



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

BOTSWANA NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STRATEGY

FINAL REPORT

March 2002

**BOTSWANA
NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STRATEGY**

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by
IUCN (Botswana) & Symbiosis Consulting (Pty) Ltd

Published by: Government of Botswana

Funded by: European Commission – Delegation of the European Commission in Botswana

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Citation: Stevens, PW and Jansen, R. 2002. *Botswana National Ecotourism Strategy*

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Foreword

Tourism in Botswana is based almost entirely on the country's unique natural and cultural heritage. Consequently, all of us who are in any way involved in the industry have a responsibility to ensure that its development is underpinned by the twin concepts of conservation and sustainable use. Recognition of this responsibility, in conjunction with the on-going drive to increase the meaningful involvement of Botswana in the tourism sector, led to the government's decision to develop a comprehensive National Ecotourism Strategy (NES).

In keeping with Botswana's long tradition of public consultation in policy development, extensive efforts were made to ensure that all stakeholders – government agencies, communities, NGOs and the private sector – were given the opportunity to express their concerns and opinions at each phase of the strategy's development. Consultative workshops were held at the outset of the process, and after publication of the Issues Paper and Draft National Ecotourism Strategy. The essential phases of the preparation of the NES included:

1. *Stakeholder consultation: Experts Workshop*
2. Issues Paper
3. *Stakeholder consultation: District Stakeholder Consultation Workshops*
4. Draft NES development
5. *Stakeholder consultation: National Consultative Conference*
6. Final National Ecotourism Strategy

Consequently, the Botswana National Ecotourism Strategy should be examined in conjunction with the 'Issues for National Consultation' and the 'Record of Stakeholder Consultations' publications.

May I express my sincere appreciation to the European Commission, which provided the funding for the development of the Strategy; to the UK Department for International Development (DFID), who also supported the process; and to Mr Ruud Jansen (IUCN Botswana) and Mr Paul Stevens (Symbiosis Consulting), the consultants who facilitated the development of the National Ecotourism Strategy, with whom my colleagues and I have worked closely throughout.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those who participated in, or otherwise contributed to, the various stakeholder consultation workshops, without whom the Strategy would not be the success that I hope and believe it will prove to be.

T. Ndzingo (Mrs)

Director
Department of Tourism
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Tourism is the world's fastest growing industry, and it is central to the Government of Botswana's economic development strategy, with particular attention being paid to its potential as a stimulant for sustainable economic development in remote, rural areas. In recognition of its importance, the Government – in partnership with the European Union – commissioned the Botswana Tourism Development Programme (BTDP) to map out a development strategy for the industry in Botswana. This strategy was set out in the Botswana Tourism Master Plan (BTMP) that was completed in May 2000.

The BTDP also made provision for a National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) that would complement the Botswana Tourism Master Plan (BTMP) by helping all stakeholders to derive sustainable benefits from tourism, while safeguarding the natural and cultural resources upon which the industry in Botswana depends.

DEFINING ECOTOURISM

For the purposes of the National Ecotourism Strategy:

'Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people.'

(The International Ecotourism Society)

It is emphasised that in Botswana ecotourism refers to the country's cultural, as well as natural heritage, and that great importance is placed on the active involvement (as opposed to mere participation) of host communities and other Botswana in all aspects of the industry's management and development.

'Principles' of ecotourism

More specifically, 'ecotourism' refers to tourism to areas of natural and cultural heritage that is planned and managed with the objective of:

- Minimising negative social, cultural and environmental impacts.
- Maximising the involvement in, and the equitable distribution of economic benefits to, host communities.
- Maximising revenues for re-investment in conservation.
- Educating both visitors and local people as to the importance of conserving natural and cultural resources.
- Delivering a quality experience for tourists.

These five 'principles' of ecotourism have underpinned the development of the National Ecotourism Strategy since its inception.

NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STRATEGY

Goal

The goal of the National Ecotourism Strategy is to create an environment in which *all* elements of tourism development planning and management facilitate, promote and *reward* adherence to the key 'principles' of ecotourism by all of those involved in the tourism industry.

In addition to the strategy itself, a preliminary inventory of existing and potential ecotourism sites has been developed. The intention being that the two can be used in unison: the inventory serving to help identify areas with high potential for tourism development, and the strategy putting in place the necessary measures to enable any such development to be planned and managed in accordance with the principles of ecotourism.

Scope

The NES aims to complement, rather than replace, the Botswana Tourism Master Plan. It is *not* intended to address general tourism development issues.

Approach

In keeping with Botswana's long tradition of public consultation in policy development, and in recognition of the fact that the NES will only fulfil its potential as a tool for conservation and development if it has the support of all stakeholders, the process of formulating the strategy was designed to ensure that all play – from the outset – a central role in its development. To achieve this, the strategy has been developed through the following series of steps:

1. Experts Workshop
2. Issues Paper
3. Stakeholder review of Issues Paper
4. District Stakeholder Consultation Workshops
5. Draft NES development
6. National consultative conference
7. Final NES

Format

The document has been divided into 8 sections, seven of which follow on directly from the Issues Paper. An additional section – 'Co-ordination and Collaboration' – has been included in response to concerns raised during National Consultation regarding the need both for greater cross-sector collaboration in tourism development planning and management, and co-ordination of the tourism-related activities of government departments and agencies.

Each of the sections contains:

- An introduction providing some background on the topic concerned.
- A summary of key issues that were identified during the research and consultation phases.
- An overall objective and a number of specific goals within that objective.
- Proposed 'actions' to address the stated objectives.
- An indication of the stakeholder(s) (national government, tourism operators, conservation NGOs etc) to which the proposed 'actions' refer.

ACTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that the planning, development and management of tourism in Botswana is consistent with the concept of sustainability.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

- Ensure that tourism development does not exceed the carrying capacity of host areas.
- Monitor and develop greater understanding of the impacts of tourism on heritage sites and host communities.
- Ensure that the activities of tourists do not compromise the sustainability of natural areas.
- Encourage tourism activities focussing on Botswana's heritage areas to contribute directly to their conservation.
- Provide host communities with an incentive to conserve the natural and cultural resources upon which the tourism industry depends.

2. To facilitate the development of economically-viable and effectively-managed ecotourism enterprises.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

- Address the problem of the high costs associated with 'green' management practices.
- Facilitate improved access to finance for prospective ecotourism operators with economically-viable business plans.
- Develop the requisite business management and technical expertise among existing and prospective ecotourism operators.
- Improve ecotourism operators' access to information and expert advice.

3. To increase the number of Botswana meaningfully involved in, and benefiting from, the tourism industry.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

- Increase the percentage of Botswana employees holding senior positions in tourism enterprises.
- Increase the number of successful, citizen-owned and managed tourism enterprises.
- Assist Botswana identify viable business opportunities in the tourism support industries.

4. To promote marketing initiatives which support the sustainable development and diversification of the tourism industry in Botswana.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

- Promote the geographical diversification of Botswana's tourism industry in a manner that is consistent with the concept of sustainability.
- Support product diversification and cost efficiency through collaborative marketing.
- Build a strong image of Botswana as an ecotourism destination.
- Provide stakeholders with up-to-date, high quality data regarding changes in market demand / characteristics.

5. ***To enhance understanding of the concept of ecotourism among all stakeholder groups, and to raise awareness of the costs, benefits, opportunities and implications of ecotourism development for each.***

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to help meet the objectives of the NES through audience-specific awareness raising activities for the two key target groups:

- Tourists / visitors
- Batswana

6. ***To facilitate the development of tourism infrastructure that minimises negative impacts, maximises the benefits of ecotourism, and is sensitive to target market expectations.***

7. ***To promote consistently high quality ecotourism standards throughout the country's tourism industry in line with international target market expectations.***

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

- Develop, and communicate to all stakeholders, ecotourism best practice guidelines and standards.
- Encourage and reward adherence to ecotourism best practices by tourism enterprises in Botswana.

8. ***To facilitate the development of Botswana's ecotourism industry through improved inter- and intra-sectoral co-ordination and collaboration.***

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

- Clarify and co-ordinate the tourism-related roles of government departments.
- Ensure that non-tourism development activities do not undermine ecotourism development strategies.
- Promote and facilitate the development of mutually-beneficial relationships within and between stakeholder groups.

IMPLEMENTATION

It is recommended that the NES be translated into action through the implementation of a National Ecotourism Programme (NEP). The final section highlights key recommendations drawn from the strategy that are suggested should be regarded as priorities for action by the Government of Botswana and form the basis of the NEP. These are divided into the following four areas of activity:

Programme A: Ecotourism Planning & Research

Programme B: Ecotourism Standards & Accreditation

Programme C: Ecotourism Enterprise Development

Programme D: Ecotourism Training & Education

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BOCOBONET	Botswana Community Based Organisations Network
BTDP	Botswana Tourism Development Programme
BTMP	Botswana Tourism Master Plan
BWTI	Botswana Wildlife Training Institute
CBE	Community-based Ecotourism
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CBT	Community-based Tourism
CBTE	Community-based Tourism Enterprise
CC	Carrying Capacity
CDT	Commonwealth Department of Tourism (Australia)
CEDA	Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency
DoT	Department of Tourism
DWNP	Department of Wildlife and National Parks
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FAP	Financial Assistance Policy
GIS	Geographical Information System(s)
GoB	Government of Botswana
GR	Game Reserve
IYE	International Year of Ecotourism
JV	Joint Venture
KTFP	Kgalagadi Trans Frontier Park
LAC	Limits of Acceptable Change
LACOM	Local Advisory Committee
NACOBTA	Namibia Community Based Tourism Association
NES	National Ecotourism Strategy
NEP	National Ecotourism Programme
NP	National Park
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TES	The Ecotourism Society
TIES	The International Ecotourism Society (previously TES)
TIS	Tourism Information System
TSA	Tourism Satellite Accounts/Accounting
UB	University of Botswana
WTO	World Tourism Organisation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The consultants would like to express their appreciation to all of the many stakeholders from the public, private, NGO and community sectors, as well as private individuals, who participated in the various consultative workshops and in so doing contributed to the development of the Botswana National Ecotourism Strategy. In particular, Baraedi Mogomotsi (Bocobonet), Alan Wolfrohm (Wilderness Safaris), Innocent Majole and Sharon Safran (Conservation International), Debbie Peake (Botswana Wildlife Management Association), Sue Sainsbury (Okavango Polers Trust) and Keith Thomas (Berry Bush Camp) deserve a special mention.

In the wider region, Dr Shan Holmes (Realsearch Environmental Management and Development), Uys Du Buisson (CSIR), Andrew Mayoral-Phillips (Open Africa) and Anna Spenceley in South Africa, Maxi Louis (NACOBTA) in Namibia and Charles Tshabangu (Landela Safaris) in Zimbabwe all made useful contributions. Further afield, Jill Grant and Alison Allcock, who were responsible for the Australian National Ecotourism Strategy upon which the Botswana NES is to some degree modelled, kindly provided useful resources and advice.

Finally, we would like to express a particular word of thanks to all of our colleagues at the Department of Tourism who contributed in many different ways over the course of the year, and in particular to Mrs T Ndzingo (Director of Tourism), Mr W Tema, Ms M Ngwenya and Mr E Raj for their strong support and valuable input throughout the development of the strategy.

Paul Stevens (Symbiosis Consulting)
Team Leader

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

1.1.1 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

1.1.1.1 Global Tourism Trends

Global tourism has grown significantly over the past 30 years and is now the world's single largest economic activity (SADC 1999). In the ten years from 1989 – 1998, international tourism arrivals grew at an average annual rate of 4.3%, and receipts at an average 8.1% (WTO 1999). The growth in the industry appears set to continue over the next decade, with more than one billion tourist arrivals / year predicted by 2010.

The World Tourism Organisation predicts that tourist arrivals in Africa will rise from 27 million in 2000, to 47 million in 2010 and 77 million in 2020.

1.1.1.2 Tourism in Southern Africa

Described as the 'economic driver for the 21st century' (SADC 1999), tourism has – providing the appropriate policies and legislation are put in place – enormous potential for growth in southern Africa. By 2010, it is forecast that the tourism industry will be responsible for the employment of 1.9 million people directly, and a further 5 million indirectly (ibid.). The focus of this growth is predicted to be the international holiday market, with business travel and visits to family and friends developing at a slower rate (BTDP).

Strong evidence of this transformation is already emerging. The 'balance of payments' for the southern African tourism sector, has turned from a deficit of US\$222 million in 1989, to a US\$646 million surplus in 1997, and, during 1998, the region performed better than any other in Africa (WTO 1999).

1.1.2 BOTSWANA CONTEXT

Tourism to Botswana has shown a steady increase over the past few years, with holiday arrivals rising by 90.2% from 106,800 in 1993 to 203,172 in 1998. The industry's contribution to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has risen correspondingly, with gross visitor expenditure estimated at P1.1 billion in 1997. Of that sum, P780 million is estimated to have been lost to the country through payments to external agents and import 'leakage', leaving a P320 million input into Botswana's economy. This represents a 4.5 percent increase from 1996, and, as holiday arrivals are forecast to increase annually by 10% over the period 1997-2010, the industry's contribution seems set to continue its steady rise.

Wildlife and – to a lesser extent – wilderness, are far and away Botswana's biggest holiday tourism draws. This is reflected in visitor numbers to the country's national parks, which increased from 76,742 in 1995 to 125,088 in 1997: a rise of 63 percent. The great majority of these are visits to parks in the north of the country.

1.1.2.1 Government of Botswana (GoB) Tourism Policy

The overall development strategy of the Botswana Government focuses on long-term export-oriented sustainable growth through diversification of the mining-dominated economy to improve the quality of life of the population. Tourism has been identified as an economic sector with the potential to contribute to this process of diversification.

The Government position on tourism is contained in the Tourism policy, Government paper No. 2 of 1990, while The Tourism Act (1992) makes provisions for regulating the tourism industry with a view to promoting its development and well-being. Numerous other pieces of legislation also address – or have an indirect impact on – tourism ¹.

The general objective of tourism development is to obtain, on a sustainable basis, the greatest possible net social and economic benefits for Botswana from their tourism resources, scenic beauty, wildlife and unique ecological, geographical and cultural characteristics.

The specific tourism development objectives are:

- Generation of employment and consequently income for Botswana, particularly in remote rural areas so as to reduce urban drift.
- Stimulation of the provision of other services and the strengthening of linkages to other economic sectors.
- Increase foreign exchange earnings and government revenues.
- Improve the quality of life for the population through the provision of educational and recreational opportunities.
- Project a favourable image to the outside world.

These objectives have to be achieved:

- In an ecologically sustainable way.
- By an increase in participation by Botswana in the ownership and management of tourism enterprises.

1.1.2.2 Botswana Tourism Development Programme (BTDP)

In recognition of the importance of the tourism industry, the Government, in partnership with the European Union, commissioned the Botswana Tourism Development Programme to provide a framework for the continued development and diversification of tourism in Botswana.

The overall objective of the BTDP was ‘to diversify the Botswana economy and to improve the quality of life of the indigenous population’, with its principal task being ‘to establish tourism as a significant and sustainable economic sector in respect of generation of employment and local income distribution’.

¹ Documented in National Ecotourism Strategy ‘Issues for National Consultation’ report.

Having conducted a range of studies, visitor and tour operator surveys, and held discussions with industry stakeholders, the Botswana Tourism Development Programme identified the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats effecting the prospects for future tourism development in Botswana.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Wildlife and Wilderness	• “Infancy” state tourism development
• Political and economic stability	• Limited tourism awareness
• Safety and security	• Bureaucratic procedures
• Good physical infra-structure	• Weak tourism organisation

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Product diversification	• Unbalanced (regional) development
• Involvement of rural communities	• Negative socio-cultural impacts
• Increase of industry standards	• Negative environmental impact
• Development of domestic tourism	• Regional political instability

As Botswana’s tourism product is based almost entirely on its natural and cultural heritage, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified are equally applicable to ecotourism development in the country. In addition to the above, an ecotourism SWOT would also include Botswana’s historic policy of developing exclusively ‘low volume, high value’ tourism and the resultant lack of any ‘mass tourism’ developments in the ‘strengths’ column, while the high growth rate of the international market for ecotourism (which continues to outstrip that of the overall tourism industry), and the additional boost which the sector is anticipated to receive as a result of the International Year of Ecotourism (2002), constitute additional ‘opportunities’.

The BTDP concluded that although difficult to predict the relative influence of each of these factors, proper planning and implementation could significantly enhance the favourable strengths and opportunities and reduce the influence of weaknesses and threats. Strategies were then designed to address each of the key issues.

Details of the findings can be found in the Botswana Tourism Master Plan (BTMP) that was finalised in May 2000, but the general principles around which tourism development in Botswana is to be shaped, are stated as:

- Product diversification.
- Citizen and community participation, and community empowerment.
- Private / public sector partnership.
- Ecological / economic sustainability.

1.2 NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STRATEGY

1.2.1 WHY HAVE A NATIONAL ECOTOURISM STRATEGY?

There are a number of reasons why developing a NES can be of benefit to Botswana. These include:

- Providing an incentive for the sustainable utilisation of natural resources.
- Generating resources for the conservation and sustainable management of natural areas.
- Fostering renewed pride in local culture.
- Creating business and employment opportunities for individuals citizens and communities, including those in less developed parts of the country.
- Facilitating and rewarding responsible tourism planning and management practices.
- Raising the profile of the country as a ecotourism destination (2002 is the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE)).
- Helping the country attract a segment of the tourism market that is widely considered to have significant growth potential.

1.2.2 DEFINING 'ECOTOURISM'

Although the term 'ecotourism' was originally coined in 1983, it has avoided firm definition, becoming instead all things to all people with different parties defining it according to their own specific interests and priorities.

In order to avoid confusion amongst stakeholders as to what was meant by ecotourism in the context of the National Strategy, a review of the different options was conducted. It concluded by recommending that the official definition of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) – which enjoys, arguably, the broadest international acceptance – be adopted as the working definition for the NES. The definition reads:

'Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people.'

It is emphasised that in Botswana ecotourism refers to the country's cultural, as well as natural heritage, and great importance is placed on the active *involvement* (as opposed to mere participation) of host communities and other Batswana in all aspects of the industry's management and development.

More important, though, than the specific wording of the ecotourism definition adopted, are the principles and objectives upon which it is based. From the outset, the process of developing the NES has been guided by the goal of facilitating the development of tourism to areas of natural and cultural heritage, that is planned and managed with the objective of:

- ***Minimising negative social, cultural and environmental impacts.***
- ***Maximising the involvement in, and the equitable distribution of economic benefits to, host communities and citizen entrepreneurs.***

- **Maximising revenues for re-investment in conservation.**
- **Educating both visitors and local people as to the importance of conserving natural and cultural resources.**
- **Delivering a quality experience for tourists** (without which tourists will not continue to visit, and so the benefits to conservation and development will not be sustained).

These five ecotourism ‘principles’ (as they shall hereafter be referred to) have underpinned the development of the National Ecotourism Strategy from its inception and should, it is suggested, figure prominently in any promotional materials that may subsequently be produced.

1.2.3 OBJECTIVES

The International Ecotourism Society’s definition recognises that one does not become an ecotourist simply by having nature as one’s destination. In other words, it is not where tourists go, but what they do when they get there that determines whether or not they are engaged in ecotourism.

Consequently, the goal of the NES is to create an environment in which *all* elements of tourism development planning and management – from the regulatory framework to vocational training, data collection to grading/accreditation – facilitate, promote and *reward* the adoption of ecotourism ‘best practices’ by all those involved in the industry.

Inventory of existing and potential tourism sites

In addition to the strategy itself, a preliminary inventory of existing and potential tourism sites has been developed. The intention being that the two can be used in unison: the inventory serving to help identify areas with high potential for tourism development, and the strategy putting in place the necessary measures to enable any such development to be planned and managed in accordance with the principles of ecotourism.

1.2.4 SCOPE

The National Ecotourism Strategy aims to complement, rather than replace, the Botswana Tourism Master Plan. It is *not* intended to address general tourism development issues.

1.2.5 APPROACH

In keeping with Botswana’s long tradition of public consultation in policy development, and in recognition of the fact that the NES will only fulfil its potential as a tool for conservation and development if it has the support of all stakeholders, the process of formulating the strategy was designed to ensure that

all play – from the outset – a central role in its development. To achieve this the strategy has been developed through the following series of steps:

7. Experts Workshop

An initial 'Experts Workshop' was held in Gaborone March 2001. The workshop provided a forum for representatives of the different stakeholder groups – government, the commercial tourism sector, community-based organisations, conservation and development NGO's, and donor organisations – to make clear the Issues that they felt the NES needed to address.

2. Issues Paper

The Issues Paper presented a list of key issues for discussion during national consultation. The issues identified were drawn primarily from the Experts' Workshop, but in order to ensure that no key issues were omitted, and that lessons from ecotourism development from abroad were taken into account, the issues raised during the workshop were further supplemented by:

- Contributions from international experts.
- Discussions at the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) seminar on 'Planning, Development and Management of Ecotourism in Africa'², held in Maputo in March 2001.
- Reviews of:
 - Relevant reports and documents relating to tourism, conservation and development in Botswana.
 - Other national/regional ecotourism strategies and related documents³.
 - Wider body of relevant literature.

3. National consultation / stakeholder review

After a period for stakeholders to review the Issues Paper, a series of six district workshops were held during the months of July and August 2001 in Tsabong, Maun, Kasane, Selibe-Phikwe, Francistown and Gaborone. In order to ensure that all interested parties – including those who were unable to attend the workshops – who wished to contribute were given the opportunity to do so, written submissions were also invited.

The objective of the workshops was to ascertain from stakeholders in each of the districts their thoughts / opinions / suggestions re: the following four questions:

- I. What are the specific experiences / concerns of stakeholders in their region with regards to each of the main issues identified?
- II. Are there any other ecotourism issues / concerns that are not covered in the Issues Paper, but which stakeholders feel need to be addressed (in the NES)?

² Regional preparatory workshop for the International Year of Ecotourism, 2002.

³ Ecotourism strategy or strategy-related documents from Australia, Guyana, Canada, Manitoba, Brazil, Hawaii and Vietnam were reviewed, with those from Australia (CDT 1994) and Manitoba (Keszi 1997) being particularly strongly drawn upon.

III. Which ecotourism issues do stakeholders in the region consider to be priorities for action?

IV. What action / measures would stakeholders like to see included in the NES to address the issues raised?

N.B. As the workshops constituted the beginning of the process of developing solutions to the issues raised, particular emphasis was placed on question IV.

4. Drafting NES

5. National consultative conference

Having been approved by the NES steering committee, a draft NES was distributed to representatives of the different stakeholder groups who were then invited to a final national consultative conference held in Gaborone on November 22/23. The conference provided stakeholders with an opportunity to discuss and recommend amendments to the draft NES.

5. Final draft NES

1.2.6 FORMAT

The document has been divided into 8 sections, seven of which follow on directly from the Issues Paper. An additional section – ‘Co-ordination and Collaboration’ – has been included in response to concerns raised during National Consultation about the need both for greater cross-sector collaboration in tourism development planning and management, and co-ordination of the tourism-related activities of government departments and agencies. It is emphasised, however, that few of the issues raised or the actions proposed are stand-alone: there is a high degree of overlap, with many of issues raised and recommended actions having some bearing on other sections.

Each of the sections contains:

- An introduction providing some background on the topic concerned.
- A list of key issues that were identified during the research and consultation phases⁴.
- An overall objective and a number of specific goals within that objective.
- Proposed ‘actions’ to address the objectives raised.
- An indication of the stakeholder(s) (national government, Department of Tourism, DWNP, local government, commercial tourism sector, community tourism sector, conservation and development NGOs etc) to which the proposed ‘actions’ refer⁵.

⁴ For a full list of the ‘issues’ identified, please refer to the ‘NES – Issues for National Consultation’ and ‘NES – Record of Stakeholder Consultation’ publications, which are available from the Department of Tourism.

⁵ Many of the activities for which the Department of Tourism is currently responsible – including marketing, market research, and the collection, analysis and dissemination of qualitative tourism industry data – are being transferred to a newly established Tourism Board. However, as exact responsibilities of the Tourism Board are yet to be finalised, they are not – at the request of DoT – indicated in this document.

The final 'Implementation' section highlights key recommendations drawn from the strategy that it is suggested should be regarded as priorities for action by the Government of Botswana.

1.3 COSTS AND BENEFITS OF TOURISM

All tourism, however 'green', has impacts, and Botswana's tourism industry – based, as it is, almost entirely on natural areas and the wildlife that inhabit them – is particularly sensitive to these.

Tourism impacts – which may be short-term or long-term, positive or negative – can be divided into the following four categories:

- Environmental
- Host-social and cultural (socio-cultural)
- Visitor-social / experiential
- Economic

Each of the above, if not effectively addressed, has the potential to undermine the sustainability of the tourism product and the natural areas and cultural heritage upon which it is based.

1.3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The presence of tourists in sensitive natural areas can have a significant detrimental effect on local wildlife and ecology (see Table 1). If these go unchecked, their cumulative effect can lead to permanent environmental degradation, thereby undermining the viability of the site in question as a tourist destination.

Conversely, tourists can contribute positively to conservation either practically (Earthwatch 'volunteers', for example, are tourists who pay to participate in conservation projects around the globe) or through financial contributions to the conservation and management of natural areas. These may take the form of protected area entrance fees or donations to local conservation organisations. In some instances, tourism operations ' earmark ' a percentage of the cost of merchandise, guiding services, accommodation or the holiday package itself to support conservation.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<p>Tourism can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate vital revenue to support the management of natural areas and conservation of fauna and flora. • Provide a strong incentive for the establishment of protected areas. • Serve to raise awareness among local people of the value of their natural environment and wildlife, and encourage adoption of / adherence to sustainable resource use practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts can be caused directly by tourists, or indirectly, by tourism-related infrastructure. • Impacts caused directly by tourists include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soil erosion and compaction - Disturbance of wildlife - Trampling of vegetation - Removal of vegetation (collection of plants or firewood) - Accidental introduction of exotic species

<p>Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some tourists (eg. Earthwatch ‘volunteers’) pay to take an active part in conservation projects. • Some tourism operations ‘ earmark’ a percentage of their revenue for conservation measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased incidence of exotic fire. - Litter and vandalism • Indirect impacts caused by tourism-related infrastructure include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reclamation of land for infrastructure (e.g. bush clearing for roads) - Generation of solid waste (e.g. rubbish/trash) - Water and air pollution (e.g. effluent, vehicle emissions) - Purchase of souvenirs using threatened or endangered species (e.g. ivory).
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Table 1: Environmental impacts of tourism

1.3.2 HOST–SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACTS

Socio-cultural impacts are the outcome of social relationships that occur between tourists and hosts as a result of their contact. More specifically:

Cultural impacts are those that affect the patterns, norms, rules and standards which find expression in behaviour, social relations and artefacts. Changes occur to such things as language, traditions, food, art, music, architecture, education, dress and leisure activities.

Host-social impacts are those that affect intra-community relations and the way of life of host communities. The advent of tourism has been found to cause or exacerbate problems such as crime, employment, prostitution, religion, gambling, xenophobia, migration, changes in clothing and language, overcrowding of infrastructure, accommodation, services, and standards of health (see table 2).

One particularly common negative impact on host communities that results from the advent of tourism, is the breakdown of traditional social-structure when young people, who are typically the main beneficiaries of employment opportunities generated by the industry, suddenly gain in wealth and influence relative to the elder generation. Sudden increases in income have also been linked to rising levels of alcohol abuse in communities such as Xai-Xai.

Negative host-social and cultural impacts can undermine support for tourism among host communities, to the extent that in some cases residents have actually sabotaged the natural resources upon which it is based.

N.B. It should be noted that while many of the aforementioned negative socio-cultural impacts are of real concern, in many cases they are blamed on tourism in spite of historical evidence that they began occur prior to the arrival of the first tourists in the area concerned.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<p>Tourism development can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in family structure and gender roles, resulting in new opportunities for women and young people. • Strengthening of local traditions and encouragement of creative art. • Cultural exchanges and improved understanding of acceptance of others. • Improved amenities at the destination. • Maintenance of community stability. • Strengthening of community pride and identity. • Empowerment of local people. • Promotion of indigenous resource conservation. • Improved quality of life. • Facilitates meeting visitors and promotes cultural exchange. • Increased accessibility of rural community to education. • Support of local language(s). • Improvements in quality of police protection in rural areas. 	<p>Tourism development can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to family structure and gender roles, leading to tension and loss of self-esteem for men and older generations. • Dilution of local language and culture • Commodification / demeaning of cultural ceremonies which are re-enacted for tourists • Changes in traditional arts, craft, dress, festivals as a result of adaptations for tourists' tastes. • Gender inequalities in employment and the community. • Increased pollution and the spread of disease. • Heightened tension due to inequalities in benefits and costs within communities, and between communities and tourists. • Destabilisation of communities leading to increased social problems such as crime, prostitution, begging, alcohol and drugs. • Reinforcement and exacerbation of existing social inequalities. • Changes in moral conduct, family relations, community organisations, and safety levels. • Offence may be caused when residents are confronted by tourists inappropriately attired (e.g. in revealing clothes). • Loss of privacy and invasion of traditional / sacred sites. • Loss of language, artefacts, and access to places. • Recreational and community conflicts.

Table 2: Socio-cultural impacts of tourism on host communities

1.3.3 VISITOR-SOCIAL / EXPERIENTIAL IMPACTS

Word-of-mouth recommendations are an important factor in influencing the choice of tourist destination: satisfied tourists lead to more tourists (and therefore increased benefits to host communities).

Conversely, unsatisfied tourists can lead to a reduction in visitor numbers and threaten the economic sustainability of natural areas. Common causes of reduced ecotourism visitor satisfaction include:

- Perceived crowding.
- Environmental degradation.
- Aesthetic impacts (i.e. tourism infra-structure that is designed in a way that is insensitive to local landscape and/or culture).

1.3.4 ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Tourism can have positive and negative impacts the local economy of host communities. Some of these are summarised in Table 3, below.

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<p>Tourism development can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate the local economy and provide opportunities for entrepreneurial activity (providing goods and services to the industry). • Provide increased employment opportunities (direct & indirect). • Stimulate the growth of other local businesses by bringing money into the local economy. • Lead to increased investment in development of infrastructure such as schools, health facilities roads and transport. • Increase taxes revenues for government. • Provide an incentive for local people to learn new skills and diversify their livelihood strategies. • Attract private investment to rural areas. • Raise income levels and standards of living. • Attract shops to rural areas (thereby increasing rural communities access to goods and services). 	<p>Tourism development can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hostility as a result of clear disparities of wealth between local people and tourists, or because of thoughtless and objectionable behaviour by visitors. • Over-dependence of communities on a single industry that is susceptible to sudden downturns. • Excessive pressure on local infrastructure and services (if they are not supported by investment). • Displacement of local people due to increased living costs and accommodation prices. • Increases in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prices of goods and services. 2. Price of land and housing. 3. Overall cost of living <p>Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created for local people are often limited in number, seasonal, and menial (ie low wage). • Because tourism businesses are often owned by those from outside the host area, and because supplies and services are not always available locally, much of the income from tourism 'leaks' out of the local economy. <p>Dominance of the tourism industry by companies based elsewhere can lead to loss of local control over the economy.</p>

Table 3: Examples of economic impacts of tourism

1.3.5 SUMMARY

Tourism that focuses on nature and culture – as is the case in Botswana – is something of a double-edged sword: it can be a powerful engine for economic growth in rural areas; engender a renewed sense of pride among host communities for their heritage and culture; and be the saviour of wildlife, landscapes and ecosystems. Conversely, without appropriate planning and management, it can hasten the destruction of natural and cultural resources, and lead to hostility and resentment among local people.

Nature tourism can be said to become ecotourism when the potentially destructive influence of tourists in sensitive natural areas is harnessed as a force for conservation through the implementation of well-planned visitor impact management practices.

2. ISSUES AND ACTIONS

2.1 SUSTAINABILITY

OBJECTIVE 1

To ensure that the planning, development and management of tourism in Botswana is consistent with the concept of sustainability.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

1. Ensure that tourism development does not exceed the carrying capacity of host areas.
2. Monitor, and develop greater understanding of the impacts of tourism on heritage sites and host communities.
3. Ensure that the activities of tourists do not compromise the sustainability of natural areas.
4. Encourage tourism activities focussing on Botswana's heritage areas to contribute directly to their conservation.
5. Provide host communities with an incentive to conserve the natural and cultural resources upon which the tourism industry depends.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of tourism sustainability – enabling Botswana to benefit from their natural and cultural heritage without compromising the ability of future generations to do so – is fundamental to ecotourism development. Tourism to natural areas is, however, inherently unsustainable: it can, if ineffectively planned or insensitively managed, destroy the very resources upon which it depends.

If this natural equation is to be reversed, steps must be taken to: (1) maximise the benefits of tourism to conservation and local economic development, and (2) identify, minimise and alleviate the negative impacts outlined in section 1.3. Ultimately, the net benefits of tourism to conservation and local economic development must outweigh the environmental, host-social and experiential costs if tourism to heritage areas is to be sustainable.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Tourism that focuses on nature and culture is – without careful planning and management – inherently unsustainable.
- Tourist interest can result in an increased sense of pride among local people in their culture but, if not sensitively managed, can lead to its commodification and degradation.
- The economic sustainability of a tourism destination can be undermined by experiential impacts that dissuade tourists from visiting or re-visiting the area concerned.

- The requirements of economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability are not always compatible.
- There is a lack of understanding about the precise cause-effect relationship between specific tourism activities and their impacts.
- Although there are many tourism operations in Botswana that apply sound ecotourism management practices, there is a lack of 'model' developments that could demonstrate to existing and prospective operators the application of a full range of ecotourism 'best practices'.
- Conducting EIA's and establishing Carrying Capacities – the two most commonly employed impact management tools – lack the flexibility and sophistication to ensure the long-term sustainability of tourism activities.
- The lack of ecological and cultural baseline data hinders the effective monitoring of tourism impacts.
- Insufficient attention is currently being paid by the responsible regulatory authorities to (1) monitoring the environmental impact of tourism activities and (2) the adherence of operators to environmental regulations and the impact management strategies outlined in their management plans.
- There are particular difficulties in effectively enforcing adherence to regulations by self-drive tourists, with current penalties considered ineffective.

Objective 1.1: To ensure that tourism development does not exceed the carrying capacity of host areas.

Because the presence of tourists, irrespective of how sensitively managed, will have some impact on natural areas, limits must inevitably be placed on tourism activities to ensure that the sustainability of the resource – and of the tourism industry that it supports – is not compromised.

At present, partly as a result of constraints on resources, the primary tools being employed for this purpose are Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Carrying Capacity⁶, both of which – though useful – have significant limitations:

⁶ Carrying Capacity (CC) is defined as the 'physical, biological, social and psychological capacity of the (natural) environment to support tourist activity without diminishing environmental quality or visitor satisfaction' (Lindsay 1986). Three categories of carrying capacity must be respected if the area concerned is to remain viable in the long-term as a heritage tourism destination (Lindberg 1991: 27):

- **Ecological CC:** 'the level of visitation beyond which unacceptable ecological impacts will occur, either from the tourists or from the amenities they require'.
- **Tourist-social CC:** the level 'beyond which visitor satisfaction drops to unacceptable limits from overcrowding'.
- **Host-social CC:** the level 'beyond which unacceptable change will be caused to local cultural stability and attitudes towards tourists'.

EIAs are designed to assess individual initiatives but are ineffective at guarding against the dangers to long-term sustainability posed by a series of incremental developments in a natural area; while Carrying Capacities – which focus on tourist numbers as opposed to impact per tourist – lack flexibility.

Natural area managers can employ a range of measures (site hardening, zoning, visitor education etc) which can, when successfully implemented, significantly reduce the level of impact / tourist, enabling an increase in carrying capacity, and therefore revenue from tourism, without compromising sustainability.

What is required, therefore, is for all those responsible for the management of natural areas in Botswana to follow the example now being set by the DWNP in its new management plan for the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. It has moved away from a reliance on rigid carrying capacities to a more flexible approach that establishes Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC). Such an approach enables managers to adapt to circumstances on the ground in order to fulfil the tourism development potential of the areas concerned.

N.B Baseline data on environmental and cultural resources is a pre-requisite for the establishment of Limits of Acceptable Change.

Actions

- Promote the adoption of the key 'principles' of ecotourism (see section 1.2.2) as a basis for the planning, development and management of all tourism in Botswana (all levels of government, natural resource managers, commercial sector, NGOs).
- Undertake environmental and cultural baseline studies in existing and proposed heritage tourism destinations, and establish – as a basis for all subsequent planning and management decisions – environmental, host-social and visitor-social Limits of Acceptable Change for National Parks and other key tourism sites (all levels of government, natural resource managers).
- Provide financial and/or technical assistance for the establishment of LACs on tribal land earmarked for tourism development (all levels of government).
- Consider introducing SADC Tourism Resource Accounts (Department of Tourism).
- Conduct baseline surveys of cultural activities in key tourism areas, to ensure the continued authenticity of cultural tourism products (National government, UB).
- Support the development of models of sustainable tourism in heritage areas. Models should be developed for all aspects of ecotourism 'best practice' from visitor impact management, energy conservation and tourism education, to product purchase, waste management and marketing partnerships (Department of Tourism, conservation NGO's).

- Support the establishment of ecotourism pilot programmes as showcases for ecotourism 'best practice' models (Department of Tourism, commercial sector, NGOs).
- Produce, and distribute among stakeholders, information booklets / manuals outlining ecotourism models of best practice (Department of Tourism).

Objective 1.2: To monitor, and develop greater understanding of the impacts of tourism on heritage sites and host communities to alleviate potential negative impacts.

The ability of heritage resource managers to effectively implement LAC and other management tools, and to ensure the sustainable use of the natural areas for which they are responsible, depends to a considerable degree on the quality of data that is available to them.

Tourism impact management is not, however, a precise science: the environmental and socio-cultural impacts of specific tourism activities on individual species and ecosystems are not fully understood, nor can the socio-cultural impacts on host communities be predicted with any great accuracy. The situation is further complicated by the fact that these impacts vary from site to site. Management must therefore be sufficiently flexible to adapt to changes as they occur. To do so, on-going monitoring of the environmental, socio-cultural and visitor-social impacts is required.

Needless to say, effective monitoring of change is only possible if baseline data is available.

Actions

- Support research to identify:
 - The impacts of (cause-effect relationship) specific tourism activities on key species and habitats.
 - Indicators that can be used to measure environmental, host-social, cultural and visitor-social impacts of tourism and the sustainability of tourism activities.
 - Effective measures to avoid, control and alleviate tourism impacts (National government, commercial sector, UB, natural resource managers, conservation NGOs).
- Publicise and make freely available to all stakeholders findings from the aforementioned research in the form of practical guidelines (National government, commercial sector, UB, natural resource managers, conservation NGOs).
- Develop monitoring protocols and introduce long-term monitoring of the environmental and socio-cultural impacts of tourism activities within, and adjacent to, protected areas, fragile ecosystems, and other important heritage tourism sites (all levels of government, natural area managers, UB).

- Investigate ways in which stakeholders could contribute to / participate in impact monitoring in protected areas and other heritage sites which they visit (Natural area managers, commercial sector, conservation NGOs, local communities).

Objective 1.3: To ensure that the activities of tourists, tour operators and other stakeholders do not compromise the sustainability of heritage areas.

Sound planning alone cannot guarantee the sustainability of tourism activities in natural heritage areas: visitors must comply with regulations and adhere to ecotourism best practices.

The vast size of Botswana's natural areas and the nomadic nature of the tourism industry effectively preclude extensive 'policing', making industry-self regulation – supported by incentives such as accreditation – the most viable strategy for minimising negative visitor impacts (see section 2.7). Self-regulation does not, however, provide a solution to inappropriate behaviour by self-drive tourists (an issue which stakeholder consultations demonstrated to be of widespread concern), nor can it effectively guard against rogue tourism operators who ignore regulations. It must therefore be supported by improved visitor education programmes and improved enforcement of government regulations.

Actions

- Provide visitors with information about the adverse effect that inappropriate behaviour can have on the physical and socio-cultural environment, and with guidelines for appropriate behaviour (All levels of government, natural and cultural heritage site managers, commercial sector). (See also section 2.5).
- Improve enforcement of existing regulations by undertaking inspections of tourism facilities to ensure that environmental management standards are being maintained (all levels of government).
- Consider linking renewal of tourism enterprise licences / permits to the conduct of periodical independent 'eco' audits, which should include assessments of both socio-cultural and environmental impacts (all levels of government).
- Review, in conjunction with the tourism industry (1) procedures for policing operator and self-drive visitor behaviour, and (2) penalties (DWNP).
- Continue developing, where appropriate, the role of 'honorary rangers' (all levels of government, natural area managers).

Objective 1.4: To encourage tourism activities focussing on Botswana's natural areas to contribute directly to their conservation.

Genuine 'ecotourists' make every effort to minimise the effect that their presence has on natural areas, but some impacts are inevitable (see section 1.3). It is therefore incumbent upon those 'consuming' the resources (i.e. tourists) – and particularly those profiting from them (i.e. tourism operators) – to cover, at a minimum, the cost of measures required to manage and alleviate those impacts. Contributions to resource conservation may be financial or practical.

Financial contributions from tour operators come in the form of fees paid for licences, permits and levies, as well as taxes. In some instances, operators also contribute a percentage of their revenue to conservation initiatives. Tourists contribute through payment of entrance fees to protected areas. Fees in Botswana are, correctly, multi-tiered so that foreign visitors pay more than citizens, to whom the resources concerned belong, and who in any case already subsidise the cost of conservation management through government.

Models have been developed to ascertain the optimal level of visitor entrance fees for heritage areas, but essentially the goal should be to optimise revenue without exceeding carrying capacity. Fees in Botswana are already relatively high, and scope for increases may therefore be limited, but research has demonstrated that tourists are willing to pay more if they know that the money is being used for conservation, and the situation should be continually monitored.

Tourists and tourism operators can make a more practical contribution to conservation efforts through participation in impact alleviation activities, monitoring, scientific research (as is the case with Earthwatch 'volunteers') etc. Actively contributing to conservation efforts will also serve to reinforce the message to tourists that their activities do have consequences for the environment.

Actions

- Continue monitoring, on an on-going basis, the level of fees for tour operator permits/licences and visitor entrance fees to heritage areas, and the level that tourists are willing to pay (all levels of government).
- Consider introducing, in response to the continued decline of the South African currency, a new tier of entrance fees for regional tourists to prevent Botswana becoming a prohibitively expensive destination for this market (DWNP).
- Consider providing the opportunity for tourists to make additional financial contributions to specific conservation projects. Such donations should be 'ring-fenced' for the specified project(s) (national government, commercial sector).

- Encourage discussions between tourism operators and natural resource managers to identify ways in which they (and their clients should they wish to do so) can actively contribute to the conservation host areas (all levels of government, tourism operators, natural area managers).
- Encourage the adoption of ecotourism accreditation that rewards tourism businesses that take additional steps to contribute to conservation (all levels of government, commercial sector, conservation NGOs).
- Consider introducing annual award(s) for tourism businesses that make an outstanding contribution to conservation (Department of Tourism).
- Promote the participation by tourists in conservation activities, and publicise opportunities for them to do so (national government, commercial sector, community sector).

Objective 1.5: To provide host communities with an incentive to conserve the natural and cultural resources upon which the tourism industry depends.

Ecotourism must, for pragmatic as well as ethical reasons, contribute to local economic development. If host communities are benefiting directly from the presence of tourists, they will have a vested interest in curbing unsustainable activities and in conserving the natural area and its resources upon which the tourism industry depends⁷. If this does not occur and they merely bear the opportunity-cost of tourism (i.e. restrictions on access to natural areas and the use of its resources), the perceived advantages of resource conservation will inevitably be outweighed by those of exploitation. Antipathy or even hostility towards visitors may then result from the perception that tourists' interests are being placed above their own.

Actions

- Promote the active involvement of local communities and other stakeholders in Local Advisory Committees (LACOMs) which are currently being introduced as a way of involving them in the management decisions of protected areas (All levels of government, protected area managers).
- Identify, and help meet the training requirements of local people so as to enable them to fully exploit the employment and business opportunities presented by tourism to the area (commercial sector, NGOs).

⁷ It should be made clear that community control does not inevitably lead to effective sustainable resource management. In the Masai Mara in Kenya, for example, both the Masai Mara Game Reserve itself (owned and operated by the County Council), and the surrounding Game Management Areas (community-managed) have been overdeveloped as a result of a lack of understanding of the relationship between conservation and tourism, or greed.

- Facilitate dialogue and partnerships between tourism operators and local communities to identify opportunities for the latter's involvement through (1) employment, and (2) the provision of goods and services (all level of government, commercial sector, NGOs).
- Encourage tourism operators to source goods and services whenever available from local communities (all levels of government, NGOs).
- Provide technical / financial support (initially for feasibility studies) to Batswana seeking to pursue ecotourism-related revenue raising opportunities (all levels of government, NGOs). (See also section 2.3).

2.2 BUSINESS VIABILITY

OBJECTIVE 2

To facilitate the development of economically-viable and effectively-managed ecotourism enterprises.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

1. Address the problem of high costs associated with 'green' management practices.
2. Facilitate improved access to finance for prospective Botswana ecotourism operators with economically-viable business plans.
3. Develop the requisite business management and technical expertise among existing and prospective ecotourism operators.
4. Improve ecotourism operators' access to information and expert advice.

INTRODUCTION

Botswana has the natural and cultural resources to support considerable further development of its ecotourism industry. However, the existence of tourism assets does not in itself guarantee the successful development of an ecotourism industry. If the potential of ecotourism as a tool for conservation and rural economic development is to be realised, skilled and dedicated entrepreneurs with a sound understanding of business management practices are required to transform ecotourism opportunities into viable business enterprises.

The key business viability issues raised during stakeholder consultation were consistent with those identified by research overseas, although the lack of a strong entrepreneurial tradition means that some of the challenges are, arguably, even more acute in Botswana. Several of the issues raised – most obviously the additional costs incurred by adherence to the high standards of environmental management that are required – are unique to ecotourism. Many others, though, are common to all nature tourism enterprises. Although some of the more general business management issues do not fall within the remit of the ecotourism strategy, all will need to be addressed if the industry in Botswana is to continue to develop and prosper.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Responsible tourism operators may face a competitive disadvantage due to the additional costs associated with environmentally-responsible management practices. This problem of price premiums on 'green' products is further exacerbated for small ecotourism operations that are unable to exploit economies of scale.

- Small businesses, which characterise the ecotourism sector, also face difficulties meeting the cost of effective market research and marketing, both of which are essential to develop and maintain economically-viable and competitive operations.
- A number of tourism enterprises have failed as a result of ignoring their business plans once funding has been secured.
- Concern exists that grants have been awarded to prospective Botswana entrepreneurs without a requirement for sufficient personal investment, resulting in a lack of true commitment to making the enterprise a success.
- There is no strong entrepreneurial tradition in Botswana, and relatively few Botswana possess the requisite business management skills to initiate and develop successful tourism enterprises: a problem that is particularly acute among rural communities.
- The plethora of rules, regulations and permits that are required (often from different sources) are both excessively time consuming to manage, and a source of confusion and frustration for ecotourism operators.
- Confusion exists among those seeking to become involved in the tourism industry as to where they can go for information about markets, sources of finance and expert technical assistance.

Business viability issues specific to community-based tourism

- The distinction that is frequently drawn between 'private' or 'commercial' sector and community tourism operations can be unhelpful, as it masks the fact that community-based tourism operations must compete for business in the same way as their 'commercial' sector counterparts if they are to be successful.
- The participatory approach to management associated with CBNRM activities is at odds with the streamlined hierarchy, headed by a highly-motivated individual that characterises most successful small tourism businesses.
- Co-operative enterprises in which all participants share the work have proved inefficient without incentives to reward those who work hardest.
- A lack of understanding among rural communities about the realities of establishing and managing a successful tourism enterprise, and unrealistic expectations about the proportion of shares/profits they will receive, can lead to difficulties in their attempts to attract capital investment and/or joint venture partners.
- There are no figures available for the international market for community-based ecotourism activities. The boom in CBE enterprises has been largely supply-driven and serious concerns are increasingly being expressed by

professionals about (1) the true size of the market for CBE (2) the economic viability of community-managed tourism businesses.

- CBE developments have often been undermined by the failure of project facilitators to conduct independent feasibility studies or adhere to sound business management practices.

Objective 2.1: To address the problem of high costs associated ‘green’ management practices.

The high environmental management standards expected of ecotourism enterprises (minimal impact practices, purchasing of ‘green’ products, constructing environmentally responsible facilities etc) often entail additional costs, thereby affecting operators’ profit margins or – if passed on to clients – competitiveness. Consequently, tourism operators who ignore ecotourism ‘best practices’ may effectively hold a competitive advantage over their more responsible counterparts. Measures are required to negate or, wherever possible, reverse this advantage.

Actions

- Encourage co-operation / collaboration between ecotourism operators as a way of overcoming economic problems associated with small sized businesses (e.g. grouping together to bulk-buy supplies and to market their operations (see section 2.4). (All levels of government, commercial sector).
- Support the establishment of an ecotourism accreditation scheme (see section 2.7) and consider introducing tax incentives for accredited tourism operations (national government).
- Monitor improvements in new technologies that deliver cost reductions for the industry, and disseminate relevant information to all stakeholders (Department of Tourism).

Objective 2.2: To facilitate improved access to finance for prospective ecotourism operators with economically-viable business plans.

Difficulties and delays in accessing finance are perceived by prospective entrepreneurs as being one of the key obstacles to the development of new ecotourism enterprises, but of equal concern is the 75% failure rate of small-to-medium sized businesses that *have* been established by Botswana with funds from FAP.

It is clear that while facilitating access to finance for prospective ecotourism entrepreneurs is a priority, funding must be linked to capacity-building and support initiatives that help them develop the skills that they require to transform the opportunity that funding affords them, into economically viable ecotourism enterprises (see below).

N.B. An autonomous institution – the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) – has been established in an effort to improve the efficacy of citizen enterprise development programme. It is intended that the Agency assume the management of financial assistance previously provided by the FAP and SMME programmes.

Actions

- Bring together prospective investors and entrepreneurs by compiling, summarising and distributing information relating to (1) sources of funding for ecotourism development and (2) projects seeking funding (all levels of government).
- Examine ways in which tourism development extension services can be harmonised (all levels of government).
- Consider:
 - Making allocations of loans from CEDA and other sources of funding dependent on the prior conduct of feasibility studies and skills assessments (which should be included in project budgets). (National government).
 - Issuing staggered funding payments, with secondary payments only made available if business plans have been adhered to (national government, funding institutions).

Objective 2.3: To develop the requisite business management and technical expertise among existing and prospective ecotourism operators.

Tourism businesses need to be able to draw on a wide range of business management, technical, operational and personal skills. New and existing ecotourism entrepreneurs with small businesses lack the resources to hire specialists, and so must themselves take responsibility for all aspects of the business. It is of little surprise, therefore, that many new entrepreneurs quickly become overwhelmed.

Research suggests that small businesses are at their most vulnerable between 12 and 30 months after starting out⁸, and that the primary causes of failure include:

- Financial management and liquidity problems.
- Management inexperience and incompetence.
- Problems coping with inflation and economic conditions external to the firm.
- Poor or non-existent books and records.
- Sales and marketing problems.
- Staffing.
- Failure to seek and use expert advice.

⁸ Burns 1996, cited in McKercher & Robbins 1997.

Actions

- Encourage greater collaboration between training institutions (e.g. BWTI) and the commercial ecotourism sector, to ensure that training programmes are designed to meet the practical needs of the industry (all levels of government, commercial sector, educational establishments)
- Participate in activities that raise awareness among existing and prospective tourism operators about the need for, and benefits of, developing business management skills (All levels of government, commercial sector).
- Investigate the feasibility of providing easily accessible, free or subsidised ecotourism business training to existing and prospective managers, either in a number of regional centres and / or through correspondence courses (all levels of government, commercial sector).

Actions specific to community-based ecotourism (CBE) enterprises

- Undertake educational activities to persuade communities of the need for an entrepreneurial approach to CBE development (All levels of government, NGOs, Bocobonet).
- Support collaborative inter-sectoral research to develop a system of CBE in Botswana that enables 'individual entrepreneurs to strive and prosper within the limits of collective rights'⁹. (National government, commercial sector, Bocobonet, development NGOs).
- Participate in the assessment of training needs, and the development of courses designed to meet the specific needs of community-based tourism managers (National government, commercial sector, Bocobonet, development NGOs).
- Involve private sector partners from an early stage in project development, and base any decision to develop CBE on independent feasibility study and pragmatic market assessment (CBOs, NGOs).
- Encourage and facilitate visits and training by community members from other, successful CBE enterprises (All levels of government, NGOs, Bocobonet).

Objective 2.4: To improve ecotourism operators' access to information and expert advice.

Providing easy access to the requisite information and expert advice regarding sources of markets, customer expectations, marketing, sound business management practices etc, can help new ecotourism businesses survive the critical start-up phase and subsequently keep abreast of, adapt to, and therefore remain competitive in, an evolving international market.

⁹ Ashley & Roe 1997: 6

Actions

- Undertake research into the true size of the market for CBE, identify products for which there is a demand, and communicate the results to stakeholders (Department of Tourism, commercial sector).
- Participate in the development of ecotourism product development manuals that clearly set out the legal requirements of establishing a tourism business, sources of funding and application procedures, necessary skills and how to develop them, product packaging, useful contacts etc (Department of Tourism).
- Organise regular training in the use of the manuals and guidelines produced (Department of Tourism).
- Provide incentives for established tourism businesses to act as 'mentors' to new businesses (national government).
- Facilitate contacts between existing and prospective tourism operators to enable the former to guide the latter in product development options that will complement existing activities (all levels of government).

2.3 INVOLVEMENT OF BATSWANA

OBJECTIVE 3

To increase the number of Batswana meaningfully involved in, and benefiting from, the tourism industry.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

1. Increase the percentage of Batswana employees holding senior positions in tourism enterprises.
2. Increase the number of successful, citizen-owned and managed tourism enterprises.
3. Assist Batswana identify viable business opportunities in the tourism support industries.

INTRODUCTION

Maximising the involvement¹⁰ of local people is a key 'principle' of ecotourism in Botswana (see section 1.2.2), and increasing Batswana representation in the country's tourism industry is a primary objective of the NES.

Four main avenues are available to citizens seeking to derive an income from the tourism industry:

- Employment in the 'commercial' sector.
- Citizen-owned, privately managed tourism enterprises.
- Community-based tourism enterprises.
- Employment / business opportunities in tourism support industries.

At present, although the tourism industry does create many valuable jobs for citizens, these are primarily in the low-skill, low-wage category. Relatively few Batswana hold senior management positions in the commercial sector, or own / manage their own successful tourism operations.

Government and the commercial sector both have important roles to play in providing the training needed to address the lack of appropriate technical and business skills that have been identified as obstacles to increased Batswana involvement in the industry (see section 2.2). There are, however, many other less obvious, though equally valuable opportunities for citizens to become involved in, and benefit from, tourism by providing goods and services to tour operators, lodges and protected area managers¹¹.

¹⁰ The distinction is drawn between passive 'participation' and active 'involvement', with 'involvement' used to mean local people being an integral part of the agenda-setting and decision-making processes.

¹¹ Construction; bush clearing; site, vehicle and infrastructure maintenance; anti-poaching; transport; provision of cultural goods and services etc.

N.B. Although tourism can bring valuable revenue to rural areas that may have few development alternatives, involvement in the industry is not a uniformly positive experience for local people. The sudden influx of international tourists can, in some instances, have a profoundly disruptive effect on host communities' traditional social structures, culture and way of life (see section 1.3), with remote rural communities being particularly susceptible to these negative impacts. Actions taken to increase Batswana involvement in the tourism industry must therefore be accompanied by measures to minimise and alleviate socio-cultural impacts.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- There is no strong entrepreneurial tradition in Botswana, and relatively few Batswana possess the requisite business and management expertise to initiate and develop successful tourism enterprises: a problem that is particularly acute among rural communities.
- Relatively few Batswana hold senior management positions in the commercial tourism sector.
- The limited number of Batswana with the appropriate skills (especially for senior management positions), and the unwillingness of many of those who are sufficiently qualified to live in the bush, hinder attempts by the commercial sector to reduce the proportion of expatriate employees on their staff.
- Failure to involve the commercial sector from the early stages when developing joint venture enterprises often leads to communities building unrealistic expectations regarding the benefits that they will receive from tourism.
- Tourism licence fees are prohibitively expensive for many prospective rural Batswana entrepreneurs interested in establishing small operations.
- The Professional Guides licence is too difficult for many Batswana from rural communities who nevertheless have a depth of local knowledge that is of considerable interest to many tourists.
- There is a lack of awareness among Batswana of the wide range of business opportunities that exist in the tourism support industries.
- There is a widespread perception among Batswana that the tourism industry is dominated by expatriates, and that a large proportion of income from tourism is therefore taken out of the country.
- There is insufficient monitoring of the extent to which tourism enterprises are implementing their localisation plans.

Objective 3.1: To increase the percentage of Batswana employees holding senior positions in tourism enterprises.

Tourism is a labour-intensive industry, with one job estimated to be created for every ten tourists. Many jobs are created for local people, but they are overwhelmingly low-paid and low-skilled, with few being employed in senior management positions.

Government and the commercial sector need to work together to remedy this problem: tourism businesses must be more committed to the training and recruitment of Batswana for senior positions within their organisations, while government can make it easier for them to do so without jeopardising productivity by improving training and education so as to increase the pool of suitably-skilled citizens.

Opportunities also exist for more employment of local people in positions below the level of management. For example, many Batswana living in rural areas have a depth of knowledge about their local environments that is of great potential interest to tourists, but which they are unable to exploit because of difficulties passing the Professional Guide Licence examination. Mokoro 'polers' have a special licence, and a similar arrangement may be required for local guides.

Actions

- Assess the feasibility of developing a system of government-subsidised apprenticeships within the 'commercial' sector, to accelerate the capacity-building process (national government).
- Ensure that commercial sector tourism operators meet commitments made in their tender documents to train and employ local staff in senior positions (all levels of government).
- Encourage greater collaboration between training institutions (e.g. BWTI) and the commercial ecotourism sector, to ensure that accredited training programmes are designed to meet the practical needs of the industry (all levels of government, commercial sector, training and educational establishments).
- Investigate the feasibility of introducing a new category of guide licence that is more accessible to – and recognises the special skills and knowledge of – local guides, without compromising national standards (national government).

Objective 3.2: To increase the number of *successful*, citizen-owned and managed tourism enterprises.

Establishing a successful tourism operation in what is a highly competitive industry can be an up-hill struggle, and it has proved especially challenging for Batswana, many of whom – having never themselves been tourists – lack a clear

understanding of the industry, and have had no opportunity to develop the requisite technical and business management skills.

International experience suggests that these obstacles can most effectively be overcome by developing close links with existing tourism enterprises, and by encouraging Botswana to focus initially on developing small businesses in the tourism support sectors where competition is less fierce, and in which they either have a specific advantage (e.g. cultural tourism and developing products for the as-yet unexploited domestic tourism market), or can utilise existing skills.

Such a strategy would:

- Enable citizens to build experience, management skills and business confidence.
- Complement existing tourism enterprises.
- Significantly reduce the amount of tourism revenue that 'leaks' out of the country.

Actions

- Investigate ways of encouraging, facilitating and rewarding the development of 'mentor' relationships, linking new citizen/community-owned and managed enterprises with existing commercial sector operations (all levels of government, commercial sector).
- Provide assistance for communities seeking to become involved in tourism development with (1) feasibility studies (2) assessments of training requirements (all levels of government).
- Promote the increase of CBE activities in all protected areas (national government).
- Support existing proposals to reserve some tourism support service activities (i.e. those that do not require extensive specialist skills or high levels of investment) for citizen owned and managed businesses (national government).

Objective 3.3: To assist Botswana identify viable business opportunities in the tourism support industries.

Even when opportunity and capacity do exist locally, it can prove difficult for communities unfamiliar with the industry to identify opportunities and, once a product is developed, break into the market. Facilitating communication and co-operation between existing tourism businesses and communities/individuals seeking to become involved in the industry, can do much to alleviate this problem (see also section 2.8).

Actions

- Facilitate contacts between existing and prospective tourism operators to enable the former to guide the latter towards product development options

that will complement existing activities (all levels of government, commercial sector, NGOs, Bocobonet).

- Assess the feasibility of instituting a requirement for those applying for tourism licences / permits to identify opportunities for local employment and revenue-raising activities (national government).
- Participate in initiatives that educate local residents about the goods and services which ecotourism operators in Botswana – and specifically in their region – require (all levels of government, Bocobonet, NGOs).
- Establish a database of tourism-related goods and services that are available within Botswana (national government).

2.4 MARKETING AND PROMOTION

OBJECTIVE 4

To promote marketing initiatives which support the sustainable development and diversification of the tourism industry in Botswana.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

1. Promote the geographical diversification of Botswana's tourism industry in a manner that is consistent with the concept of sustainability.
2. Support product diversification and cost efficiency through collaborative marketing.
3. Build a strong image of Botswana as an ecotourism destination.
4. Provide stakeholders with up-to-date, high quality data regarding changes in market demand / characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

Although no global system for collecting statistics on nature-based tourism currently exists, the sector is estimated to be growing at a rate of between 10 and 30% per annum: significantly faster than the annual increase in tourism arrivals for the industry as a whole, which the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) predicts will average 4.3% during the first two decades of the 21st century.

However, while demand is growing rapidly, so too is the competition, as developing countries in particular increasingly focus on nature-based tourism as a strategy for conservation and development in rural areas, and as visitors become more sophisticated and selective in their choice of travel destination. Effective market research and marketing is therefore vital if Botswana is to attract the increased numbers of visitors and / or length of stay of existing visitors that it requires to drive and sustain the planned geographical diversification of the country's ecotourism industry. It is equally important to the successful establishment and management of individual ecotourism enterprises.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- The relatively high cost of effective market research and marketing – particularly in the prime international target markets – is an obstacle to the (geographical and product) diversification of the tourism industry.
- There is strong demand for genuine 'ecotourism' experiences, but increasing scepticism amongst tourists from key target markets about unsubstantiated tour operator claims of environmentally and socially-responsible management practices.

- Prospective and existing tourism operators do not have access to sufficiently detailed and up-to-date qualitative data regarding ecotourism market trends and preferences/expectations.
- There is insufficient communication and collaboration between government and the private sector with regard to how less-developed or undeveloped areas of the country should be marketed.
- Botswana lacks a single, strong and recognisable tourism image and as a result suffers from a very low recognition factor in the main source markets.

Objective 4.1: To promote the geographical diversification of Botswana's tourism industry in a manner that is consistent with the concept of sustainability.

Set against the need to promote Botswana as a tourism destination in an increasingly competitive international marketplace, is the concern that many of the natural areas to which tourists are attracted – and upon which the industry is almost entirely dependent (BTDP 2000) – are highly sensitive to visitor impacts. Consequently, there is a danger that successful marketing of parks / natural areas may result in visitor numbers exceeding their Carrying Capacity, and in the subsequent accelerated resource degradation described by the 'tourism cycle'.

Marketing activities must be designed in such a way as to support the geographical diversification of the ecotourism industry in Botswana, without compromising the sustainability of the natural and cultural resources upon which it depends.

Actions

- Target promotional strategies for natural areas on sites for which EIAs, the establishment of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), and the design and implementation of visitor impact management plans have been completed (Department of Tourism).
- Regulate the size and style of infra-structural development in tourism areas (all levels of government). (See section 2.6).

Objective 4.2: To support ecotourism product diversification and cost efficiency through collaborative marketing.

The high cost of effective market research and marketing – particularly in the prime international target markets – constitutes a significant obstacle to the geographical diversification of the tourism industry, as well as to the economic viability of existing and prospective, small-scale ecotourism enterprises that are unable to exploit economies of scale.

Ecotourism businesses can act to neutralise this inherent disadvantage by joining forces to market their activities. There are a range of opportunities for mutually-beneficial collaborative marketing of ecotourism activities, goods and services. These include:

- Ecotourism enterprises in 'new' tourism areas such as the Kgalagadi district, that are currently struggling to attract tourists, can join forces to create and market themselves as a package of attractions / activities which may be able to draw greater numbers of visitors to the region than would be possible when acting individually.
- Ecotourism enterprises with a similar focus can link up to provide national networks of single-interest activities. The benefits of such an approach, which has been pioneered by the South Africa-based Open Africa network, go beyond cost efficiency: small-scale projects can be presented as a single, high profile tourism attraction (e.g. a national network of community-based tourism activities) that has the potential to be marketed internationally.
- Tour operators can collaborate with local suppliers of ecotourism-related goods and services: the operator benefits by increasing the range of activities available to its clients, thereby potentially increasing their length of stay; the suppliers benefit by gaining direct access to their prime target market.

Actions

- Identify key sites in each district at which large numbers of tourists congregate (e.g. airports, hotels, border posts, National Park / Game Reserve entrance gates / visitor centres), and develop them as promotional 'hubs' to raise awareness of / advertise other ecotourism sites and activities in the vicinity (all levels of government).
- Develop a comprehensive database of businesses providing tourism-related goods and services in Botswana, and make it easily accessible to all stakeholders (Department of Tourism).
- Encourage, facilitate and promote inter- and intra-sectoral collaboration in marketing activities between stakeholders from the public, 'commercial' and community sectors offering complementary products / services (all levels of government, Bocobonet, commercial sector).
- Pursue opportunities for free marketing of community-based ecotourism (CBE) enterprises on the internet, through existing specialist CBE web-sites and promotional organisations such as Tourism Concern (All levels of government, commercial sector, NGOs).
- Consider producing a high quality ecotourism product catalogue highlighting new ecotourism products and circuits in Botswana as a means of enhancing international perceptions of Botswana as an ecotourism destination with a wide product range (Department of Tourism).

- Participate in international ecotourism and special interest travel and trade fairs, including participation by SMEs and CBOs (Department of Tourism, Bocobonet, commercial sector).
- Assess the feasibility of establishing a Central Reservation System for CBOs and CBEs and identify specialised international General Sales Agents (GSAs). (Department of Tourism).

Objective 4.3: To build a strong image of Botswana as an ecotourism destination.

Botswana lacks a strong tourism image in key international target markets: international visitors recognise names such as 'Chobe' and 'Okavango', but do not necessarily associate them with Botswana. Research has suggested that this has hampered attempts to develop tourism in new regions of the country and build Botswana-only tourism packages.

Countries such as Costa Rica and Belize have derived considerable success from marketing themselves specifically as ecotourism destinations. Botswana has a tourism industry that is based entirely on nature and culture, it has no mass tourism, and it is the first country in southern Africa to develop a NES at what is, from a marketing perspective (2002 being the International Year of Ecotourism), a very opportune time. These factors suggest that Botswana may be well placed to follow Costa Rica's example and market itself as Southern Africa's specialist ecotourism destination.

However, to be credible in a world in which consumers are increasingly sceptical about 'greenwash' (see section 2.7), such a strategy would require that the 'principles' of ecotourism run more than simply 'skin deep': they must demonstrably underpin all aspects of development planning in Botswana.

N.B. Marketing Botswana as an ecotourism destination would be consistent with the overall market positioning strategy proposed in the Botswana Tourism Master Plan (BTMP). The BTMP recommended fostering 'world class emotional impressions of Botswana combining wilderness with African wildlife and cultural heritage...offering a range of different product components, e.g. adventure, wilderness, wildlife, culture/heritage, sand dunes, salt pans, camels etc.'

Actions

- Investigate the viability of marketing Botswana specifically as a specialist / exclusive ecotourism destination (Department of Tourism).
- Support the establishment of ecotourism 'best practice' standards, guidelines and accreditation (see section 2.7). (All levels of government, commercial sector, NGOs).
- Communicate and promote, through all national and international tourism information and marketing fora (tourism information centres, internet, brochures, trade fairs etc), the key 'principles' of ecotourism development in

Botswana, the National Ecotourism Strategy, guidelines for appropriate tourist behaviour, the country's ecotourism standards and – once one is initiated – its accreditation system (Department of Tourism).

- Give precedence in all publicly-funded marketing activities to tourism enterprises that embrace ecotourism 'best practice' and – once an accreditation scheme is established – to accredited tourism enterprises (Department of Tourism).
- Explore alternative methods of harnessing the interest in ecotourism that it is anticipated will be generated by the International Year of Ecotourism (2002), to raise the profile of Botswana as an ecotourism destination (Department of Tourism).
- Use, wherever possible, 'green' / sustainably harvested raw materials for the production of tourism awareness and marketing materials (tourism industry).

Objective 4.4: To provide stakeholders with up-to-date, high quality data regarding changes in market demand / characteristics.

The lack of detailed and up-to-date data regarding market characteristics and trends hinders attempts by new operators to design ecotourism products that accurately meet current demand, and established operators seeking to adapt in order to maintain market advantage.

Provision of such data would assist Botswana's tourism industry to tailor its products to meet current and future market demand, and also to maximise the efficacy and efficiency of its marketing activities.

Actions

- Conduct frequent, periodic (1) surveys to assess motivation, behaviour/attitudes, satisfaction and expenditure of visitors to Botswana, and (2) market research in primary target markets in order to track evolving demand / market characteristics (Department of Tourism, commercial sector).
- Make results of market research and analysis freely available to all stakeholders, including electronically (Department of Tourism).
- Support the continued development of the tourism inventory / database to help identify regions / activities / opportunities that meet the demands highlighted by the market research. (All levels of government, tourism industry).
- Develop promotional materials that address the specific expectations of key target markets, and monitor their effectiveness (Department of Tourism, commercial sector).

- Assist individual operators improve their products and operations by helping them to design visitor satisfaction survey questionnaires (Department of Tourism).

2.5 UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS

OBJECTIVE 5

To enhance understanding of the concept of ecotourism among all stakeholder groups, and to raise awareness of the costs, benefits, opportunities and implications of ecotourism development for each.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to help meet the objectives of the NES through audience-specific awareness raising activities for the two key target groups:

- Tourists / visitors
- Batswana

INTRODUCTION

There is a tendency for the educational aspect of ecotourism to be undervalued and in many cases – not least Botswana’s protected areas – all but ignored. This is a situation that must be reversed, for the extent that the potential of ecotourism as a force for conservation and development will be harnessed, and the effectiveness of the actions being taken to support it, depend to a large degree on the support of the different stakeholders. This in turn requires that the ‘principles’ of ecotourism (see section 1.2.2), and the policies and actions being taken (as well as the reasons for them) are effectively communicated to – and understood by – all stakeholders.

Stakeholder understanding of the critical link between a viable tourism industry and resource conservation is a pre-requisite of *sustainable* tourism, and this – with the other ‘principles’ of ecotourism in Botswana – should form the basis of all educational activities. But awareness raising activities can do much more than simply help to minimise negative environmental impacts of tourism activities in protected areas: they can also play a valuable role in promoting the geographical diversification of the industry and increasing the benefits that citizens derive from it.

To maximise their efficacy, education and awareness-raising activities should be:

- Delivered by well-trained guides with strong interpretative skills and knowledge of appropriate tourism behaviour. Consumer surveys have revealed that guides with strong ethical principles and skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, service and communication are particularly highly valued.
- If possible, interactive and participatory.
- Adapted to address specific target audiences (see below).
- Subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation (behavioural change can give a strong indication of their efficacy), and adapted where necessary.

A series of tourism awareness activities (for rural communities, school teachers and DWNP staff) have already been organised by the Department of Tourism in line with the recommendations of the Botswana Tourism Master Plan. These should be regarded not as one-off activities, but as part of an on-going process of stakeholder education. If it is to make a significant impact, the training that has already been conducted, which has so far reached only a small minority of the target audiences, must be expanded. Follow-up activities to ensure that participants are actually applying what they have learnt are also required.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Inappropriate tourism behaviour can lead to social upheaval in host communities and to the neglect, degradation or excessive commodification of their cultural heritage.
- A major proportion of Botswana society remains unaware of the significance of the role that tourism can play in the future economic development of the country's rural areas, and of the business and employment opportunities that exist within the industry.
- Despite widespread familiarity with the term, confusion as to what distinguishes 'ecotourism' from other forms of tourism remains widespread.
- International surveys have found that interpretation is both highly valued by ecotourists and undervalued by operators.
- Many private sector operators *do* have strong tourist conservation education and interpretation programmes, but – although a stated objective of DWNP park management plans – these are lacking in Botswana's protected areas.
- Lack of understanding of the requirements of tourists and tour operators can effect the ability of Botswana producers of tourism-related goods and services to fully exploit this market.
- Possible perception of ecotourism as a threat by other interest groups.

Objective 5.1: To raise awareness among tourists of the 'principles' of ecotourism, activities and attractions in Botswana, and opportunities to support local economic development.

Tourists are in a position to cause significant damage to Botswana's natural and cultural resources (see section 1.3), and so must be an important focus for educational activities. Ecotourism education programmes for tourists should typically (though not exclusively) include information regarding:

- Local ecology.
- History and culture of local people, and the roles that they have played in shaping their environment.

- Rules and regulations. These should be positive, encourage responsible behaviour, and be translated into as many tourist languages as resources allow. Their rationale should also be explained, as it has been demonstrated that if people understand the purpose of regulations, they are more likely to adhere to them.
- Universal conservation issues such as the importance of natural areas, and the need for sustainable resource use.
- Goods and services that are available from host communities, and the importance of purchasing these locally, so as to maximise the economic dividend that local people derive from tourism and conservation.
- Culturally appropriate behaviour.

Actions

- Investigate the feasibility of developing comprehensive visitor (education) centres at the main entrance of high profile heritage tourism sites (national government, heritage area managers).
- Encourage innovative and pro-active approaches to visitor education such as talks given by experts to visitors in their hotels / lodges (all levels of government, commercial sector).
- Participate in the production of guidelines for environmentally and culturally sensitive behaviour (all levels of government).
- Investigate ways in which information about Botswana ecotourism destinations, activities, guidelines and accreditation system can be distributed to visitors *prior* to their arrival in the country (magazines / videos on inbound flights, foreign-based travel agents etc).

Objective 5.2: To raise awareness among Batswana of the principles of ecotourism, the industry's role in Botswana's development, and opportunities for citizen involvement.

The ecotourism industry relies, to a considerable extent, on the support of the country's citizens. Efforts must therefore be made to raise awareness among Batswana of the benefits and opportunities that the industry brings, and the effect that their behaviour and activities can have on the resources on which it depends. Particular attention should be paid to raising awareness about ecotourism development issues and opportunities among the young: the decision-makers of the future whose actions will determine the long-term sustainability and success of the industry in Botswana.

Effective education programmes for local people will seek to:

- Highlight the benefits that they can derive from ecotourism.
- Ensure that they understand the principles of sustainable resource use.
- Make clear the critical link between their activities, the conservation of natural and cultural resources, and the benefits that they can derive from tourism.

- Ensure that they have realistic expectations as to the likely extent of the benefits that they will receive from ecotourism. (Unrealistic expectations can, when left unfulfilled, lead to frustration and disillusionment).
- Illustrate the full range of tourism-related revenue-raising opportunities available to them.

Actions

- Conduct public awareness campaigns to raise the profile of ecotourism issues and broader environmental / lifestyle issues (e.g. littering). (All levels of government, NGOs).
- Encourage and, where appropriate, subsidise visits to national heritage sites by more school children and members of local communities (All levels of government).
- Participate in the production of ecotourism and conservation awareness information resources for the media (national government, commercial sector, conservation NGOs).
- Expand ecotourism awareness training for school teachers, and incorporate ecotourism education into school curricula (national government).
- Encourage all tourism training programmes to give a more prominent role to the 'principles' of ecotourism (all levels of government).
- Publicise the contribution that tourism makes to Botswana's economy, extent of tourism related employment etc (national government).
- Monitor the effectiveness of ecotourism training and awareness programmes (Department of Tourism).

2.6 INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVE 6

To facilitate the development of tourism infrastructure that minimises negative impacts, maximises the benefits of ecotourism, and is sensitive to target market expectations.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainability must not be limited to the activities of tourists once they arrive in a protected area. It should underpin every aspect of tourism development. In recognition of this fact, attention is increasingly focussing on facility design and construction practices, where choices made with regards to architecture, siting, building materials and landscaping will play a significant role in determining the extent of the resultant negative environmental, cultural and aesthetic impacts.

It is also worth noting that while policy is, correctly, to minimise infra-structural development in the wilderness areas, where facilities are considered necessary and developed within established Limits of Acceptable Change, they can play a positive role by:

- 'Hardening' highly-visited sites to reduce per capita tourist impacts (see section 2.1).
- Providing space for facilities that:
 - Contribute to conservation through inclusion of visitor education and interpretative facilities (see section 2.5).
 - Contribute to local economic development through the sale of locally-produced goods such as handicrafts, and promotion of services and activities available in the surrounding area.

Although infrastructure that is designed, developed and managed in a manner that is sensitive to the principles of ecotourism may entail some additional costs, the trend towards stricter environmental standards in national legislation, the prospect of ecotourism accreditation in Botswana, and a growing desire among international tourists for facilities that complement local landscape and architecture, suggest that it makes sense from a business as well as conservation perspective.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Use of natural resources by the tourism industry may interfere with local people's existing livelihood strategies.
- Use of fossil fuel can be damaging to the environment through global climate change, environmental contamination during extraction and transport energy expenditure.

- Prime ecotourism sites are often the most ecologically sensitive.
- Choice of construction materials can have an impact on the energy efficiency of buildings. In addition, procurement and transport of materials to site can have adverse environmental effects.
- Importing 'green' raw materials (e.g. wood from sustainably-managed forests) can incur additional expense for tourism operators.
- Sewage and refuse from tourism can result in microbial, chemical and aesthetic impacts on the surrounding environment.
- It is difficult for consumers to check for infrastructure sustainability, so monitoring of those that claim sustainability is needed.
- Limited infra-structural development in natural areas can – if carefully planned and sensitively designed – reduce environmental impact and increase visitor carrying capacity.

Actions

- Participate in the production and distribution of 'best practice' guidelines for the development of new – and the conversion of old – tourism infrastructure, addressing such things as minimal impact designs, waste management and energy conservation (national government, conservation NGOs).
- Encourage the use of local labour and – if sustainably harvested – local materials in the construction of tourism infrastructure (all levels of government).
- Participate in the development of a database of suppliers of tourism infrastructure-related goods and services available within Botswana and make available to all stakeholders (all levels of government).
- Promote the adoption of environmentally and culturally sensitive architectural styles as the basis for design of all (not only tourism-related) infrastructure in key tourism areas (all levels of government, commercial sector).
- Participate in the compilation of a database detailing suppliers of 'green' technologies and sustainably-harvested natural construction materials. Make available to all stakeholders (national government).
- Ensure that independent environmental and social impact assessments are conducted prior to construction in key tourism areas, and that any such developments are within established Limits of Acceptable Change (all levels of government). (See section 2.1).

- Investigate the feasibility of incorporating known conservation technologies into existing facilities (all levels of government, heritage site managers, commercial sector, community sector, BOTEK).
- Monitor and disseminate to stakeholders, international advances in sustainable design, construction materials and technologies with relevance to the tourism sector (national government).
- Monitor, on an on-going basis, the environmental impact of tourism facilities (all levels of government, commercial sector, heritage area managers).
- Monitor the effectiveness of tourism infrastructure in reducing visitor impacts, increasing carrying capacities, and influencing visitor behaviour (natural area managers, commercial sector).
- Ensure that all publicly-funded infrastructure developments in heritage areas adhere to ecotourism 'best practices' (all levels of government).
- Support the inclusion of adherence to infrastructure 'best practices', as an assessment criteria for ecotourism accreditation (national government).

2.7 INDUSTRY STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

A grading system for tourism accommodation facilities is being developed by DoT and the Botswana Bureau of Standards, but there are currently no plans to include sustainability, or indeed any of the 'principles' of ecotourism, in the assessment criteria.

OBJECTIVE 7

To promote consistently high ecotourism standards throughout the country's tourism industry in line with international target market expectations.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

1. Develop, and communicate to all stakeholders, ecotourism 'best practice' guidelines and standards.
2. Encourage and reward adherence to ecotourism 'best practice' by tourism enterprises in Botswana.

INTRODUCTION

Recreational experiences are difficult to evaluate prior to purchase and as a result word-of-mouth recommendation is particularly influential in tourists' choice of holiday destination. Visitor satisfaction is therefore vital to the continued economic sustainability of ecotourism operations.

Levels of visitor satisfaction can be attributed to the difference between anticipated benefits and actual benefits. It is essential that the actual benefits a tourist derives from his or her experience meets or exceeds the anticipated benefits. The most effective way of avoiding dissatisfied tourists is to ensure that their expectations are accurate, and it is here that the multiple interpretations of the term ecotourism pose difficulties.

The continued confusion over the definition of 'ecotourism' has led to a proliferation of products and activities that adopt the label for marketing purposes. Some of these adhere strictly to the principles of ecotourism set out in section 1.3.1, while the claims of others to sustainable management practices are tenuous at best.

Tourists from the primary international target markets are increasingly aware of this practice, which has come to be known as 'greenwash', and while the demand for true ecotourism experiences is growing, so too is consumer scepticism about unsubstantiated claims by operators of 'green' or 'eco' credentials.

There is a danger that operators who adopt the 'ecotourism' label but do not comply with ecotourism standards may, as a result of the additional costs which 'green' management often entails (see section 2.2), be able to undercut responsible operators who have adopted ecotourism 'best practices'. Negative feedback from unsatisfied clients may then deter potential future visitors to the site, to the detriment not only of the businesses concerned, but also those of responsible ecotourism operators.

Developing guidelines for ecotourism 'best practice' can help existing and prospective tourism enterprises meet the standards expected by international tourists, while establishing a system of accreditation will help to clearly identify and reward those that do.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- The term 'ecotourism' creates, among many tourists, an expectation of high standards of environmental management and cultural awareness.
- There is no effective grading system in Botswana that enables tourists to make informed decisions based on the environmental/social sustainability of tourism operations.
- There is little or no monitoring of the environmental management practices of tourism operators.
- The adoption of an ecotourism accreditation scheme is likely require financial input from subscribing tourism operations.
- The profusion of international environmental accreditation schemes (e.g. PATA's Green Leaf, WTTC's Green Globe, Europe's Blue Flag) in addition to the increasing number national systems (e.g. Costa Rica and Australia) can themselves be confusing for consumers.
- Some accreditation schemes (particularly those which lack an independent monitor/assessor) have been accused of 'greenwash': prematurely accrediting businesses, thereby enabling them to increase profits while continuing unsustainable management practices.
- There is likely to be a time-lag between the adoption of an accreditation scheme and realisation of its marketing benefits.

Objective 7.1: To develop, and communicate to all stakeholders, ecotourism best practice guidelines and standards.

Actions:

- Encourage a clear and consistent understanding of what is meant by ecotourism in Botswana, by publicising the 'principles' of ecotourism (see

section 1.2.2) in all tourism promotional materials (all levels of government, commercial sector).

- Develop and promote ecotourism:
 - Best practice guidelines.
 - Codes of conduct for each of the key sectors of the tourism industry, and all stakeholder groups (National government, natural resource managers, commercial sector, conservation / development NGOs, Bocobonet).
- Support the development of pilot projects to 'showcase' ecotourism best practices (National government, commercial sector, conservation and development NGOs).
- Undertake educational activities to raise awareness within the industry of ecotourism best practice – and the benefits of adhering to them (all levels of government, commercial sector, conservation/development NGOs).

Objective 7.2: To encourage and reward adherence to ecotourism best practices by tourism enterprises in Botswana.

The development of standards and guidelines of ecotourism 'best practice' is an essential first step, but one that must be supported by measures that encourage the industry to comply with them. While enforcement of regulations has an important role to play (see section 2.1), voluntary compliance, supported by government incentives, is the both the preferable and – given the difficulty of effectively 'policing' Botswana's vast natural areas – the pragmatic solution.

Establishing a system of ecotourism accreditation would, by providing accredited tourism businesses with a potentially significant marketing advantage, create a strong incentive for adherence to ecotourism standards. It would also:

- Reduce or reverse the financial handicap suffered by operators engaging in ecotourism 'best practices'.
- Provide an effective and ultimately self-financing means of industry regulation.
- Strengthen Botswana's international reputation as an ecotourism destination.
- Provide a 'yardstick' by which authorities and natural resource managers could monitor the activities of tourism enterprises.
- Help to raise levels of visitor satisfaction by providing tourists with the information that they require to make informed decisions.

Ultimately, the success of any system of ecotourism accreditation will depend on (1) its credibility with tourists, and (2) the support of the tourism industry itself (i.e. the willingness of operators to ascribe to the scheme).

The process of stakeholder consultation revealed almost universal, cross-sector support for the establishment of a system of ecotourism accreditation, although its precise shape would be dependent on the outcome of a review of systems already in operation around the globe, and extensive industry consultation.

Questions that would need to be addressed include:

- Should Botswana join an existing accreditation system, or develop one to fit its specific conditions and objectives?
- How would the different sizes and types of ecotourism businesses, and the varying conditions and facilities (e.g. recycling) of different regions, be catered for?
- How could a balance most effectively be achieved between the need to draw tourism businesses currently falling short of the specified standards into the system so that they commit to – and are rewarded for - improvements, and to avoid ‘accrediting’ unsustainable tourism enterprises: something of which existing systems such as Green Globe have been accused?

To help ensure its long-term success, the accreditation system adopted would need to become self-financing. However the time-lag that is likely to occur between the system’s initiation and the realisation of significant marketing benefits for participating businesses, means that initial up-take may be slow. The government is therefore likely be required to support management costs in the short-term until the system attains ‘critical mass’ and tourism enterprises calculate that the costs of participation are outweighed by those of remaining unaccredited.

The government can, however, take steps to accelerate the transitional phase by:

- Providing additional incentives for accredited businesses, over and above those that it is anticipated will accrue from accreditation itself.
- Committing resources to promoting the system both within Botswana and internationally, to hasten its establishment as a credible measure of ecotourism standards.

Actions

- Investigate – in consultation with the tourism industry – the options for developing a national ecotourism accreditation scheme based on the ‘principles’ of ecotourism outlined in section 1.2.2 (national government).
- Investigate additional incentives (tax relief, preferential treatment in promotional materials etc) to encourage tourism enterprises to participate in the ecotourism accreditation system (national government).
- Vigorously promote the ecotourism accreditation system and the key ‘principles’ upon which it is based, in all tourism promotional activities and materials (all levels of government, commercial sector).

2.8 CO-ORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

OBJECTIVE 8

To facilitate the development of Botswana's ecotourism industry through improved inter- and intra-sectoral co-ordination and collaboration.

Guided by this objective, actions are proposed to:

1. Clarify and co-ordinate the tourism-related roles of government departments.
2. Ensure that non-tourism development activities do not undermine ecotourism development strategies.
3. Promote and facilitate the development of mutually-beneficial relationships within and between stakeholder groups.

INTRODUCTION

The successful planning, development and management of Botswana's ecotourism industry depends on the contribution and activities of a wide range of stakeholders from the public, private, community and NGO sectors. While the process of consultation demonstrated near universal support for the objectives and 'principles' espoused in the NES, the lack of co-ordination between the various actors leads, at times, to unnecessary inefficiencies and conflicts of interest.

Promoting inter- and intra-sectoral communication, collaboration and co-ordination would do much to help:

- Reduce misunderstandings and conflicts between stakeholders.
- Minimise unnecessary duplication of efforts.
- Stakeholders identify suppliers of goods and services that they require, and products that complement their own.
- Botswana identify viable tourism-related business opportunities (and therefore reduce business failure rates).
- Foster mutually beneficial alliances.

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- There is insufficient communication and collaboration between government and the commercial sectors with regard to how less-developed or undeveloped areas of the country should be marketed.
- There is excessive fragmentation of tourism-related responsibilities within government.
- There is a lack of co-ordination between the different branches of (national and local) government with tourism development/management-related responsibilities.

- Considerable confusion exists among stakeholders (particularly new and prospective tourism operators) as to the respective roles and responsibilities of different government departments/agencies.
- Meeting all the regulatory and administrative requirements of establishing and managing an ecotourism operation constitutes a significant drain on time and resources for small businesses.
- Some government officers responsible for facilitating the entry of citizens into the industry are perceived to have the mentality of 'policemen' rather than civil servants, and as a result discourage prospective ecotourism entrepreneurs.
- Small businesses, which characterise the ecotourism industry in Botswana, are hampered by their inability to exploit economies of scale.

Objective 8.1: To clarify and co-ordinate the tourism-related roles of government departments.

The consultation process made clear the extent of the frustration and (for prospective new entrants into the industry) confusion felt by many stakeholders at what are widely regarded as excessively convoluted administrative requirements to which tourism enterprises are subject. Furthermore, prospective ecotourism businesses frequently face difficulties and delays in obtaining funds for tourism development and/or the requisite licences, permits, land allocation etc. Often when one or more of these are forthcoming, project development is delayed while awaiting another. By the time all have been granted, the business opportunity may have been missed.

Streamlining and clarifying administrative procedures would enable entrepreneurs to focus on establishing and developing successful ecotourism enterprises, while rationalising and clarifying the respective roles of government departments with responsibilities for tourism, and co-ordinating government tourism extension services (financial assistance, professional advice etc) would help to attract new citizen entrepreneurs into the industry.

Actions

- Consider establishing an inter-departmental working committee to facilitate the rationalisation / clarification of their respective ecotourism-related activities. Communicate the outcome to all stakeholders (national government).
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a 'one-stop-shop' for tourism extension services in each district (national government).

- Produce, and make readily available to all stakeholders, a simple checklist or 'toolkit' providing information about all (national and local) regulatory requirements for ecotourism operators, information about relevant policies and guidelines, how and where to apply for funding, relevant contact details etc. A 'toolkit' specific to community groups wishing to become involved in the industry should also be produced (national government, commercial sector).
- Provide 'customer service' training for all government staff responsible for assisting/advising existing and prospective tourism enterprises and communities interested in becoming involved in the industry, in addition to those who have direct contact with tourists (all levels of government).

Objective 8.2: To ensure that non-tourism activities do not undermine ecotourism development strategies.

The ecotourism industry is not immune from the activities of other stakeholders and government agencies. Extracting gravel from pans for road construction, the prisons department using wood for cooking, rubbish dumps visible from major roads, and the litter problem in Maun were all cited by stakeholders as examples of unsustainable practices that detract from the tourists' impression of Botswana and undermine its image as an ecotourism destination.

Consequently, those responsible for broader development and land use planning must be aware of the requirements of ecotourism development, and work to ensure that other activities in, or adjacent to, tourism areas do not undermine the heritage resources upon which the industry depends.

Actions

- Appoint an Environment (as distinct from Environmental Health) Officer to each district authority to oversee the activities of other departments so as to ensure that they are consistent with, rather than undermine ecotourism development activities (all levels of government).
- Ensure that all developments in key tourism areas (not only those related to the industry) remain within established Limits of Acceptable Change (see section 2.1). (All levels of government).
- Ensure that EIA's for all tourism in areas adjacent to tourism sites take cognisance of their impact on tourism (all levels of government).
- Participate in educational initiatives that:
 - Raise awareness among Botswana about the adverse effect that inappropriate behaviour can have on ecotourism resources and the industry that depends on them (All levels of government, conservation NGOs).
 - Contribute to cross-sectoral understanding by raising awareness among stakeholders of the needs and aspirations of other stakeholder groups (all levels of government, NGOs, commercial sector).

- Educate those responsible for the development of National and District Development Plans about the requirements and potential benefits of ecotourism development (all levels of government).
- Incorporate actions identified in the National Ecotourism Strategy into National and District Development Plans (all levels of government).

Objective 8.3: To promote and facilitate the development of mutually-beneficial relationships within and between ecotourism stakeholder groups.

Increasing collaboration both within and between stakeholder groups can help to significantly reduce the difficulties associated with small ecotourism business size (section 2.2), identify viable opportunities for community involvement (section 2.3) and develop tourism in new areas of the country (section 2.4).

Partnerships between the commercial tourism sector and communities have proved particularly problematical, often being undermined by misunderstandings and unrealistic expectations. Facilitating discussions between these and other stakeholders could do much to contribute to the development of mutually-beneficial strategic alliances, as would the presence of an independent organisation that understands both perspectives and can act as a suitable bridge between the two parties (the role played by NACOBTA in Namibia).

The effectiveness of protected area management can also benefit from co-operation between the key stakeholders whose activities effect it: tour operators and local communities. By involving them in the management decision-making process, natural area managers can help to ensure a co-ordinated resource management strategy, avoid resource use conflicts, and also benefit from their assistance in monitoring impacts and enforcing regulations.

Actions

- Investigate the feasibility of developing a new or existing independent organisation (e.g. Bocobonet) that can act as a bridge between the commercial sector and communities interested. (National government).
- Support the establishment of a CBNRM forum in each district to facilitate meetings and discussions between stakeholders interested in developing partnerships (all levels of government, commercial sector).
- Educate stakeholders about the advantages of collaborating with each other (all levels of government, commercial sector).
- Expand the use of Local Advisory Committees (LACOMs) to include commercial sector and local communities in the management decision-making process for protected areas (national government).

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The National Ecotourism Strategy has the potential to make a significant contribution to the conservation of Botswana's natural and cultural heritage and to the *sustainable* development of the country's tourism industry, to the benefit of both current and future generations of Botswana. The extent to which this potential is fulfilled will depend to a large extent on maintaining the support of all stakeholders, which in turn necessitates continued consultation and collaboration throughout the implementation process.

The national government inevitably has a pivotal role to play in promoting and sustaining support for the strategy, and in providing the driving force for its implementation. The government must be seen to be leading by example, and it is therefore recommended that the National Ecotourism Strategy be translated into action through the implementation of a National Ecotourism Programme.

3.2 NATIONAL ECOTOURISM PROGRAMME (NEP)

This section outlines a series of activities that it is recommended be regarded as priorities for action by the Government of Botswana, and which should form the core of the National Ecotourism Programme (NEP). The proposed NEP consists of four areas of activity:

- Programme A: Ecotourism Planning & Research
- Programme B: Ecotourism Standards & Accreditation
- Programme C: Ecotourism Enterprise Development
- Programme D: Ecotourism Training & Education

It is emphasised that this section is intended simply as a guide to indicate key activities in each programme. Detailed implementation plans centred on – but not necessarily limited to – the detailed recommended 'actions' in Section 2 of the strategy should be drawn up for each programme.

N.B. Activities have been divided into 'stages'. These are intended to indicate the recommended progression of actions within individual programmes and do not necessarily correspond to the equivalent stage in other programmes (i.e. it is possible that all three stages of activities within one programme could be implemented before stage 1 of another programme is complete).

Programme A: Ecotourism Planning & Research

In order to provide those responsible for the planning and management of tourism activities in Botswana with the information that they require to make informed decisions, this programme will support:

1. **Research** to identify:
 - The impacts (cause-effect relationship) of specific tourism activities on key species and habitat types.

- Indicators that can be used to measure environmental, host-social, cultural and visitor-social impacts of tourism and the sustainability of tourism activities.
- Effective measures that can be taken to avoid, control and alleviate tourism impacts.

The results of the research will be published and made freely available to all stakeholders.

2. The conduct of **baseline studies** and the establishment of **Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC)** for natural and cultural heritage areas.
3. **Ecotourism training and awareness activities** for those responsible for wider development planning, so as to ensure that all such planning – particularly in areas adjacent to tourism sites – is consistent with the ‘principles’ of ecotourism and does not inadvertently undermine the product (see Programme D).

Activity		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Research	Conduct research to identify the environmental, social, and cultural and environmental impacts of specific tourism activities.	■		
	Identify tourism impact indicators		■	
	Develop tourism impact monitoring protocols			■
Planning	Conduct ecological and cultural baseline studies	■		
	National Parks, Game Reserves and cultural heritage sites of national / international importance.		■	
	Other heritage areas		■	
	Set Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) for all other Heritage Areas		■	
	National Parks and Game Reserves and cultural heritage sites of national/international importance.		■	
	Other heritage areas			■

Summary of Programme A: Ecotourism Planning & Research

Programme B: Ecotourism Standards & Accreditation

Establishing and maintaining Botswana as a genuine and successful ecotourism destination, requires not only that the tourism industry is planned and managed in accordance with the highest ecotourism standards, but also that those standards have credibility with international tourists who are increasingly sceptical of such claims. To achieve these objectives, this programme will:

- Research and produce a series of '**Botswana Ecotourism Best Practice Guidelines / Manuals**' for existing and prospective tourism operators, to cover all aspects of ecotourism planning and development (visitor impact management, energy conservation, product purchase, waste management etc)
- Investigate – *in consultation with the tourism industry* – the options for developing a national **ecotourism accreditation** scheme based on the 'principles' of ecotourism outlined in section 1.2.2.
- Support the establishment of two **pilot projects** to 'show-case' all aspects of ecotourism best practice by being planned, developed and managed in accordance to the established guidelines and accreditation criteria.

It is recommended that the pilot projects be:

- Sited within the 'proposed pilot areas' identified as having high potential in the tourism inventory (specific location to be determined by site inspections, planning regulations and feasibility studies).
- Of contrasting character (one community-based ecotourism enterprise and one protected area visitor centre are recommended) in order to illustrate that *all* tourism-related activities focussing on Botswana's natural and/or cultural heritage are potentially ecotourism activities (i.e. it is the planning and management practices rather than type of product that is the determining factor).

N.B. The CBE pilot project must act as a showcase not simply for 'eco' practices, but also for successful business planning and management. Consequently, the exact nature of the development, the product/service to be provided and the site must be determined by pragmatic market analysis and independent business feasibility study.

Activity		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Develop ecotourism best practice guidelines / manuals		■		
Ecotourism Accreditation System	Feasibility study	■		
	Implementation (if existing international system recommended)		■	
	Development (if Botswana-specific system is recommended)		■	
	Implementation (if Botswana-specific system is recommended)			■
Pilot projects	Feasibility assessments	■		
	Planning		■	
	Implementation			■

Summary of Programme B: Ecotourism Standards & Accreditation

Programme C: Ecotourism Enterprise Development

In order to increase meaningful citizen involvement in the tourism industry and to facilitate the development of successful ecotourism enterprises – particularly those owned and managed by Botswana – this programme will:

- Conduct ecotourism **market research** on an ongoing, periodic basis to establish visitor profiles and identify products for which there is a demand. *Particular focus will be placed on the size and nature of the market for community-based ecotourism.* The results of the research will be made freely available to all stakeholders.
- Develop district tourism offices into comprehensive **'one-stop-shop' tourism information and advisory centres.** (Appropriate training will be provided for DoT extension staff).

- Develop an **ecotourism enterprise development and management manual**, to be used in conjunction with the training course (see below), that clearly sets out the legal requirements of establishing a tourism business, sources of funding and application procedures, necessary skills and how to develop them, product packaging, useful contacts etc.
- Organise, in each district, regular **ecotourism enterprise development and management training courses**.
- Compile, and periodically up-date, a **database of businesses providing tourism-related goods and services** in Botswana.
- Facilitate the development of community-based ecotourism product networks and collaborative marketing through the establishment of a **Central Reservation System for CBE enterprises**, linked to the Botswana Tourism web-site and other specialist CBE enterprise promotion web-sites.
- Support the promotion of CBE enterprises at **special interest international travel and tourism trade fairs**.
- Produce a high quality **ecotourism product catalogue** highlighting new ecotourism products and circuits.

Activity	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Conduct CBE market research.	■		
Produce ecotourism enterprise development manual.	■		
Conduct ecotourism enterprise development training.		■	
Establish 'one-stop-shop' tourism information and advisory centres.			■
Compile database of businesses providing tourism goods and services in Botswana.	■		
Establish Central Reservation System for CBE enterprises.		■	
Produce ecotourism product catalogue.			■
Promote CBE enterprise network at specialist international trade travel and tourism trade fairs.			■

Summary of Programme C: Ecotourism Enterprise Development

Programme D: Ecotourism Training & Education

It is essential that implementation of the National Ecotourism Programme is supported by a comprehensive and on-going programme of ecotourism training, education and awareness-raising activities.

Educational activities should be audience-specific. Important target groups include:

- Government (particularly DoT and DWNP) employees.
- National and district development planners.
- Rural communities
- Individual citizens
- Visitors / tourists
- The tourism industry.

This programme will:

- Conduct ecotourism **training and awareness seminars** for DoT, DWNP and other government employees whose activities impact on ecotourists and / or ecotourism resources.
- Produce ecotourism **information resources for the media**.
- Expand ecotourism awareness **training for school teachers** and **incorporate ecotourism education into mainstream school curricula**.
- Produce **visitor guidelines for environmentally and culturally sensitive behaviour**.
- Establish comprehensive **Visitor Education Centres** at the main entrances of high profile natural and cultural heritage tourism sites. As well as providing information about the heritage area concerned, the Centres will also act as promotional 'hubs': raising awareness of / promoting other ecotourism-related goods and services available in the region.

N.B. It is vital that the current widespread confusion about what is meant by 'ecotourism' in Botswana (which exists even within the Department of Tourism) is addressed, and that a common understanding of the concept is developed. Consequently, although education and awareness activities must be shaped to address the needs and concerns of specific target audiences, all must be based on – and include a clear explanation of – the 'principles' of ecotourism outlined in section 1.2.2. All government sponsored ecotourism education and awareness training activities and materials must therefore be centrally co-ordinated and vetted to ensure consistency of message.

Activity	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Conduct GoB staff ecotourism training & awareness seminars.	●		
Produce ecotourism information resources for the media.	●		
Conduct ecotourism training for teachers.	●		
Produce visitor guidelines for environmentally and culturally-sensitive behaviour.	●		
Establish Visitor Education Centres.		●	

Summary of Programme D: Ecotourism Training & Education

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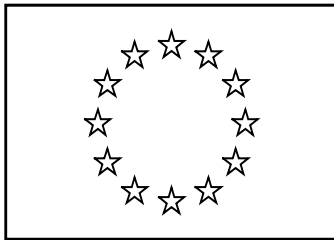
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