

ITTO/IUCN International Workshop on Increasing the Effectiveness of Transboundary Conservation Areas in Tropical Forests

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Key Issues on Transboundary Conservation Areas (TBCAs)

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Introduction

SANParks and Transfrontier Conservation Areas

Throughout the world conservation was once confined to programmes carried out exclusively within national borders. In southern Africa the Kalahari Gemsbok Park in South Africa and the Gemsbok Park in Botswana have co-existed alongside one another unfettered by any dividing border fence. However, while wildlife ranged freely across the border, the area was never managed as a common entity.

Under the visionary leadership of Dr Anton Rupert, who founded the South African branch of the World Wildlife Fund, the idea of promoting peace in southern Africa through conservation led to the establishment of the Peace Parks Foundation in 1990. He invited the Presidents of the countries of the region to serve as patrons of the Peace Parks Foundation, thus indicating their support of the ideals of the organisation. Recently Members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) endorsed the principle of regional development through cross-border conservation. Not only would this facilitate the free natural movement of wildlife across political borders that were at odds with ecosystem flows, but a compact of this nature would promote tourism within the region and create opportunities for rural development in mostly remote areas.

SANParks and its counterparts have pioneered the implementation of this SADC strategy. The Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park went into operation in 1999 with the Presidents of the two countries signing enabling protocols. A joint management board oversees the implementation of the Park Management Plan. The Greater Limpopop Transfrontier Park was proclaimed in December 2002. It brings together more than 3.5million hectare of conservation land comprising Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, Kruger National Park in South Africa and Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe. The first elephant herds have already been translocated from Kruger into Limpopo Park and a programme of transferring species of other wildlife will commence shortly. Discussions are far advanced between authorities in Namibia and South Africa on the establishment of Ai-Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park along the Orange River; similarly with Limpopo Shashe Transfrontier Park covering conservation areas in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Other transfrontier parks, not managed by SANParks include the Maluti Drakensberg Transfrontier Park between Lesotho and South Africa and the Lebombo Transfrontier Park that spans South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique. The TBCAs mentioned above are illustrated in Figure 1 to be found in Appendix I.

Major Issues and Challenges

a) Key benefits of TBCAs

- Fostering trans-national collaboration and co-operation among the Parties. This in turn facilitates effective ecosystem management in the TBCA area;
- Promoting alliances in the management of biological natural resources by encouraging social, economic and other partnerships among the participating parties, including the private sector, local communities and non-governmental organisations;
- Enhancing ecosystem integrity and natural ecological processes by harmonising environmental management procedures across international boundaries and striving to remove artificial barriers impeding the natural movement of wildlife;
- The establishment and maintenance of a sustainable sub-regional economic base through appropriate development frameworks, strategies and work plans;
- Fostering regional socio-economic development by the develop trans-border eco-tourism;
- The exchange of technical, scientific and legal information for the joint management of the ecosystem.
- Good inter-state relations; peace.

b) Key Challenges

- Lack of political will and understanding will impede the process. This includes a lack of understanding and/or commitment from other relevant government agencies and key role players in the TBCA development process;
- Unequal management capacities, including the lack of human and financial resources in the relevant institutions, will also slow or impede the process;
- Different levels of park development;
- Potential conflicts resulting from countries having different resource management strategies (e.g. sustainable consumptive use versus non-consumptive use);
- Disparity regarding policies and legislation between countries involved;
- Need to standardise/harmonise process to facilitate effective implementation of TBCA;
- Perceptions of local communities which are not supportive of the concept;
- Level and degree of local community and key stakeholder participation in the planning, development, and implementation process;
- Government policies and international relations;
- Different approaches to disease control, including the need for fencing;
- Safety and security issues, especially creating potential for cross border criminal activities;
- Potential incompatibility of goals when countries are in different stages of development, or when the components of the TBCA differ in the level of tourism infrastructure development investment;
- Inconsistency of involvement of the various countries and
- Language barriers may have to be overcome to ensure effective communication.

▪ **Political and Institutional Arrangements**

a) Process of establishing TBCA in Southern Africa

Example

- In 1998 relevant stakeholders of Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe met to discuss need for moving ahead with the establishment of pilot TBCAs;

- Consensus was reached and an Interim International Technical Committee, which comprised members of the various countries involved, was formed. The specific tasks of the Committee was to:
 - Determine in each country areas that could form part of the pilot TBCAs
 - Define a vision for TBCA development in the region;
 - Develop the Terms of Reference for sub-committees which were formed for each one of the pilot TBCAs;
 - Draft an international agreement for review by the respective ministers of the countries involved.
- Appropriate institutions were created to facilitate the planning and development process. These institutions generally consisted of the following:
 - A Ministerial Committee, which is ultimately the top decision making authority in the TBCA planning and development process. The Minister of environment and/or tourism of each of the countries involved sits on the Ministerial Committee;
 - A Technical Committee, which advises the Ministerial Committee on issues relating the planning and development of TBCAs. Members on the Technical Committee are either high ranking government officials, technical experts, or both;
 - Various Working Groups advising the Technical Committee on issues relating to the planning and development of the TBCA. The Working Groups will be comprised of technical experts of the countries involved and would typically be dealing with issues such as safety and security, joint management of the TBCA, tourism development, community issues, harmonisation of legislation, and funding requirements.
- Signing of the International Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In terms of this agreement each party has 2 year to act as co-ordinating party in the TBCA process, taking responsible to maintain momentum in the planning and development process.
- Development on an International Treaty. The Treaty formalises the international agreement between the parties, and apart from the proclamation of the TBCA it also provides guidelines for implementation.

b) Implementation

- Once the relevant countries sign the Treaty, the implementation phase commences. In terms of the Treaty, the implementation of the project is the responsibility of the implementing agents (conservation agencies) within each of the countries involved, and the Joint Management Board.
- The Joint Management Board (JMB) takes over the roles and responsibilities of the Technical Committee, and is responsible for the management of joint issues relating to the project. The JMB also advises and informs the Ministerial Committee on issues relating to the implementation of the project. As in the case of the Technical Committee, the JMB comprises of representatives of all the countries involved, with the majority of the members belonging to the respective implementing agents;
- The JMB may also decide to form or continue with the advisory committees established in the planning and development phase. As in the previous phase, these committees advise the JMB on issues relating to the implementation of the project.

- Although the JMB is responsible for the management of joint issues relating to the project, the day-to-day management of the conservation area in each country (i.e. the country component of the TBCA) remains the responsibility of the implementing agent.
- c) *Issues relating to the political and institutional arrangements*
- Most TBCAs established to date in Southern Africa consists of formally proclaimed conservation areas managed by government authorities. Based on the aforementioned, the various institutions established to date consist mainly of government officials and representatives from the implementing agencies;
 - The planning and development of TBCAs, which include communal and private land, and the formation of appropriate institutions to manage these presents a bigger challenge than with only state owned land.
 - However, since the formation of TBCAs often entail international agreements and treaties, only the state / central government has the mandate to go into an agreement with the government of another country.
 - In order to have effective management of TBCAs, the relevant institution should also ensure effective participation of and communication to the various key stakeholders involved in the process. These stakeholders will often include local communities and the private sector.

Political, Managerial, and Technical Issues in transboundary management at the landscape level with a view to integrating TBCAs into the broader landscape

a) *Key Issues*

- Identify and agree on broad goals and objectives, which incorporate both national and regional development objectives;
- Define areas which will provide for multiple land uses, and ensure that these are supportive / compatible with each other;
- Define appropriate boundary for the TBCA;
- Initiate a co-ordinated planning process driven by a task team which includes representatives of all stakeholders in the area;
- If possible, conduct a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to ensure compatibility of the proposed TBCA with the broader region;
- Develop a Joint Management Plan to provide policies and guidelines on the management of joint issues. This plan should also address issues relating to management zoning, and ensuring that the zoning of each area is compatible with the neighbouring area;
- Develop an integrated tourism strategy and infrastructure development plan, which addresses issues such as linkages, tourism development zones, branding, product development, etc.
- If desirable, change the designation of the protected area to give it higher importance / status in each country, and making it compatible with the protected area classification of the TBCA component in the neighbouring country;
- Develop sustainability indicators to monitor the success of the project in the long term;
- Effective participation of other government agencies and other key stakeholders including local communities and the private sector;
- Set up appropriate institutional structures / manage authority/s to manage TBCAs, and define areas of jurisdiction;

- Provision and effective distribution of information relating to the establishment of the TBCA;
- Equal distribution of benefits to the stakeholders involved in the process;
- Develop partnerships between government, local communities and the private sector;
- Ensure sustainable funding for the long term development of the TBCA;
- Address veterinary issues such as issues relating to disease control;
- Address issues relating to human / animal conflicts.

Recommendations for improving formulation and management of TBCAs

- Develop appropriate institutions for the management of the area. This should include building the capacity of the institutions of the weaker parties involved, and ensuring that there are opportunities for the transfer of skills in the development process;
- Adopt a approach which embraces sustainable multiple land use in achieving trans-border ecosystems management and conservation of shared biodiversity;
- Consult and involve all stakeholders in the TBCA planning and decision-making process, and the implementation of the project;
- Involve local communities and other key stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation process of the TBCA goals and objectives;
- Create partnerships between the stakeholders involved in the process, and develop mechanisms to ensure that benefits accruing from the project are distributed in an equitable way between all parties involved;
- Harmonise approaches to natural resource management, which includes community based natural resource management;
- Harmonise approaches and procedures for private sector involvement in the project, and encourage local investors to actively participate in the project. This would include the reviewing and harmonisation of tenure policies to provide security for potential investors and protecting the rights of local communities;
- Develop a common vision to disease control, which is based on the sharing of information, and develop contingency plans for when the levels of wildlife diseases get above acceptable levels;
- Develop mechanisms to resolve conflicts between partners in the planning and management of the TBCAs.

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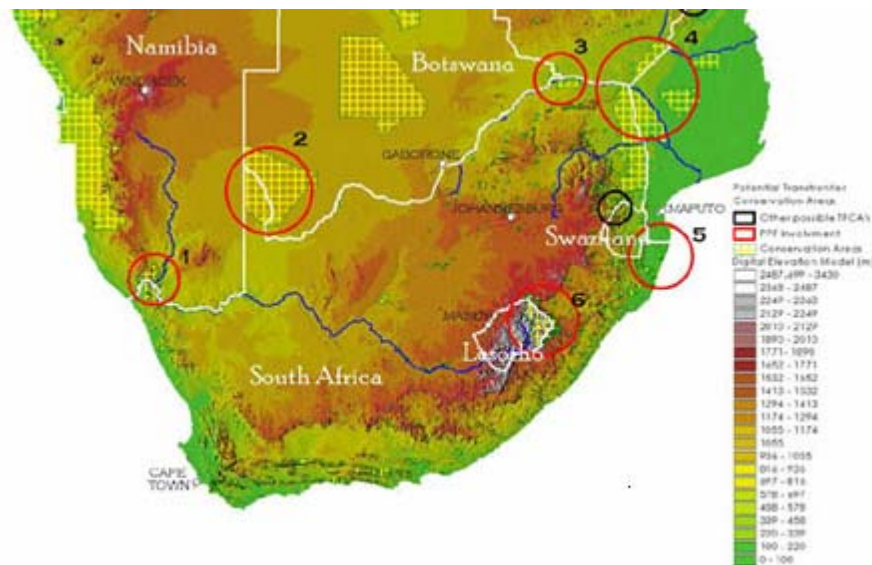
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Appendix I

Transfrontier conservation areas in Southern Africa



Appendix 2: Process of establishing a transfrontier conservation area

Process of establishing TFCA – planning & development

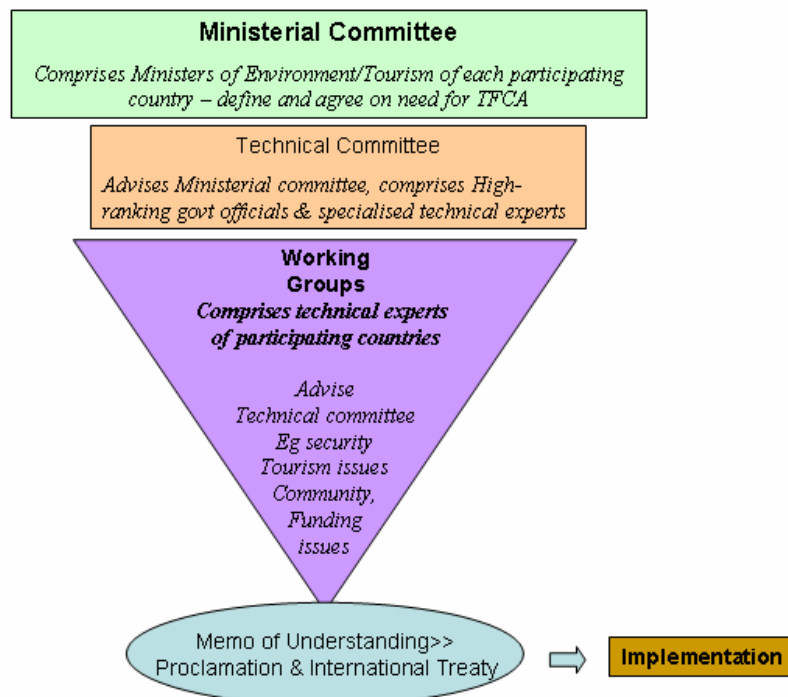


Figure II

Appendix II