

Name of the Partnership/Initiative

Expanded OUZIT Project – Okavango Upper Zambezi International Tourism Spatial Development Initiative

Expected date of initiation:

Inception: 1997.

Launch: During WSSD August/September

Expected date of completion:

Ongoing initiative with short-term projects, which will have specific starting and completion dates. Implementation period expected to be from 2002 – 2012.

Partners Involved:

Governments: All SADC Countries

Intergovernmental organizations: RETOSA – (Regional Tourism Organization for Southern Africa), SADC – Southern African Development Community, the TCU (SADC Tourism Coordination Unit).

Major groups – Likely partners: Department of Trade & Industry of South African (DTI); Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA); NEPAD

Potential Partners: AFDB – African Development Bank; WWF – World Wildlife Fund; World Bank; GEF - Global Environmental Facility, IUCN, G8 Countries.

Leading Partners:

SADC, RETOSA (Regional Tourism Organisation for Southern Africa), and the Departments of Tourism and or Wildlife in participating partnership countries.

Name of the contact person/focal point:

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Main objectives of the Partnership/Initiative

Please provide a brief description:

The Expanded OUZIT Project is an integrated tourism development strategy aimed at establishing a comprehensive tourism and resource development zone in SADC.

In order to strengthen the economic impact of tourism in the SADC region, higher load factors and increased flight frequencies to the region will be required. While bilateral arrangements impacting landing slots and equipment remain important factors, investment in the region remains ad hoc, lacking in strategic focus. Global tourism investment is increasingly strategic in nature, often developing around Resort Hubs that are used as a staging area from which access to a range of package tours/experiences can be obtained through integrated networks of smaller nodal developments made accessible through regional air-links. Such an approach linking Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA's) with coastal Resort Hubs would support the economic basis for much needed near term investment in the region's air transport and related infrastructure and logistic services - thus extending the economic impact of tourism in the region - accelerating the export of cultural, agricultural, and manufacturing goods into the global economy.

Project origins: In its early formative stage, the OUZIT Project was conceived and presented as a wildlife sanctuary to be located within the context of the Okavango and Zambezi Wetland systems. As presented at a Regional Workshop on Water Resource Management in Kasane '93, the project was focused on a Core Development Area comprising some 260 000 km² incorporating game parks in Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This area includes the Okavango, Kwando, Chobe and Zambezi river systems, which represents the largest contiguous wilderness, wetland and wildlife areas in Southern Africa.

Given the region's susceptibility to recurrent drought, and the increasing water scarcity, spurred by increasing population among the south bank riparians, (i.e. Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe) there was and remains strong motivation to protect the water resource. In a similar vein, the sandy nature of the soils makes the area unsuitable for the development of large-scale agriculture, and ideally suited to Eco-tourism and conservation as a land-use/management strategy.

The agreed project roll out would see the Expanded OUZIT project proceed on two parallel tracks:

a) As an integral part of the WSSD – focused on presenting SADC's TFCA's (Transfrontier Conservation Areas) – proposed and existing, as a unifying theme demonstrating the region's commitment and leadership in the preservation of bio-diversity, the conservation of two of the region's last remaining and largely untapped river systems (i.e. Okavango, and Zambezi), and as a vehicle for the upliftment and sustainable development for the rural poor.

The project roll out entails the preparation of a detailed Status Report on the state of the TFCA'S (Transfrontier Conservation Areas) in the region from the perspective of physical infrastructure to national policies impacting the conduct of negotiations between the respective parties to be completed in time for the WSSD or before.

Such an approach would position the TFCAs as a strategically important project:

- As an embodiment of the objectives of Agenda 21 addressing within one concept the economic, social, and environmental pillars of development.

- As a catalyst for regional co-operation and development
- As a clear example of Southern African global leadership for similar initiatives elsewhere. There are a total of some 34 potential TFCA's in Africa; 24 in Central and South America; 45 in Europe, 25 in Asia and 8 in North America.
- As a vehicle for building a regional security consensus aimed at the collective monitoring, maintenance, and defense of the eco-tourism asset base.
- As a vehicle around which regional institutional capacity aimed at sustaining the TFCA initiative through training, infrastructure development, natural resource management and investment projects can be coordinated and financed.

b) The second track for progressing the Expanded OUZIT will be project driven and draw upon the TFCA scoping study.

Accordingly the agreed project roll out will:

1. Identify and prepare documentation for at least three (3) new large-scale investments in Resort Hubs around which to network TFCAs.
2. Support Capacity Building in the management and expansion of Gateway/Resort Hubs in participating member states.
3. Identify high profile and active global investors (including airlines and major tour operators) and organize a programme to engage them.
4. Address bottlenecks (infrastructure, policy, financial, load factors) impeding the provision of long haul and inter-regional air transport services.

Please also provide a brief description of the relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of Agenda 21 as well as relevant goals and objectives of the United Nation Millennium Declaration:

The objectives of the Expanded OUZIT Project align with Agenda 21 objectives, in particular:

I. Social & Economic Dimensions:

- International Cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries
⇒ *Through the implementation & facilitation of debt-for-nature swaps*
- Policy making for sustainable development
⇒ *Through political agreements between the SADC Countries to protect the bio-diversity of the region, i.e. NEPAD (New Partnership for African Development).*

II. Conservation & Management of Resources for Development

- An integrated approach to land resource-use
- Sustaining biological diversity
- Combating deforestation
- Halting the spread of deserts
- Protecting mountain eco-systems

III. Strengthening the role of major groups by facilitating Strategic Partnerships and Capacity Building.

TFCAs are a relatively new phenomenon in the conservation and management of natural

resources and as such demands new sets of skills to implement. These skills can only be acquired through training those that can influence decisions about establishing TFCAs and those that will be affected by the development of TFCAs. The groups to be targeted for training include decision-makers, senior management personnel and technical officers of government agencies, as well as other stakeholders outside government circles. Training will enhance the capacity of institutions to deal with the establishment and development of TFCAs. The methods of training these groups can take many forms, but the following are considered more appropriate for the situation in the SADC region:

- Seminars/Workshops/ Conferences – these would facilitate the re-orientation and retraining of staff involved in the establishment and development of TFCAs at both the national and international levels. These forums can also be used for exchanging experiences and sharing ideas about TFCAs.
- Short courses - these will comprise special operational courses on specific topics of the TFCA concept designed for technical officers at both the national and international levels.
- Core subject in curricula – there are five institutions in the SADC region that specialize in natural resources management training. These institutions are in Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. A recent review of instruction offered at these institutions by Chemonics International, Inc. showed that none of the institutions offered courses on TFCAs and that they were all oblivious of the SADC Protocols. The TFCA concept must be introduced in the curricula of all SADC training institutions for natural resources management.
- Exchange visits – these are basically study tours between countries with or without TFCAs. The primary purpose of the exchange visits is to allow for interaction and sharing of experiences between the hosts and the visitors.

IV. Means of implementation:

- Establishment of Project Facilitation Unit to develop projects i.e. capacity building and infrastructure development.
- Establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to facilitate intra-regional cross border investment and or investment into targeted schemes by G8 partners.

Expected results:

Please provide a brief description:

- Major Investment in new and existing tourism infrastructure – with attendant collateral investment in transport, telecommunications, agriculture, and manufacturing.
- Upliftment of rural poor through community based tourism development linked to expanding inward investment in tourism and related infrastructure.
- Enhanced protection of the Zambezi and Okavango River and other regional catchment areas and associated wetland systems - as Eco-tourism as a land use strategy takes hold as a meaningful alternative to other less sustainable development options.
- Strengthening of regional security arrangements as participating member states commit to rigorously monitor and defend the core natural recourse assets, which underlie the region's Eco-tourism industry.

Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:

Targets:

1. Identify and prepare documentation for at least three new large-scale investments in Resort Hubs around which to network TFCAs involving all SADC Countries.

- Project Scoping Report on Infrastructure requirements for 21 SADC based TFCAs.
- Project Scoping Reports on Selous/Coastal Development (Tanzania)
- Project Scoping Report on Iona/Skeleton Coast - Huila Development (Angola)
- Project Scoping Report on Core OUZIT Area (Zimbabwe, Botswana, Angola, Namibia, Zambia)

Completed

2. Analysis of Regional/Long Haul Airline Network/s

Deliverable: October 2002

3. Evaluation of Community Based Tourism Opportunities near identified Resort Hubs and TFCAs.

Deliverable: 2002

4. Status Report on Fresh Water Conservation Schemes in proximity to targeted TFCAs and Resort Hubs.

Deliverable: October 2002

5. Discussion Paper on the inclusion of the Natural Resource Asset Base (For Eco-tourism) and SADC's Regional Security Arrangements.

Deliverable: October 2002

6. Investors Roadshow

Launch: February 2003

Coordination and Implementation mechanism:

A project support and facilitation unit around which regional institutional capacity aimed at sustaining the TFCA initiative through training, infrastructure development, natural resource management and investment projects can be coordinated and financed.

Arrangements for funding

Available funding: South African Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

Expected sources of funding: African Development Bank & South African Department of Trade and Industry, SADC, GEF, UNDP, HABITAT, UNEP, World Bank, Bilateral

Future financing mechanisms: The establishment of an investment company or an environmental trust fund to receive funds from Multilateral, Bilateral, National and Private sector sources. The purpose of this will be:

1. The attraction of potential investors (private sector)
2. The attraction of international donor funds for the establishment of a TFCA trust fund. (i.e. from: Bilateral, UNDP, WWF, World Bank etc.)

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer.

Capacity building & Informational Support:

The project coordination and implementation unit referred to above is expected to evolve out of the current project management unit at the Development Bank of Southern Africa. Working in co-operation with other development assistance organizations, the unit will undertake skill audits to determine the capacity of rural based communities to establish sustainable natural resource management projects, and community based tourism enterprise - the unit will then develop targeted training and skills development programs to fill identified gaps.

In order to achieve the maximum job creation and related economic benefits from investment in tourism and related infrastructure a capacity building effort to support the development of policies and strategies linking environment, trade and development as well as in spatial planning (including GIS capacity building) and basic project management training for public officials operating at local, national and regional levels.

Also, in terms of Information Support, a website could be created that could serve as an information portal to the SADC region and with regular updates on the status of the project.

Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level (if any)

This component will be developed and thoroughly researched during the implementation phase of the project and is essential to ensure that any major tourism developments are in line with current best practices in sustainable Eco-tourism development. Possible measures to ensure this could include:

- Drawing on existing sustainability indicators for Eco-tourism developments such as is currently being developed by the WTO.
- Develop for SADC a well-designed Eco-tourism certification program similar to NEAP in Australia (Nature and Eco-tourism Accreditation Program in Australia).
- Set criteria for financial assistance to new developments - to adhere to sustainable Eco-tourism indicators to minimize the ecological footprint.
- Engaging – during the implementation and development phase – international experts in Eco lodge development, to ensure thorough planning in the overall environmental framework.
- Creating a rating or certification for Eco-tourism operations such as the star system for hotels, or utilizing the expertise of existing organizations such as Green Globe 21.

Monitoring Arrangements

Current monitoring arrangements:

1. Bi-monthly Project Progress reports to the Spatial Development Initiative Project Unit at the South African Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism.
2. Quarterly Meetings to report to the OUZIT Steering Committee, which consist of senior tourism officials of the SADC Countries involved and RETOSA (Regional Tourism Organisation for Southern Africa)
3. The SADC Tourism Coordination Unit in Mauritius currently convenes the meetings of the OUZIT Steering Committee.

Future monitoring arrangements:

Continuous report backs to the SADC TCU In Mauritius. Also, electronic reports could be posted on a future website.

Other relevant information:

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