



**KAZA Stakeholder Workshop
Sustainable Standards & Itineraries for the Kavango
Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area
Report on Proceedings and Outcomes**

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe
September 9th- 10th, 2015

Executive Summary

For this two-day workshop key stakeholders from the international and local tourism industry, such as national tourism boards, conservation organizations, certification experts and the private tourism sector gathered to receive an update about the tourism-related progress, achievements, and planned activities of the KAZA TFCA. The initial information session on the first day of the workshop was followed by a second session, which specifically looked at the Futouris Sustainable Lodges project, the 2015/16 flagship project of the German sustainability initiative which aims at increasing the number of sustainable accommodation providers (“Sustainable Lodges”) in the KAZA area, whilst creating and implementing a practical standard for the integration of sustainable accommodation offers into the supply chains of Futouris member tour operators (TUI, Gebeco, Thomas Cook, etc.).

This kick-off workshop was intended as the foundation for the Sustainable Lodges project by Futouris. During the main workshop day, participants discussed and agreed upon which criteria (environmental, economical, socio-cultural and managerial) are required in order to determine whether a lodge operating in the KAZA area is regarded as sustainable or not. The results of a study by Futouris consultants which evaluated and compared different regional standards, highlighted the importance of considering KAZA TFCA specific goals for tourism in the areas of biodiversity conservation, economic development, local benefits, local participation, visitor experience and the KAZA brand, whilst taking into account Wildlife Dispersal Areas (WDAs). A set of tentative criteria for the project standard was suggested, together with a list of possible certification partners, such as ‘Ecotourism Botswana’, ‘EcoAwards Namibia’, ‘The Long Run’ and ‘Fair Trade Tourism’. It was emphasized that the goal of the Futouris Sustainable Lodges project was not to create a new standard, but to evaluate and use existing ones, ideally with the support of a local implementing organisation. A presentation by the Sustainable Tourism Certification Alliance Africa (STCAA) confirmed that standards for sustainable accommodation do not need to be newly developed as there are both international (Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria) and regional (STCAA) frameworks that can be applied, but cases may need to be specifically adapted to the KAZA context. The harmonised minimum criteria which have been introduced by the STCAA confirm the results of the first workshop session on lodge criteria. Sustainable and responsible management criteria are applied in a regional business context closely linked to the local community, by facilitating education and capacity building for stakeholders, and ensuring workplace health & safety, as well as employment equality. Combating child labour and exploitation is another crucial point with regard to ensuring social and economic benefits to the local community. Overall, the maximisation of positive impacts for the environment and local community can only be ensured by opting for a holistic business approach which links each operation to the big picture.

Futouris consultants presented the results of an analysis of the product portfolios of Futouris tour operator members and their current involvement and future plans of operating in the KAZA region. In working groups workshop attendees discussed key interest areas. The first group discussed possible new itineraries for the Futouris members (and beyond) taking into account Wildlife Dispersal Areas. The second group exchanged ideas on how to implement a “Sustainable Lodges” standard in Zimbabwe & Zambia. The third group dealt with practicalities for lodge owners who wish to become part of the Sustainable Lodges project. The fourth group explored ways of communicating and marketing the sustainable lodges and wider KAZA project to European markets, but also to stakeholders in the region. The workshop ended with the formulation of next steps for the recruitment of lodge owners for the project and product development for the tour operators.

List of Participants (in order of country of origin)

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Workshop Agenda

Wednesday 9 th September 2015 → Initiation of the Workshop: KAZA Update		
Timing	Agenda item	Presenter / Facilitator
14h00	Welcome & Introductions	KAZA - Morris Mtsambiwa
14h15	Purpose and background to the workshop	
14h30	Presentation & adoption of the agenda (9 th – 10 th)	
14h45	Brief Introduction / Update of KAZA	KAZA - Frederick Dipotso
15h00	<i>Tea break</i>	
15h30	Overview of KAZA tourism activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Development of a Communication Strategy ii. Development of Destination Branding iii. Feasibility Study of Financing Private Sector investments in eco-tourism lodges iv. Update of the KAZA TFCA Pilot Uni Visa v. Sustainable tourism accreditation project 	KAZA - Shareen Thude
16h30	Trans-boundary tourism development strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Tourism “grid” ii. Tourism in Wildlife Dispersal Areas 	WWF - Clive Poultney
16h45	Wrap up and closure	KAZA - Morris Mtsambiwa

Thursday 10 th September 2015 → Sustainable Tourism Workshop		
Timing	Agenda item	Presenter / Facilitator
08h30	Welcome & Introduction	ZTA, KAZA Secretariat, STCAA, Futouris consultants
08h45	“Sustainable Lodges” – Introduction to the Futouris project and preliminary results	Dr. Wolfgang Strasdas
09h15	What criteria should a “Sustainable Lodge” meet? Brainstorming of economic, environmental, socio-cultural and management/ verification-related criteria and presentation of results in plenary (tea break in-between)	Futouris consultants (Strasdas, Körner)
11h00	STCAA: Sustainable tourism standards in Southern Africa	Netsai Sibanda (STCAA), with Richard Malesu (Ecotourism Botswana)
12h30	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
13h30	Current itineraries and partner lodges of Futouris members in KAZA	Diana Körner
14h15	Discussion of further project implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Create new itineraries taking into account Wildlife Dispersal Areas ii. How to implement a “Sustainable Lodges” standard in Zimbabwe & Zambia iii. Practicalities: What do lodges have to do exactly to qualify for the project? iv. Communication & marketing of “Sustainable Lodges (tea break in-between)	1) Clive Poultney (WWF) & Dr. Strasdas 2) Netsai Sibanda 3) Manuel Bollmann (FTT) & Richard Malesu (Botswana Ecotourism) 4) Shareen Thude & Diana Körner
16h00	Wrap up and closure	
16h30	End of workshop	

Summary and outcomes of the working groups

Part I: What criteria should a “Sustainable Lodge” meet?

Workshop participants were divided into four mixed groups in which they were allocated to one of four discussion groups (environmental, economic, socio-cultural and managerial). In a world café format, participants exchanged their thoughts about the respective criteria areas in an open, creative, brainstorming format, noting their ideas on white papers. After about 30 minutes the group attendees rotated from their first criteria topic to a second, in which they were supposed to build upon the thoughts of the previous group and prioritize the different ideas based on their own experience (red dots, see annex 2).

1. Environmental criteria

Working group members agreed that businesses in the KAZA region needed to integrate their business in the existing ecology in a way that disturbances are kept to a minimum (e.g. stilted accommodation to protect habitat). However, it was also agreed upon that certification criteria are context specific, considering that some remote accommodation providers are unable to equip their businesses with certain technical environmental measurement devices, such as water meters. Calling on their experience, participants emphasized the need to strongly consider wildlife and human interactions within the criteria by rewarding a lodge’s specific wildlife protection efforts, e.g. an anti-poaching unit, and by setting clear protective criteria. Among all points discussed (see annex 2), the following criteria were ranked most crucial:

- Sustainable design & (corporate) guidelines for implementation
- Education & awareness raising for both, communities and among guests
- Consideration of human-wildlife conflict
- Business in-house environmental policy
- Wildlife protection aspects + carrying capacity in the wildlife environment
- Criteria design: do not prescribe quantitative emission/energy usage targets, but have policy & plan on business level on measuring impacts (electricity, water..) and management plan fund on reducing impacts

2. Economic criteria

Participants of the working group on economic criteria agreed on the importance to accredit the involvement of the accommodation provider in the local community and facilitate an enabling financial environment for the promotion of local synergies and employment creation. Also the role of the KAZA brand was scrutinized in order to create a sustainable financial model which is linked to the Sustainable Lodges criteria. The following points were highlighted at the end of the discussion:

- Establishment of economic standards (National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World as a vision)

- KAZA brand (national and regional standards): logo usage fee for KAZA brand, which is in turn tied to (Sustainable Lodges) compliance criteria (=certification) → would assure an income stream to the KAZA secretariat through equitable fee structure with common standard
- Social Responsibility Budget integrated into a lodge's business policy (commitment), which assures effective investment into (progressive) local community projects. Other aspects could be tax rebates via NGO/charitable donation (incentive), training funds, community/ livelihood support, infrastructure support, establish linked facilities (cultural village, campsite)
 - ⇒ entailing local employment
 - ⇒ local ownership
 - ⇒ Joint venture profit share
 - ⇒ local material use (construction, furniture, décor, produce)
 - ⇒ local capacity building (training fund)

3. Socio-cultural criteria

The discussion about socio-cultural criteria found that contextualising was one of the most important aspects in adapting criteria to a specific business situation in a local community. According to participants this could not be achieved through a tick box standard, but through an inclusive and collaborative approach, which emphasizes the importance of creating synergies to prevent poaching and feelings of exclusion in the local communities. Additionally the discussion found that guests also play a crucial role in the socio-cultural context, as many aspects directly translate to the service quality provided. These were the main considerations collected:

- Local procurement, under the consideration of local conditions: quality, quantity and reliability (ensure production capacities above subsistence level and take into account Human Wildlife Conflict)
- Ownership: Rights and access
- Partnerships: KAZA, private sector, NGOS and communities → show alternatives (“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”) and foster involvement of villagers in tourism planning: Feeling of ownership
- Education: understand benefits of changes/ employment, showing respect for local cultures, two-way education: lodge ↔ local community; social baseline studies of communities (internal and external learning to understand the context and community in which the business is operating)
- Poaching vs. local/cultural hunting: philanthropy vs. core business, establishment of anti-poaching units
- Cultural dances and traditional villages as staged authenticity? Let villagers decide
- Local employment and skill development

4. Management criteria

The discussion about managerial criteria concentrated on good governance aspects which need to be integrated into sustainability criteria. Many points confirmed and emphasized the discussions around environmental, economic and socio-cultural criteria.

- Environmental management only possible to the same degree that public services are available (especially for small enterprises)
- Staff retention:
 - ⇒ Good HR policy implemented (living wage leading to staff satisfaction/ guest services improved)
 - ⇒ Skills development
 - ⇒ Career development opportunities
 - ⇒ Inclusive management (draw ideas from + include lower level workers + middle managers)
 - ⇒ Staff recruitment policy (local preferential, job description, training staff, marginalised people)
- Education: awareness campaigns (local communities, staff, local authorities)
- Good governance – Transparency – linked to audit/verification
- Risk management: community relations, land tenure, corruption
- Business ethics issues (revenue streams, income leakage, legal compliance)

To summarize, there was a strong emphasis on the relationship between lodges and local communities on several levels (employment, procurement, ownership, environmental education, etc.). Even though some of the ideas mentioned and highlighted as important were not necessarily criteria for a sustainable accommodation standard, they pointed at what needs to be done in the larger context in which lodges operate in the KAZA area (such as tourism planning, anti-poaching activities, capacity building) and to which they are expected to contribute in apposite way. On the other hand, Sustainable Lodges expect to be rewarded for their commitment, e.g. by tax incentives.

Part II: Futouris Project and Implementation - Key Comments

The presentation (annex 1) about the Futouris members operating in KAZA presented three possible ways of integrating sustainable lodges into the product portfolios of the partner tour operators:

1. Existing itineraries:

- Non certified lodges: sensitize lodges which are already part of product portfolio/ convince of certification
- Certified lodges: Change individual certified lodges/ add to itineraries

2. Add-on lodges:

Admission of sustainable lodges as individual add-on option to a trip, with the possibility of a special label/ preferred placement in catalogue

3. FIT (Foreign independent traveller):

Possibility to choose sustainable lodges plus activities on a FIT basis (but booked through a tour operator)

Questions from participants

➤ **Which accommodation to be included? How can new ones enter the process?**

Certified lodges are given preference, but lodges which show a clear commitment (on the way to certification) could also be included. The main contact/liaison point in the future will be the incoming agencies of the tour operators (currently ATC & Thompsons). They are always open to receiving new lodge proposals and excursion information and can suggest/ include them in the planning processes according to the catalogue development cycle.

➤ **What is the mid- to long-term perspective of the project?**

The current Futouris flagship project should be seen as a facilitation and matchmaking process, which paves the way for long term cooperation between lodge owners and German tour operators.

➤ **How is the selection process? Whom to address?**

A pre-selection (based on compliance with sustainability criteria) will be made by the Futouris consultants. Then, typically, the incoming partners will gather all relevant additional information on existing and potentially new lodge partners and discuss this with the tour operators in Germany and jointly make a decision. Therefore the incoming agencies are the main focal points in the region in terms of match-making.

➤ **What kind of properties to be included – are community based projects of interest?**

The current product portfolios include a range of different accommodation types (mobile camps, lodges, hotels), in 3 to 5 * category. As accommodations in community-based projects typically are not categorised according to star-rating, these options would be more interesting for the excursion programmes offered by the lodges. Here the Futouris members place high value on authenticity and cultural experience and wish to further develop sustainable excursion programmes (e.g. through Thomas Cook's "Local Label" initiative).

Working Groups II

On the basis of the current round trips on offer in the KAZA region and with the three new options (itineraries, add-on lodges & FIT) in mind, participants entered the afternoon working group session. For this session participants could join one of four groups based on their area of interest and expertise, collecting their ideas on cards (see annex 3).

Communication & marketing of “Sustainable Lodges”

The idea of this working group was to focus on short-, medium- and long-term marketing and communication measures which need to be undertaken by KAZA stakeholders in the framework of the Futouris Sustainable Lodges project, but also beyond.

- Sell story – elaborate a story for the KAZA region
- Elevator pitch – how to present the benefits and USP of KAZA? Convey this message to all important stakeholders, so that they are all on the same line
- Info material about KAZA (for consistent communication)
- Use icons as “hooks” – KAZA is currently rather unknown to European travellers, therefore build on existing images and icons (Okavango Delta, Victoria Falls, etc.) to build a story
- What is KAZA? Purpose + concept to private sector and travellers → increase awareness
- Communicate achievements, not only visions
- Closer communication between KAZA office and tourism boards
- Develop clear brand identity, in line with vision
- Concrete actions:
 - ⇒ E-newsletter → tourism trade
 - ⇒ Info flyers for tourists attached to VISA
 - ⇒ Website and social media (comprehensive product data base, detailed touristic map)
- ITB
- Midterm: tourism offices in the countries
- Local trade information sessions

This workshop brainstormed communication and marketing ideas that were directed at a wider number of stakeholders such as national tourism boards and the KAZA Secretariat itself, thus providing a framework for the Futouris project, which will focus its communication activities on the ITB 2016.

Create new itineraries taking into account Wildlife Dispersal Areas (WDA)

Participants of this working group were to brainstorm new itinerary ideas based on the existing tourism routes and the WDAs. The discussion was very vivid, but participants expressed their concern about developing tourism routes along the WDAs, as the UNI VISA is still only in its first trial phase (Zimbabwe and Zambia) and right now tourists cannot travel easily and quickly across borders in the KAZA region. Combining WDAs and tourism routes was seen more as a USP for the future than for an immediate integration into the Sustainable Lodges project. Accredited routes (cross border routes which obtain a special tourism authorization for transboundary tours) were seen as a possible intermediate way to work with WDAs before the UNI VISA is active. These routes would then need the multi-governmental authorization to cross borders for tourism purposes.

Destination / Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Accredited WDA routes (cross border routes which obtain a special tourism authorization for transboundary tours) ➤ Create new products suited to WDA routes ➤ Communicate WDAs as future USP ➤ WDAs challenging for tourists crossing borders ➤ Use and improve existing products on route (??) (many current tours/round trips are already close to WDAs and other new areas of interest) ➤ Adding value to existing routes through culture and adventure ➤ Fly-in safaris for remote areas ➤ Khaudum route (remote nature reserve of high value at the west of the Caprivi)
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Border crossing (time, fees) needs to be facilitated ➤ Accredited routes (open borders) ➤ FIT (mobile facilities) (??) ➤ Khaudum as add-on or fly-in option, but costly
Responsibilities / Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create an enabling environment ➤ Governments, communities, conservancies, KAZA Secretariat, local representatives (of what?), IBM (?), local JMC (Joint Management Councils?) ➤ Private sector

Practicalities: What do lodges have to do exactly to qualify for the project?

Apart from formulating some concrete steps for lodge owners to take, this group came up with a series of valid questions and thoughts concerning certification in KAZA in the context of the Futouris project and beyond. Unfortunately, there was no time to discuss possible answers, so these questions should be noted and kept in mind for the further development of the project.

Important steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Define sustainability ➤ Players: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ National Governments ⇒ Global bodies (UN, GSTC) ⇒ Grassroot organisations/ NGOs ➤ Brand has to guarantee a minimum standard ➤ Steps towards sustainability certification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ First step: research existing certification criteria ⇒ Second step: start documenting in writing what is already being done
Considerations & Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How are checklists comparable between NAM+ BOT ➤ Minimum standard - benchmark ➤ ZIM & ZAM? ➤ FTT. Long Run, national standards ➤ How to compare businesses across sizes and segments? ➤ Angola: Standard? ➤ Recovered/ rehabilitated sites (e.g. former mines, war zones) ➤ Sustainable Lodges only in rural/natural areas?

Thoughts

- Who benefits?
- All products and markets? Or only Futouris companies and their existing products?
- You don't want TUI and Thomas Cook to lose faith in national brands
- KAZA brand accessible to all products and operators?
- KAZA should recognize existing credentials (certification & awards)
- National brands always have to override the KAZA brands
- Retain diplomatic relationships with the national DMOs and associations

How to implement a “Sustainable Lodges” standard in Zimbabwe & Zambia

Due to the fact that the Zambian representative had to leave early, the discussion focused mainly on the current situation in Zimbabwe. The following points were noted and are seen as a basis for further discussion between the Zimbabwean government, STCAA, the KAZA secretariat and Futouris partners.

- National standard to be developed
- Creating ownership an important motivation for a national process
- Hotels, restaurants, local tour operators to be covered
- Liaison with BOT and NAM
- Cost/ subsidies an issue to be pondered
- Victoria Falls as one of several “nodes” in Zimbabwe to develop and test the standard (some preparatory capacity building has taken place there)
- There is a cooperation with Green Tourism Scotland to develop the standard
- A **2-tiered approach** was considered for the integration of lodges from Zambia and Zimbabwe into the Futouris project.
 - ⇒ **prime products**: certified accommodation providers
 - ⇒ **emerging products/in transition**: currently not certified, but clearly visible efforts

Next Steps

Consultation with Futouris: Wolfgang Strasdas and Diana Körner will report and discuss next steps with Futouris members → September/ October 2015

Itinerary development: based on the Hannover and Vic Falls workshops, the Futouris consultants will initially develop potential itineraries in close cooperation with the WWF consultant Clive Poultney, incoming partners and tour operators → to be finalised by February 2016

ITB concept: an action plan will be set up by the Futouris consultants and put in place with concrete deadlines → by the end of October 2015

Imvelo Safaris, the Victoria Falls Hotel of Zimbabwe as well as Pangolin Photo Safaris (Botswana) expressed interest in becoming part of Sustainable Lodges project → list of possible lodges for the Futouris project will be circulated → October 2015

Two industry events in April 2016 were identified as possible stages for featuring/presenting the results of the Futouris project, strengthening relationships among stakeholders in the region and initiating the next stage of the project (handover after the official end of the Futouris project).

- WTM Cape Town (April 6-8, 2016)
- TIES conference in Kasane (April 2016), in cooperation with BTO

Annex

Annex 1: Presentations

Annex 2: Results of World Café on environmental, economic, socio-cultural and management criteria

Annex 3: Results of working group II