medium to long term	Central banks and other financial sector regulators FSPs	All (especially member states who are yet to conduct gap assessment/gender audits) ¹
Inconsistent and low levels of GDD awareness among frontline	To enhance and improve GDD awareness, the following activities should be considered.			

¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lshkl-JIIM9hXjB7_CjHlsXF2QC60QWF/view?usp=drivesdk

departments at the central bank and FSPs	1. Issue public statements and policy notes on GDD: Central banks and other financial sector regulators should clearly express their commitment to gender equality and financial inclusion, emphasising the role of S-GDD in attaining these objectives. For example, the Bank of Zambia and the Central Bank of Kenya publicly issued their gender data journey, emphasising the significance of accurate data for informed policies.	Short to medium term	Central banks	All (especially those who have yet to issue any policy or statement on S-GDD)
	2. Capacity-building events: Organise events such as workshops and seminars aimed at financial institutions, policymakers and other stakeholders to promote awareness about the benefits of collecting and using S-GDD. These platforms can highlight successful cases and offer practical advice.	Short term	Central banks	All
	3. GDD communication materials: Create user-friendly guides, infographics and presentations that explain what S-GDD is, why it is important, and how it may be applied. Such materials should be available on the central bank's website and distributed through a variety of channels within the central bank and among FSPs.	Short term	Central banks	All
	Key activity: Conduct GDD advocacy and communication-related tasks.			
Country-level National Financial Inclusion Strategies (NFIS) are not accompanied by a specific gender action plan, unlike the SADC strategy on financial inclusion.	1. Conduct a comprehensive gender analysis of the existing NFIS: Analyse the existing NFIS for any explicit or implicit gender concerns, gaps or potential for gender mainstreaming. Examine the NFIS's aims, indicators, and implementation procedures via a gender lens.	Long term	NFIS Secretariat in collaboration with central banks and other key stakeholders	All

	<p>2. Identify key intervention areas: Prioritise intervention areas based on gender analysis. These may include addressing legal and regulatory impediments, creating gender-responsive financial products and services, increasing financial literacy and capability for women, using digital financial services (DFS) to promote women's inclusion, improving data collection, analysis and training financial organisations in gender-sensitive practices, as well as the creation of products and services geared towards women.</p> <p>Key activity: Conduct a gender analysis of NFIS and identify priority intervention areas².</p>			
<p>Although the lack of explicit regulation to mandate central banks to collect S-GDD from FSPs may not be an impeding factor, this may result in poor commitments from FSPs.</p>	<p>1. Central banks at the national level should either amend and improve the existing legal frameworks used for data collection for regulatory and supervisory purposes, explicitly addressing GDD issues, or develop specific policies requiring all FSPs to collect and report GDD on all necessary financial inclusion indicators. The policies should specify data needs and reporting dates so that GDD reporting is mandatory rather than optional, and adherence to such policies should be included in compliance requirements.</p> <p>2. For countries with existing S-GDD frameworks and regulations, they should periodically evaluate the effectiveness of such regulations and revise them as needed to reflect changing data needs,</p>	Long term	Central banks	All

² <https://www.microfinancegateway.org/finequity/guide/2022/07/finequity-knowledge-guide-incorporating-gender-intelligent-design-financial-services>

	<p>technological improvements, and stakeholder feedback.</p> <p>3. Central banks and other regulatory agencies should mandate all regulated FSPs to collect and report S-GDD for a defined set of key banking and mobile money indicators.</p> <p>Key activity: Strengthen the existing legal and policy framework to mandate FSPs to collect sex-disaggregated data. This should also include developing clear, explicit and comprehensive guidelines and regulations.</p>			
<p>Data quality may not be a serious concern, as most countries use systems like the Banking Supervision Application (BSA), which include built-in validation checks. However, severe data quality gaps may be imminent in countries that continue to handle S-GDD manually, where the exchange of data between central banks and FSPs is done through Excel templates by email.</p>	<p>1. Central banks should develop system-based data transfer mechanisms to do away with the manual transmission of returns.</p> <p>2. Central banks should encourage FSPs to adopt digital tools and systems for data collection and reporting to reduce manual errors and improve efficiency.</p> <p>3. Set up automatic mechanisms to discover errors, inconsistencies and missing data during the submission process.</p> <p>Key activity: Central banks should leverage technological advancement by migrating to an application programming interface (API) for seamless communication and exchange of data during the filing of returns.</p>	Medium term	Central banks and FSPs	Only countries undertaking manual transmission of returns
<p>Although the existing S-GDD collection focuses on banking and mobile money indicators, which are based on templates produced by SADC and the IMF (FAS), there may be a lack of well-designed, detailed protocols in the form of toolkits for all focus indicators that guide GDD</p>	<p>1. FMT, FSD Africa and SADC, as part of the follow-up activity to the GDD gap assessment, developed S-GDD guidelines with a high-level capacity-building activity conducted, which comprised staff mostly drawn from central banks across SADC member countries. Subsequent activity should include consideration by member</p>	Medium to long term	Central banks and FSPs	All

collection, analysis, and dissemination.	<p>states to ensure that the developed guidelines are part of the resource base on GDD issues, and conduct additional capacity-building and orientation workshops for key stakeholders at the country level based on the developed guidelines.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous engagements with organisations such as the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI), the World Bank, and UN Women, which have ongoing efforts and resources on gender-disaggregated data. AFI's Financial Inclusion Data Working Group (FIDWG) created recommendations and toolkits for sex-disaggregated data. Create platforms for regular dialogue between data providers (FSPs), data users (central bank departments, policymakers), and other key stakeholders to ensure that the GDD collection and analytics efforts meet the needs of all stakeholders. <p>Key activity: Implement collaborative and partnership activities.</p>			
GDD is sometimes unavailable at the central bank level due to a lack of essential data from primary data providers (FSPs/MNOs). This is because, while GDD-related information is collected as part of the KYC onboarding process, some banks that continue to manage client data outside of their MIS may encounter challenges in extracting GDD-related information because this cannot be done seamlessly.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> FSPs should conduct a thorough assessment of their existing core banking systems, customer relationship management (CRM)/KYC systems, and other relevant data capture and storage infrastructure. This assessment should identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Current data fields related to customer demographics <input type="checkbox"/> Capabilities for capturing and storing gender information <input type="checkbox"/> Data privacy and security protocols 	Long term	FSPs	All

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ System integration capabilities □ Potential challenges and costs associated with upgrades. <p>Such a system assessment should be informed by the framework provided by central banks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Based on the system assessment, central banks and FSPs should clearly identify the precise data points that must be recorded (e.g. account holder details, transaction types, loan information), the permitted gender categories, and the needed data formats. While conducting this activity, the central bank is responsible for establishing clear and standardised data requirements connected to S-GDD and efficiently communicating them to FSPs. 3. FSPs should create a clear, staged plan for system upgrades that includes timelines, resource allocations and critical milestones. These plans should consider the complexity of current systems as well as the scope of the necessary improvements. The central bank can support a staged approach, beginning with the most crucial data points and gradually broadening the focus. They can also advise on the critical components that should be included in these plans. 4. To improve S-GDD, central banks should promote the adoption of digital national identity systems that incorporate gender information, where feasible, and in conformity with data privacy legislation. Learning from countries, such as Chile and Egypt, which use gender-coded national IDs for financial data reporting, can provide useful insights. 			
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	<p>5. Other specific activities to be implemented by FSPs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Financial institutions need to prioritise investments in upgrading and adapting their data management systems and technological infrastructure to enable the efficient collection, storage and reporting of SDD <input type="checkbox"/> Gender fields should be systematically integrated into all relevant customer onboarding processes, including account opening forms (both digital and physical), and transaction recording systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive training should be provided to frontline staff and data management personnel on the importance of accurate SDD collection, the definitions of gender categories, and proper data entry procedures. <input type="checkbox"/> Financial institutions should actively utilise the collected SDD to gain deeper insights into their female customer base, understand their specific financial needs and behaviours, and inform the development of targeted, gender-sensitive financial products and services. <input type="checkbox"/> Establishing dedicated teams or assigning responsibilities for analysing SDD can help identify opportunities for product innovation and market segmentation. <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring short-term technical assistance projects with internally placed data scientists. 			
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	Key activity: CRM/KYC systems development, integration and upgrade, and linking such to transaction-level databases. This should include the promotion of national digital identification systems.			
SADC Secretariat				
Lack of comparable frameworks, guidelines and toolkits at the SADC level to be used as resources among member countries	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The SADC Secretariat should play a key role in enabling regional harmonisation of data collecting standards, reporting frameworks, and SDD definitions across all member states, expanding on existing initiatives such as the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS), SADC Gender Statistics Strategy (SGSS) for 2023-2030, and the implementation of gender action plans. This should also include regularly convening a regional working group on gender statistics in financial inclusion, which can aid in the development and promotion of these harmonised standards and guidelines. 2. The secretariat should aggressively encourage member states to share their knowledge, exchange best practices, and learn from one another about effective techniques for enhancing the collection and use of gender data in financial inclusion. Regional forums, workshops and conferences can help policymakers, regulators, and FSPs communicate and collaborate more effectively. 3. The Secretariat should continue to work with other stakeholders, such as FinMark Trust, to continuously explore the feasibility of establishing a central regional repository or platform for collecting, analysing, and 	Medium to long term	SADC Secretariat, member states	All

	<p>disseminating aggregated sex-disaggregated financial inclusion data for the SADC region (SADC FI M&E Portal), while adhering to strict national data privacy regulations and conducting a detailed feasibility assessment to determine the technical and regulatory prerequisites for expanding such a platform to include additional important indicators in accordance with the SADC financial inclusion agenda and other country-level NFIS.</p> <p>Key activity: Continuous facilitation of regional harmonisation and collaboration among member states.</p>			
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Demand-Side Gender-Disaggregated Data

Introduction

The roadmap prioritises actionable insights and policy interventions to enhance GDD, consolidated and analysed by central banks and similar financial inclusion authorities in the SADC region. By providing this enhanced statistical information, this will enable a more inclusive financial system throughout the SADC region.

The roadmap aims to proffer strategies for:

- Increasing GDD data quality
- Identifying and understanding specific gender gaps.

The successful implementation of the roadmap will require collaboration among a diverse range of stakeholders, including regulators and FSPs.

This roadmap is the culmination of a multi-stage project tackling GDD from both supply-side and demand-side perspectives. We provide brief overviews of both these components and the roadmap for subsequent GDD initiatives to advance this project across the SADC region.

Background

The guidelines were created to empower stakeholders to have enhanced capacity to identify and address the specific needs and challenges faced by women, thereby producing a more inclusive financial system throughout the SADC region, as conceptualised by regional and national financial inclusion policies/strategies. In fact, by diagnosing and advancing gender-disaggregated data, this project explicitly pursues this specific objective within the SADC Financial Inclusion SME Access Strategy (2023-2028).

In SADC, FinScope surveys are the key demand-side instrument for collecting financial inclusion data. Since the FinScope methodology already facilitates a data structure enabling detailed gender disaggregation, we focused on another dimension. Here, we examined key measures of women's economic empowerment (WEE) covered in FinScope surveys.

Existing FinScope surveys include different WEE measures, but these vary by country and have not been pursued as a standalone priority.

Demand-side piloting of enhanced WEE-FI indicators

FinEquity has recently presented a WEE-FI framework, along with suggested indicators and questions, for use in quantitative survey data collection.

FinEquity emphasises WEE encompassing:

- **Access to or use of resources (direct outcomes)**

- Material, human and social endowments, including education, skills, good health, digital technologies, markets and business training, all within a suitable enabling environment.
- **The exercise of agency (intermediate outcomes)**
 - The skills and resources to compete in markets
 - Fair and equal access to economic institutions
 - Power to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits within households, businesses and communities
- **Economic achievements (final outcomes)**
 - Final outcomes of the empowerment process, measured by objective business profits, subjective well-being and self-esteem.

FinEquity presents this framework and approach as a resource for enhancing the evaluation of interventions that have both a WEE and FI dimension. FinEquity suggests that the full framework is unlikely to be applied to most interventions.

Their measurement framework, indicators and questions provide options for evaluators to consider appending to their evaluation approach. The choice of what to use should be based on the WEE-FI components that best align with the intervention and evaluation requirements.

The FinEquity WEE-FI framework indicators were piloted in existing FinScope Consumer surveys in Botswana and South Africa in 2024 with the full survey samples. Most of the FinEquity indicators were incorporated into the Botswana survey. These additions significantly extended the duration of the interview.

In contrast, stakeholder dynamics meant that only a few indicators were added to the South Africa FinScope survey.

Findings from the FinScope WEE-FI pilot surveys

The primary purpose of the pilots was achieved. This demonstrated that the FinEquity WEE-FI indicators and questions can be integrated into the FinScope Consumer surveys. However, the demonstration purpose of the pilots has important differences from the broader GDD objective of enhancing future FinScope surveys with relevant WEE-FI content. This introduces our proposed roadmap.

The proposed roadmap approach

The identification of suitable indicators may depend on each country's requirements and will be incorporated into FinScope stakeholder management and survey implementation processes. This will involve incorporating a WEE-FI conceptual overview into the existing FinScope key initial stakeholder engagement processes. For each country, the extent to which WEE-FI will feature across subsequent phases of FinScope implementation will vary, depending on how WEE-FI resonates with key stakeholders and how well its measures align with financial inclusion strategic priorities at that point in time.

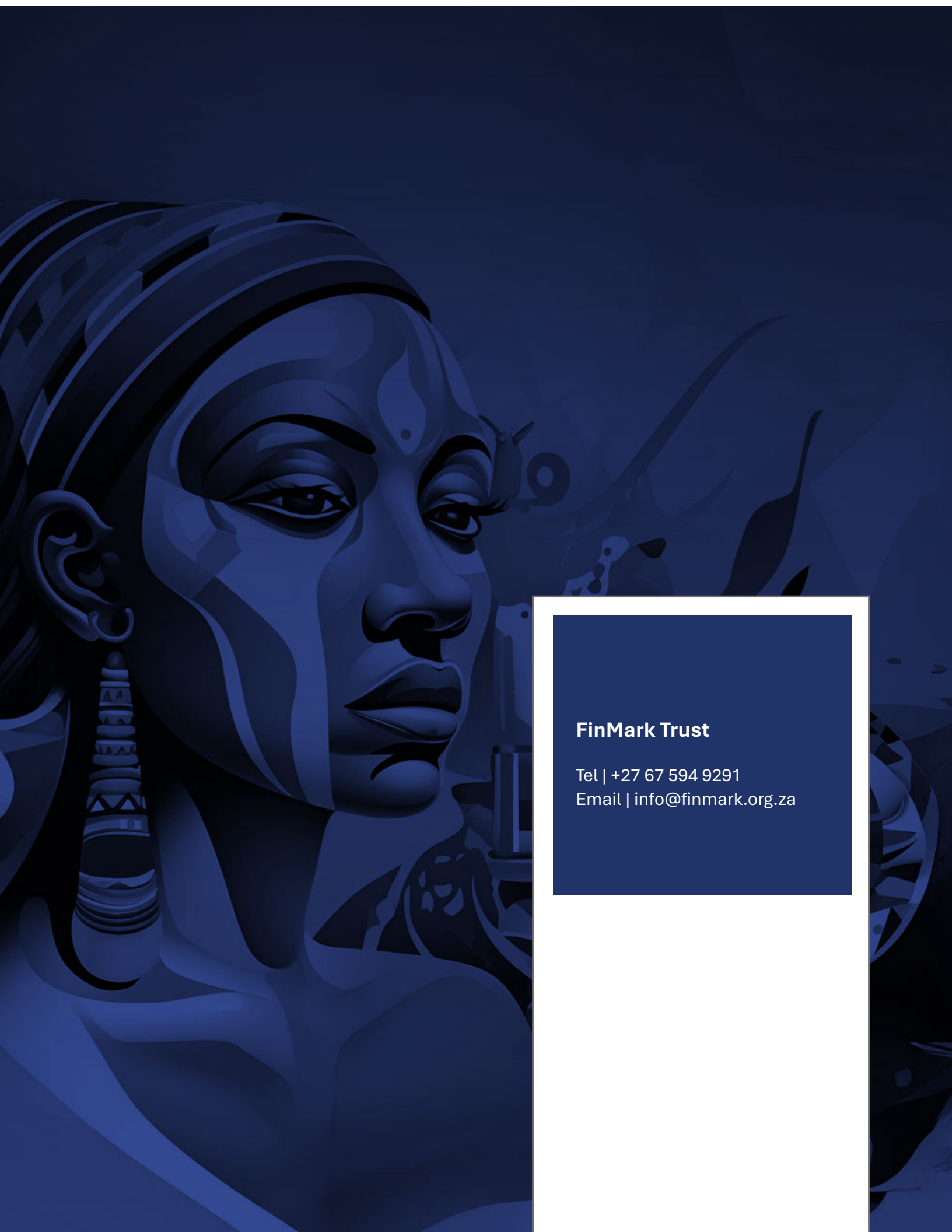
The timing for implementing additional WEE-FI indicator integration into FinScope surveys is important. This is best managed in the lead-up to a new survey round, to enable optimal integration into the survey instrument.

We recommend the following steps for piloting WEE-FI indicators in future FinScope surveys:

1. **Integrating WEE-FI into future FinScope surveys:** For forthcoming FinScope surveys, summarise the underlying measurement framework's purpose and intended outcomes, and include this overview as a key component for key stakeholders early in the upcoming FinScope country processes. In addition, engage the key financial inclusion host ministry to understand how well the measurement framework aligns with their financial inclusion priorities.
2. **Review proposed indicators:** Proposed indicators should be evaluated within the context of an underlying measurement framework or theory of change.
3. **Prioritise indicators:** Proposed indicators will be ranked based on their relevance and alignment with FinMark Trust's priorities.
4. **Identify gaps:** The identified priority indicators will be compared with existing FinScope surveys to identify existing questions and any gaps where indicators are not yet covered.
5. **Conceptualise questions:** Recommended questions will be developed to best integrate into existing FinScope questionnaires, considering the scope and capacity of each country's survey.
6. **Pilot and review:** The proposed questionnaire will be piloted in an upcoming FinScope survey, and the data will be analysed for gaps and integration guidelines.

Forthcoming FinScopes for implementing the D-GDD WEE-FI roadmap

Within the SADC region, upcoming FinScope Consumer surveys are scheduled for Eswatini, Lesotho and Namibia. However, these studies are still pending approvals, and thus, transforming the intended roadmap to a specific timeline is not currently possible. However, we intend to fortify the FinScope processes, data collection and reporting with enhanced WEE-FI content and indicators, as indicated.



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