



***A Preliminary Tourism Development Strategy for
the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor 2011-2014***

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List of abbreviations

IDP	Integrated Development Plan
MTPA	Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
MYDP	Multi-Year Development Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TBC	Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor
TFCA	Trans Frontier Conservation Area
TFP	Trans Frontier Park
SME	Small and Medium Scale Enterprise

Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor

A Preliminary Tourism Development Strategy 2011-2014

FINAL REPORT

1. Introduction

As was noted in the 2002 Preliminary Tourism Development Strategy for the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor, the predominantly rural areas of Northern Swaziland, South-eastern Mpumalanga and Southern Mozambique have tremendous inherent development potential for tourism-led growth, although this inherent development potential has tended to be under-utilised.

The central concept that emerged from the previous planning processes is that of utilising the unique biodiversity, heritage, cultural, geological and archaeological resource base that is shared by the countries as a basis for the development of an economic development corridor where tourism-led developments are the primary activities.

1.1 Purpose of this document

The Barberton Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor programme (BATOBIC) commissioned DB Consulting (December 2010) to review and update the previously prepared (2002) Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor development strategy.

As such, the main objectives of this consultancy are to *firstly* evaluate the previous Preliminary Tourism Development Strategy for the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor (June 2002 TBC Strategy) in context of projects subsequently (to 2002) undertaken in the project area and in context of any/all new and relevant tourism and conservation based strategies/studies that have been prepared for the planning area. *Secondly*, where needed to update and review such, based on the current needs for tourism development in the area. *Thirdly*, to develop a Multi-Year Development Programme (MYDP) which will guide the process of the implementation of projects that form the BATOBIC programme as may be relevant to the implementation of the updated Strategy previously referred to. If appropriate, this will be a review and update of the MYDP developed in 2001.

1.2 Methodology

Strategic emphasis: The proposed approach to implementing this project is guided by the overall principle that BATOBIC is focused on achieving tangible economic growth and development. Key indicators in this regard are increased tourism flows, investment, job creation and capacity building.

Geographical focus area: It is also important to confirm that this process will focus primarily on strategy and multi-year planning for the South African areas of what is often referred to as the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor. This area stretches from Kaapmuiden in the east through Barberton to Badplaas in the west. Furthermore, it is part of a long term vision and integrated plan to unlock the potential of the area and position it as a diversified tourism destination. The programme has its origins in the various national, provincial and local planning studies that have been conducted in the area over the last few years. These studies have consistently identified the area as having large, undeveloped tourism potential. As

such, the 2011-2014 version of the TBC Strategy and Multi-Year Development programme will place a far lesser emphasis on assessing, or proposing revised, projects, priorities and programmes in the Swaziland and Mozambique areas of the TBC (as defined in the 2002 TBC Strategy). However the strategy does where applicable identify potential strategic linkages, development opportunities and complementarities of a cross border nature where required.

Prioritisation: In view of BATOBIC's objective to achieve impacts as quickly as possible, it is also essential that the Multi-Year Development Plan identify and focus on those projects that can reasonably be implemented within the *time-framework* of 1-3 years. In terms of the types of projects to be pursued as priorities the emphasis will be placed on potential anchor investment or demonstration projects that will not only create desired socio-economic impact (which generally indicates that they are larger scale projects), but that are also most likely to demonstrate the value and impact of development models (such as community/Private [CPPS] and/or community/public/private partnerships [CPPPs]) which are likely to be applied on multiple projects (and possibly at varying scales). In terms of the sectoral emphasis, a similar approach as was applied in the 2002 strategy has been followed - that tourism-led developments were/are inevitably going to be a key part of any development strategy for the planning area (even though the role of the agriculture sector in terms of employment creation and local economic development should not be underestimated). As such the 2010-2014 TBC Strategy is aimed at providing a sound and sustainable strategic context within which the initial tourism anchor projects have been identified, prioritised and conceptualised.

1.3 Structure of the report

This report is structured as follows: *Section two* provides a summary assessment of the key existing socio-economic trends in the South African portions of the TBC, and highlights the related planning and development issues, implications, opportunities and priorities. *Section three* summarises the key tourism development trends in the planning area. *Section four* provides the broader regional tourism development context. *Section five* provides a concise overview of the biodiversity and conservation issues and priorities in the planning area. *Section six* provides the proposed preliminary tourism development framework and strategies for the planning area. *Section seven* provides an overview of the key anchor projects. *Section eight* provides a list of required follow-up actions.

2. Key socio-economic issues and trends, and related planning implications

In general it is clear that the South Africa portions of the study area are in need of accelerated development. In particular, there is an urgent need for the development of strategies that would create sustainable employment and economic growth. The key indicators that underpin this conclusion are as follows:

The inadequate performance of the economy of the Study Area is evident in its **low labour absorption capacity**. This is evident from the high unemployment levels in the Study Area which are in excess of 26%¹ (Umjindi IDP 2010-2011). Expansion of existing economic activities and exploitation of new ventures are essential to improve the absorption capacity of the economy.

¹ The source data for this statistics appears to be from 2002.

Tourism Master Plan



TOURIST ROUTE SECTIONS	ATTRACTION NAME
Badplaas to Lukwatini R541	1. Badgat Inland Dive Site & Komati Springs
Lukwatini to R35fda1	2. Nkomazi Game Reserve
Josefsdal to R30/R40 intersect East	3. bridge NB GEO sites
Mlumatati to Low's Creek	4. Doornhoek Conference & Enviro Education Centre
Low's Creek to R38/R40 intersect East	5. Ebuthini X44 Trail
R38/R40 East tp R40/R38 West	6. Songimvelo Nature Reserve
R40/R38 West to Badplaas	7. Ou Kaapberg Historic Bridge
	8. Masuli Recreation Club
	9. Dingopani / Masuli Golf Course
	10. VIEWPOINT 2
	11. Tienie Louw Nature Reserve
	12. Bardolton Nature Reserve
	13. Saddleback pass

- 1 Nkomazi GR (Komati River) (not listed)
- 2 Ebushini Lodge
- 3 Kromdraai Camp - Songimvelo Game Reserve
- 4 Mead Guest House
- 5 Cranko's Creek Guest House
- 6 La Luna Guest Farm
- 7 Paradise Game Ranch
- 8 Diggers Retreat Hotel
- 9 Old Coach Guest House
- 10 Barberton Guest House
- 11 Oppikoppi Inn/Krater
- 12 Barberton Manor Guest House
- 13 Guthrie's Bed & Breakfast
- 14 Lezmin 1485 Cc
- 15 Fountain Baths Guest House
- 16 Cockney Liz Hotel
- 17 Chill Inn Accommodation (same thing)
- 18 Chill Inn Lodge (same thing)
- 19 English Lodge (can't find)
- 20 Fernlea House Lodge
- 21 Fortuna (Can't find)
- 22 Makhojwa Guest House
- 23 Phoenix Hotel
- 24 The Gold Nugget Guesthouse
- 25 Royal Sheba Guest House
- 26 Stopforth house
- 27 Barberton Caravan Park Chalets (one destination)
- 28 Barberton Caravan Park (one destination)
- 29 Phumula Holiday Camp
- 30 Barberton Daisy Lodge
- 31 Grace Farm Cottages
- 32 Aloe Ridge Herbs and Guest Farm
- 33 Savanna Lodge
- 34 Queen Rose Hiking Trail
(Makesh Hut and Queens View Hut)
- 35 Jambila Jeugsentrum
- 36 Malasha Guesthouse
- 37 Dawson's Game & Trout Lodge
- 38 Imieboes Guest House
- 39 Pomponyane Holiday & Game Farm
- 40 Therans Rest Camp
- 41 Maryvale Rest Camp
- 42 Forever Resorts Badplaas
- 43 Cornerstone Guesthouse
- 44 Villa Rozana
- 45 Songimvelo Panhandle
- 46 Shiyalingobu Dam
- 47 Boondocks Heritage site
- 48 Nukaini Mabusa Rock Painting
- 49 Sheeba Mine
- 50 Eureka 4x4 trail end - Iapa
- 51 Eureka City
- 52 Jack's Tree
- 53 Eureka 4x4 trail start
- 54 Oilfantskop
- 55 Fairview Mine (Historical or current?)
- 56 Mountaintails 4x4 Trail start/end
- 57 Oppikoppi 4x4 trails
- 58 Barberton Golf Course
- 59 Jack of Bushveld Museum
- 60 Locomotive Museum
- 61 Blockhouse Historic Building
- 62 Barberton Museum
- 63 Kerb stone from 1800's
- 64 First Stock Exchange
- 65 Belhaven Museum
- 66 St John's Catholic Church & Care Centre
- 67 Queen River Historic Bridge
- 68 Queen River Horse & Pony Rides
- 69 Paintball War Games
- 70 Fernatic Nursery
- 71 Suidekaap River Historic Bridge
- 72 Daisy Kopje National Heritage Site
- 73 Nataldrieff Wholesale Nursery
- 74 Lincoln Macadamia Nursery
- 75 Hopewell Nursery
- 76 Thronzloff Nature Reserve
- 77 Cythna Trail Floral Reserve
- 78 Queen Rose Hiking Trail
- 79 Queen River Hiking Trail
- 80 Queens River Nature Reserve
- 81 Bothness viewpoint
- 82 VIEWPOINT
- 83 Nelshoogte Nature Reserve
- 84 Dr Hamilton Nature Reserve
- 85 Nelshoogte pass
- 86 Enkhonjani's Royal Kraal
- 87 Vyeboom Dam
- 88 Barberton Yacht Club
- 89 GoKarts
- 90 Cross-Country Carts
- 91 Badplaas Picnic Site
- 92 Eco Adventures Badplaas
- 93 Badplaas Resort Chip 'n Putt
- 94 Badplaas Horse Trails
- 95 Waterfall Gorge
- 96 Emanzana 4x4 trail
- 97 Emanzana Nature Reserve
- 98 Trail Viewpoint

PLAN 1: REGIONAL ASSESSMENT



The unique geology and associated soil types, as well as the range of altitudes have resulted in the area having a tremendously rich diversity of biota. The natural resource base and climate make the study very well suited to agricultural-led and tourism-led economic development. The fact that it is the natural resource base that underpins both of these economic activities implies that the long-term management on a sustainable basis of the natural resource base is essential.

Presently, the economy of the Study Area is driven by the agriculture (30.8%) and mining (11.2%). The importance of the agriculture sector as an employment creator stands out especially in context of the declines of the mining sector (noted in the Umjindi IDP 2010) which will also create additional unemployment and socio-economic hardships. There is no real prospect at present that these job losses in the mining sector can be reversed (locally within the sector). As such alternative sources of employment in economic activities need to be actively pursued.

The under-utilised but potentially ‘world-class’ tourism natural resources offer a clear opportunity for tourism-led development. Tourism-led development also offers important potential for SME development since opportunities are relatively plentiful, and access is that much easier within the tourism industry (particularly resource and culturally based). What is also significant is that much of this under-utilised tourism development potential is located in or adjacent to rural areas that house many of the poorer communities. Such tourism-led development strategies and initiatives will need to be designed and implemented in a coordinated and integrated manner with the agricultural led developments that form part of the KRBDP.

There are also a number of important ***transborder collaboration issues*** that should be noted in terms of the promotion of tourism-led development:

- *Firstly*, that the underlying resource base within South Africa and Swaziland is very well suited to tourism-led development. If this resource base is to be sustainably utilised and/or conserved, an integrated and coordinated approach to the conservation, management and development of the resources is essential. Inevitably, this will require considerable related capacity building, and this too can, and should, be approached on a collaborative and co-operative basis.
- *Secondly*, tourism-led development strategies within the South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique could have major positive impacts for economic growth and investment². It is essential for such tourism-led developments that a coordinated and integrated approach is adopted. It is only on this basis that a corridor encompassing a variety of different environments, archaeological experiences, cultures, biological diversity, adventure tourism experiences etc. can be developed.
- *Thirdly*, in support of tourism-led development efforts, it is vital that an integrated network of infrastructure and services are developed. If access through the region is perceived to be difficult, excessively slow, dangerous, excessively expensive, etc., development will be negatively affected.
- *Fourthly*, related to the issue of the transborder movement of travelers, every effort needs to be made to ensure the smooth flow of people across the international borders. This is especially important since tourists who experience tedious and excessively bureaucratic immigration procedures feel threatened and unwelcome.

² Due to inter alia the potentially employment intensive and SMME friendly nature of the tourism industry, as well as the fact that this sector poses less barriers to entry for less skilled and experienced employment seekers)

3. Tourism development issues and trends

Within the context of the above listed socio-economic issues and trends, there are a number of tourism specific issues and trends that need to be noted:

- ***The planning area contains a significant number of publicly, communally and privately owned nature reserves.*** These protected areas provide a range of different natural habitats and related opportunities for nature based adventure and photographic tourism. The most significant of these existing reserves include the following:
 - The South African reserves include Songimvelo, Barberton Game Reserve, Nkomazi Wilderness Nature Reserve, Piranie Nature Reserve, and the Mountainlands Nature Reserve
 - The Swaziland reserves include Malolotja, Phophonyane, Lubombo Conservancy (including Hlane, Mlawula, Shewula and Mbuluzi Reserves).
 - ***There are also portions of communal land that could be well suited to tourism based developments.*** The key areas identified at present include the Matsamo cattle/game project area and the Ebutsini Community tourism area.
 - In Swaziland the *Sand River cattle and game ranch*.
- ***The planning area has unique geology.*** The Barberton Makhonjwa Mountainlands contains the oldest and best preserved volcanic and sedimentary rocks on earth. Our knowledge of the earth from 3.6 billion years ago has grown tremendously as a result of research done in the Barberton Mountainlands. It is within this context that the area has already achieved the 'Tentative Listing' accreditation from UNESCO as a prospective World heritage Site. The marketing and related economic benefits that would result from 'World Heritage Site' accreditation are likely to be significant for the TBC.
- ***Wide range of cultural and heritage opportunities*** including both traditional indigenous cultures as well as colonial influences and Dravidian and Arabic influences from 1000 to 3000 years ago. These include Middle Stone Age sites (22 000-100 000 years old) in Barberton, 16th and 17th century bushman rock paintings in Piggs Peak (amongst 20 other sites in Swaziland), various ancient dwellings and settlements around 500 years old (one complete village on Wonderscheur in Mountainlands), Lions Cavern, which at between 41 000 and 36 000 BC is the oldest known mine in the world, Labambo Royal Kraal (Swaziland – current), Eureka City (1800s mining settlement), Sheba Gold mine which is the oldest working mine in the world, De Kaap Valley (Valley of Death), Dravidian temple sites (in Mountainlands Nature Reserve, Nkomazi Wilderness Nature Reserve and Songimvelo Game Reserve) etc.
- ***Arts and crafts:*** A wide range of quality handcrafts is available to visitors and represent a blend of the best of traditional designs and modern techniques. Some are sold in specialist stores, whilst others are available from the markets and even on the side of the road.
- ***There is a good potential match between tourism development potential in the TBC, and tourism demand trends in South Africa:*** In terms of inherent potential it is a well-accepted fact that South Africa has particularly good inherent potential for nature based tourism – particularly related to the varied scenery and wildlife. The 2009 Annual Tourism Report (SA Tourism) confirms that natural attractions, cultural and

historical sites, business and wildlife are the main reasons for foreign tourists visiting South Africa.

The Mpumalanga Province is renowned as a prime destination for nature-based tourism – especially photographic tourism. Notwithstanding its inherent development potential as well as its past performance as a nature based tourism destination there are some worrying signs for Mpumalanga tourism:

- Using foreign visitor trends as an indicator, it is clear that Mpumalanga Province has lost a substantial market share of tourist arrivals to South Africa since 2002. From a high of 21% in 2002, this percentage dropped to 16.3% (2003); 15.3 (2004); 14.9 (2005); 14.1 (2006); and 12.8 (2007). Since 2007 there has been some improvement to 13.4 (2008) and 14% in 2009. Foreign tourist direct spending has also dropped significantly from some R5 Billion in 2002 to about R 3.9 Billion in 2007, and then improved substantially to 5.3 Billion in 2008 and 2009. The trend is clear - notwithstanding the large number of world class attractions - the province has consistently struggled to grow its market share.
- Even in the domestic tourism market, which accounts for 75% of total SA market by volume, the trend is worrying. In 2008 Mpumalanga is ranked only 5th (out of 9) in terms of preferred destinations. This position deteriorated further to 6th in 2009.
- Notwithstanding the obvious tourism development potential of the TBC area, ***this inherent tourism development potential is hardly utilised at all***. Clearly the TBC area is not a well-known tourism destination, and one result is that there is a very limited amount of development, as well as poor levels of utilisation. The fact that tourism-led development in the Kruger Lowveld area is very new is also reflected in the paucity of statistics that are available for the area.
 - ***In the Barberton district*** the major existing tourism attractions include the various public and private nature reserves/conservancies, as well as a range of archeological, geological and culture and heritage attractions (as described above). At this stage, the related tourism development potential remains largely under-utilised, and the area is not a well-known destination at all. The area has a number of key advantages that bode well for its future development. They include the following:
 - The inherent development potential in terms of nature based photographic and consumptive tourism, in adventure tourism, and in terms of culture and heritage tourism. All of these sectors of the tourism market are key growth sectors in the global tourism economy.
 - All the major reserves have reasonably good access by road. Piranie and Mountainlands via tarred roads, and Songimvelo (the last portion) via gravel road. All reserves are accessible by 2X4 wheel drive vehicles. (Note: Internal road access is not universally 'good' within portions of Mountainlands and Songimvelo.)
 - This district is well located in terms of proximity to Swaziland and it's related attractions, particularly so as a result of the surfacing of the Barberton to Bulembu Road. This linkage would be substantially further improved when, and if, the road between Bulembu and Piggs Peak is upgraded.

- ***Biodiversity and conservation issues and trends:*** The area incorporates a continuum of habitats from the Drakensburg representing the Afromontane Archipelago (1050-1400m) to the Middleveld (400-1000m), to the Lowveld (150-400m), to the Lubombo Mountains (high point of 770m), to the Maputaland/Tongaland coastal plain. Whilst these types of habitat are found elsewhere in Swaziland and South Africa, it is only in the northern parts of Swaziland that this continuum is compressed into a maximum east-west distance of 200km. This renders the area uniquely valuable from a scientific point of view compressing high levels of biodiversity into a relatively small area.
 - The *Drakensberg ecoregion* of Afromontane grasslands and woodlands forms a high plateau extending from the Eastern Cape through Lesotho and western Swaziland into Mpumalanga. It displays several sub-levels of local endemism – one of which is the Barberton Centre that extends from South Africa into Swaziland. The area is very rich in biota, plants, mammals, snakes, birds, etc. The grassland biome is foremost among the biomes in southern Africa that are poorly represented within existing protected areas. Malolotja Nature Reserve and Songimvelo are two of the few protected areas where a substantial area of the grassland biome and rare and endemic species are conserved.
 - The *Middleveld* and *Lowveld* encompass a range of productive habitats. These areas contain very fertile soils and can (and historically did) support a large and varied range of larger mammal species. Whilst vast areas of the Middleveld have been settled by pastoralists and sugarcane monoculture, biologically valuable but increasingly discontinuous areas do survive either in inaccessible country, on private or state ranches, or in proclaimed protected areas. The northern Lowveld in Swaziland is notable in supporting rare relict tropical species such as rare snakes, and the overall amphibian and avifaunal diversity is probably the richest in the country.
- ***Regional tourism development context:*** There are a number of tourism development initiatives currently underway that impact on the BATOBIC TBC planning area. The most important of these include the Songimvelo/Malolotja TFCA, the proposed Barberton Mountainlands World Heritage Site, and the Ehlanzeni Responsible Tourism Development Plan (which includes a number of local municipalities including Mjindi). Since these individual initiatives are geographically all located very close together and in certain instances ‘overlap’ geographically it is important that opportunities for collaboration are pursued, and that policies and strategies are complementary. Collectively these initiatives are focused on the development of a very diverse range of tourism products, experiences and environments that are potentially complementary in nature. By combining their individual products and experiences they collectively offer a vast array of diverse yet complementary tourism products and experiences. These potential advantages are further reinforced by opportunities for participating authorities to benefit from economies of scale associated with a regional approach to tourism marketing, management and development³.

4. *Development framework and principles for the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor 2011-2014*

³ These include: Economies of scale associated with the joint development of infrastructure, facilities and services thereby avoiding duplication, as well as sharing of human and financial resources; Greater coordination of tourism development policy and strategy; Sharing of lessons of experience; Creating a critical mass to be internationally significant and attractive; etc.

4.1 Key issues arising from the Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy (2007)

The Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy (MTGS) provides the provincial level strategic context for the TBC 2011-2014. The MTGS has identified a number of strategic priorities for the Barberton area as follows:

A review of the DRAFT Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy also highlighted a number of important trends and strategies that are relevant to this assessment:

Vision:

- Diversified and expanded tourism product.
- More balanced spatial spread of tourism product.

*In terms of the Barberton area the key elements of the vision were that it would by 2016 have been designated as the 'Cradle of Life' site as a World Heritage Site. This in turn would have given impetus to the development of **Barberton** as a tourism centre. Capitalising on the plant species diversity in the area, a BioPark (WHS Interpretation Centre) would have been developed which is a major attraction for tourists, both international and domestic. Barberton is the centre for sightseeing in the Bulembu Mountains and the Songimvelo Nature Reserve.*

Strategy:

- To achieve a targeted R10 Billion in tourism spending (for Mpumalanga) by 2016 there was/is a need to broaden and diversify the primarily nature-based tourism product into more mainstream segments such as sports events, business/conference meetings, theme/amusement park. Mpumalanga's natural, cultural and man-made attractions were also identified as offering potential for niche products based on nature, culture, heritage, soft adventure and hard adventure. Product quality was to be up market.
- Investment driven strategy: To achieve the targeted R10 Billion of tourism spending Mpumalanga will have to move to an investment driven strategy with sustained investment in new products, destination marketing, human resources development etc.
- To obtain sustainable benefits for the people of Mpumalanga. In this regard the fundamental mechanism to achieve this was to be by increasing tourism revenue. Without an increase in revenue there can be: no growth in income; no improvement in employment, or Government tax revenues; and no possibility of improving community benefits from tourism. To increase tourism revenue there must either be more visitors, increased per capita spending by visitors, or longer stays, or some combination of above.
- Product Development Planning: The key interventions for the TBC planning area included the development of a number of 'flagship' projects which included a new hotel(s) in Barberton (including golf course and spa) and the BioPark (WHS Interpretation Center at Barberton).
- Marketing: Two key factors were identified as having a determining influence. The first was that Mpumalanga has neither the product range nor volume, nor the resources to undertake general destination marketing campaigns. Consequently, in the short/medium term the small scale of Mpumalanga's current tourism product offering requires that to be effective and get the best returns on expenditures, the

promotion must be targeted at niche product segments. However, as the product base expands, increasingly more resources will need to be allocated to for destination marketing.

The second factor was that South African Tourism determines and implements the national marketing strategy. SATourism determines the source markets which should be targeted, the country's brand image in these markets, the products/destinations featured in advertising and publicity campaigns, the promotional activities undertaken and the budgets allocated. Consequently, the MTPA's approach must be to dovetail the Mpumalanga's marketing strategy and plan with that of SATourism's, while at the same time using SATourism's marketing activities as 'platforms' to mount its own promotional campaigns.

4.2 *Strategic objectives of the TBC 2011-2014 Development Strategy*⁴

The primary strategic objective of this TBC 2011-2014 Development Strategy is the promotion and support of sustainable tourism-led socio-economic development in the Barberton District of South Africa.

The objectives and strategies described below are all consistent with those defined in the MTGS (2007) as described above. The vision, objectives and strategies are also and are also all consistent with the 'vision' for tourism development in the Umjindi Local Municipality as described in the "Umjindi Responsible Tourism Development Strategy" document (February 2008) which defines the vision as follows:

To create a tourism destination which is rich in historical intrigue, story telling and eco-tourism experiences of both scenic beauty and adventure that will provide entertainment to holiday travelers and satisfaction to historians. In turn this product offering will provide recognition to the region as well as ongoing growth in economic and social return for the local community."

The Umjindi Responsible Tourism Development Strategy also defined a number of tourism goals deemed to be important to achieving the stated vision. These tourism goals are described below and are also consistent with the detailed objectives, principles and strategies defined in the TBC 2011-2014 Strategy. They are:

- *To increase visitor numbers, visitor spend and length of stay.*
- *To mobilise greater private sector investment in tourism product and small enterprise development.*
- *To ensure the responsible development of tourism that is commercially viable, environmentally conscious and culturally sensitive.*
- *To ensure the creation of a safe and secure environment for tourists.*

There are also a number of more detailed objectives and biodiversity conservation objectives. They are as follows:

- To utilise the inherent tourism and conservation potential as a basis for the development of a world-class nature based tourism destination.
- To increase the rate of economic growth within and adjacent to the planning area.
- To generate new/additional tourism and conservation-led employment opportunities.

⁴ *The objectives of the TBC 2011-2014 Strategy are consistent with those specified in the 2002 TBC Strategy*

- To create a more diversified and robust economy within and adjacent to the planning area.
- To mobilise private sector investment and expertise for tourism and conservation development within the planning area.
- To increase the benefits flowing to the rural communities in order to launch a process of sustainable development over the long-term.
- To demonstrate the strong positive relationship between the conservation of biodiversity and tourism development.
- To develop a sustainable management and biodiversity conservation system.
- To conserve and/or rehabilitate areas with a high existing or potential biodiversity value

4.3 *Preliminary design principles for the TBC Strategy 2011-2014*

- Any proposed developments must be designed and implemented in a manner that is sustainable. In terms of this project, sustainable is seen to ***constitute a balance between the social, economic and environmental considerations***. In this regard it is noted in particular that the planning area is characterised by a very high incidence of poverty, as well as high biodiversity and tourism development potential. These three characteristics have the potential to conflict, and it is as such imperative that in the development of certain initiatives that a balance between the issues is attained.
- ***Any proposed tourism development framework must ensure that the natural resource base in the planning area is properly conserved.*** A number of the reserves/conservancies (including Malolotja, Songimvelo, Mountainlands, Nkomazi Wilderness game/nature reserves) are strategically important assets since they protect strategically vital water catchments, and also have very high bio-diversity value. As such it is proposed that all proposed developments within the planning area should be designed to comply with standards that would provide for environmental auditing against ISO 14000 standards at some stage.
- ***The existing and proposed game/nature reserves/conservancies offer potentially very attractive tourism investment opportunities that need to be better utilised.*** There are numerous areas/localities within and adjacent to these nature reserves that could sustain tourism developments. In some instances facilities already exist but are severely under-utilised (such as in Songimvelo). In other cases such as in the Songimvelo Panhandle and around Maguga Dam), the potential exists, but has never been utilised.
- ***The revenue generating ability of these various nature reserves need to be enhanced*** in order to provide additional resources for much needed conservation and development initiatives within the other existing and/or potential reserves in the broader planning area. This should have the impact of reducing their impact on the State/Provincial budgets, although it should be noted that in many instances the additional tourism developments will not cover all costs associated with land management, and as such Government will still be required to provide the balance of funding.
- ***Revenue generated from the nature reserves/conservancies in the sub-region, should be re-invested locally.*** There is a need to ensure an institutional structure and legal framework that allows/ensures that locally generated revenues are reinvested into the planning area's nature reserves and adjacent communities.

- ***Far greater levels of private sector investment and expertise needs to be mobilised in support of tourism marketing, management and development.*** The primary role of the private sector would be to invest resources and expertise into the planning area, and to promote it as an important tourism destination through their development and marketing of individual facilities and attractions. The primary role of the state would be to provide regional planning support and generic marketing in partnership with the private sector. This in turn would promote economic growth and employment creation.
- ***The tourism development framework must wherever possible and practical endeavor to build linkages between the proposed tourism developments within the nature reserves and existing and/or proposed community based tourism development initiatives adjacent to the Reserves.*** In particular it is noted that the Ebutsini, Sheba, Lomshiyo communities have embarked on their own tourism initiatives. Any proposed tourism development initiatives within the State reserves (wholly or partly) should seek to support rather than compete with these. Similarly, specific efforts will be made to ascertain where tourism and/or conservation related activities could be 'outsourced' to local communities, and for the use of indigenous building technologies. Wherever possible private sector expertise should be brought in to support these development efforts especially in terms of aspects such as sustainability (economic, financial, environmental and social) as well as marketing.
- ***The design principles formulated for the planning area need to be integrated into and consistent with the development objectives and priorities of the relevant District, Sub-regional, Local and Tribal authorities' areas.*** As such the objectives and priorities for the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor and its component parts in South Africa would need to be fully integrated into the relevant Local and District Authority Integrated Development Plans (IDPs).
- ***Areas with land claims:*** It is essential that in those instances where there are land claims on any areas of land targeted for tourism developments within the planning area, that the principles and procedures, and rights and obligations of the applicants and the Government are clearly stated in the bidding documents (Requests for Proposals) that are to be presented to prospective investors. As far as possible these claims should be resolved as soon as possible since the uncertainty around land tenure acts as a strong disincentive to further private sector investment and development.

5. ***Conceptual tourism development strategy***

The strategies provided are not intended to provide a comprehensive package, and more detailed and site-specific strategies will need to be developed on a site-by-site basis. When and where additional strategies are formulated for specific project sites and/or specific nature reserves, such strategies should not be in conflict with the basic design principles spelled out in section 4.3 or in conflict with the strategies described in this section.

The strategies described below have been developed over the period of the past 10 years. A second related document that should be read in conjunction with this TBC Tourism Development Strategy is the TBC Multi year Development Programme (MYDP) that was

initially completed in 2001 and has been revised (as part of this same consultancy) in 2011. The MYDP highlights the following:

- The key activities that need to be undertaken as part of the TBC initiative.
- The related institutional responsibilities for executing such activities.
- The current status in terms of each activity.
- The likely time framework within which such activities are intended to be implemented.

5.1 The vision

The vision for the TBC 2011-2014 Strategy is to:

- Establish the sub-region as a world-class tourism destination.
- To develop and get agreement between the public, community and private stakeholders on a common medium term (3-15 years) vision, strategy, priorities and action plan for the future development of this area.
- To restructure the economy from one that is stagnant and based primarily on mining and agricultural led development, to one that is growing and underpinned by tourism, conservation and agricultural-led development.
- The tourism product to be developed is based on a blend of nature based (photographic and consumptive), adventure, and cultural (including arts and crafts) tourism activities.
- The existing ownership and 'control' structures of the land is such that the key stakeholders are a blend of people from the public, private and community sectors.
- To market, manage and develop the conservation and tourism assets on the basis of a regional and collaborative approach with Swaziland and Mozambique.

5.2 Key elements of strategy

As was noted in section 1.2 of this document a key part of the methodology is to develop a strategy that is focused, not unnecessarily complicated, and last but not least that will result in tangible development impacts as quickly as possible. The TBC 2011-2014 Strategy is underpinned by five key elements of strategy. They include:

- The identification and implementation of selected demonstration projects
- Tourism management strategies
- Tourism marketing and product development strategies
- Tourism investment mobilisation strategies
- Tourism related spatial development strategies

5.2.1 The identification and implementation of demonstration projects

Whilst the planning area has undoubted tourism development potential, this potential has remained largely under-utilised to-date. The reasons for this lack of utilisation are varied, but would certainly include *firstly*, the fact that the private sector has in many instances been 'crowded out' by the public sector in terms of investment. *Secondly*, that the area is not at all well known as a tourism destination. *Thirdly*, that the private sector is probably concerned about the sustainability/security of investing substantial amounts of money in infrastructure and facilities on land which is generally not owned on a freehold basis. *Fourthly*, the State has also had concerns about the potential impacts of allowing private sector investment into areas that were essentially set aside for conservation uses. *Fifthly*, there are also certain strategic elements of tourism related infrastructure that need to be developed and/or upgraded.

In recent years there has been a far greater acceptance of the need to form partnerships between the State, the private sector and communities for the development of conservation based tourism ventures. Furthermore substantially more projects based on CPPs and CPPPs have been implemented since 2002, with a significant number of projects been implemented in Mpumalanga. However, these concepts of private sector investment, tourism-led development, and of partnerships still need active support and encouragement until the approach, related procedures, principles and so on are well accepted and understood by government, communities and the private sector.

For this reason it is proposed that the top priority strategy for boosting the development momentum in the planning area, and at the same time demonstrating how tourism investment can and should proceed (including the use of community/private partnerships [CPPS] and community/ public /private partnerships), is to identify a range of demonstration projects that will demonstrate how tourism related investments and partnerships can be structured in a viable and sustainable manner⁵.

This approach of using demonstration projects was initially proposed and accepted as part of the 2002 TBC Strategy. A number of these demonstration projects have in fact been implemented and they are discussed below.

Regrettably quite a number of the initial demonstration projects have also not been implemented. As part of the initial demonstration process for the TBC 2011-2014 Strategy 7 further demonstration projects have been selected and described very briefly below. These same demonstration projects are also described in more detail in Annexures 1-8 of this document.

Progress achieved since the TBC 2002 Development Strategy:

As noted above a number of the demonstration projects identified in the TBC 2002 Strategy have been implemented in the intervening period. They include the following:

Firstly, the upgrading of the Nelspruit to Barberton Road (R40) which was/is a critical access road between Nelspruit and Barberton. This route also provides access to the TBC for tourists travelling along the N4 between Gauteng and Maputo and the Mpumalanga Lowveld including the Kruger National Park. The investment value of this project was R350 million

Secondly, the Barberton to Bulembu Road was upgraded and surfaced thus providing for all weather travel along an important section of the TBC as well as proving strategic access for travelers between Barberton and the Bulembu border post (with Swaziland). (Regrettably the Swaziland extension of this road, between Bulembu and Piggs Peak which was [understood to have been] planned for surfacing now appears to have been removed from the Swaziland priority roads upgrading programme. The impact of this is that this strategic tourism link between the South African surfaced road network and the Swaziland surfaced road network is incomplete. The fact that this area is typically mountainous and experiences

⁵ *There are already a number of investment initiatives underway including the following: Investment and development process at **Piranie** is already underway and has been driven largely as a private sector initiative. Its impact on the broader planning area is likely to be limited to one of marketing. Similarly the development of the **Nkomazi Wilderness Nature Reserve** is also well underway as a private sector driven tourism and conservation initiative. The successful development of this project will contribute much investor confidence and to the development momentum in the area.*

high rainfall makes the inadequacy of this section of road particularly threatening to tourists (with the exception of those travelling by 4X4 vehicles). The investment value of this project was R145 million

Thirdly, the development of the Barberton Tourism Information Center (2005) and the establishment of a related Section 21 Company based on a partnership between the private product owners and the Umjindi Municipality. The investment value of this project has exceeded R5 million.

Fourthly, as a private sector initiative, an integrated tourist information centre has been developed near the junction of the R38 and R541 a short distance east of Badplaas. This information centre, which operates on a commercial basis, offers a range of services to tourists including much needed tourism information as well as the opportunity to buy meals, and to view nature and geology based tourism products. It also includes a museum, a 15 unit lodge facility, a conference facility and access to a filling station. When completed the investment value of this Cradle of Life Tourism and Conservation Centre is expected to be around R100 Million (according to the developer, 2011). Presently the Centre employs between 70-100 permanent staff. This number is expected to increase by a further 150 people in the next phase of the development.

Fifthly, the development of the Komati River Lodge in the Nkomazi Game Reserve. This 24-bed lodge caters for the 'luxury' end of the market. It was developed at a cost of R 24 million and employs 25 permanent staff.

Sixthly, the development of Dawsons Lodge is located between Carolina and Barberton (20km east of Carolina and 72 south-west of Nelspruit). This 35 bed lodge caters for the luxury end of the market. It was developed at a cost of R 22 million and employs 43 staff.

Seventhly, the implementation (2008) of the Mountainlands Estate leisure residential development in the Mountainlands Nature Reserve. On completion this development will include the development of 18 privately owned 'syndicated' lodges. The completed investment value will be approximately R 200 million. The anticipated full time employment will be at least 28 staff.

Eighthly , the Boondocks conservancy development which investment exceeded R6 million and has created 10 permanent jobs.

Ninthly the development of the Komati River Lodge development in Songimvelo (2011). This 20 bed lodge caters for the middle to luxury part of the market. It is currently being constructed at a cost of R12 million and should employ 20-40 staff once fully operational.

Tenthly, the Dixie Farm Golf and Wildlife Estate. This is a very substantial development which when completed will see the development of 600 units (houses, apartments and lodges) all set within a golf course and wildlife estate. According to the developers all planning and environmental approval are in place. The estimated value of this development will exceed R1 Billion. Employment estimates are about 700 direct full time jobs. The development is likely to be implemented in phases and due to the scale of the development would take about 10 years to complete.

There have also been encouraging developments in Swaziland that will support product development in the broader TBC area. This includes the development of additional

accommodation facilities at Maguga Dam (where further substantial developments are currently awaiting final approval from the Swazi authorities), at Malolotja (including accommodation upgrades and the establishment of an aerial walkway project, and at Bulembu (where some accommodation facilities have been developed within the mining village (mining operations have ceased).

The key demonstration projects that have been identified as part of the 2011-2014 TBC Strategy are described in detail in Annexures 1 to 8. In summary the main demonstration projects for the 2011-2014 TBC Strategy are as follows:

- **Project 1: Creation of the BATOBIC Programme Management Unit (PMU):** In order for the development programme to be successful over the long term, significant support in terms of planning, marketing, management and mobilization of grant and investment funds is required. The key roles and responsibilities of the PMU is to implement the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor Strategy. The unit will thus be responsible to identify and facilitate anchor investment and infrastructure projects; including investor mobilisation and to seek further funding of the projects identified from the strategy. The area has seen the creation of several regional strategies over the years. The implementation of these strategies has been hampered by lack of capacity and resources. The creation of the PMU addresses this problem through a dedicated capacity to drive all projects. The PMU office is situated in Barberton and was opened on 1 September 2010. The first steps are to ensure that the previous strategies are still relevant and to implement the already funded projects explained earlier. Further projects will then be identified from the strategy and these will be implemented.
- **Project 2: The development of additional tourism facilities on Lomshiyo Trust land in the Mountainlands Nature Reserve:** This project is focused on the development of additional tourist accommodation (game lodge/hotel of 60 beds) on a portion of community owned land in the Mountainlands Nature Reserve. The project will be developed as a community/private partnership (CPP) underpinned by a long-term lease. Part of the initial capital investment has been sourced via donor funding provided to BATOBIC. The intention is to source the balance of the required capital investment, as well as all working capital for the accommodation component from the private sector partner.
- **Project 3: The development of the Mountainlands Nature Reserve Internal Linking Road network:** This project is focused on extending the main/bulk internal road network within the MNR in a manner that ensures that traversing can take place across the MNR based on a variety of routes. Currently the absence of an internal network of link roads is a major constraint to tourism development and investor mobilisation in MNR. This project will result in the development of approximately 100kms of new linking roads in MNR. The roads will be developed on Lomshiyo Trust land and MTPA land.
- **Project 4: The rehabilitation and upgrading of Msauli Village:** This project is focused on the rehabilitation of an old mining village into leisure residential and/or resort type tourism development. This project was identified as a priority project in the 2002 TBC Strategy. There has been no tangible progress with the implementation of this project partly due to the fact that the property was subject to a land claim that was unresolved until 2010. The situation as of 2011 is that the 'land claim' has been

finalized and the property transferred to the new owners. These new landowners have indicated that they would like to pursue the rehabilitation process based on a community/private partnership. The successful rehabilitation of Msauli village and the subsequent lease of individual properties with rehabilitated houses is a development opportunity that can be implemented in the short term. The major spin-off effects of this are expected to include:

- Employment creation and SME development during the course of the rehabilitation of the village. Preferential clauses would apply in the CPP contract.
- Fixed investment by the private sector based on the rehabilitation and upgrading process.
- Revenue streams for the landowners derived from the leases of the various residential and/or commercial properties. These could include guaranteed base rentals as well as turnover based revenues.
- The proposed traversing rights (not exclusive) into the Songimvelo Game Reserve would also secure a revenue stream for the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) and would also act as a focused marketing campaign ('word of mouth') for Songimvelo.
- The successful lease of the residential stock in Msauli will also have the spin off effect of boosting investor confidence in the destination.
- SMME development opportunities related to the new leisure residents (100 houses), they provide something of a captive market for a number of the tourism-related facilities/products in the area. These include escorted and self-drive vehicular travelers through Songimvelo, Malolotja, Mountainlands Nature Reserve, Barberton Town, Ebutsini 4X4 trail etc.
- Finally, having a semi-permanent population will also increase the demand for related commercial and social services. This in turn contributes the diversification of the local economy, and create a new economic life-line for the people living in this somewhat isolated valley.

Project 5: The upgrading of Road Signage in the TBC related to the development of various scenic and special interest (e.g. geology route) tourism routes, locations (e.g. heritage sites in Barberton town), tourism support services (e.g. Barberton Visitor Information Center): This will entail the development of a consistent set of internationally approved (SADC approved) road route signs in the project area. The design of these signs has already been completed and approved as part of the Tourism Route Signage project initiated by the Kruger Lowveld RTO, as well as the preparation of a related map book. Roads and facility audits for the entire Kruger Lowveld area have already been completed, and planning for the erection of the signs is already underway.

Project 6: The development of the World Heritage Site Interpretation Center: It will serve as a multi focus facility with information, interpretative and display function as well as offices to house the personnel to implement all the necessary activities for a fully functional WHS Interpretation Center. Once this project is implemented it has been agreed that the current Barberton Visitor Information Center will re-locate from Barberton town to the WHS Interpretation Center. Presently Barberton does not have a suitable tourism Visitor Information Center and this has a negative impact on marketing and information dissemination to international and domestic tourists. The WHS Interpretation Center combined with the Visitor Information Center are regarded as key elements of the strategy to present the unique attractions of the TBC area to tourists and tourist operators. The WHS Interpretation Center and the re-located Barberton Visitor Information centre will be strategically located relative to the flow of tourists moving from Gauteng Province to

Barberton; from the Highlands meander (Dullstroom, Machadadorp etc.) through Badplaas to Barberton; and from Nelspruit to Barberton.

Project 7: The establishment of the Songimvelo/Malolotja TFCA: This demonstration project is directly concerned with the establishment of the Malolotja/Songimvelo Trans Frontier Park (TFP) and the broader Songimvelo/Malolotja Transfrontier Conservation area (TFCA). The project is intended to provide the tourist with very easy access to a wide range and diversity of tourism products across an international border. This will provide those hiking, horse riding or self driving tourists with a unique opportunity to experience such activities in a transboundary context, unfettered by the normally associated hindrances of international border control, as well as in very diverse environments. This process is already in its early stages of conceptualization/implementation through the drawing-up of the relevant international protocols.

Project 8: Finalisation of the Nomination Dossier for the World heritage Site: As has been discussed above, the formalisation of the Barberton Makhonjwa Mountainlands (BMM) as a World Heritage Site is regarded as strategically important and beneficial to the long-term development and marketing of the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor. The BMM site has already achieved Tentative Listing status from UNESCO. There are a number of key steps required to finalise the application process. Step 1: Planning for the WHS Nomination Dossier, and submission of proposal to DEAT and UNESCO. Step 2: Completion and submission of the Nomination Dossier to DEAT and SAWHCC. Step 3: Submission of WHS Nomination Dossier by DEAT to UNESCO. Step 4: Implementation and development of the BMML WHS leading to operationalisation of the WHS. It is important to note that the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation is the lead implementing agent for this process. BATOBIC will be providing non-financial technical 'support' to the WHS application process.

5.2.2 Tourism management strategies

- The maintenance and in certain respects the enhancement of the conservation function. To a very significant degree, the underlying tourism product being offered is the natural environment or is directly related to the natural environment. From a long-term economic sustainability perspective, it is therefore essential that the natural environment is properly conserved. In this regard the following specific actions are important:
 - The completion of the tourism and conservation management frameworks for the formally protected areas (e.g. Songimvelo, Mountainlands Nature Reserve, etc.)
 - Support to the completion of the WHS Nomination Dossier to UNESCO. Related to this support the development of regulatory frameworks (e.g. tourism and conservation management plans within the proposed WHS area.
- The Mpumalanga Government⁶ will be responsible for putting in place the environmental regulatory framework for the planning area within which the tourism developments will be implemented, and for monitoring compliance by developments in terms of this framework. The Government could where practical also devolve - on a management contract basis - the environmental management function to the private sector. In such instances the State will always maintain the environmental regulatory function.

⁶ The same principle would apply for those areas located Swaziland and/or Mozambique

5.2.3 Tourism marketing and product development strategies

- The private sector developers/operators will assume the primary responsibility for the marketing of the individual project investment areas. In view of the very real financial and technical capacity constraints faced by the Provincial and Local levels of Government, and the local communities, this strategy would also be applied in those instances where partnerships between the private sector and the State and/or communities are being utilized.
- The public sector in collaboration with the various parastatal and community tourism associations will be responsible for promoting the planning area as a destination. Related to this strategy it will be important for the relevant public sector institutions to give attention to the following aspects (as highlighted in the Responsible Tourism Development Strategy [Umjindi] 2008):
 - Ongoing research into the regions key target segments of which marketing efforts need to focus. Developing a stronger 'brand' for Umjindi (in particular to tie-in the significant gold mining history and storytelling into Umjindi brand).
 - Creating awareness of Umjindi as a tourist destination in identified source markets.
 - Identifying the most effective markets through which to promote Umjindi to tourist markets.
 - Developing and promoting events.
- A priority action for government, communities and the private sector is to promote and support the development of new tourism products in the TBC.
 - Product development would build on the TBC's main tourism experience and product strengths which include: Picturesque scenery; gold mining and historical intrigue; exciting annual events; geological wonders; and ecotourism and adventure. (Ref. *Responsible Tourism Development Strategy [Umjindi] 2008*)
 - As such, the main products would be related to the development of:
 - Scenic routes drives focused on natural and cultural heritage. Related to this, the development of day visitor facilities in suitable scenic locations along such routes. Related to this the development of 'rural tourism products as 'add on' attractions for tourists visiting Barberton;
 - Development of new facilities (lodges, hotels, resorts) in the various public, private and communal game reserves and/or conservation areas;
 - Development of adventure tourism products - including hiking, mountain biking, quad biking, 4X4 routes, rock climbing, abseiling, paragliding);
 - Development of scenic and special interest tourism products (that are based on the mining history, geology, culture and archeology).
 - The development of a series of 'events' that build on the project areas tourism strengths. As has been noted in the Responsible Tourism Development Strategy (Umjindi) 2008 "*events are a way in which the region can generate 'quick wins' through attracting investor numbers and economic impact... Umjindi, especially Barberton has a relatively good annual events calendar ... the following events have been identified as having the potential for greater regional and provincial status: Barberton Mountain Bike Challenge; Barberton Gold Panning Competition; Jock Marathon; Jock Cycle Race*" (Section 3.5, 2008)
 - As part of this strategy it would also be important to improve on existing products (by improved marketing, interpretation, and building product linkages and

‘packages’⁷ of products to be sold into the regions key source markets); expanding certain products (such as the under-utilised potential related to the game reserves and wildlife); and the development of new products (especially in terms of the adventure tourism activities in the reserves and in the mountains).

5.2.4 Tourism investment strategies

In addition to upgrading existing products it is essential to develop new product types as well as the size of the product portfolio in order to improve the visitor experience, to attract tourists into the planning area (for instance attract those tourists using the N4 route to go to Kruger National Park, Mozambique and Swaziland into the planning area), and to retain a competitive edge for the planning area. As a relatively unknown and certainly under-developed tourism area the mobilisation of public and in particular private sector investment in support of the development, operation, marketing and maintenance and tourism infrastructure and facilities is an essential component of the TBC 2011-2014 Strategy. In this regard a number of strategies will be applied:

- The ongoing identification of commercially viable and sustainable tourism development projects on state, community and privately owned/controlled land: The State, private sector and community land owners are to identify a range of tourism investment opportunities in and adjacent to the nature reserves, and then to package them for investor mobilization. In terms of the selection of projects, the emphasis is placed on supporting project interventions that are characterized by the following:
 - Projects which could reasonably be implemented within 12-18 months.
 - Projects that are likely to be commercially viable and self-sustaining
 - Are likely to attract private sector investment (rather than relying on grant funding).
 - Projects that will generate employment opportunities for local residents of the project area – the more employment intensive the better.
 - Are located on land which has secure ‘tenure’ status or where tenure can be secured within 6 months (i.e. freehold title, restituted land, land registered via the land redistribution programme).
 - Projects which will not rely on the development of public infrastructure (unless such infrastructure developments have been approved and funded already).
- The identification and mobilization of specifically targeted investors to ‘kick-start’ the tourism investment process. The sub-region is not well known as a tourism destination, very little marketing of the region has taken place, and resources and expertise for marketing the region are very limited. Within this context priority will initially be given to identifying certain investors with a proven track record and whose strengths complement the weaknesses of the community and/or state partner. In this regard the following are important criteria:
 - Financial capacity: The private partner must be able to mobilise all capital (fixed and working) requirements for the development and operation of the relevant assets/facilities.
 - Ability to construct/maintain the proposed fixed assets/facilities: Assess the private partners’ ability to cope with operating risks (constructing/operating/maintaining facilities) in remote locations.

⁷ Such as outdoor and adventure packages; history and heritage packages; geological wonder expeditions. *Responsible Tourism Development Strategy (Umjindi) 2008*

- Track record in marketing similar fixed assets/facilities: to demonstrate a proven track record of marketing related types of tourism/agriculture/forestry products and/or facilities. Demonstrate market credibility and existing client base
- Experience and track record in managing/operating similar fixed assets/facilities: The private partner must be able to demonstrate the nature and extent of their experience in operating similar fixed assets/facilities/farms in similar destinations.
- Policy and strategy in terms of local community upliftment: procurement of local labour; skills transfer and capacity building of employees; and support for SME development, and the procurement of goods and services.
- The mobilization of private sector investment and expertise for the development of tourism on restituted and State land. The key role and function of the private sector partners would be to provide the necessary human and financial resources to facilitate the development, marketing and operation of the tourism facilities. The prevailing socio-economic circumstances of the local communities are such that they cannot develop the necessary infrastructure and facilities. Furthermore, since these communities also lack the required skills and experience, they are very unlikely to be able to operate such tourism facilities without outside support. Similarly, the Mpumalanga Government are very hard pressed within the context of other more pressing socio-economic priorities, to provide the necessary human and financial resources to facilitate the tourism development process.
 - As a part of this strategy initiatives are already underway between BATOBIC and the various larger corporate companies to identify opportunities for a coordinated application of corporate social investment funds in support of community tourism initiatives
- The development of a legal and institutional framework for the processing of 'unsolicited bids' from interested private sector parties for tourism and/or conservation related activities needs to be developed. Whilst an initial set of tourism anchor (or demonstration) projects (refer to section 5.2.1) has been selected for immediate development, there are many other viable and sustainable development opportunities that exist within and adjacent to the existing and/or proposed reserves/conservancies. Initiatives from enterprising members of the community which are not in conflict with the conservation and/or tourism development framework/objectives, and which will also ensure the better utilisation and maintenance of these state assets need to be encouraged and supported. (It is noted that the 'need' may be more applicable in later years, once there is greater development momentum, than at present.) This framework would also need to provide guidance in respect of the criteria and procedures for the evaluation and adjudication of bids. At present it appears that the necessary legal and institutional policy framework to facilitate such an approach does not exist within the Mpumalanga Province. This framework will also need to provide for greater efficiency in the evaluation of bids. The current timeframes involved in government processes tend to be so tedious that they discourage private investment.
- Collaboration between the public, private and community institutional structures in the sub-region. The planning and development process thus far, as well as the future mobilization and facilitation of investment into the region are supported by a strong

collaborative effort by a range of public, private and community organizations. Key stakeholders that have, and will continue to play an active and direct role include:

- The National Ministry of Tourism (that has provided considerable financial support to the BATOBIC TBC Initiative [for the period 2010-2014] focused on technical assistance, capacity building support, institutional development support, investor mobilisation support, construction of specific elements of tourism infrastructure and tourism facilities)
- The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) that controls the development and operation of the provincial reserves in the planning area, and the Department of Finance and Economic Affairs who have the primary responsibility for promoting tourism development in Mpumalanga.
- At a local authority level the Umjindi Municipality has over the last decade played a leading role with the Barberton Chamber of Business and Barberton Community Tourism in promoting the development of tourism in the Barberton area in general and in the TBC in particular.
- The longer-term sustainability of the initiative is also significantly dependent on the active support, and more particularly participation of the local private sector and communities (e.g. the Lomshiyo Trust and the Ebutsini community are critical).
- The upgrading of key elements in the provincial access road network. Since Gauteng and Mpumalanga are likely to be the biggest source markets for the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor, and as most of these Gauteng and Mpumalanga based tourists are likely to be self-drive tourists, it is important that the main access road network is reasonably well developed. Since the 2002 TBC Strategy two of the previously identified priority roads have been completed. They are the Nelspruit to Barberton Road and the Barberton to Bulembu Road. In terms of the 2011-2014 TBC Strategy the priority road projects still requiring urgent attention include:
 - *Firstly*, the resurfacing of the rehabilitation and upgrading of the Kaapmuiden to Barberton road;
 - *Secondly*, the surfacing of the Bulembu to Msauli to Ebutsini to Tjarkastad Road.
 - *Thirdly*, Bulembu to Piggs Peak Road (in Swaziland).
- The maintenance of the existing gravel road network providing access to the nature reserves needs to be improved. The priority focus areas would need to be on those nature reserves selected as part on the initial set of demonstration/anchor projects. These are Songimvelo (Msauli access), Mountainlands Nature Reserve, and Songimvelo Panhandle. At present the gravel road network providing access to these nature reserves is often not properly maintained (due to resource constraints) with the result that one could not guarantee the 2X4 tourists access to these nature reserves (NOTE: The intention here is not to promote self drive within the reserve, but to allow tourists to drive themselves safely to the reserve.) This in turn significantly reduces the attractiveness of these locations to tourism investors, and as a spin-off reduces the revenue and employment generating capacity of these under-utilized assets. The maintenance function could also be used as a means of generating further sustainable opportunities for small entrepreneurs who could become responsible for the road maintenance function.
- Focus the development of tourism accommodation and infrastructure on communally controlled land wherever possible as a priority. There are significant areas of communally controlled land that have significant inherent and under-utilized tourism

development potential (such as the Lomshiyo Trust land in the Mountainlands Nature Reserve). This is significant bearing in mind the extremely poor socio-economic circumstances currently prevailing in these areas, and the fact that the opportunities for further employment creation in the other economic sectors are very limited. Within this context it is proposed that wherever possible, the development of new accommodation facilities should take place on communally controlled land in order to facilitate greater empowerment benefit flows (including the development of SMEs) to local communities.

5.2.5 Spatial development strategies

5.2.5.1 Locational issues:

In terms of spatial development issues it is evident that the TBC Planning Area is spatially removed from the N4 (Maputo Development Corridor) which is the major transport route between Gauteng Province (the largest source market for domestic tourists and the place from which most international tourists arrive/depart in/from South Africa). As such the TBC planning area misses out on much of the tourist 'drive by/through' development opportunities. At the time of preparing the TBC 2002 Tourism Strategy three key issues that were highlighted as making the spatial location even worse. *First* was the fact that R40 road between Nelspruit and Barberton was in urgent need of upgrading; *secondly*, that the Wonderfontein to Carolina to Badplaas Road; and *thirdly* it was important to develop a surfaced road link between Barberton and Bulembu in order to facilitate easier access for tourists between Barberton and Swaziland.

Very importantly, by 2010 both of the Nelspruit to Barberton Road and the Barberton to Bulembu Road upgrades had been implemented thereby significantly improving access within the planning area.

However, whilst the implementation of these two road projects has improved access between Barberton and Nelspruit and Bulembu, as an outcome of the TBC 2011-2014 planning process three important elements of road infrastructure remain to be developed.

- *Firstly*, the resurfacing of the rehabilitation and upgrading of the Kaapmuiden to Barberton road; The upgrading of this road will provide tourists with an alternative surfaced scenic and experience rich route between Barberton and the N4 Maputo Corridor route.
- *Secondly*, the surfacing of the Bulembu to Msauli to Ebutsini to Tjarkastad Road. This road is a critical component of the tourism route development programme for the TBC 2011-2014. Presently many sections of this important road network are in a very poor condition and become increasingly dangerous in wet weather and at night. From a broader socio-economic perspective the sections between Ebutsini and Tjarkastad are important link roads, for the substantial rural population, to higher order urban centers of Badplaas, Barberton, and Nelspruit.
- The *third* required road upgrading project is that between Bulembu and Piggs Peak. At the time of developing the TBC 2002 Tourism Strategy it was understood that Swaziland had already programmed the surfacing of this strategic portion of road that would link the South African road network into the Swaziland surfaced road network. Subsequently however this prioritization was reviewed by Swaziland and the upgrading of this portion of road is no longer programmed for implementation by the Swaziland Government. The impact of this change in priority has been that the

Barberton-Bulembu section of road is almost certainly under-utilised due to the fact that the Bulembu-Piggs Peak link is in a poor state of repair – especially in wet weather.

5.2.5.2 The issue of rural marginalised communities

It is important that specific actions are taken in respect of the rural communities. These communities have a history of marginalisation, and have also suffered the effects of sharp declines in employment from the mining sector. The agricultural sector in the Barberton district has also been growing very slowly. Whilst the greater emphasis that is being placed on tourism-led development in the Kruger Lowveld Tourism area is easy to motivate from an economic perspective, special care needs to be taken to ensure that the rural communities are more fully involved and included in the planning and development process than has taken place thus far, and that they realise tangible benefits from any decision that they make to allocate their land to tourism and/or conservation.

These communities have a very strategic role to play in any tourism-led development initiative in that *firstly*, they live adjacent to or own/control the use rights (Lomshiyo Trust, Msauli Land Claimants, Songimvelo Land Claimants) many of the prime tourism assets. If communities experience little or no benefits from the development process, there is every chance that they will become embittered with the process and may well disrupt it with very bad consequences from tourism. *Secondly*, these communities also live on, or control areas of communal land that could offer additional opportunities for the development of complementary tourism development products and experiences. If these areas of land are to be included into the broader tourism product and facilities, the communities will need to more fully understand the broader tourism development strategy for the TBC. Thirdly, the developments in the region offer a good opportunity for economic growth, wealth creation, and empowerment of local rural communities, and these opportunities should not be missed.

6. TBC 2011-2014 Multi –Year Development Programme

6.1 Project name:

The creation of the BATOBIC Programme Management Unit

Project description:

In order for the TBC Strategy to be successfully implemented over the long term, significant support in terms of planning, marketing, management and mobilization of grant and investment funds is required. The key roles and responsibilities of the PMU are to implement the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor Strategy. The unit will thus be responsible to identify and facilitate anchor investment and infrastructure projects; including investor mobilisation and to seek further funding of the projects identified from the strategy.

Key activities to be undertaken:

- Operationalisation of the PMU:
 - The appointment of the PMU Manager, a community Facilitator and Office Administrator.
 - Renting of suitable office space in Barberton.
- Policy and strategy:

- To facilitate the update of the TBC Strategy and Multi-year Development Programme.
 - Related to this is the regular ongoing (annual) updating of the MYDP in terms of progress made with existing projects, as well as to include into the MYDP new additional project initiatives where applicable.
 - The design and financing of relevant technical studies that will facilitate the implementation of the MYDP.
- *Project interventions: To facilitate the implementation of the NDT TBC support programme (2010-2013):* The key project activities in this regard, all of which form part of the broader TBC 2011-2014 Development Strategy include:
 - Project 1: Operationalisation of the BATOBIC PMU
 - Project 2: Update of the TBC Development Strategy
 - Project 3: Implementation of the Lomshiyo Trust Eco-lodge development project
 - Project 4: Development of a GeoTrail Route.
 - Project 5: Development of a Gateway Visitor Centre.
 - Project 6: Implementation of the Eco-heritage village programme.
 - Project 7: Upgrading, beautification and signage of the main Umjindi access intersections.
- *Investment and investor mobilisation:*
 - To facilitate the identification and conceptualisation of additional demonstration investment projects as part of the TBC. In this regard the programme manager will need to ensure that new projects identified are consistent with the objectives, principles and strategies as defined in the TBC 2011-2014 Tourism Development Strategy.
 - Investor mobilisation in support of the various demonstration investment projects identified. Subsequent to the identification of additional projects, it will be necessary to design and implement related investor mobilisation processes.
- *Communication and marketing:*
 - Project stakeholder interaction: Interaction and coordination with the relevant public, private and community stakeholders in context of facilitating the implementation of particular investment projects and the TBC programme. Such activities will be focused on those projects within the South African component of the TBC.
 - Strategic interaction with Government: Strategic level interaction and coordination with the relevant South African government departments (national, provincial and in particular local authorities) to ensure integration of the TBC Tourism Development Strategy and the related Multi-Year Development Programme into the relevant public sector policy and strategy frameworks.
 - Transboundary collaboration and coordination in order to ensure coherency and consistency between policy and strategy between the Swaziland, Mozambique and South Africa.
 - Marketing of the TBC and its opportunities nationally and internationally. This function would be executed in very close collaboration with existing South African initiatives, as well as the Swaziland and Mozambique

marketing initiatives and would focus on supporting, expanding and developing already established initiatives in this field.

Main activity	Responsibility	Time framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operationalisation of the PMU 	BATOBIC	January 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy and strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate the update of the TBC Strategy and Multi-year Development Programme. 	PMU	February 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project interventions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project 1: Operationalisation of the BATOBIC PMU Project 2: Update of the TBC Development Strategy Project 3: Implementation of the Lomshiyo Trust Eco-lodge development project Project 4: Development of a GeoTrail Route. Project 5: Devt. of a Gateway Visitor Centre. Project 6: Implementation of the Eco-heritage village programme. Project 7: Upgrading, beautification and signage of the main Umjindi access intersections. 	BATOBIC PMU PMU PMU PMU PMU PMU	January 2011 February 2011 Jan to Dec 2011 Dec 2011 2011-2013 2012 2011

6.2 Project name:

Lomshiyo Trust Eco-Lodge Development (Mountainlands Nature Reserve)

Project description:

The development of additional tourism facilities on Lomshiyo Trust land in the Mountainlands Nature Reserve: This project is focused on the development of additional tourist accommodation (game lodge/hotel of 60 beds) on a portion of community owned land in the Mountainlands Nature Reserve. The project will be developed as a community/private partnership (CPP) underpinned by a long-term lease. Part of the initial capital investment has been sourced via donor funding provided to BATOBIC. The intention is to source the balance of the required capital investment, as well as all working capital for the accommodation component from the private sector partner.

Key activities to be undertaken:

- Step 1: Request for assistance from Lomshiyo Trust. Signing of Memorandum of Agreement. Mobilisation of suitably qualified team of Transaction Advisors.
- Step 2: Project screening (Pre-feasibility)
- Step 3: Inception Phase including introduction of Transaction Advisors; community objectives; proposed approach to investor mobilisation and CPP structuring; work completed and rights currently secured.
- Step 4: Design of Investor mobilisation process (competitive or negotiated bidding route).
- Step 5: Design of proposed Community Private Partnership (allocation of risks and responsibilities)
- Step 6: Requests for proposals
- Step 7: Evaluations of RFPs
- Step 8: Negotiation Phase
- Step 9: Preparation of legal documentation
- Step 10: Signing of contracts
- Step 11: Implementation commences

Main activity	Responsibility	Time framework
<u>Step 1:</u> Mobilisation of suitably qualified team of Transaction Advisors.	PMU	March 2011
<u>Step 2:</u> Project screening (Pre-feasibility)	Transaction Advisors	April 2011
<u>Step 3:</u> Inception Phase	Transaction Advisors	May 2011
<u>Step 4:</u> Design of Investor mobilisation process	Transaction Advisors	May 2011
<u>Step 6:</u> Requests for proposals	Transaction Advisors	June 2011
<u>Step 7:</u> Evaluations of RFPs	Lomshiyo Trust and TAs	July 2011
<u>Step 8:</u> Negotiation Phase	Lomshiyo Trust	Sept 2011

	and TAs	
<u>Step 9:</u> Preparation of legal documentation	Transaction Advisors	October 2011
<u>Step 10:</u> Signing of contracts	Lomshiyo Trust	Nov 2011
<u>Step 11:</u> Implementation commences	Partnership between Lomshiyo Trust and private sector	December 2011

Other issues:

- Finalisation of the MNR tourism and conservation development plan.

6.3 Project name:

The Development of the Mountainlands Nature Reserve Internal Linking Road network:

Project description:

This project is focused on extending the main/bulk internal road network within the MNR in a manner that ensures that traversing can take place across the MNR based on a variety of routes. Currently the absence of an internal network of link roads is a major constraint to tourism development and investor mobilisation in MNR. This project will result in the development of approximately 100kms of new linking roads in MNR. The roads will be developed on Lomshiyo Trust land and MTPA land.

Key activities to be undertaken:

- BATOBIC to apply to NDT for R36 Million in funding
- Once NDT approval secured, BATOBIC to appoint implementing agent in context of the approved NDT project description.

Responsibility (Primary) for implementation:

- BATOBIC to apply to NDT for R36 Million in funding

Time framework per main activity:

- To be determined in context of NDT Business Plan approval

Main activity	Responsibility	Time framework
1. To be determined		
2. To be determined		
3. To be determined		
4. To be determined		
5.		
6.		

6.4 Project name:

Msauli Village Rehabilitation and Upgrading (Songimvelo Game Reserve)

Project description:

This project is focused on the rehabilitation of an old mining village into leisure residential and/or resort type tourism development. This project was identified as a priority project in the 2002 TBC Strategy. There has been no tangible progress with the implementation of this project partly due to the fact that the property was subject to a land claim that was unresolved until 2010. The situation as of 2011 is that the 'land claim' has been finalized and the property transferred to the new owners. These new landowners have indicated that they would like to pursue the rehabilitation process based on a community/private partnership. The successful rehabilitation of Msauli village and the subsequent lease of individual properties with rehabilitated houses is a development opportunity that can be implemented in the short term.

Key activities to be undertaken:

- Step 1: Request for assistance from Msauli CPA. Signing of Memorandum of Agreement. Mobilisation of suitably qualified team of Transaction Advisors.
- Step 2: Project screening (Pre-feasibility)
- Step 3: Inception Phase including introduction of Transaction Advisors; community objectives; proposed approach to investor mobilisation and CPP structuring; work completed and rights currently secured.
- Step 4: Design of Investor mobilisation process (competitive or negotiated bidding route).
- Step 5: Design of proposed Community Private Partnership (allocation of risks and responsibilities)
- Step 6: Requests for proposals
- Step 7: Evaluations of RFPs
- Step 8: Negotiation Phase
- Step 9: Preparation of legal documentation
- Step 10: Signing of contracts
- Step 11: Implementation commences

Main activity	Responsibility	Time framework
<u>Step 1:</u> Mobilisation of suitably qualified team of Transaction Advisors.	PMU	April 2011
<u>Step 2:</u> Project screening (Pre-feasibility)	Transaction Advisors	May 2011
<u>Step 3:</u> Inception Phase	Transaction Advisors	June 2011
<u>Step 4:</u> Design of Investor mobilisation process	Transaction Advisors	July 2011
<u>Step 6:</u> Requests for proposals	Transaction Advisors	July 2011
<u>Step 7:</u> Evaluations of RFPs	Msauli CPA and	August 2011

	TAs	
<u>Step 8:</u> Negotiation Phase	Msauli CPA and TAs	October 2011
<u>Step 9:</u> Preparation of legal documentation	Transaction Advisors	November 2011
<u>Step 10:</u> Signing of contracts	Msauli CPA	Dec 2011
<u>Step 11:</u> Implementation commences	Partnership between Msauli CPA and private sector	January 2012

6.5 Project name:

Tourism Route Development (including related road, site, and route signage)

Project description:

The main elements of this project include the upgrading of Road Signage in the TBC in relation to the development of various scenic and special interest (e.g. geology route) tourism routes, locations (e.g. heritage sites in Barberton town), tourism support services (e.g. Barberton Visitor Information Center). The TBC section of the Kruger Lowveld Tourism Region of Mpumalanga has been identified as a priority region within which the Mpumalanga Tourism Route Road and Signing Framework should be implemented^[1]. This will include the development of a consistent set of internationally approved (SADC approved) road route signs in the TBC and adjacent areas. The design of these signs has already been completed and approved as part of the Tourism Route Signage project initiated by the Kruger Lowveld RTO, as well as the preparation of a related map book. Roads and facility audits for the entire Kruger Lowveld area have already been completed, and planning for the erection of the signs is already underway.

Key activities to be undertaken:

Main activity	Responsibility	Time framework
1. Bulembu Road GeoTrail Development	BATOBIC/BCT	Dec 2011
2. Barberton Gateway Intersection Upgrade	BATOBIC/BCT	Dec 2011
3. Badplaas/Barberton/Louws Creek Route Development	BATOBIC/ULM/ALM	Dec 2011
4. Barberton EcoHeritage Town Upgrade	BATOBIC/ULM/ALM	Dec 2012
5. Regional Integration with Kruger Lowveld Tourism and Swaziland	BATOBIC/KLT/Swaziland	2013

^[1] This framework was initiated in 1998 in response to discussion between the MTA, tourism business operators and roads authorities (including SA National Roads Agency and Mpumalanga Provincial Roads) in response to concerns regarding the poor level of tourism signage along the road infrastructure in Mpumalanga.

6.6 Project name:

The development of the World Heritage Site Interpretation Center:

Project description:

It will serve as a multi focus facility with information, interpretative and display function as well as offices to house the personnel to implement all the necessary activities for a fully functional WHS Interpretation Center. Once this project is implemented it has been agreed that the current Barberton Visitor Information Center will re-locate from Barberton town to the WHS Interpretation Center. Presently Barberton does not have a suitable tourism Visitor Information Center and this has a negative impact on marketing and information dissemination to international and domestic tourists. The WHS Interpretation Center combined with the Visitor Information Center are regarded as key elements of the strategy to present the unique attractions of the TBC area to tourists and tourist operators.

Key activities to be undertaken:

Main activity	Responsibility	Time framework
1. Detailed Conceptualization	WHS Planners	Dec 2011
2. Design of physical facilities	WHS consultant	July 2012
3. Tendering	BATOBIC	2012 Dec
4. Construction	Contractor	Jan-Dec 2013

6.7 Project name:

The establishment of the Songimvelo/Malolotja TFCA

Project description:

This demonstration project is directly concerned with the establishment of the Malolotja/Songimvelo Trans Frontier Park (TFP) and the broader Songimvelo/Malolotja Transfrontier Conservation area (TFCA). The project is intended to provide the tourist with very easy access to a wide range and diversity of tourism products across an international border. This will provide those hiking, horse riding or self driving tourists with a unique opportunity to experience such activities in a transboundary context, unfettered by the normally associated hindrances of international border control, as well as in very diverse environments. This process is already in its early stages of conceptualization/implementation through the drawing-up of the relevant international protocols.

Key activities to be undertaken:

PHASE 1. The following tasks have already been implemented as part of the establishment of the Songimvelo-Malolotja Transfrontier Park

- Establish a collaborative managing/coordinating structure for TFP development.
- Formalisation of Inter-State Agreement to establish TFCA.
- Integration of Malolotja and Songimvelo conservation management plans to form a TFP management plan

PHASE 2. The following tasks are required to facilitate the establishment of the Songimvelo-Malolotja Transfrontier Conservation Area

- Task 1: Define stakeholder participation strategy. Task completed by end 2010.
- Task 2: The Joint Management plan has been completed.
- Task 3: Expand the TFP collaborative managing/coordinating structure to form a collaborative managing/coordinating TFCA structure. In this regard, as and when there is a need such structure will be put in place.
- Task 4: Integration of suitable surrounding areas into a joint TFCA conservation management plan.
- Task 5: Collaborative development of 1 year and 3 year development plan for TFCA.

Responsibility (Primary) for implementation:

Main activity	Responsibility	Time framework
Step 1: Define stakeholder participation strategy. Task completed by end 2010.	TFP Managing & Coordinating structure	Complete
Step 2: The Joint Management plan	TFP Managing & Coordinating structure	Complete
Step 3: Establishment of the TFCA Management and Coordinating Structure	TFP Managing & Coordinating structure	To be determined
Step 4: Integration of suitable surrounding areas into a joint TFCA conservation management plan.	TFP Managing & Coordinating	To be determined

	structure	
Step 5: Development of the Annual and 3 year development Plan for the TFCA	TFP Managing & Coordinating structure	To be determined

6.8 Project name:

Finalisation of the Nomination Dossier for the World heritage Site

Project description:

As has been discussed above, the formalisation of the Barberton Makhonjwa Mountainlands (BMM) as a World Heritage Site is regarded as strategically important and beneficial to the long-term development and marketing of the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor. The BMM site has already achieved Tentative Listing status from UNESCO. It is important to note that the Provincial Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation has been the lead implementing agent for this process thus far. BATOBIC will be providing non-financial 'project administrative support' to the WHS application process.

Key activities to be undertaken:

The UNESCO process of planning and achieving WHS 'inscription' is well understood by all the agencies involved and is documented in detail elsewhere. This process was approved and initiated but later was interrupted and halted due to lack of funds. There are a number of key steps required to finalise the application process.

Step 1: Re-plan for the resumption of the WHS Planning Project with new funding and agreement from NDT and/or alternate funding agency/source. (UNESCO to be kept informed)

Step 2: Completion and submission of the Nomination Dossier to NDT and SAWHCC.

Step 3: Submission of WHS Nomination Dossier by NDT to UNESCO (poss +/- 2 yrs before approval.)

Step 4: Inauguration of **BML WHS Management Agency** and implementation of component development and commercialisation projects leading to full operationalisation of the WHS.

Responsibility (Primary) for implementation:

Main activity	Responsibility	Time framework
Step 1: Planning for the WHS Nomination Dossier	National Dept. Tourism (NDT)	Dec 2011
Step 2: Completion and submission of the Nomination Dossier to DEAT and SAWHCC	NDT & Mpumalanga Government	2012-2013
Step 3: Submission of WHS Nomination Dossier to UNESCO	NDT	2014
Step 4: Implementation and development of the BMML WHS	NDT	To be determined

6.9 Projected cumulative impact of (existing and) new demonstration projects

Project name	CAPEX Estimate	Jobs Direct/indirect	Wages
Lomshiyo Trust Mountainlands Lodge	R18 million	Direct = 30 Indirect ⁸ = 60 Temporary = 200	Direct ⁹ : R744,000 p.a. Indirect ¹⁰ : R1,044,000 p.a. Temporary = R4,412,000
Msauli Village Rehabilitation and upgrading	+ R100 million	Direct = 150 Indirect ¹¹ = 300	Direct ¹² : R3,870,000 p.a. Indirect ¹³ : R5,220,000 p.a.
Mountainlands Internal roads	R24 million	temporary = 534	Temporary = R6,618,000
Road signage and route development project	R9 million	temporary = Godfrey Please	Temporary = Godfrey Please
Development of the WHS Interpretation Center.	R7 million	Direct = 38 temporary = 396	Permanent ¹⁴ = R2,470,000 Temporary = R11,100,000
TOTALS	+R158 Million	Direct = 218 Indirect = 360 Temporary = 1130	Direct = R7,084,000 p.a. Indirect = R6,264,000 p.a. Temporary = R22,130,000

6.10 Other non-BATOBI projects to be pursued

- Resurfacing of the rehabilitation and upgrading of the Kaapmuiden to Barberton road;
- Surfacing of the Bulembu to Msauli to Ebutsini to Tjarkastad Road.
- Surfacing of the Bulembu to Piggs Peak Road (in Swaziland).

⁸ Using a multiplier of x2

⁹ Using the minimum wage for tourism industry of R2,150-00 per month

¹⁰ Using the agriculture minimum wage of R1,450 per month

¹¹ Using a multiplier of x2

¹² Using the minimum wage for tourism industry of R2,150-00 per month

¹³ Using the agriculture minimum wage of R1,450 per month

¹⁴ Using average wage of R5,000-00 per month x 13

Project 1: Establishment of required institutional capacity (Project Management Unit) to manage and implement the TBC 2011-2014 Strategy and MYP

INTRODUCTION

It is a surprising feature of the TBC initiative that it has, notwithstanding its success thus far (since inception in 2000), never secured a permanent project manager (with resources) to 'drive' the process. Tremendous reliance has been placed on the goodwill of individuals in the private sector, and small amounts of grant funding to support the technical work programme.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

It is critical that as part of the implementation of the TBC initiative that a properly funded and capacitated Project Management Unit be put in place to manage the TBC implementation process.

OBJECTIVES

To establish and operationalise a PMU consisting of a small full time staff component (i.e. TBC Programme Manager, TBC community facilitator and office administrator) supported by contracted specialists in response to specific work programmes.

PROPOSALS

This PMU would take the lead in terms of the following key activities:

- *To facilitate the implementation of the TBC Strategy and Multi-year Development Programme.* Related to this is the regular updating of the MYDP in terms of progress made with existing projects, as well as to include into the MYDP new additional project initiatives where applicable.
- *To facilitate the identification and conceptualisation of additional anchor investment projects* as part of the TBC. In this regard the programme manager will need to ensure that new projects identified are consistent with the objectives, principles and strategies as defined in the TBC Preliminary Tourism development strategy.
- *To facilitate the periodic updating of the TBC Preliminary Tourism Development Strategy.* As and when necessary the TBC Tourism Development Strategy will need to be updated to reflect changes in priority, to include additional elements of strategy, and to include new anchor projects that may have been identified.
- *To identify and facilitate the removal (where possible) of particular bottlenecks* (on an ongoing basis) that hinder the identification, conceptualisation and implementation of investment projects. These include political, institutional, technical and financial constraints.
- *To identify and facilitate the mobilisation of sources of technical and financial assistance* to support the implementation of the TBC Tourism Development Strategy and the Multi-Year Development Programme. In this regard it will be important to consider sources within the public sector (national, provincial and local authority), the private sector and the donor community.
- *The design and financing of relevant technical studies* that will facilitate the implementation of the MYDP. In this regard it must be noted that funding will not be used for capital expenditures, or for studies that should typically be the responsibility of investors. This technical component is specifically aimed at supporting the creation

of an investor friendly enabling environment and on getting projects prepared/packaged to a level where they can be offered to prospective investors.

- *Interaction and coordination* with the relevant public, private and community stakeholders in context of facilitating the implementation of particular investment projects and the TBC programme. Such activities will be focused on those projects within the South African component of the TBC.
- *Strategic level interaction and coordination with the relevant South African government departments* (national, provincial and in particular local authorities) to ensure integration of the TBC Tourism Development Strategy and the related Multi-Year Development Programme into the relevant public sector policy and strategy frameworks (i.e. national tourism development priorities [including marketing, investor mobilisation, public works and poverty relief programmes etc.], provincial tourism development strategies [including infrastructure programmes, marketing initiatives, capacity building initiatives, youth development initiatives etc.], and local authority Integrated Development Plans.)
- *Transboundary collaboration and coordination* in order to ensure coherency and consistency between policy and strategy between the three countries that make up the TBC. In this regard it needs to be noted that the responsibility is confined to the technical aspects of the programme, and in no way interferes with aspects that are typically the responsibility of the relevant countries Foreign Affairs ministries. Particular emphasis should be placed on collaboration and coordination with the Swaziland Biodiversity and Tourism programme, which is already funded and operational.
- *Investor mobilisation in support of the various anchor investment projects.* In so far as the anchor projects are concerned, a number of the projects listed are in their conceptualisation stages. Since it is very likely that concepts may change somewhat, and that new projects may be identified in the implementation process, it is also strongly recommended that the anchor projects be periodically updated so that the document reflects their current status reasonably accurately. It needs to be remembered that one of the key reasons for pursuing selected anchor projects was their demonstration effect to other would-be investors that the destination is one that is already popular with a range of investors. There can be little doubt that one of the best ways to convince would-be investors is to inform them about all the other existing investment success stories taking place in an area.
- *Marketing of the TBC and its opportunities nationally and internationally.* This function would be executed in very close collaboration with existing initiatives by the Barberton Tourism Local Organisation, Kruger Lowveld Tourism Organisation, the Mpumalanga Tourism Authority and SA Tourism, as well as the Swaziland and Mozambique marketing initiatives and would focus on supporting, expanding and developing already established initiatives in this field.

STATUS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS REQUIRED

Funding for this project has been secured, and implementation of the PMU establishment (including staffing) commenced as of October 2010.

Project 2: Lomshiyo Trust Community Tourism project (Mountainlands Nature Reserve)

INTRODUCTION

The Lomshiyo trust own significant portions of potentially high value tourism and conservation land in the Barberton Mountainlands Nature Reserve. The Barberton Mountainlands Nature Reserve measures approximately 18 000 Hectares, and is situated to the east of Barberton town. The reserve is situated in an area of great beauty with high plant species diversity and at the core of the future WHS since it contains several unique geological features related to the WHS. The natural resource base is characterised by a variety of habitats set in an undulating and at times mountainous setting. The area has a very rich biodiversity and great scenic beauty. Several Red Data plants and bird species are found in the area. There are various antelope as well as carnivore species existing at present. Historically the Big Five also occurred in the area.

The Mpumalanga Parks Board has been appointed as custodian of approximately 10 000 hectares of State land within the nature reserve. Through cooperative management agreements with surrounding private and communal landowners whose land makes up the remaining portion of the reserve, these portions of land have been consolidated into a single ecologically and economically viable entity, capable of accommodating the Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, rhino and buffalo).

This reserve is strategically very well located in a tourism development context both within Mpumalanga Province and in terms of the development of the Songimvelo/Malolotja Transfrontier Conservation Area between South Africa and Swaziland respectively. It is likely that the Mountainlands Reserve will in due course become part of the Songimvelo/Malolotja TFCA.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- The quality of the natural environment within Mountainlands is good. This reserve was established in 2000. To-date the inherent tourism development potential of this nature reserve remains under-utilised since only the private sector landowners have commenced any form of tourism developments.
- The nature reserve comprises 3 types of landowners – private, community Trust and State land. The land was proclaimed as a Nature Reserve in 1996 (proclamation No. 2 of 1996).
- The reserve has been fenced with a game fence suited to ‘plains game’. Initiatives are underway to secure funding for an upgrade of the fence to Big Five standards (via electrification).
- The reserve has reasonably good access in terms of existing provincial and national tarred roads. The MNR is reasonably well located relative to existing provincial and national tarred roads including the N4 (major link between Gauteng and Maputo) and the R40 (linking Nelspruit to Barberton) and R38 (linking the N4 to Barberton). All these roads are surfaced and in a good state of repair. The condition of the roads within the reserve on the community and state land is generally poorly maintained, while the roads in private land are generally in good condition and well maintained.
- There are numerous perennial streams that originate on and flow through MGR.

- From a broader socio-economic development perspective, the development of tourism in this locality is the logical choice now that the mining operations are decreasing and will naturally phase out (mining is a consumptive activity which by definition has to end at some point), and because of the inherent development potential of the area for nature based, adventure and cultural tourism. Tourism development is potentially well placed to generate a range of new local economic development opportunities for the adjacent communities.
- The development of tourism facilities on the Lomshiyo Trust land, based on a suitably structured community/private partnership, should result in the establishment of a range of sustainable revenue streams and benefit flows to the Lomshiyo Trust.
- The development of this Mountainlands tourism node is strategically vital to the longer-term development of the TBC due to its strategic location.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this initiative is to promote sustainable socio-economic development within the context of this strategically important nature conservation and tourism development area. This area has been identified as a priority area for tourism-led development at a national, provincial and municipal level.

Specific objectives include:

- The mobilisation of private sector investments and lending
- The development of the MGR on the basis of a community/private public partnership
- The generation of a more diversified local economy
- The empowerment of the Lomshiyo community via:
 - Investment (public and private) on Lomshiyo Trust land
 - Preferential employment for members of the Lomshiyo Trust
 - Contractual capacity building programmes
 - The establishment of sustainable revenue streams including lease fees and turnover based payments.
 - Opportunities for Lomshiyo Trust to acquire equity shares in the operating company (via the inclusion of equity options) in the CPP contracts.

PROPOSALS

Description of existing assets

Infrastructure

- The Lomshiyo Trust are the owners of 3 000 hectares of land within MGR. The Lomshiyo land is located in the eastern section of the MNR.
- The MGR is reasonably well located relative to existing provincial and national tarred roads including the N4 (major link between Gauteng and Maputo) and the R40 (linking Nelspruit to Barberton) and R38 (linking the N4 to Barberton). All these roads are surfaced and in a good state of repair.
- The Lomshiyo Trust land is located in the north-eastern section of the MGR and takes access directly off the R38 linking the N4 to Barberton.
- The road network within the reserve is currently only suited to heavy-duty 4X4 vehicles at present. Prior to the mobilisation of tourism investors, significant upgrading of this internal network will be implemented as part of the nationally funded BATOBIC programme. Planning in this regard is currently underway.

- MGR is fully game fenced. The current fence is not suited to Big Five. MGR is already partially stocked with 'plains game' and further stocking programmes are in implementation on a long term basis.
- The reserve has easy access to ESKOM power. ESKOM currently provides power to three active mines within/adjacent to the reserve, and there is also one power line for residential purposes.
- There are 7 perennial streams in the nature reserve, as well as numerous non-perennial streams. They provide the nature reserve with an abundant water supply for both human and wildlife uses.

Key principles

The following general principles apply:

- The members of the partnership commit themselves to the broader objective of developing the Mountainlands Nature Reserve for tourism and related uses on a sustainable basis. The development of related infrastructure and facilities, as well as the restocking of the Mountainlands Nature Reserve are all actions intended to support the broader socio-economic objectives. The development of the tourism-related activities will be the responsibility of the partnership, and will be done in such a manner that they do not undermine the long-term conservation of the underlying resource base.
- The partnership will undertake to manage the reserve. This includes the fencing of the reserve; game management; security and anti-poaching activities; veld management etc. The details of the management plan will also be made available to private tourism lodge developers, operators and investors.
- The reserve will be developed with a combination of common and private road networks.
- The reserve has been 'broadly' zoned in a manner that provides a spectrum of high intensity through to low impact wilderness zones. The process to prepare the more detailed conservation and tourism development plan will be completed in 2011.
- Development sites have been located in a manner that ensures that access is available to 2X4 vehicles, and in a manner that avoids unnecessary traversing within the MGR.
- If consumptive tourism is to be pursued, there will be a clear separation of photographic and consumptive tourism uses.
- The MGR will be managed as a secure area with access and egress tightly controlled.
- Tourism investment opportunities within MGR include leases/concessions, joint ventures, and freehold sale in certain sections.

In so far as the stocking of game is concerned, the following should also be noted:

- The partnership will be responsible for managing the process whereby the game is located, purchased and relocated (the necessary logistical arrangements excluding game purchase and transport cost) to Mountainlands Nature Reserve.
- The partnership will be responsible for ensuring that the necessary basic infrastructure exists to facilitate the management of these game populations (basic roads etc.)

Project parameters

- Consumptive and non-consumptive use of the surplus game is 'in principle' allowed. Such actions need to be guided by the nature reserves management plan, and related decisions need to be taken in consultation with the partnership, and in particular those within the partnership responsible for the day-to-day management of the game

species, as well as those responsible for photographic and non-consumptive tourism uses.

Project elements

The zoning for the development of tourism facilities within MGR has been completed, and the development of the more detailed reserve tourism and conservation management plans will be implemented in 2011. It has been agreed that the major *tourism products* are likely to include at least the following:

- Ecotourism activities focused on photographic tourism.
- Adventure tourism including hiking, mountain biking, paragliding, hang gliding, abseiling, kloofing and limited 4X4 routes.
- Heritage tourism pursuits focused on the various historical and cultural sites within MGR
- Environmental education.
- Controlled hunting in specifically demarcated areas).

Within the context of these proposed products, the proposed investments projects are likely to include the following:

- Game lodges
- Hotel and conference facilities
- Environmental education centre and camps
- Adventure and sporting facilities
- Hiking and 4X4 trails and camps

Role of each stakeholder

The partnership (State, community trust, private land owners)

- The partnership will be responsible for the tourism and conservation management functions within the nature reserve. These will be implemented against the approved tourism and conservation management plan.
- The partnership will be responsible for the design and implementation of investor mobilisation strategies. The land-owners are entitled to implement their own investor mobilisation processes within context of the agreed upon tourism and conservation management frameworks and investor mobilisation strategy.
- Securing of necessary bulk infrastructure as agreed in terms of the tourism and conservation development plan.
- The sourcing and management of the game populations.

The state

The national Government has made R36 million available for the development of a basic internal roads infrastructure (R12 Million) and the establishment of some initial accommodation facilities on Lomshiyo Trust land (R12 million)

Private investors

- Development and marketing of tourism related facilities.
- Destination promotion and advertising.
- Development, operation and maintenance of facilities and private lodge/activity specific infrastructure.

STATUS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS REQUIRED

The partners have expended considerable effort on getting the necessary regulatory frameworks in place (legal and institutional aspects) as well as creating an attractive investment environment (including aspects such as strategic infrastructure and facilities, game stocking, basic staffing, resolution of outstanding land settlement issues. The key challenge in the short term is to secure much needed investment in the development and operationalisation of tourism accommodation, related photographic tourism activities, related nature based activities, and related special interest activities. BATOBIC has secured funding to facilitate the investor mobilisation processes, as well as to develop key elements of internal infrastructure (e.g. internal link roads – See project 3).

Project 3: Mountainlands internal linking road infrastructure

INTRODUCTION

The Barberton Mountainlands Nature Reserve measures approximately 18 000 Hectares, and is situated to the east of Barberton town. The reserve is situated in an area of great beauty with high plant species diversity and at the core of the future WHS since it contains several unique geological features related to the WHS. The natural resource base is characterised by a variety of habitats set in an undulating and at times mountainous setting. The area has a very rich biodiversity and great scenic beauty. Several Red Data plants and bird species are found in the area. There are various antelope as well as carnivore species existing at present. Historically the Big Five also occurred in the area.

This reserve is strategically very well located in a tourism development context both within Mpumalanga Province and in terms of the development of the Songimvelo/Malolotja Transfrontier Conservation Area between South Africa and Swaziland respectively. It is envisaged that the Mountainlands Reserve will in due course become part of the Songimvelo/Malolotja TFCA.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- The quality of the natural environment within Mountainlands is good. This reserve was established in 2000. To-date the inherent tourism development potential of this nature reserve remains under- utilised.
- The reserve has reasonably good access in terms of existing provincial and national tarred roads. The MNR is reasonably well located relative to existing provincial and national tarred roads including the N4 (major link between Gauteng and Maputo) and the R40 (linking Nelspruit to Barberton) and R38 (linking the N4 to Barberton). All these roads are surfaced and in a good state of repair.
- The condition of the roads within the reserve on the community and state land is generally poorly maintained, while the roads in private land are generally in good condition and well maintained. Of particular importance is the development of main (linking) road network across the nature reserve to integrate the eastern and western road networks. The poor quality and limited extent of internal link roads are currently a serious obstacle to the process of tourism development in general and to investor mobilisation in particular, since such links are required to ensure a suitably diverse and extensive traversing area to support commercially based photographic tourism .
- From a broader socio-economic development perspective, the development of tourism in this locality is the logical choice now that the mining operations are decreasing and will naturally phase out (mining is a consumptive activity which by definition has to end at some point), and because of the inherent development potential of the area for nature based, adventure and cultural tourism. Tourism development is potentially well placed to generate a range of new local economic development opportunities for the adjacent communities.
- The development of this Mountainlands tourism node is strategically vital to the longer-term development of the TBC due to its strategic location.

OBJECTIVES

MNR objectives:

The overall objective of this MNR development initiative is to promote sustainable socio-economic development within the context of this strategically important nature conservation and tourism development area. This area has been identified as a priority area for tourism-led development at a national, provincial and municipal level. Specific objectives related to the development of MNR include:

- The mobilisation of private sector investments and lending
- The development of the MNR on the basis of a community/private public partnership
- The generation of a more diversified local economy
- The empowerment of the local communities via:
 - Investment (public and private) on community owned/controlled land.
 - Preferential employment for members of the local communities.
 - Contractual capacity building programmes for local communities employed in MNR.
 - The establishment of sustainable revenue streams including lease fees and turnover based payments for local communities on whose land tourism developments take place.
 - Opportunities for local communities to acquire equity shares in the operating company (via the inclusion of equity options) in the CPP contracts.

Project specific objectives:

- To extend the main/bulk internal road network within the MNR in a manner that ensures that traversing can take place across the MNR based on a variety of routes.

PROPOSALS

- The development of approximately 100 km on new linking roads in MNR – specifically in order to link the community and state owned portions of land, and the associated investment/development opportunities, to the more extensively developed road network on the western section of the MNR (privately owned land).

Key principles

The following general principles apply:

- The members of the partnership re-commit themselves to the broader objective of developing the Mountainlands Nature Reserve for tourism and related uses on a sustainable basis, based on the previously identified integrated development approach which has been only partially implemented. The main outstanding developments being the three identified commercial lodge sites together with guided and value added tours into the reserve.
- The development of related infrastructure is intended to support the broader socio-economic objectives and will be done in such a manner that is consistent with the approved tourism and conservation management frameworks. The planned infrastructure developments specified in this project will specifically benefit the community and state land owners and will aim to bring the investments made on such land on par with the investments already made by private land owners in pursuance of the integrated development of the reserve.
- The partnership has committed itself to the use of labour intensive road construction and maintenance in terms of this project.

- The partnership will undertake to manage the reserve. This includes the maintenance of all common infrastructures created (specifically including the link roads proposed in this project).
- The reserve will be developed with a combination of common and private road networks.

STATUS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS REQUIRED

Funding for this project has been secured for the implementation of this project via BATOBIC.

Project 4: Msauli Village Rehabilitation and Upgrading

INTRODUCTION

Msauli Village was developed as a mining town in the early 1940s. Msauli is situated in a picturesque valley at the foot of the Ngwenya Mountains in the eastern Lowveld of Mpumalanga. Msauli is also located within the boundaries of the Songimvelo Game Reserve. Road access to the area is via a secondary road running from Badplaas to Barberton over the Saddleback pass. The distance by road to Barberton is 55km, to Badplaas 60 km and to the Bulembu Border Post 15km.

Mining operations at Msauli have ceased and the 'village' has subsequently been transferred to a Land Claimant Community who are now the owners of the land and the above ground infrastructure and facilities. Regrettably there has been little maintenance on the remaining residential facilities since 2000 and as a result the physical infrastructure and facilities are already in a poor state of maintenance. Nevertheless, the Msauli Village is believed to offer a good investment opportunity based largely on the inherent potential of the existing 'village' infrastructure, combined with Msauli's location within Songimvelo Game Reserve.

BACKGROUND TO SONGIMVELO GAME RESERVE

The Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency are responsible for the management of the Songimvelo Game Reserve. At 48 000 hectares Songimvelo is the largest of Mpumalanga's game reserves. It forms a contiguous conservation area with the 18 000 hectare Malolotja Nature Reserve in Swaziland. Both of these protected areas have tremendously high biodiversity, and protect a range of rare and/or endangered plants/birds/animals. Songimvelo is an important water catchment for the Komati, Lomati and the Msoli rivers.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- The quality of the natural environment within Songimvelo is very good. The inherent tourism development potential of this nature reserve is significantly under-utilised, and the ability of this reserve to generate much needed revenues for the MTPA and its conservation activities, has been under-utilised.
- Whilst a limited amount of accommodation were developed for tourist use within Songimvelo (Komati River Lodge [20-beds burned down] and chalets at Kromdraai [100 beds]), such facilities have in practice been extremely poorly utilised to-date. In this regard, a key strategic issue has been that this area is not a well-known tourism destination, which situation has been exacerbated by the very limited marketing of the area. The limited marketing of the area also needs to be understood within the context of the MTPAs, and indeed the Mpumalanga Province's, very severe human and financial resource constraints.
- The MTPA is the adjacent land user (Songimvelo area is subject to expansive land claims that are largely unresolved) on all sides of Msauli village (which is essentially an island within Songimvelo Game Reserve).
- The MTPA has historically expressed the opinion that a change of land use from mining to tourism/recreation and related residential uses, under the management and development of a sustainable and reputable operator/developer would be strategically beneficial (economically, financially, and in terms of conservation) to the current operations and future development of Songimvelo.

- Since the new land owners (land claimant community) have extremely limited institutional and financial capacity, and certainly have no 'own' capacity in terms of the management and development of leisure residential facilities, a critical issue for the future development of Msauli will be to ensure that the selected new investor has a proven track record in terms of the development, marketing and ongoing operation of such nature/adventure tourism based facilities¹⁵.
- The value of the village (and the ability to market and lease the existing housing stock) to a new investor/operator will be significantly enhanced if supported by a mutually beneficial arrangement with the MTPA in terms of access to MPB land and facilities. The terms and conditions, and the nature and extent of such access would need to be formally agreed to as a 'side/parallel' agreement to the private/private sector deal between the current mine owners and a new investor.
- From a broader socio-economic development perspective, the development of tourism in this locality is the logical choice now that the mining operations are ceasing, and because of the inherent development potential of the area for nature based, adventure and cultural tourism. Tourism development is potentially well placed to absorb some of those retrenched from mining activities, as well as to generate a range of new local economic development opportunities for adjacent communities.
- There are certain land claims within the broader Songimvelo Game Reserve. These need to be resolved (one way or another) so as to provide a degree of certainty for the ongoing operation of tourism ventures in the area.
- There are a limited number of rural households located within and/or immediately adjacent to the Songimvelo Game Reserve. There are no fundamental reasons to suggest that these families cannot be included as active or passive partners in the long term tourism development processes within the area.
- The development of this tourism node is strategically vital to the longer-term development of the TBC.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this initiative is to promote sustainable socio-economic development within the context of this strategically important nature conservation and tourism development area. This area has been identified as a priority area for tourism-led development at a national, provincial and municipal level. Specific objectives include:

- The conversion of this mining village to tourism/conservation and related residential uses.
- To identify a suitable tourism/residential/resort investor to lease the village before the existing infrastructure falls into complete disrepair. The private sector investor/operator would be responsible for the rehabilitation, operation and maintenance of the tourism infrastructure and facilities within the village.
- To use the development momentum gained via the private sector driven marketing and investment process in Msauli to boost the use of tourism infrastructure and facilities at in Songimvelo.
- Similarly, to use this development momentum to boost the demand for further tourism-led developments in the Songimvelo Panhandle (essentially undeveloped at

¹⁵ *Should the responsibility for the rehabilitation, operation, management and maintenance of Msauli be transferred to a strategic private partner that cannot rehabilitate and operate the village on a long term sustainable basis, this would constitute the loss of an important development opportunity for the Claimant Community, as well as the opportunity to boost tourism development in this impoverished rural are. This failure would also result in associated' losses' to the MTPA operations and the future development of Songimvelo.*

this stage), as well as Diepgezet and Josefsdal, both of which areas are also significantly under utilised.

- To use the tourism development process as a basis for employment creation within the area.
- To generate new revenue streams (via the tourism development process) which could be used to support the long-term conservation and socio-economic development activities within and adjacent to the Songimvelo Game Reserve.

PROPOSALS

Description of existing assets

Accommodation facilities

- Approximately 100 houses that were used for senior personnel constitute the most valuable part of the accommodation facilities. Houses are either three or four bed roomed units, some 25% with en-suite or double ablution facilities. Thirty-nine of the houses are brick and mortar construction with the remainder being prefabricated. Eight of the houses are provided with swimming pools. (Note: Numbers to be verified during investor mobilisation process).

Infrastructure

- The residential area of Msauli village is served with a reasonably well constructed road network. The portion of the road running through the village is tarred to control dust. Minor roads give access to many of the natural attractions in the area.
- From a tourism product perspective, the road network in Songimvelo Game Reserve varies. Certain sections such as 'The Plains' have a well-developed network that was developed for guided game drives, whilst 'Dunbar Valley' and the 'Panhandle' which are also of particular relevance to Msauli Village are only suited to heavy-duty 4X4 vehicles.
- The village is provided with power from ESKOM through a dedicated overhead power line running from Barberton to a main sub-station. All accommodation units are provided with power at a nominal 220V. The installed capacity of the power supply is 12.5MW, which is more than adequate for the proposed tourism/recreational and residential uses. Additional power is generated in the rainy season by a hydroelectric installation (1.25MW) in the Komati River. (Note: To be verified during investor mobilisation process).
- All the rivers in the area are perennial and provide the village with an abundant water supply. Water for human consumption is pumped from two pumping stations in the Mtsoli River, which is renowned for its clear and uncontaminated water quality. Potable water is processed at a water treatment plant¹⁶ with a capacity of 2 000 000 litres per 24 hours. Potable water is collected in several strategically situated reservoirs from where it is distributed to consumers. (Note: To be verified during investor mobilisation process).

Recreational facilities

- There is a recreation club with men's and ladies bar as well as function halls, a small shop, snooker and dart facilities and a well laid out barbecue area.
- A nine hole golf course situated next to the Mtsoli River and Songimvelo Game Reserve. This facility is rapidly falling into disrepair as a result of under-utilisation and associated revenue shortages.

¹⁶ Comprises a chemical assisted settling pond, sand filters and automatic chlorination.

- Soccer field with pavilion and commentators box. (Note: To be verified during investor mobilisation process).
- Swimming pool, squash court, floodlit Bowling Green and three paved tennis courts, one of which is floodlit. (Note: To be verified during investor mobilisation process).

Other facilities/infrastructure

- A guesthouse (budget end of market) near the main office complex.

Mine buildings and infrastructure

- The main office complex that consists of eight large office areas, two smaller offices, toilet facilities and a large conference room, all housed in a double storey plastered brick building. Substantial storage facilities are also provided.

Key principles

- The proposal is for the bulk of the housing, recreational and office infrastructure to be leased to a new tourism investor/operator based on a community/private partnership. The new investor will assume the primary technical and financial responsibility for the rehabilitation and maintenance of such infrastructure/facilities.
- The MTPA will enter into negotiations with the Land Owners and the new investor/developer so as to provide long-term access to Songimvelo according to specific conditions as agreed between these parties.

Project parameters

- Access granted by the MTPA to traverse sections of Songimvelo will be based on a non-exclusive use lease/concession agreement.
- The introduction of any non-indigenous fauna and/or flora into the village and/or Songimvelo is prohibited.
- The MTPA retains the responsibility for all conservation management functions within Songimvelo and including the village. (Note: To be verified during investor mobilisation process).

Project elements

Element/contract one: Msauli Village

- The rehabilitation of (and possibly extension), the development site (Msauli mining village) for tourist, recreational, accommodation and related facilities.
- The rehabilitation and operation of all related infrastructure and facilities by the selected investor/operator.
- The marketing and leasing of existing and/or new houses and/or facilities.
- The restocking of indigenous wildlife into the project area (Songimvelo Game Reserve).
- Security, fencing and access control for the village.

Element/contract two: Access to Songimvelo Game Reserve

Zone A (Including Msauli village and the golf course): Approximately 200 hectares that is leased and operated by the private sector and is reserved for the exclusive use of the village residents. This zone will be fenced and will have limited plains game within it.

- **Zone B (Including Diepgezet, Nooitgezien and Josefsdal):** Approximately 5000 hectares. Residents of Msauli will have access to this zone for hiking, cycling, climbing, self drive etc. Part of this area (estimated at 2000 hectares) will be restocked with plains game. Msauli residents have access to Zone B but such access is not exclusive. Msauli residents will be required to pay a yearly levy for unlimited (but controlled)

access. Members of the general public are also able to access this area in terms of certain conditions, fees and controls. The development of additional lodges within this area by private sector and/or community-based developers at a later date is not precluded. (Note: To be verified during investor mobilisation process with 'Claimants' and MTPA).

- **Zone C (Including Songimvelo Plains and Dunbar Valley etc.):** This zone of some 30 000 hectares is characterised by Big Four game (no Lions), and as such access is more tightly controlled. Msauli residents will not have exclusive rights to this area. In view of the dangers associated with the wildlife within the area, (and bearing in mind the opportunity to introduce Cheetah and Spotted Hyena into this zone) walking/hiking would need to be on an 'accompanied' basis with an accredited guide. The terrain within this part of Songimvelo is particularly scenic and spectacular, but will only be suited to heavy 4X4 vehicles. To avoid over congestion within this zone strict controls will need to be developed to limit and control access. It is most likely that the bulk of vehicular access will need to be on the basis of guided game vehicles with professional operators/guides. It is proposed that tariffs for access to this area, be it for hiking or vehicular game viewing, will be on the basis of 'pay as you go'. (Note: To be verified during investor mobilisation process with 'Claimants' and MTPA)..
- **Zone D (The Panhandle):** The Panhandle has an area of about 14 000 hectares. The area is particularly well suited to hiking, but could be developed to provide limited access for self-drive 4X4 vehicles. There are existing structures on this part of the reserve that could with very limited expenditure be redeveloped/rehabilitated for overnight accommodation. (Note: To be verified during investor mobilisation process with 'Claimants' and MTPA).

Role of the partners – Public sector; Private sector; Communities

The State

- The MTPA will be responsible for the conservation management function within Songimvelo including Zones A, B, C, and D. (Note: To be verified during investor mobilisation process with 'Claimants' and MTPA).

The new investor/operator

- Rehabilitation, redevelopment, operation and maintenance of accommodation facilities. (Private party to assume all commercial responsibilities including funding for working and capital investments.)
 - Rehabilitation of the bulk infrastructure.
 - Operation and maintenance of the bulk infrastructure.
 - Marketing of all houses and facilities.
 - Rehabilitation and maintenance of the golf course.
 - Rehabilitation, operation and maintenance of all sporting and recreational facilities.
 - Fire risk management
 - Alien plant control as per agreed upon programme.

Benefit flows – Public sector; Private sector; Communities

- Public sector benefits via increased revenue from gate fees and lease/concession fees that would apply in relation to state owned land/reserves. These revenues can be reinvested directly back into the conservation and socio-economic development functions.
- The community benefits via direct employment; the development of upgraded infrastructure and facilities (Transferred at no cost at end of lease – BOT); monthly

revenue streams; on the job training; and via related entrepreneurship opportunities (wood, refuse removal, road maintenance, tourist guiding, rehabilitation and maintenance, retail etc.)..

- The private sector benefits by way of access to prime investment opportunities, as well as a package of rights to access Songimvelo Game Reserve which should enhance the potential to market this new tourism destination and its related facilities.

Project 5: Tourism Route Development (including related road, site, and route signage)

INTRODUCTION

The main elements of this project include the upgrading of Road Signage in the TBC in relation to the development of various scenic and special interest (e.g. geology route) tourism routes, locations (e.g. heritage sites in Barberton town), tourism support services (e.g. Barberton Visitor Information Center). The TBC section of the Kruger Lowveld Tourism Region of Mpumalanga has been identified as a priority region within which the Mpumalanga Tourism Route Road and Signing Framework should be implemented^[1]. This will include the development of a consistent set of internationally approved (SADC approved) road route signs in the TBC and adjacent areas. The design of these signs has already been completed and approved as part of the Tourism Route Signage project initiated by the Kruger Lowveld RTO, as well as the preparation of a related map book. Roads and facility audits for the entire Kruger Lowveld area have already been completed, and planning for the erection of the signs is already underway.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- The Tourism Route Road Signage Framework is intended to support the establishment of effective tourism related information infrastructure. It is one key part of Mpumalanga's integrated tourism information system.
- Mpumalanga has developed a sophisticated route road development system. The route road development concept assumes that tourists travelling by road to a particular destination do not necessarily take the shortest and quickest route. Rather tourists tend to balance 'effort of getting there' with the travelling experience along the route.
- For a tourist to plan such a trip will require access to promotional and information material including road signs as well as maps, brochures and an information office network.

OBJECTIVES

To establish an effective tourism related information infrastructure, specifically route road signage in the TBC tourism region of Mpumalanga. (It should be noted that as and where necessary this tourist signage would be supplemented by the provision of strategically located and easily accessible tourist information centers and information bureaus.)

PROPOSALS

The key project elements to be implemented as part of this project include:

- Establishment of the 'Fig 8' Tourism Route Development and Bulembu Rd GeoTrail Signage projects, both of which are key tourism info infrastructure for the WHS and the region.
- Identify and implement heritage site improvements 'EcoHeritage Town' (Barberton) and related signage including visitor gateway facilities (as already planned and funded).

^[1] This framework was initiated in 1998 in response to discussion between the MTA, tourism business operators and roads authorities (including SA National Roads Agency and Mpumalanga Provincial Roads) in response to concerns regarding the poor level of tourism signage along the road infrastructure in Mpumalanga.

- Construction, equipping & networking of an improved VIC for Barberton region linked to a properly instituted KLT structure.

The key activities required in order to implement such a system in the Kruger Lowveld tourism region include the following:

- An audit of existing tourism plant.
- The development of a new tourism map for the TBC planning area which will include all identified tourism routes and places of interest.
- The development of a new brochure of the TBC planning area which will include all identified tourism routes and places of interest.
- The design and erection of route road signs and tourism facility signs.

STATUS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS REQUIRED

The road signage for the Kruger Lowveld has been designed and approved by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The road signage will extend throughout the TBC – South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique. Assessment will be required to estimate and prioritise top-up signage work that may be needed when the funds for the present tourism infrastructure projects are exhausted.

Project 6: World Heritage Site Interpretation Centre (incorporating the Barberton Visitor Information Centre)

INTRODUCTION

The WHS Interpretation Centre (Note: Referred to in the Mpumalanga Tourism Growth Strategy [2007] as the 'BioPark') will serve as a multi focus facility with information, interpretative and display function as well as offices to house the personnel to implement all the necessary activities for a fully functional WHS Interpretation Center. Once this project is implemented it has been agreed that the current Barberton Visitor Information Center will re-locate from Barberton town to the WHS Interpretation Center. Presently Barberton does not have a suitable tourism Visitor Information Center and this has a negative impact on marketing and information dissemination to international and domestic tourists. The WHS Interpretation Center combined with the Visitor Information Center are regarded as key elements of the strategy to present the unique attractions of the TBC area to tourists and tourist operators. The WHS Interpretation Center and the re-located Barberton Visitor Information centre will be strategically located relative to the flow of tourists moving from Gauteng Province to Barberton; from the Highlands meander (Dullstroom, Machadadorp etc.) through Badplaas to Barberton; and from Nelspruit to Barberton.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- Presently Barberton does not have a suitable tourism Visitor Information Center and this has a negative impact on marketing and information dissemination to international and domestic tourists.
- Mpumalanga has designed a marketing information and management system that creates and facilitates a regular flow of information for the use and analysis of product owners, interested stakeholders and tourists.

OBJECTIVE

To provide up-to-date and accurate information about tourism products, experiences, destinations, infrastructure, services as part of the process of 'selling' the various regions, towns etc. as tourism destinations.

THE PROPOSAL

- Geographical focus area: the greater Barberton area (Kruger Lowveld / Barberton-Makhonjwa World Heritage Site/ Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA/ Barberton Bio Park). The VIC will be located at Barberton town.
- Proposed facilities: Buildings and related structures and facilities for this envisaged multi-focus visitor attraction. The facilities will include living and static displays. Its displays and information will showcase the sense-of-place of the entire region, including the region's natural wonders: it's famous ancient geology illustrating where life began; its stunning mountain scenery; its wildlife and other heritage and cultural treasures. It will include details about the Greater Barberton's inhabitants including their history and culture, and the connection between people and their environment. It will showcase the educational value of all of the region's natural and cultural resources. It will include various forms of tourist information.
- It is envisaged that an owner-operated concept will be applied in order to stimulate private sector entrepreneurship and financial sustainability.

- As part of the owner operated licensing a complete service package will be provided to the licensee. This includes access to the MTPA database, Website, research information, training, and branding. It will also facilitate inclusion in all MTA promotional material, IT infrastructure, information office marketing activities, a reservation system, and advice on financial matters.
- At the time of writing this project is still in the process of conceptualization¹⁷. This particular tourism information center could be developed as an integrated tourism service center - including a petrol filling station (suitable for cars and busses), a 'Cradle of Life Museum', high standard food and ablution facilities, and recreational facilities.
- The facility will be developed in a manner that promotes collaboration with other tourism information facilities in the planning area including those at Nelspruit, Komati Wilderness Information Center and in Swaziland.

STATUS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS REQUIRED

It is important to note that the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation is the lead implementing agent for the process leading to the approval and implementation of the Barberton Makhonjwa Mountainland WHS. Whilst BATOBIC will be providing non-financial technical 'support' to the WHS application process, BATOBIC has secured R7 Million in support of the physical facilities for the Interpretation Centre. In the event that the WHS is not approved, the facility will be referred to as the Barberton Visitor Information Centre.

¹⁷ According to the current Business plan key elements will/could include:

1. Visitor bus-disembarkation facility (restrooms and bus-stop-shop); linking to expanded information/tourism communications facilities; including hi-tech lecture theatre, meeting rooms and indoor/outdoor display areas & scenic view sites or elevated platforms. It has emphasis on linked out-door settings and recreational/educational spaces and facilities.

2. Separate but adjacent building for Early Earth and First Life Geological displays and interpretative facilities; includes a central 3-D terrain model (including timber plantations and 18 km Havelock Mine Ropeway) geological specimens, photographs, graphics, and "Virtual Archaean Time Telescope" all with detailed interpretative stories for visitors & learners. (Teaching kids about Barberton & its setting.) Indoor outdoor link to include adjacent natural area used to illustrate connection between geological diversity & ecological diversity, e.g. serpentine soils and rare plants.

3. Mining and Transport displays linked to existing historical sites and collections (Tiger Trap tours, Sheba Mine Museum, Bray's Golden Quarry, Eureka City etc). These double as educational displays and commercial advertising links to local tourism products & activities. Heritage walk, other local Barberton/Umjindi heritage assets / buildings etc, peri-urban hiking trails included.

Annex 7

Project 7: Songimvelo/Malolotja Transfrontier Park and Conservation Areas

INTRODUCTION

The proposed Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA is located on the South Africa-Swaziland border between Barberton (SA) and Pigg's Peak (Swaziland) and covers an area of approximately 700km², with potential extensions of another 500km². The core of the TFCA is formed by the 49 000 ha Songimvelo Game Reserve (SA) and 18 000 ha Malolotja Nature Reserve (Swaziland) which share a common border. The other identified core areas on the Swaziland side are three protection-worthy areas¹⁸, namely the Bulembu, Makhonjwa, and Sondeza National Landscapes.

The area is characterised by a long and diverse history of land use. Middle-stone-age artifacts dating back 30 000 to 50 000 years were found on Ida Dover (SA). Stone walled sites of the Later Iron Age (the last 1000 years) are common. They range from complex 'village-type' sites in the lowly-lying southern area to single stone rings on the exposed uplands. Historian Hromnik¹⁹ convincingly argues that many of these sites can actually be linked to Dravidian (Indian) gold miners and traders, which were active in this region many centuries ago. The eNcakeni area (mostly the area known today as Songimvelo) was settled by the bakaNgwane (people of Swaziland) under the eMjindini authority during the reign of King Mswati II (1840-1868).

Ngwenya Mountain in Swaziland is the site of the world's oldest mine, the Lion Cavern, where around 4100 BC, haematite and specularite were mined for cosmetic and ritual uses. This ancient mine is located next to the more modern iron ore mine, which ceased production in 1978. The old Forbes Reef Gold Mine is located in the Forbes Reef forest. A hundred years ago all workable gold was extracted over a twenty years period and Forbes Reef settlement became a ghost town. Stibnite and Stibiconite (antimony) were mined from 1906 to 1917 in the Mali mine on the farm Soodorst (SA). Gold was mined at the Onvewacht and Komati Lily mines (SA). Asbestos was until the last decade still being actively mined at the Msauli (SA) and Havelock Mine (Swaziland) on the serpentines along the south-eastern Swaziland border. All mining activities at Msauli and Havelock have now ceased.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- The TFCA is situated in the Barberton Mountainland, which forms part of the African erosion surface. Elevation ranges from 600 to 1900m above sea level. The TFCA contains catchments of national hydrological importance for both Swaziland and South Africa and is drained by numerous perennial rivers and streams of which the Nkomati and Mlumati are the most significant. The topography is very rugged, with only the Nkomati valley in Songimvelo representing gently rolling terrain. Generally, the broken unspoilt natural landscape of supreme visual impact makes the TFCA aesthetically the most attractive portion of the Swaziland-South African border. Of particular interest are the spectacular, deeply incised gorges of the Mntsoli, Malolotja and Mlumati

¹⁸ ANON. 1979. *Survey of Nationally Protection worthy Areas of Swaziland. Unpublished Report. Swaziland National Trust Commission.*

¹⁹ Hromnik C.A. 1991. *Dravidian gold mining and trade in ancient Komatiland. J.A.A.S. 26(3&4): 283-290*

rivers, as well as several waterfalls (including the Malolotja Falls-Swaziland's highest waterfall).

- The Barberton Mountainland represents an early Precambrian greenstone belt. The entire succession of supracrustal rocks constituting the greenstone belt is known as the Swaziland Sequence. The underformed nature and state of preservation of the geological phenomena account for the international acclaim, which the area enjoys amongst earth scientists. Its rock exposures yield key information on the origin and evolution of the Earth crust, the nature of early life, and the character and development of the Ancient Ocean and atmosphere. The feature, together with the completeness of the stratigraphic column it presents, attracts worldwide attention to the Barberton Mountainland.
- The Barberton Mountainland is considered to be one of five centres of endemism along the Transvaal escarpment (Fourie et al. 1988)²⁰. The area is characterised by high species diversity. In Songimvelo for example more than 1440 species have so far been identified, and in Malolotja more than 1000 species, including many endemics have also been identified. Since 1991 at least four species new to science have been collected from the reserve. This high species number reflects Songimvelo's location in the quarter-degree grid with the highest recorded plant diversity in Mpumalanga.
- Veld type 8 (north-eastern Mountain Sourveld), which covers most of the TFCA, is rapidly being lost to afforestation and the spread of alien plant and fish species. This extensive grassland area is therefore of critical importance to conservation. Furthermore, the granite derived soils along the eastern border of Malolotja and the serpentine soils in both reserves are unique features that support important plant communities. The upland bog system in Malolotja reputedly supports the most diverse *vlei* communities in Swaziland²¹ and possibly in the region.
- Numerous rare and endangered plant species have been found in the TFCA area. Of these, the occurrence of the only remaining wild population of the Woolly Cycad, *Encephalartos heenanii* ranks as the most important. Some 400 of these plants occur on Songimvelo with a very few plants growing just across the Swaziland border similar habitat. A significant number of restricted cycads, namely *Encephalartos paucidentatus* also occur in both Songimvelo and Malolotja. Important populations of *Encephalartos laevifolius* are found in Malolotja. Several species of *Protea* occur in the region and entire Swaziland population of *Protea comptonii* occurs in Malolotja and Bulembu Mountain.
- Since the proclamation of the reserves a number of large herbivores have been introduced. The white rhino population on Songimvelo is one of the largest in the Mpumalanga Province. Disease-free buffalo are also present on Songimvelo. Elephant occur on both Malolotja and Songimvelo. Seventy-three mammals have been recorded from Songimvelo and sixty-four from Malolotja. Twenty-seven small mammals occur

²⁰ Fourie S.P., Jacobsen N.H.G., Kleynhans C.J. & Tarboton W. 1988 Biogeographical importance and species/areas warranting particular conservation attention. In Ferrar A.A., Isaacs G. & Stacey J.R. (Ed.). *Environmental conservation features of the Transvaal Escarpment. Occasional Report 31.* CSIR, Pretoria.

²¹ Compton, R.H. 1966. An Annotated checklist of the Flora of Swaziland. *Journal of South African Botany. Supplementary Volume No. VI.*

in Malolotja including three species of grass climbing mouse (*Dendromus spp.*). The TFCA has important populations of regionally threatened species.²²

- More than three hundred and thirty bird species have been recorded from Songimvelo and more than two hundred and seventy in Malolotja. Important species recorded from the area include White stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), Yellow-billed Stork (*Mycteria ibis*), Bald ibis (*Geronticus calvus*), Bat hawk (*Macheiramphus alcinus*), Martial Eagle (*Polemaetus bellicosus*), African finfoot (*Podica senegalensis*), Stanley's bustard (*Neotis denhami*) and Blue swallow (*Hirundo atrocaerulea*). Of the approximately 92 endemic southern African bird species, 33 have been recorded from Malolotja. The two reserves provide important breeding habitat for African finfoot, Martial eagle, Bald ibis (*Geronticus calvus*), Stanley's bustard and Blue crane. At least eight breeding pairs of the critically endangered Blue swallow are present at Malolotja.
- More than twenty species of freshwater fishes have been recorded from each protected area, including threatened and rare species such as the Incomati rock catlet (*Chiloglanis bifurcus*), Phongolo rock catlet (*Chiloglanis emarginatus*), and southern mouthbrooder (*Pseudocrenilabrus philander*). All six southern African endemic species of rock catlet (*Chiloglanis spp.*) have been recorded from Malolotja and Songimvelo. Both reserves provide important protected habitat for eels.
- More than fifty species of reptiles and amphibians have been recorded from Songimvelo and from Malolotja eighty-nine species, comprising 65 reptiles and 24 amphibians. Several regionally important species are found in the area including the Swaziland endemic Thick-tailed rock gecko (*Afroedura major*), the near-endemic Barberton girdled lizard (*Cordylus warreni babertornensis*), and the near-endemic Swazi rock snake (*Lamprophis swazicus*). All three species of southern African grass lizard (*Chamaesaura spp.*) occur in Malolotja. Regionally important frogs include the Natal ghost frog (*Heleophryne natalensis*), Plaintive rain frog (*Breviceps verucosus*), Long-toed running frog (*Semnodactylus wealii*), Striped grass frog (*Ptychadena porosissima*) and Yellow striped reed frog (*Hyperolium semidiscus*).
- In terms of land uses, the Malolotja Nature reserve was proclaimed during 1977 whereas Songimvelo was established in 1987. A number of tourist facilities have been established in both reserves and are functional at this stage. On the South African side a number of private conservation initiatives have sprung up in the Barberton Mountainlands. These could, together with community land and other state land, be linked with Songimvelo-Malolotja into a single entity of 1 200 km². The surrounding land use outside the core TFCA area is mostly plantation forestry and grazing. Apart from a number of formal settlements along the borders of the TFCA, a number of households are scattered across the landscape within the TFCA practicing subsistence agriculture (maize farming and livestock grazing). Income levels are low and future prospects seem slim.

²² Thick-tailed bushbaby (*Otolemur crassicaudatus*); Samango monkey (*Cercopithecus mitis*); Honey badger (*Mellivora capensis*); African civet (*Civettictus civetta*); White-tailed mongoose (*Ichneumia albicauda*); Aardwolf (*Proteles cristatus*); Leopard (*Panthera pardus*); Serval (*Laptailurus serval*); African wild cat (*Felis lybica*); Antbear (*Orycterophus afer*); White rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*); Cape buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*); Red duiker (*Cephalophus natalensis*); Tsessebe (*Damaliscus lunatus*); Oribi (*Ourebia ourebi*), and Grey rhebok (*Pelea capreolus*).

- A comparative study on the value of the respective forms of land use (namely forestry, maize farming, livestock grazing and ecotourism) on Songimvelo revealed that only forestry could generate financial returns on a par with the full tourism development potential. However, its environmental impact is much higher in terms of the loss of original vegetation and its associated fauna as well as the resulting stream flow reduction. This would have major repercussions for the users downstream, particularly the emergent sugar cane farmers in the Nkomazi district, who depend directly on irrigation water from the Nkomati and Mlumati rivers. Based on the present catchment value of the Songimvelo area and the extent of plantations already present in the Barberton/Pigg's Peak area, it is unlikely that new large-scale planting permits would be allocated by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry.
- Landscape beauty, game viewing, cultural and (soft) adventure products, within the context of the TBC strengthen the areas profile and future potential. The potential growth scenario assumes a 'without frontiers' vision based on a partnership between Mpumalanga and Swaziland. If this partnership is not forthcoming then the package of tourism product offerings by both Mpumalanga and Swaziland is that much weaker. The further expansion of the ecotourism facilities in this TFCA area and the integration of the tourism experiences across the area have thus been identified as the main opportunity for income generation and job creation in the TFCA area. The different types of land-ownership hold the potential to realise true public-community-private partnerships.
- Major constraints that have been identified include the following:
 - The border which is largely impermeable and which divides the TFCA without allowing the natural synergy to operate.
 - Restricted opening times of the Bulembu border post.
 - The poor condition of the dirt road linking Piggs Peak to the Bulembu border post.
 - Spread of alien invasive plants from the forestry areas, resulting in stream flow reduction.
 - The underdeveloped nature of Songimvelo/Malolotja as a well recognised destination in terms of marketing (although this could change in the light of current initiatives).

OBJECTIVES

The Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA Objectives of the Parties are as follows:

- (1)(a) To promote sustainable economic development and the sustainable utilisation of natural resources in the Area for the benefit of present and future generations by identifying and establishing appropriate and viable economic activities and initiatives in the Area in accordance with the Objectives and the TFCA Objectives and to develop, market and promote the TFCA to this end;
- (b) To address the needs and aspirations of local communities by ensuring their direct participation in and/or ownership of and/or derivation of benefit from any programmes or initiatives that are undertaken in the Area and encouraging or empowering them to do so in whatever way is possible and appropriate.
- (2)(a) To protect depleted, threatened, rare or endangered species and populations in the Area and, in particular, to preserve habitats in the Area considered critical for the survival of such species;
- (b) To maintain those ecological processes which characterise the Area and to protect

- the integrity of ecosystem structure and function in the Area;
- (c) To prevent outside and inside activities from detrimentally affecting the Area by identifying such threats and undertaking appropriate action to remove or mitigate such threats.
- (3)(a) To preserve, protect and manage any historical and cultural sites and natural aesthetic values of terrestrial and aquatic areas in the Area, for present and future generations;
- (b) To facilitate the interpretation of natural and cultural heritage in the Area for the purposes of conservation, education and tourism;
- (c) To provide for research and training, and for monitoring the environmental effects of human activities in and near the Area, including the direct and indirect effects of development and adjacent land-use practices.
- (4)(a) To make full use of the opportunities and advantages offered by the trans-national nature of the Area and to use this to maximum effect in meeting these objectives;
- (b) To promote cross border co-operation and interaction between the Parties at all levels including that of local communities, private sector, non-governmental organisations and government agencies;
- (c) To attempt to resolve any specific problems in the Area but without impinging on the sovereignty of either party;
- (d) To investigate options for the facilitation of cross-border movement, the positioning of fences, and the possible creation of visa-free areas or reserves;
- (e) To create an enabling framework to facilitate the achievement of these objectives; and
- (f) To perform strategic studies in order to formulate an agreed programme to implement these objectives.

PROPOSAL

Design Principles

- Under the TFCA initiative, management of ecosystems encompasses conservation, utilisation and control activities. The aim of conservation is:
 - to maintain the potential of the wildlife resources,
 - that of utilisation so as to derive sustainable economic benefits’;
 - while that of control so as to reduce any detrimental effects of wildlife.
- Conservation of wildlife shall be achieved by ensuring the survival of optimum numbers of species managed for sustainable utilisation, and by promoting sustainable land use practices, which includes the existing protected areas, which form part of the TFCA’s.
- Sustainable use of wildlife resources under the TFCA initiative is considered as a desirable and feasible form of land use. However as the ethical perceptions of uses and type of uses may vary between countries and cultures, in certain cases ecologically sustainable consumptive uses, especially in some protected areas, may be precluded on ethical grounds. In situations where consumptive use of natural

resources is a complementary land use, use of wild species will have to be conducted within an ethical context that:

- Includes respect for the viability of wild species and integrity of natural ecosystems.
 - Recognises the individual and collective responsibility for maintaining the sustainability of the shared natural resources, and;
 - Reflects the need to seek equity of benefits among the present generation and between the present and future generations.
- The TFCA needs to be formalised within the context that each country recognises and respects the sovereignty of its partners. However, legislation, policies and practices that would promote natural resource integrity and optimum socio-economic benefits should be harmonised. Furthermore, as the Parties to the TFCA initiative are also members of various Regional and International Treaties, Protocols and Conventions that promote biodiversity conservation, they shall endeavour to manage the shared ecosystems and their attendant biodiversity in accordance with the principles stipulated in such Treaties, Protocols and Conventions.
 - As ecotourism development and marketing is likely to be the banner for the proposed TFCA's, mechanisms for the equitable sharing of revenues, particularly from entry fees to the TFCAs will need to be worked out at the outset to avoid unnecessary conflicts.
 - Local community participation, under the TFCA initiative, will be through the promotion of Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in the interstitial areas. The guiding principle under CBNRM is one of sustainable rural development that enables rural communities to manage and directly benefit from natural resources. This is achieved through dual objectives. By making wildlife profitable, through active participation of the private sector, it attempts to stimulate rural development. It also simultaneously provides local communities with incentives to conserve wildlife and to manage inter-related natural resources such as soil, water, woodlands, arable land and grazing land.
 - The success of the TFCA initiative will depend on long –term political support and sustained commitment by all the partner nations to contribute financial, intellectual and other resources to the process of establishment, development and sustainable management of the proposed TFCAs.

Proposed work programme

PHASE 1. The following tasks have already been implemented as part of the establishment of the Songimvelo-Malolotja Transfrontier Park

- Establish a collaborative managing/coordinating structure for TFP development.
- Formalisation of Inter-State Agreement to establish TFCA.
- Integration of Malolotja and Songimvelo conservation management plans to form a TFP management plan

PHASE 2. Establishment of the Songimvelo-Malolotja Transfrontier Conservation Area

- Define stakeholder participation strategy. This task has been completed.
- Expand the TFP collaborative managing/coordinating structure to form a collaborative managing/coordinating TFCA structure. In this regard, as and when there is a need to address joint management objectives, such structure will be put in place. Note too

that the Joint Management plan is complete and involved participation from SAPS, Military, Dept. of Home Affairs, Dept of Health, Customs, SARS because of the cross border dynamics.

- Integration of suitable surrounding areas into a joint TFCA conservation management plan.
- Collaborative development of 1 year and 3 year development plan for TFCA.

STATUS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS REQUIRED

This initiative is currently in the process of implementation via a task group from Swaziland and South Africa (in the latter case represented by the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency).

Project 8: Finalisation of the Nomination Dossier for the World heritage Site:

INTRODUCTION

As has been discussed above, the formalisation of the Barberton Makhonjwa Mountainlands (BMM) as a World Heritage Site is regarded as strategically important and beneficial to the long-term development and marketing of the Tourism and Biodiversity Corridor. The BMM site has already achieved Tentative Listing status from UNESCO.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

There are a number of key steps required to finalise the application process. Step 1: Planning for the WHS Nomination Dossier, and submission of proposal to DEAT and UNESCO. Step 2: Completion and submission of the Nomination Dossier to DEAT and SAWHCC. Step 3: Submission of WHS Nomination Dossier by DEAT to UNESCO. Step 4: Implementation and development of the BMML WHS leading to operationalisation of the WHS. It is important to note that the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation is the lead implementing agent for this process.

OBJECTIVES

BATOBIC will provide non-financial support to those processes aimed at pursuing the approval of BMM as a WHS.

PROPOSAL

BATOBIC will assist in mobilizing the required funding to implement Steps 1-4 as described above.

STATUS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

BATOBIC will be providing non-financial technical 'support' to the WHS application process.