



Greetings and Welcome

Warm greetings from all of us at the African Safari Lodge Foundation. 2010 is now in full swing and it promises to be a busy year indeed. Along with the rest of the African continent, we look forward to the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ and the exposure that South Africa – and southern Africa – will receive because of the event. We can only hope that all the hype around this tournament will mean expanded tourism arrivals for many years to come.

In this issue we focus on our various projects in Mozambique. We highlight the successes and we take a look at valuable lessons learnt along the way. As usual, any input you would like to send to us is most welcome. Please send your comments to Sandra Mombelli at sandra@asl-foundation.org



*Photo
courtesy of
Technoserve*

The ASLF Rural Development Programme in Mozambique

The ASLF's involvement in Mozambique dates back to late 2005.

According to Peter John Massyn, CEO of the ASLF, Mozambique has huge untapped tourism potential,

much of which is on communal land. And the country has passed legislation allowing local communities to secure formal rights to their ancestral land. He says, 'Mozambique also has an extensive

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network of parks that were once rich in wildlife and regarded as some of the top tourism destinations in Africa. But decades of war decimated the wildlife and left the infrastructure in ruins. Since the end of the armed conflict, the government has been working with civil society and international donors to rehabilitate and – more recently – commercialize many of its parks. We thought that these elements – untapped potential on communal land, active park rehabilitation and a reformist government – created a promising environment to advance the ASLF's agenda'.

Massyn says that the ASLF were also fortunate to find a partner in Technoserve 'who has a strong organization in Mozambique and who shares our vision of building a more inclusive tourism economy through a

rights-based approach to community involvement'.

The Ford Foundation became the primary backer of the programme in Mozambique. Over the years - the ASLF also forged strong bonds with government as well as the private sector. The program has worked with Guludo Beach Lodge and Ibo Island Safaris in Cabo Delgado, Nkwichi Lodge in the Manda Wilderness of Niassa Province and Covane Community Lodge in Gaza. In future, the Foundation is looking to Mount Gorongosa, Ilha de Mozambique and Ponta Chemucane in the Maputo Elephant Reserve. At the same time we – together with our partners – are actively involved in advocacy designed to influence government policy and practice in the field of conservation and nature-based tourism.

The ASL Programme in Mozambique's activities

The ASLF in Mozambique works not only with companies who already have concessions and want to build meaningful local partnerships but also directly with communities who have acquired land and tourism rights and want to develop viable businesses.

The ASLF has provided wide-ranging assistance to its partners including socio-economic research to better understand the community dynamics around private sector-led lodges; helping to formalise cooperation arrangements between management and local communities; setting up strong local organisations to partner the private sector and brokering business deals between communities and private firms.

The ASL programme in Mozambique also helps to build business linkages between local suppliers and lodges and to implement skills development programmes for community residents. We also provide advice regarding responsible tourism accreditation and, on occasion, we spearhead media publicity for our projects to help build visibility in the industry.

Community-led initiatives

The ASL programme in Mozambique facilitates partnerships between communities, private business and government. One of our core activities is the training of communities on how to run competitive (and transparent) bids for attracting investment and finding private partners as well as helping community members to participate actively and constructively as partners in new businesses they set up with the private sector.

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*Ibo Island –
courtesy of Ibo
Island Lodge*



ASLF and the impact on poverty

Peter John Massyn says, 'We impact at two levels, the one clearly measurable and the other more intangible. Our projects – Covane, Chemucane, Manda, Ilha and Gorongoza – are all aimed at establishing tourism businesses that are owned by local communities but operated with private partners. This gives previously marginal people ownership of a valuable asset, a stake in a viable business and an income stream that can help to build their communities. These projects also create jobs and small business opportunities for locals. Their impacts can be measured in hard currency and we do so by way of our monitoring programmes.

'But we also contribute by pioneering and advocating new approaches. We actively engage others – government, NGO partners and donors – to disseminate our learning and to advocate progressive reforms. So, for example, we are playing an active role in the development of Mozambique's new policy on concessions in protected areas by making submissions to government and by exposing the policy makers to South African and Namibian models'.

Mozambique's pilot lodges

The starting point for the ASLF presence in Mozambique was to establish workable models of community-private tourism partnerships through various pilot lodges and thereby impact on the lives of Mozambique's rural poor.

Ibo Island Safaris

Situated in Cabo Delgado, Ibo Island has been nominated for World Heritage status. There have been various initiatives to encourage tourism-related businesses on the island but few that have succeeded in building value for local residents.

The ASLF partnered with Ibo Island Safaris, a local lodge and tour operating company, and the Aga Khan Foundation to encourage the island's highly skilled silversmiths to create a range of goods for the international market. The project aided local entrepreneurs with business skills training and also assisted with the branding and

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marketing of Ibo silver. The works are being showcased at design fairs in South Africa and elsewhere, and the future looks promising. The Ibo product is gaining a worldwide reputation for quality and creativity, and various enterprises are now set to make their mark internationally.

Tourism, is of course a major draw-card to the area and the Ibo Island Lodge



Foundation aims to raise \$50,000 per year by 2015 to support the community in areas of education, entrepreneurship and enterprise. There has also been a move to develop guided routes to include the 'coffee experience' as well as the training of coffee producers in marketing, packaging and selling coffee to the outside world.

Paulo Mussanhane of Technoserve says the project faced numerous issues, 'The big challenge was to find out where and how the ASLF should intervene to maximise socio-economic benefits from tourism'. He says that many lessons were learnt along the way, 'We learnt that community involvement requires time and passion. We also realized that there needs to be lots of buy-in from different stakeholders and that you must have a clear intervention plan and follow up procedures in place.'

He also points out that there is a need

for the community to understand the critical function of quality and quantity in the supply chain in the tourism industry. 'In my opinion, this is key for long-term sustainability when building local linkages'.

He said there was some real progress made due to the ASLF's involvement, particularly with silver jewellery. 'The improvement in the quality of the silver pieces as a result of the linkage we established between the



*Ibo Silver:
Modern
Collection and
artisan at work
- courtesy of
©Ibo Silver*

silversmiths and Africa Nova (the raw material supplier) has been surprising. Africa Nova also committed itself to buy back 80% of the final product as long as the silversmiths were able to meet certain strict quality standards. We also assisted in putting together a tailor-made guiding manual for both the current staff and new employees. This has helped to provide a unified vision. The support of the project by Ibo Island Lodge has also been invaluable.'

Although the ASLF is no longer involved on a big scale with Ibo Island Safaris, Mussanhane says the Foundation still makes a contribution. 'We are still in touch, providing regular technical advice. This assists a business that provides direct employment to locals and increased income through local purchases and guest donations'.

For more information, visit:
www.iboisland.com and www.ibosilver.com

Nkwichi Lodge, Manda Wilderness Project

The Manda Wilderness Project is situated in the Lago District in Niassa Province, and is focussed around Nkwichi Lodge. Located on Lake Niassa, the area boasts significant international ecological importance. As one moves inland there is a pristine wilderness area with potential for game and wildlife tourism.

Nature tourism is a key attraction to the area, but limited resources, the remote location and the fact that the Manda Wilderness is still recovering from the ravages of armed conflict mean that creating a viable tourism operation in the area comes with major challenges.

The Manda Wilderness Project (MWP) was set up in 1998 by a group of six private individuals to introduce tourism as a force to stimulate conservation and community development. The vision is simple: 'To balance community development with conservation through the creation of a sustainable wilderness reserve.'

There are three main pillars in the Manda project: Nkwichi Lodge, the Manda Wilderness Community Trust (a UK-registered charity) and a community conservation area (CCA).

Nkwichi Lodge is a 14-bed luxury private eco-lodge that attracts mid to high-end international tourists. The main attractions include canoeing, bush walks and visits to the nearby community. The Manda Wilderness CCA protects some 120 000 hectares of nearby land. The CCA is working with 15 villages on projects to improve health, education and small business.

Although things have moved along slowly, significant progress has been made over the years. The Manda Wilderness Project has worked with a local NGO to educate the local communities about the potential of tourism, conservation and development and over 20 000 people have signed up to be part of the project. The Umoji Association



*Nkwichi Lodge
– courtesy of
Manda
Wilderness*

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was established to represent all 15 communities in the region and will eventually manage the conservation area.

The boundaries for the conservation area have been agreed upon by both community and government, and land titles have been obtained by the local communities. Natural resource committees have been established in each of the communities to begin to regulate land use with a particular emphasis on eradicating illegal hunting in the area.

The next stage is for the CCA to be legalised and commercialised – a management plan has been developed and is in the process of being formally accepted by the community and authorities. But it is imperative that more private investment is encouraged in the region to see real and sustainable growth.

Patrick Simkin at Manda Wilderness Project (co-founder, director and resident manager of Nkwichi Lodge) believes that the advent of the initiative has changed lives significantly. He says, 'Prior to the setting up of MWP, there were only very limited activities in the area and no real development projects. MWP has helped to put the area of Cobué on the map for the Government of Mozambique, resulting in improved communications and access (the road has recently been totally renovated). More importantly, each of the six communities now has title to their lands and therefore have the ability to control the future development within their areas'. The figures say it all – through employment and local purchases of building materials and food supplies, the MWP has financially benefited almost 50% of the people in the surrounding communities. Simkin says that when one looks at how far the community has come over the past ten years, these changes are vastly significant.

He says it hasn't been plain sailing and there have been many planning and development issues that needed attention. 'The main challenge is ensuring that Umoji can grow in capacity so that it can manage what activities take place in the area, and that they are done in the correct manner. In terms of needs, health and medical care are steadily improving, but there are limited employment opportunities in the area other than Nkwichi Lodge and government positions'.

The positive impacts of the tourism initiative are significant. Patrick says, 'Tourism-related projects in the area range from primary schools (ten to date), a maize mill, maternity clinic, agriculture project and bicycle loan schemes. These are carried out in partnership with the village committees and the Manda Wilderness Community Trust. However the biggest environmental impact out of all the community projects is the establishment of Natural Resource Management Committees (which control the resource use within their areas) and the establishment of the CCA.

He says that aside from the financial benefits arising from wages and local purchases, the largest social impact has been the establishment of the Umoji Association. 'The Chief and sub-Chief of each village, along with the President and Vice President of each elected village committee, represent their community in the General Assembly of the Umoji Association. This provides a platform for planned development in the area, and from where rights of the communities can be defended from exploitation and outside threats'.

He says, although its early days, Umoji are already playing a significant role. 'Umoji are still at an early stage, but to date they have been able to unite the 20,000 people in the area into one unified body. They have provided the legal under which the conservation area was registered'.

So what is the way ahead? Simkin says,

'The next big step is for the Management Plan to be approved by the Government of Mozambique, which will then allow Umoji to apply for a DUAT (right to use the land). Once this is achieved, investors can be attracted to the area to set up further tourism lodges and further businesses, ensuring sustainability of the whole project'.

Peter John Massyn has a long-term vision for the region. He says, Manda, like Covane, is in the first place about assisting local communities to acquire secure land rights – in this case to a huge tract of about 120,000ha. But it is also about assisting the local owners with the planning and development of their land in a way that is environmentally sustainable and of benefit to the poor. So, I suppose the long-term vision is for a model community-owned conservation area that generates good returns from a variety of sustainable businesses, including joint ventures with the private sector'.

For more information visit: www.mandawilderness.org

The Covane Community Lodge

The ASLF has been involved with Covane Community Lodge (now known as Covane Fishing and Safari Lodge) since 2005, and there is great excitement regarding developments and the impending relaunch in May 2010. This community-led initiative is located close to Massingir in Gaza Province on the outskirts of the Limpopo National Park. Owned by the Canhane community, the lodge was originally established with the support of Helvetas, a Swiss NGO, which has subsequently been taken over by Lupa, a Mozambique-based NGO.

Under new management and with additional financing, the Covane Fishing and Safari Lodge, is currently being transformed into a 3-4 star lodge through an innovative and transparent process between the Canhane community and private investors. The ASLF assisted the Canhane community to negotiate an operating and marketing contract with Transfrontier Parks Destinations.

The project secured a \$250,000 grant from the Ford Foundation, channeled through the ASLF. In addition to the FF funds, \$500,000 was secured from the World Bank-supported transfrontier conservation programme for the re-development of the lodge. The new lodge will be a US\$750 000 asset for the community creating 40 new jobs and generating approximately \$50,000 per year in direct income to the community.

2010 will see the renovation of buildings, training and recruitment of staff, and a brand new phase of marketing and promotion. In May 2010, the lodge will have a 'soft opening' with limited camping and water-based activities available. In March 2011 the new, revamped lodge should be fully operational.

Training at Covane Lodge

Paulo Pires, Director for Proserv Tourism Mozambique, is part of a team contracted by the ASLF to provide tourism and hospitality skills training to existing and new staff at Covane, and to build tourism awareness in the local community. He says, 'We also support the lodge management in setting service standards for the different departments, which we incorporate in our training.'

He says that training is an essential component to the success of Covane lodge.

'Building infrastructure alone will not attract guests and make the place a sustainable business. We need to build skills to ensure that the community is able to involve themselves in the running of the lodge and that as many people in the community as possible benefit from the business. The community also needs to understand what it takes to run a lodge like this and to attract guests.' He says that it is imperative that the community embrace their role in this ambitious project so that capacity can be built so that the community is eventually in a position take over the management of their lodge.

'We will be training around 100 people from the Community of Canhane and surrounding areas. This training component will contribute towards the improvement of economic conditions in the Massingir district'. Pires says that literacy problems present a real challenge. 'In September last year we conducted a needs analysis to help us determine the literacy levels. We are presently in the second phase, developing the training programmes. This will be followed in May by the first round of training for community leaders in tourism awareness as well as community leadership'.

He says that, resulting from a request by the stakeholders, Proserv will offer functional skills training beginning in May 2010 and continuing until the lodge opening in early 2011.

'We have also made provision for a coaching program that will involve monitoring of the service levels for the first six months after the opening of the lodge'.



Site inspection at Covane

Covane Fishing and Safari Lodge

Covane Fishing and Safari Lodge is set to become one of southern Africa's prime fishing destinations. Massingir Dam is fed by the Olifants River and forms the southern border of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. A wide variety of fish types are found here, including Tiger fish and other fresh water game species that offer the fishing enthusiast a superb outdoor opportunity. Visitors can also explore the spectacular Elefantes Gorge with its hippos and crocodiles and wide array of birdlife. The current accommodation consists of traditionally-built units with en-suite facilities, aimed at the adventure-traveller market. There are camping sites with shared ablutions and a restaurant serving traditional meals. During May 2010, two self-skippered Lightley's houseboats (sleeping 4 persons each) will be launched as well as two fishing boats and a 24-seater game viewing boat. Four star accommodation and top-notch restaurant facilities will be completed by March 2011.

Q&A with Glynn O' Leary

Glynn O Leary heads up Transfrontier Parks Destinations, the company that will be responsible for managing, marketing and operating Covane Fishing and Safari Lodge under a long-term contract with the Canhane Community.

QUESTION: *What do the upgrades/revamp of Covane Community Lodge entail?*

ANSWER: *Firstly, there has been a name change from Covane Community Lodge to Covane Fishing and Safari Lodge. Covane is the name of a former Chief of the Canhane Community – a man revered in these parts. The name change from 'Community' Lodge was agreed with the Community. They have agreed they want to see their lodge promoted as a good quality tourism destination and not just a community product that people visit because they feel sorry for the 'community'.*

QUESTION: *What can we expect when it comes to infrastructure changes?*

ANSWER: *We will add two four-sleeper houseboats (the same as Lightley's houseboats on the Knysna lagoon), as well as 12 x 2-bed chalets of a 3-4 star standard. We will also upgrade the existing bungalows and create new camping facilities with good ablutions (hot and cold water showers) and a new restaurant/dining area with a pool deck overlooking Massingir Dam.*

QUESTION: *What is the architectural language for this lodge?*

ANSWER: *'Shangaan Safari' - stone (gabion external and plastered internal), thatched (local reed) with canvas windows.*

QUESTION: *What kind of tourist will be attracted to Covane?*

ANSWER: *There is a wide range of activities on offer including game and bird viewing boat trips into the Lebombo Gorge; fishing (tiger, bream etc); guided canoeing trails; dhow sundowner cruises; visits to the local village; traditional dancing; and fishing excursions with community fishermen.*

QUESTION: *How are you combining bush and water experiences?*

ANSWER: *We will also combine Covane with our Machampane Wilderness Camp that is nearby in the Mozambican part of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. This will give guests the opportunity to combine a wildlife and bush experience with water based activities and cultural encounters.*

QUESTION: *Who is your target market?*

ANSWER: *Our target is the soft adventure market looking for comfort and quality but not 'bling'. Guests will come from both regional and international markets and we will also target particular segments such as birding enthusiasts, the fishing market, the overland market (both camping and lodge-to-lodge) and the self-drive FIT market. Covane will be presented as a 'key' location in terms of journey distances and times, and as a minimum one, but preferably two to three night, stop in anyone's 'Bush to Beach' itinerary.*

QUESTION: *What is Transfronter Parks Destinations vision for the lodge?*

ANSWER: *It's important for us is that anyone visiting the lodge should happily be able to compare it with any other 3-star destination in southern Africa. As important is that the experience and training gained by our staff should equip them to work in any other tourism facility in Southern Africa'.*

ASLF Current Projects and Priorities:

Outcomes of the Mozambique Strategic Planning Workshop

A strategic planning workshop was held from the 26th to 28th of January 2010 in the Madikwe Game Reserve to plan the way forward for the ASLF's various projects in Mozambique. The aim of the workshop was to reach consensus on focal areas and strategic objectives.

Representatives from the ASLF, Technoserve and the Carr Foundation attended and gave presentations and projections regarding various projects in Mozambique. Criteria for the selection of new projects were agreed and roles and responsibilities defined. A communications strategy was also lined up for the various initiatives.

Peter John Massyn says, 'We defined the roles of each partner organization, agreed on our selection criteria for projects and established joint working teams to implement our prioritized projects. Most important perhaps, was the agreement that all our projects must meet our "Big Five" selection criteria: they should have measurable and significant poverty impact; high policy impact; build local equity and asset ownership; be

economically, socially, environmentally and institutionally sustainable AND be scalable, i.e. have a real potential for replication at other sites'.

Pilot Projects – the way forward

The following projects were confirmed as part of the ASL Mozambique programme and will be implemented jointly by ASLF and Technoserve with local project-specific partners.

The Covane Model

It was decided at the workshop that the Covane lodge model will be used as a benchmark 'blueprint' for other pilot lodges in Mozambique. Massyn says, 'Covane is unique because it involves a local community who have used existing legislation to first secure their land and then use it to establish a viable tourism business in partnership with a private partner. This was done through the hard work of many partners including Helvetas, who assisted the community with the registration of their land. We believe Covane sets an important example for other communities who have valuable tourism land at their disposal'.

There will be ongoing publicity around the lodge in Mozambique and via the ASLF knowledge network.

Contract signing ceremony – Covane Lodge

On the 23rd of December 2009, there was a contract signing ceremony to commemorate the contract that allocates World Bank, Ford Foundation and the private sector funds for the re-development of Covane Lodge. The function was attended by Mozambique's Minister of Tourism, Mr Fernando Sumbana, community members, tourism officials, Park managers and representatives from LUPA, the private sector, ASLF and Technoserve. Speeches were given highlighting the history and progress of the lodge and a fishing boat was handed over to the community members. A message from Paula Nimpuno of the Ford Foundation summed up the event beautifully, "The Ford Foundation is proud to participate in this ground-breaking partnership that enables rural communities with the private sector operators in an affirmative and empowering manner – enabling Mozambique and its rural citizens to position themselves and take advantage of newer trends and alternative forms of tourism that can protect natural resources and stimulate local ownership and diversity while generating economic growth."

Maputo Special Reserve/ Ponta Chemucane

The Chemucane partnership with the Peace Parks Foundation was confirmed as one of the ASLF's future projects.

The Maputo Elephant Reserve has been targeted by the Government of Mozambique to attract high-quality tourism investment. The area has great potential to become a major tourist attraction – there is easy access from South Africa (just a 1,5 hour drive from Maputo) and offers exceptional beaches and coral reef diving. There is also potential for a combination of bush and beach experiences (with elephants roaming close to the lodge sites). Water activities such as sunset cruises, snorkeling, kayaking and diving with dolphins are all an option. With support of the IFC Anchor Investment Program, MITUR [Mozambique Ministry of Tourism] recently launched a tender for three coastal sites inside the Reserve, including Ponta Chemucane which has been awarded directly to the local community.

Massyn says the development of tourism in the Maputo Elephant Reserve will do much to uplift communities. 'The Reserve is one of Mozambique's prime undeveloped tourism assets. Three concessions along the seaboard are currently under negotiation through a process that places strong emphasis on local community benefit and participation. If successful, they will create more than 200 jobs and many downstream opportunities in one of the poorest districts of Mozambique'.



*Maputo
Special
Reserve*

The Vision for Chemucane

The vision for Chemucane is to create an exclusive, environmentally sensitive eco-tourism development based on community ownership of the tourism concession.

Massyn and the Mozambique ASL team are very excited about the prospects. He says, 'Chemucane is very exciting because it is the first of its kind in Mozambique. It involves the granting of a prime tourism concession in one of Mozambique's foremost parks directly to an association of local residents who will then develop a lodge together with a private partner, currently being identified through an IFC-assisted tender. The vision is for a model high value community-private partnership that shows the way for similar projects in other parks'.

Proposals have been sought from strong regional brands to develop and operate an eco-lodge with the local community holding head concession rights. MITUR is the concession

authority and the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) plays the role of 'community broker'.

There is already a full-time community development officer in place and the communities adjacent to Ponta Chemucane have formed a legal entity known as 'A Hi Zamani Chemucane' ('Lets go for it, Chemucane!'). The objective is for the community to enter into a partnership with a private partner with a view to developing up to sixty beds. 'We are nearing the end of a two-stage tender process. Requests for Proposals have

been issued to pre-qualified bidder for the development of the 850-hectare site. The model is similar to Covane with the community appointing a partner to build, operate and market the lodge. Grant and quasi-grant funds for this project are potentially available through the TFCA Unit/World Bank and the ASLF for the community. In addition to the Chemucane concession, a short-term community horse-trail concession in the north of the Reserve is also under negotiation. Here, the community will also enter into a partnership with a private operator.

The MER Community at a glance

According to the Maputo Elephant Reserve Census, there are nine communities (247 families or 1004 people) living inside the Reserve and its buffer zone. These communities live on subsistence agriculture, mainly maize, peanut, mandioca and sweet potato as well as fishing and the harvesting of forestry products and informal trade. The major hardship facing residents is lack of access to social services. There are two rudimentary primary schools and a mobile health brigade that visits the area once a month. Communities inside the Reserve have limited access to health centres, boreholes and schools (as no social infrastructure may be built inside the park boundaries). The development of tourism in the area promises opportunities to improve basic infrastructure, markets for the supply of products, and jobs for local people. All this will deliver tangible benefits from conservation and thereby increase community support for the conservation of this biodiversity hotspot.

ILHA DE MOÇAMBIQUE

Ilha de Mocambique lies off the coast of northern Mozambique between the Mozambican channel and Mossuril Bay. 'Ilha', as it is locally known, is a unique destination that combines cultural attractions with coastal lifestyles. A mix of African, Indian, Portuguese and Arabic traditions, the island is a cultural melting pot that was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1991. But many buildings that have both architectural and historic value are now in ruins, and there are fewer occasions to see traditional ceremonies and activities. According to the World Tourism Organisation, the demand for cultural tourism is growing by 15% per year, and places like Ilha offer a unique opportunity to take advantage of this growth.

There are however challenges to tourism development on Ilha: there is overpopulation in what is known as Macuti town where poverty is rife. There is also a lack of basic infrastructure and half the population is illiterate. Despite the challenges, Massyn says that it is essential to focus on rebuilding the island. He says, 'We have adopted Ilha as a pilot project based on the innovative work done there by Technoserve, our partner in Mozambique. It involves working with a major philanthropic donor who will fund the transfer and subsequent rehabilitation of about 100 historic buildings in this World Heritage Site to a community foundation. The idea is to use the renovated buildings for tourism in partnership with the private sector. It is a

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big project that also involves the development of social infrastructure and services at appropriate locations on Ilha and the adjacent mainland to ensure that the islanders are not displaced by tourism. Indeed, the whole point of the project is improve the quality of life for local residents while at the same time helping to conserve one of the world's great cultural gems'.

The Game Plan

The plan is for 100 historical buildings to be transferred to a community foundation by government. The Foundation will raise the money to rehabilitate these buildings and then establish private-public partnerships with tourism companies to operate them through management contracts. So-called "Makuti Houses",

built with local materials and owned by the local community, will also be renovated in order to create homestays. Individual loans will be made available to improve these community-owned houses and conserve the unique culture (the repayment of loans goes to Foundation). The aim is to also develop economic opportunities on the mainland to encourage some people to settle there. Technoserve is in the process of securing funding for the project. They will also project manage the improvements and provide support to the community. The ASLF will play an advisory role on the models and provide transaction advice where appropriate.

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Future partnership with Carr Foundation/Gorongosa National Park

The Carr Foundation (a U.S. not-for-profit organization), has teamed with the Government of Mozambique to restore the ecosystem of Gorongosa National Park and to develop an ecotourism industry that will benefit local communities* In January, 2008, the Foundation signed a 20-year contract with the Government to co-manage the 4,000 square kilometre Park, located at the southern end of the Great East African Rift Valley. During Mozambique's many years of civil conflict, wildlife numbers were drastically reduced and eco-systems felt the full brunt of the war. Since 2006, there has been a reintroduction of animals, park infrastructure is being rebuilt and anti-poaching team has been trained to eradicate poaching in the area. The Carr Foundation has been working together with government to improve the lives of people in the Park's surrounding lands by creating employment, funding schools and health clinics, and training local farmers in sustainable agriculture.

The Gorongosa Restoration Project

The Gorongosa Resoration Project, started in October 2004 under an MOU signed with Government, is currently underway and will be guided by a Park Management Plan jointly developed by staff, the government of Mozambique, and local communities. It will be regularly reviewed and adapted to changing conditions in the park.

At the recent ASLF workshop it was outlined that for the restoration project to be successful, the Park must financially support itself for the foreseeable future. The two main goals of the Gorongosa National Park restoration project are to conserve the Gorongosa ecosystem and to improve the lives of people in the Park's

Sustainable Development Zone (Buffer Zone). Both will ultimately depend on communities understanding their land rights and formally establishing them.

Massyn says, Our involvement is at an early stage. We have agreed in principle to work in partnership with the Carr Foundation and Technoserve to assist communities on Mount Gorongosa – which currently isn't part of the national park – with the incorporation of their land into the park and its tourism economy. This is an exciting project because it has the potential to build local ownership in one of Africa's conservation icons'.

Community Involvement

The Carr Foundation are helping communities in the Sustainable Development Zone (Buffer Zone) to define their boundaries. Once that is done, they can secure legal rights to land they have occupied for decades. They will also be able resolve boundary disputes with neighbours - including the Park - and sign legal agreements with organizations interested in using their natural resources. There is also a focus on teaching farmers conservation agriculture techniques that produce higher yields and healthier crops and have the lowest possible impact on the environment. A reforestation program in the Mountain of Gorongosa has been successfully implemented, where there was a lot of "buy in" from the local communities in the protection of the Mountain and its resources.

The development of Gorongosa National Park has created jobs which has helped some local families. To foster broader economic development it is planned to introduce a variety of tourism-based businesses, encourage entrepreneurship and empower people to operate their own businesses. As tourism grows there will be more need for service industries and community-run businesses, thus many people in the region will find a

greater variety of ways to earn a sustainable living.

Gorongosa National Park shares 16% percent of its revenue with neighbouring communities that support the Park's conservation objectives. Each participating community elects a committee of men and women who review project proposals submitted by community members. The committee funds projects that most benefit the community and have the fewest environmental impacts, e.g., a new school or a new well.

There is no doubt that the restoration and long-term sustainability of Gorongosa National Park depends on ecotourism.

Mount Gorongosa

Much of the ecotourism development is focused on Mount Gorongosa - a vital source of water for the Park and home to many rare birds and plants. The forests harbour an amazing diversity of plants and animals, including rare birds such as the Green-headed Oriole and the Moustached Warbler. However, slash and burn agriculture and charcoal production are creating barren patches across the

landscape of the mountain. Mount Gorongosa's 2000 inhabitants are struggling to find food, jobs, and places to live. Local communities sell charcoal and surplus crops at local markets to generate income, but the burning devastates the mountain. The statistics are frightening - a forest that was once untouched by humans may disappear by 2011.

The ultimate goal is to attract international support for restoring the mountain's endangered forests while providing environmentally-friendly jobs and other income to local communities. Technoserve has provided support in the establishment of a dry fruit factory that buys all of the fruit from the local communities. By the end of 2009 there were 82 families involved and their annualized revenue doubled from the existing US\$300 per year. Tourists who choose to hike the mountain are directly contributing to the ecotourism business and providing local people with an alternative to destructive slash and burn farming.

** Information source - Gorongosa website*

*For more on Gorongosa and
the Carr Foundation visit
www.gorongosa.net*



Mount Gorongosa

Newsflash: Landmark signing with Namibia's Ministry of Tourism and Environment

The African Safari Lodge Foundation (ASLF) is pleased to announce that Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) recently awarded tourism concessions on state land and in national parks to several conservancies and communities. This is a landmark event that will do much to change lives of the rural poor.

Peter John Massyn who heads up the ASLF says: 'the signing of these concessions is a triumph not only because they will boost tourism development and poverty alleviation in some southern Africa's poorest regions. Even more exciting is the fact that this is not a one-off. It marks the start of a whole new way of doing business. The Namibian government has now started systematically implementing its policy of granting communities concessions in the country's top tourism destinations'.

Concessions have been awarded to the Anabeb, Ehirovipuka, #Khoadi//Hôas and Omatendeka conservancies in Kunene Region and the Kyaramacan Association representing residents of Bwabwata National Park in Kavango Region. At the same event the MET approved the signing of an operating contract between the Gciriku community and Namibia Country Lodges for a development to start on a community tourism concession in Khaudum National Park.

Read the full story on: <http://www.asl-foundation.org/news.php?id=253&catid=>

Mozambique as a potential tourism hotspot

Massyn says that Mozambique is no doubt the next best thing in terms of hot new travel destinations. He says there is a lot of work to be done, but if government, communities, NGO's and the private sector get together to create this tourism hotspot, tourism will be the new gold. He quotes Mozambique's national tourism policy: 'Mozambique has the potential to become a world-class tourism destination for regional and international tourism. The possibility to combine one of the finest beach experiences in Africa with the cosmopolitan life of the country's cities, the excellent opportunities for eco-tourism offered by the diversity of flora and fauna and a rich history and culture offers an excellent base upon which to build a sustainable tourism destination.'

In conclusion, thanks to all of our colleagues who contributed to this news letter, and for those who wish to read up further on Mozambique, please see various links from the ASLF website – www.asl-foundation.org or if you wish to contact the ASL programme in Mozambique directly please contact:

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