



*Sustainable Tourism Network Southern Africa*  
*Reseau du Tourisme Durable dans l'Afrique Austral*  
*Rede do Turismo Sustentável da África Austral*

## **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM NETWORK SOUTHERN AFRICA**

### **Executive Summary**

**7 May 2009**

**Room 22, Chief Albert Luthuli Convention Centre**

**Durban, South Africa**

*This meeting was made possible by the generous support of the  
Southern Africa Trust (SAT)*



The second annual meeting of the Sustainable Tourism Network Southern Africa was organized by the Network Secretariat, Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA), and facilitated by Mr Saliem Fakir, Head of the Living Planet Unit, World Wide Fund for Nature - South Africa (WWF-SA). The meeting was attended by 34 individuals from 11 different SADC countries and regional representatives. Representatives from Rwanda and Kenya attended as observers. Attendees were from the private sector (20%), not-for profits organizations (44%) and from government or parastatal organizations (36%). The meeting was made possible by funding from the Southern Africa Trust (SAT).

The meeting objectives were:

1. To agree on the need to increase cooperation within SADC on the theme of sustainable tourism.
2. To reach consensus on the activities for the working group on Sustainable Tourism Certification for the next year.
3. To agree on the Network work plan for the coming year.

Ms Sonja Ranarivelo, Vice-President (Sustainable Tourism) of Go To Madagascar, opened the meeting with remarks about the political crisis in Madagascar, how it is affecting tourism, and how the crisis highlights the need for regional collaboration and a stronger focus on sustainable tourism development.

Ms Lisa Scriven, the Certification Manager at Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) - Network Secretariat, made the first presentation, *Sustainable Tourism Network Southern Africa - Network Developments: 2008 – 2009*. Ms Scriven gave a brief background of the Network and highlighted the Network's communication, developments and representation over the past year.

Ms Jennifer Seif, Executive Director of Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) - Network Secretariat, gave the second presentation on *Certification and Standards: Regional and International Developments*. This presentation summarized research completed during 2008-09 on standards/certification schemes in SADC focusing on challenges and opportunities in relation to a more integrated approach to sustainable tourism certification within SADC. The presentation also made reference to two ongoing international processes (the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria and the Sustainable Tourism Stewardship Council) and considered the implications of these for southern Africa.

The second presentation was followed by a general discussion in which questions were raised regarding the scope and inclusivity of the Network; the status of accreditation of sustainable tourism certificates in southern Africa; and the extent to which southern African stakeholders should lobby and/or engage in international processes.

The third presentation was a case study of eco awards Namibia by Mr Wolfgang Schenck, a consultant for Eco Awards Namibia. Mr Schenck provided background to the establishment of the programme, described its current operations and then discussed successes, challenges and lessons learned. There was another question and answer session following this presentation,

which featured questions about Eco Awards Namibia's verification procedures, public and private sector buy-in, financing and partnerships.

The second case study and fourth presentation of the meeting was from Ms Edith Alusa-Bosire, the Chief Executive Officer of Ecotourism Kenya. Ms. Alusa-Bosire provided background to the Eco Rating programme along with an overview of current operations, successes, challenges and lessons learned. Ecotourism Kenya's current expansion into Tanzania was also described. Ms Alusa-Bosire's presentation was followed by another brief question and answer session wherein delegates clarified certain issues regarding the structure of Ecotourism Kenya, the impacts of the Eco Rating programme and the financing of the programme.

Mr Stephen Ramalepa, the Quality Assurance Manager for the Botswana Tourism Board and Mr Innocent Magole, of the University of Botswana BIODIVERSITY Project co-presented a third case study on the development of Ecotourism Standards in Botswana. Mr Ramalepa gave a brief background to the initiative including the importance of ecotourism in Botswana; Mr. Magole then discussed the collaboration between the Botswana Tourism Board and the University of Botswana/BIODIVERSITY project. Mr. Ramalepa concluded with an overview of how the new ecotourism certification programme will work (levels, criteria, assessment) and highlighted the deliberate integration with the national quality assurance programme. The question and answer session demonstrated high levels of interest in the combining of star and "eco" grading, along with questions of clarification regarding fees, funding and the extent to which the compulsory nature of star grading is compatible with the proposed voluntary nature of ecotourism certification. Delegates agreed that this is a particularly interesting case that should be documented and studied further by stakeholders in SADC.

Mr Luis Sarmiento, the Senior Tourism Advisor for the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) in Mozambique, gave the penultimate presentation on the Way Forward for the Network, which reviewed the achievements of the Network since its inception, and gave an overview of what is planned for the next year and what will happen after 2010.

A plenary discussion session followed, highlighting the need to expand the Network and make it more active and dynamic and demonstrating consensus around the need for a more integrated approach to sustainable tourism development within SADC (and within Africa more widely). This integration will require more active participation by all Network members as well as by key role players, most notably RETOSA.

Mr Francis Mfunne, Executive Director of the Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa (RETOSA) gave the concluding remarks. He expressed gratitude for an informative and interesting meeting. Mr Mfunne acknowledged the need to address the potential negative environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism development in SADC.

The Facilitator provided the formal closure to the meeting and thanked all meeting participants for their attendance. Ms Seif formally thanked the Southern Africa Trust, whose generous support made possible the establishment of the Network as well as the day's meeting.