

**Development of a sustainable nature-based tourism action  
plan for the broader Agulhas Plain region.**

by

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**On behalf of  
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## **1. Introduction**

Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative (ABI) signed an agreement with SANParks to undertake a tourism study with two key components. First to assess the real economic value of tourism, and more specifically the environmental and conservation based tourism in the broader Agulhas Plain region. The second study is to compile a visitor's profile, which will focus on what motivates travellers to visit the region, examining the percentage of international as opposed to local visitors and their potential spending. Both these studies were assigned to University of Cape Town (Appendices 1 & 2).

The development of a responsible nature-based tourism strategy for the Agulhas Plain region is essential in order to raise the profile of the destination, as well as to associate it strongly with positive conservation of the environment, promote responsible business practice, and to create a unique marketing and development plan for the area. It should work towards creating a cohesive tourism agenda for the Southern Overberg with the core principles of responsible tourism that should underpin all stakeholder businesses in the region.

What is Responsible Tourism? According the new Responsible Tourism in Cape Town "A How-To Guide" (September 2011), a responsible tourism approach aims to achieve the triple-bottom line outcomes of sustainable development, i.e. economic growth, environmental integrity and social justice. Cape Town recognises seven priority areas within the three pillars of sustainability, i.e. environment (water, energy and solid waste, focussing on plastic water bottles), economic (local/preferential procurement and enterprise development), and social (skills and social development).

How is responsible tourism different from sustainable tourism? According to the World Tourism Organization sustainable tourism leads to the responsible management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems. When comparing these two definitions it is clear that the overlap is considerable and the terms can be used interchangeable.

### **1.1 Planned Study**

This study is focused on the development of a sustainable nature-based tourism action plan for the broader Agulhas Plain region. Firstly a background study was undertaken to identify similar responsible tourism strategies developed around the world, which can serve as case studies for the Agulhas Plain strategy.

The responsible nature-based tourism strategy requires a tourism impact analysis on biodiversity, communities, and the economy of the region. This requires an analysis of the types of tourism activities in the Agulhas Plain region and how eco-systems, cultural heritage, and biodiversity are used as a tourism resource. However within the project's time frame, a detailed tourism impact analysis was not possible and hence a SWOT analysis has been undertaken

The study has been focused on developing practical guidelines for the implementation of a Responsible Nature-Based Tourism Strategy for bringing successful economic, ecological, and social benefits to the broader Agulhas Plain region. The foundation of this strategy must rest firmly on the principles of sustainable development and provide a suitably cohesive approach to enable individual

tourism clusters in the region to establish user-friendly management guidelines that will help to create a sustainable destination and a positive regional identity. To this end, not only a practical visitor's responsible tourism guide has been produced, but also a responsible tourism toolkit that can be used by tourism related businesses. It is our primary goal is to motivate all tourism related businesses in the area to buy-in to the concept of responsible and ethical management and, as a direct result of this an increase in tourism market share and interest in the region. Tourism businesses must be trained to understand their own responsibility and commitment to conserving the intrinsic value of such a pristine natural environment.

The development of such a strategy will also give the Agulhas Plain region a leading role in the development of responsible nature-based tourism in South Africa and as a responsible tourism destination to the rest of the world.

## 1.2 Background Study

The initial findings from some background research on existing responsible tourism destination policies around the world have highlighted some interesting facts.

There are very few countries with a national sustainable / responsible tourism strategy and existing ones are policy based, lacking the practical support for individual businesses.

A good example is the New Zealand [Tourism Strategy 2015](#) with the [role Responsible Tourism](#) plays within this policy, in which they go as far as defining a specific role of [Eco-Tourism](#) in New Zealand. New Zealand is so far the only country that we have been able to identify that offers some training and support to ecotourism operators in the country through their [EcoTourism NZ](#) operation. EcoTourism NZ e.g. provides workshops, information on what an eco-tourist expects from a tourism product, and together with the Ministry for the Environment offer simple sustainability business models.

Other examples of national tourism policies with specific emphasis on creating a more sustainable tourism strategy include:

- Canada: [Building a National Tourism Strategy](#) that started with the Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism in 2002.
- Australia: [National Long-term Tourism Strategy](#)
- Caribbean: [Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy](#) and Plan of Action for the Caribbean
- Turkey: [Tourism Strategy](#) ensuring a sustainable and healthy development of the tourism sector

There are some more regional sustainable / responsible tourism strategies and the examples in Europe are often linked to National Parks and other protected areas and have mostly emerged as a result of the [European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas](#). Examples include:

- Peak District (UK): Tourism Forum's [Sustainable Tourism Strategy](#) created in March 2000 and has very clear objectives
- Brecon Beacons (UK): a rather lengthy [Sustainable Tourism Strategy](#) affair

Other interesting examples of regional statements for a more sustainable tourism future include:

- Kerala (India): [Responsible Tourism Declaration](#)

- City of Cape Town (RSA): of course our own [Responsible Tourism Policy](#) and action plan for Cape Town

One thing that we can learn from the above examples of responsible tourism declarations is that the focus of most of these documents is very policy based – lots of intentions, but what happens in practice is everybody's guess.

The development of a sustainable nature-based tourism action plan for the broader Agulhas Plain region should provide a practical guide for implementation of responsible tourism practices, so that the ABI strategy can be an implementation framework rather than a general policy document.

## 2.1 Summary of the University of Cape Town Studies

Two studies were conducted by Beatrice Conradie and Maria Garcia Corbeira from the Centre for Social Science Research at the University of Cape Town (UCT) during 2010 and 2011. The first study was to establish the role that nature-based tourism has to play as a vehicle for integrated biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic development in the Agulhas Plain area. Their second study was to investigate if the Agulhas Plain region has a tourist demand for responsible tourism. Data was collected primarily through visitor's questionnaires located at the various regional tourism bureaux, and both international and domestic tourists were interviewed.

The results of the studies set contextualized the future of the Agulhas Plain tourism strategy. A brief overview of the findings can be found below.

### **Study 1 - Nature-based tourism in the Agulhas Plain: A vehicle for integrated biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic development** (Appendix 1)

The UCT study revealed that tourism in the Agulhas Plain region could potentially generate between R64-123 million per annum (equivalent of R418-803/ha) based on the current levels of protection and conservation.

More than three quarters of the visitors interviewed prioritised nature and biodiversity as influential in their decision to visit the region. There are already a large number of managed and identified nature-based places of interest in the region.

The study indicates clearly that nature-based tourism, and its broader appeal is a valuable commodity.

### **Study 2 - Fynbos biodiversity less valuable than previously thought: An individual travel cost model of tourism value for the Agulhas Plain, CFR, with implications for valuing terrestrial biodiversity** (Appendix 2)

Two thirds of the interviewed visitors were domestic tourists and a large proportion of those people were from the Western Cape. One third of the interviewed visitors were international tourists, who spent only up to 2 days in the region.

The Top 10 of Agulhas Plain Tourist Attractions according to the interviewed visitors:

- 80% - visit museums or Lighthouse
- 71% - see animals, wildlife and birds
- 70% - rest & relaxation at the beach
- 50% - visited a winery or brewery
- 37% - buy firewood or roadside curios from locals
- 31% - mountain biking, horse riding or fishing
- 29% - visit community run facility or traditional fishermen
- 28% - stay in Nature Reserve accommodation
- 26% - stay in Fair Trade accommodation
- 25% - explore plant biodiversity
- 12% - shark-cage dive or kite-surf

When asked whether or not they had an interest in responsible tourism, an overwhelming 85% confirmed their interest and notion of the concept. When asked which statements describe responsible tourism best in their view, 66% selected eco-tourism and a further 63% sustainability and nature restoration. This together with their top choices of tourist attractions shows that nature-based tourism is high on the visitors' agenda.

Fifty five per cent of the visitors agreed with the statement 'my choice of holiday accommodation and facilities is driven by my preference for responsible tourism' and 89% also agreed with the statement 'my choices as a tourist can make a difference to the natural environment, which I visit'. Green washing is often mentioned as the flipside of responsible tourism however only 15% believe that responsible tourism is a marketing ploy (21 % remained neutral).

### **Preliminary conclusions**

For domestic visitors, a social and environmental responsibility suggests that an awareness raising campaign and an increase of responsible tourism offerings will influence their behaviour towards greater sustainability.

Can responsible tourism really unlock the potential for nature-based tourism revenue in Agulhas Plain? These studies show that demand-side evidence from both the domestic as well as the international markets exists. The success of responsible tourism in the specified area is down to practical supply-side factors, such as economics, implementation, capacity building, brand development, and marketing. The development of nature-based and responsible tourism is crucial, if the area is to encourage greater international market participation.

## 2. Tourism Impact / SWOT Analysis Agulhas Plain

### 2.1 Strengths

Tourism is recognized as one of the world's largest industries and continues to expand at a rapid rate (UNWTO 2006). Over 922 million people travelled in 2008 and it is estimated international tourism will increase to 1.1 billion by 2020 (UNWTO 2008). Tourism has been recognised for its potential for economic development, creating jobs and improving skills, making it an industry worthy of investment for many countries around the world. However, the benefits of tourism can be accompanied by negative environmental and social impacts unless properly managed. These include:

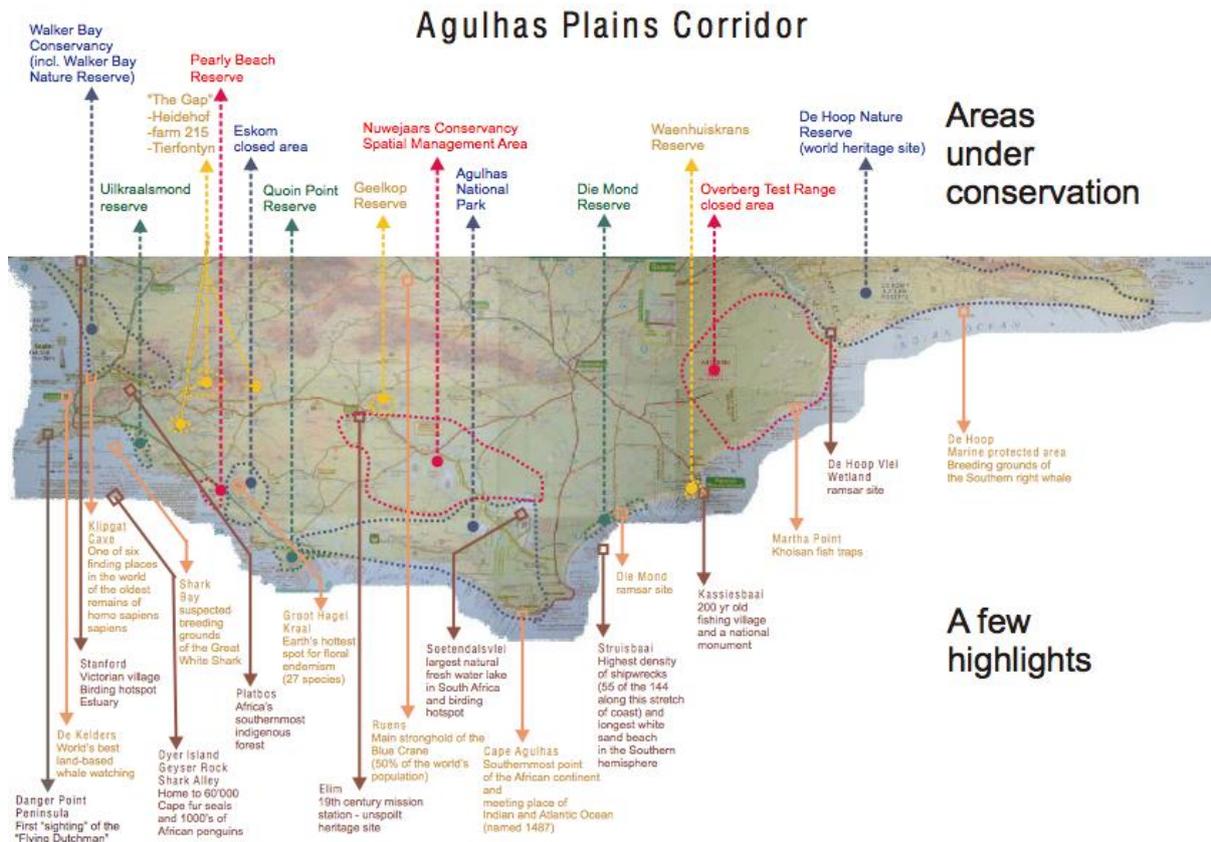
- revenue leakage from the community
- air, noise, and water pollution
- degradation and depletion of natural resources
- loss of biodiversity
- labour issues
- encroachment and overbuilding

(Theobald 1998; Bohdanowicz 2005; Dodds 2005; Graci 2009).

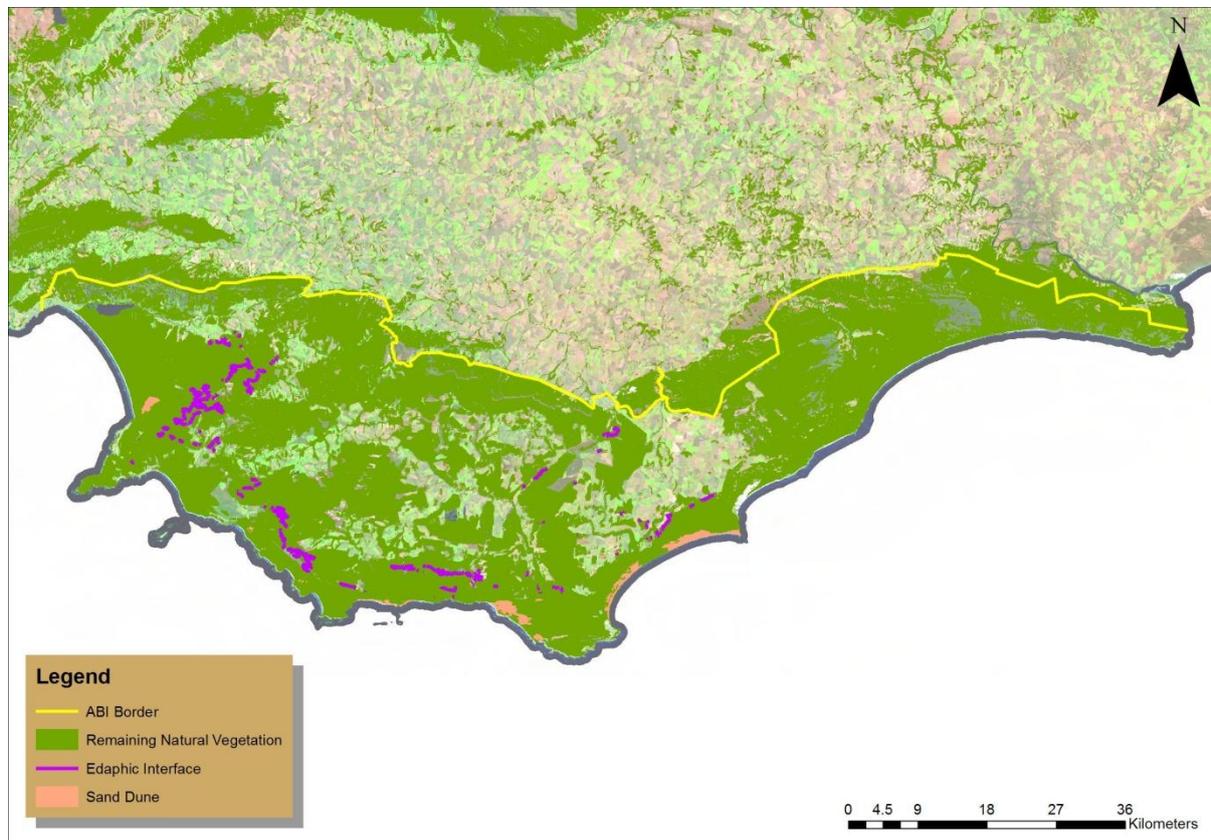
Agulhas Plain already has a strong and diverse nature-based and eco-tourism offering and can build its responsible tourism future on these solid foundations. It has two National Parks, Bontebok and Agulhas National Parks, several Cape Nature reserves, including De Hoop, Salmons Dam, and De Mond, and numerous other (private) reserves, e.g. Kogelberg Biosphere Reserve, Fernkloof Nature Reserve, Grootbos Nature Reserve, Vogelgat Private Nature reserve, and Fairhill Nature Reserve. The area offers many experiences of eco-tourism interest, including large area of Fynbos, Platbos (ancient indigenous forest), Marine Big 5 (whales, sharks, seals, penguins, dolphins), birds (particularly Blue crane, breeding colony of Cape vultures), and initiatives such as Flower Valley (sustainable flower farming). Its wine industry is mostly Biodiversity & Wine Initiative members and many are Integrity & Sustainability Certified. And some of the popular and iconic tourist attractions include Cape Agulhas & its Lighthouse, Arniston/Kassiesbaai, and De Kelders caves.

The southern Overberg's valuable pristine environments and many areas of nature conservation interest give it a significant status and importance. However, any new and existing tourism development must be undertaken with sensitivity to ensure the protection of its natural resources. This dovetails perfectly with the recent launch of the 'National Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism' by the national government, as all tourism businesses will be encouraged to take practical steps to become more responsible in the running of their day-to-day businesses. The guidelines in the minimum standards ask businesses to concentrate on seven areas for improvement (Appendix 3):

- Conservation of water resources
- Energy efficiency
- Integrated waste management
- Preferential procurement
- Enterprise development
- Skills development
- Social development



**Figure 1:** Areas of nature conservation interest in the Agulhas Plains Corridor



**Figure 2:** Pristine Environments

## **2.2 Weaknesses**

The Agulhas Plain area is currently visited by predominantly the domestic market and the international tourists often visit the region for just one or two days. An excellent example of day visitors are people staying in Cape Town, travelling into the region for the day to participate in shark cage diving or boat whale watching. Another example is those people who visit Cape Agulhas while travelling between Cape Town and the Garden Route, but not stopping overnight in the region. By not retaining these tourists, the region is obviously missing out on important tourism revenue. The region would benefit from a stronger collaborative marketing brand, encouraging longer stays.

Tourism is not currently measured separately in the calculation of regional GDP. Without accurate financial figures, it is difficult to estimate the overall monetary value of tourism to the area, though it will be possible to estimate certain sectors from recorded accommodation figures through related organisations. These could be established and used as benchmarks going forward.

During our site visits to Hermanus some government instability at municipal level was revealed. While unpacking the various challenges it was discovered that Hermanus tourism and the destination marketing organisation (DMO) assigned to support members, were supposed to operate as one dedicated promotional body. But in fact the DMO, known as Cape Whale Coast and the Hermanus tourism office were largely interpreted by tourism businesses as two totally separate entities. Each charged its own membership fee, and many businesses were members of one and not the other, meaning there was a lack of understanding and cohesion. Since then, the DMO has been dissolved and the Hermanus tourism department within the municipality is intending to re-evaluate the marketing needs of the destination as part of its work. The economic impact of tourism in Hermanus has historically been very positive, but many business owners are currently disillusioned. There is an over-supply of accommodation coupled with the constricted world economy, creating substantial competition within a small area.

Environmental issues are going to play a crucial management role in the future of the southern Overberg, and it makes good sense to introduce these dynamics into all communication with members. The provincial government has warned of the increasing cost of electricity, the threat of water scarcity in future, the need to manage waste with lack of landfill capacity, and the urgent need to reuse and recycle.

## **2.3 Opportunities**

Implementing responsible tourism best practice makes business sense, helping to reduce operating costs and to introduce business efficiencies. Furthermore, visitors are actively seeking for more responsible and meaningful experiences while on holiday and this market trend cannot be ignored. Aiming for best responsible tourism practice can give tourism businesses a definite competitive edge.

When presenting a 'winning formula' to business owners, a tourism strategy can be better understood, if there is a 'flagship' cluster that can represent a role model. The area is fortunate to have such an example in Gansbaai. The cluster has the biggest number of Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) accredited products in the country, as well as a number of successful sustainability initiatives, already proving that collaboration and partnerships work.

The tourism businesses involved include Farm 215, Grootbos Nature Reserve, Bodi-Khaya Retreat, Marine Dynamic Tours, Dyer Island Cruises, White Shark Projects and African Horse Company are all commercial tourist accommodation providers and activity operators. Lomond and Flower Valley respectively produce wine and fynbos - more directly related to agri-tourism. Various non-profit trusts and foundations, i.e. Dyer Island Conservation Trust, Klipgat Conservation Trust, Platbos Conservation Trust and Grootbos Foundation, are associated with and originated from these tourism businesses. Often income is derived from contributions by the parent companies, as well as funds raised from individuals, corporates, and government sources. The organisations are webbed together through a multitude of linkages and synergistic partnerships that are characteristic of the grouping. The lack of a formal structure is intentional – energy is focussed on individual contributions to Responsible Tourism that collectively have a region-wide reach, rather than bureaucratic top-down structures and procedures. This led to a joint application for Gansbaai in the Best Destination Category in the Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism Awards 2011 (Appendix 4).

Each business has selected easily accessible targets to aim towards improving its environmental impact, and initiatives undertaken and actions implemented by the companies include:

- Low energy light bulbs (where ambience in guest areas is not affected)
- Solar power and water heating
- Bio-degradable detergents or detergent replacements (e.g. bio-balls)
- Greywater systems and treatment of waste water through natural filtering processes (reed & sand beds) rather than chemical treatment
- Non-chemical treatment of pool water
- Separation of waste and recycling of glass, paper-products, plastic, and cans
- Composting of wet waste or recycling as poultry feed
- Local procurement of produce as far as possible, reducing food miles
- Sourcing Biodiversity in Wine wines and micro-brewed beer from the local area
- Organic food products as far as possible
- Replacement of single serve products, such as butter, jams, sugar, soaps, shampoos with large dispensers – reducing packaging waste

**Note:** *This list represents a range of actions implemented within the group however, not all participants necessarily implement all actions.*

Another highlight in the Agulhas Plain, where collaboration and responsible tourism is working well, is the Hemel en Aarde wine route. Most of the wine farms included in the portfolio are members of the Biodiversity in Wine Initiative (BWI) backed by WWF and are Integrity & Sustainability Certified. Those who are not, are encouraged to join because they can see there is a tangible benefit. A dedicated marketing representative is appointed to raise awareness of the route to the tourism industry.

The logic for implementing a responsible nature-based tourism strategy for the area is based not only on the findings of the survey, but also on the existing structures that synergistically offer a marketing advantage. Many are already in place, businesses have practical examples to learn from, the market is looking for authentic experiences that offer culture and heritage, and most importantly the area still offers good value for money experiences. It is a real advantage to have existing best practice examples to showcase, so that the 'domino effect' seen in Gansbaai can naturally extend to other areas.

It is human nature that people are resistant to change, so the sooner awareness raising and education can begin, the better. As 2011 is the international Year of Forests, and Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup>

November 2011 is International Responsible Tourism Day, and Gansbaai has been nominated for a 'Best Destination Award', we would suggest holding an initial event to launch the tourism development strategy to business owners in the area. The previous meeting in July announced the results of the UCT survey and publicised the new focus on developing a responsible tourism strategy. Now it is time for the first step.

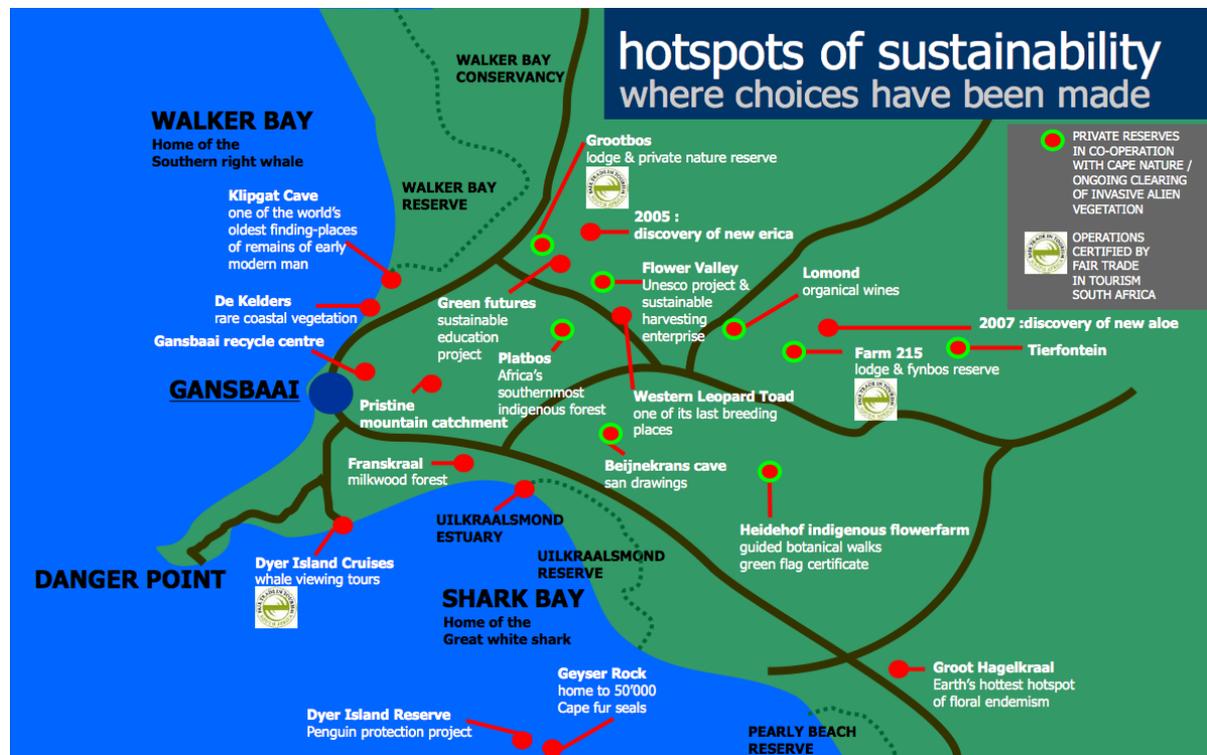


Figure 3: Walker Bay's Examples of Sustainable Choices

## 2.4 Threats

Tourism in the Western Cape, as well as across the country has been affected by the global economic downturn. This was already evident in 2010, and the larger ripple effects have impacted more severely in 2011, especially in satellite regions. Income from tourism for the Southern Overberg has been reduced, though there are some products bucking the trend. Numbers recorded in the shark cage diving industry continue to be steady. Though as a market sector, the day tour arrangements in place from Cape Town mean that it provides minimal economic benefit to the area.

The industry needs to be cautious not to take undue advantage of sporting and other events, such as the World Cup. As experience has shown, some accommodation providers inflate their prices artificially during special events for short-term gain, and do not reflect on the potential spin offs and long-term benefits. This has, to some extent, already affected South Africa's image as a value for money destination. It has created wariness amongst international tourists, and coupled with the recent strength of the Rand, these combined factors impacted negatively on forward bookings. Annual price increases also need to be evaluated realistically in order to ensure that the destination remains a competitive player in the global travel industry.

That is not to say that the Southern Overberg cannot create events of its own to attract more visitors. For example the economic value of developing themed events has been shown to

contribute extremely positively raising awareness of an area and a brand. One such example is the Robertson Wacky Wine Weekend. As long as the packages offer good value.

Evidence indicates that South Africa as a destination is beginning to recover, but visitor profiles are changing. Businesses need to adapt to these changes quickly, including recognising the role that responsible tourism now plays. Marketing the destination properly will be key - and an effective e-marketing platform must be considered.

By far the biggest concern is the protection of the area against urban encroachment and over development. Municipalities should consider with care developments in sensitive natural environments. Once environmental capital is compromised, it can never be replaced. Hermanus is a good example of a destination that has become over commercialised and densely built up. As a result negative environmental effects are being experienced. Though Hermanus can sell itself well enough on its image of being a quiet fishing village boasting some of the best land based whale watching in the world, many international tourists are disappointed when they arrive at the location to discover it is not as they had anticipated. If marketing efforts were in future to concentrate on the collective area, there is potential for the experience of the Southern Overberg to be a more inclusive one by showcasing towns further out, using this as an catalyst to match the most suitable place to the needs of the traveller.

The unique and unspoilt natural environments beyond Hermanus could likewise be negatively overshadowed if Hermanus as a destination does not begin to consider its own footprint. Business owners need to start becoming more responsible, especially in relation to future tourism related decision-making processes. Perhaps this may resolve with the new tourism structure now in place. The potential is there to create something truly unique, especially with the sound foundation already in place, if the required buy in and support from stakeholders materialises.

### **3. Agulhas Plain Responsible Tourism Studies**

The long awaited National Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism were finally launched in Knysna on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The standards bring together the guiding principles outlined in the 1996 Tourism White Paper and the subsequent 2002 Cape Town Declaration of managing tourism responsibly.

An extract from the draft document has been attached in Appendix 3, which is pertinent to the government's main focus areas in the Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism, as published in the final legislative document. This will provide municipalities with a comprehensive insight and a sense of direction in terms of how tourism, as a business model should be encouraged to manage itself responsibly.

The future is going to depend heavily on our ability to protect dwindling resources and at the same time our adaptability in still being able to offer an outstanding tourism product. It is in everyone's interest to address the issues of sustainability at a planning level and there is no longer a "business as usual"-option.

However, to ensure open engagement and a willingness to participate, any guidelines given must be easy to understand and the actions easy to implement. Still some companies will be more enthusiastic than others to become involved, primarily because they understand the core benefits of running a more responsible business, while others will need to be offered tangible bite-size targets that will not overwhelm those new to the concept.

The regional tourism offices should concentrate their initial effort on encouraging their members to align with the seven priority areas determined by the City of Cape Town and their Responsible Tourism Pilot Study. The idea of the pilot is to advance knowledge of responsible business practice and raise awareness of climate change mitigation needs in destinations by examining certain dynamics. The seven key components to be addressed are the same as identified in the National Minimum Standard for Responsible Tourism:

- Conservation of water resources
- Energy efficiency
- Integrated waste management
- Preferential procurement
- Enterprise development
- Skills development
- Social development

The municipalities in the designated areas can assist with the water, waste, and energy measurement, so that every tourism business has the opportunity to practice the essential three R's - reduce, reuse and recycle. It should be considered a priority to develop a user-friendly policy that members can promote as a tool to become more aware of their own business footprint. In addition, a responsible traveller policy should be produced for the regional tourism offices to distribute to both domestic and international visitors in the destinations. A visitor's responsible tourism guide is a useful tool to educate tourists on the principles of sustainability and to raise awareness on how they can make a difference. An informed visitor in turn becomes a catalyst for further responsible tourism development amongst the region's tourism businesses.

Part of the undertaking in the investigative phase of the project was to try and estimate how much knowledge of responsible tourism existed amongst businesses and tourism bureaus in the designated region. The research was conducted on two levels.

The first took the form of an electronic survey, which was distributed to members of the participating tourism regions (Section 3.1). The second part consists of intelligence gathered by direct contact with tourism offices (Section 3.2.4) and by interviewing a cross-section of tourism products in the region in order to gather a fair and representative pool of information (Section 3.2.1-3). Site visits and face-to-face interviews were conducted and form an integral part of the background material, providing a realistic overview of the current situation in terms of knowledge and awareness of responsible tourism amongst the tourism product providers.

### **3.1 Responsible Tourism Online Survey**

The responsible tourism questionnaire is based on the triple bottom line of environmental, economic, and social & cultural commitment. It was developed to provide a quick insight into the awareness of and commitment to the concept of responsible tourism and the sustainability of tourism related businesses in the Southern Overberg.

The survey was created and responses collected through Wufoo.com, an online form builder, facilitating quickly, easily, and inexpensively data collection. The questionnaire request was distributed by email, with a follow up reminder email sent one week later. It was sent to about 300 members of the Agulhas, Gansbaai, Bredasdorp, and Stanford tourism bureaus.

Surveys, such as this Responsible Tourism Assessment, have limitations and when interpreting and analysing the data, the following issues need to be taken into consideration.

1. The Hermanus area was not included, as the tourism bureau member list received did not include any contact details. After further requests, the Hermanus contact list has not been received to date.
2. This type of electronic bulk mail for online surveys generally has a lower response rate than e.g. for postal questionnaires. Out of the approximately 300 emails sent, 52 responses were received, a response rate of 17.3%, which is an average response rate for online surveys.
3. Tourism businesses with an interest in sustainability are more likely to respond to a responsible tourism survey compared to businesses with no interest and/or expertise in the subject, as the former understand the importance of the issues. This may have skewed the results slightly into a more positive response to environmental, economic, and social & cultural commitments of the tourism businesses in the Agulhas Plain region.
4. The responses to this survey may show response bias, a type of cognitive bias, which can affect the results of statistical surveys. The respondents may have answered questions in a way they think the questioner wants them to answer, rather than according to their true beliefs. This especially occurs if the respondent wishes to please the questioner by answering what appears to be the "morally right" answer. Hence the responses may not always reflect the full reality, creating a slight skewedness towards a more positive commitment to responsible tourism.
5. The survey was conducted in English only, hence a slight bias towards English-speaking business owners may have occurred.

Given these constraints of online surveys, the following summary gives a good indication of the state of responsible tourism and sustainability within the tourism industry in the Agulhas Plain region. From these results we can easily identify areas for future improvement.

Out of the 52 respondents, the breakdown of tourism businesses is as follows:

Accommodation provider	67.3%
Activity provider	11.5%
Restaurant	11.5%
Tour operator	3.9%
Other	5.8%

### 3.1.1 Environmental Results

The following statements relate to the environmental commitment and policy of the tourism businesses.

	Yes	No	Sometimes	N/A
We have a written environmental policy	32.7%	51.9%	5.8%	9.6%
We encourage our staff to follow our environmental policy	59.6%	13.5%	5.7%	21.2%
We encourage our guest to reuse their towels	61.5%	11.5%	5.8%	21.2%
We have water saving shower heads	26.9%	51.9%	1.9%	19.3%
We have toilets with low/high flush systems	50.0%	38.5%	3.8%	7.7%
We recycle our grey water	25.0%	59.6%	7.7%	7.7%
Our gardens are indigenous	76.9%	1.9%	7.7%	13.5%
We use energy saving light bulbs	86.5%	3.8%	3.8%	5.8%
Our geysers are on timers	36.5%	38.5%	5.8%	19.2%
We encourage our guests to switch off room lights	61.5%	9.6%	5.8%	23.1%
We have hot water solar panels	13.5%	76.9%	-	9.6%
We recycle all our glass and paper	69.2%	17.3%	7.7%	5.8%
We have a worm farm	17.3%	61.5%	-	21.2%
We compost our organic waste	48.1%	30.8%	5.8%	15.4%
We recycle all other material, e.g. plastic, metal, cartridges	55.8%	25.0%	13.5%	5.8%
We use environmentally friendly cleaning products	63.5%	17.3%	17.3%	1.9%
We use refillable guest toiletries	53.8%	21.2%	5.8%	19.2%
We support local conservation projects	82.7%	7.7%	9.6%	-
We grow fresh organic vegetables	28.8%	36.5%	11.5%	23.1%
Comments	<b>Several people said:</b> We switch the geysers off when there are no guests in			

	residence. We grow fresh organic herbs, but unfortunately vegetables don't grow well so close to the sea.
	<b>Southernmost B&amp;B:</b> We use LPG gas for our geysers, not electricity. Since we live only 30 m from the high water mark, together with salt-laden south-east winds, we are unable to grow our own vegetables. We buy organic food and products whenever we can and minimise on cleaning products. We cannot afford to install solar panels. We use a hot-box for some of our cooking. We recycle ALL paper, plastic, metal and glass. We use scrap paper for printing whenever possible. Our environmental policy is to treat lightly on our planet - we reuse, recycle, restore, recondition whenever possible.
	<b>Farm215:</b> We have no water saving shower heads, because we do not need to have them. Water is sourced from the farm itself and (after recycling) fed back into the stream in which the water was supposed to flow. Same reason why we do not have dual flush toilet systems. We do not have geysers on timers, since we do not need to have that, as our geysers are solar powered (with gas back-up).

### Summary of Environmental Commitment:

More than half of the responding tourism related businesses do **not** have a written environmental policy.

In a water poor area, such as the Overberg, more than 50% of the businesses do not have water saving shower heads, nearly 40% do not have toilets with low/high flush systems, and nearly 60% do not recycle their grey water.

In terms of energy saving measures, the respondents do slightly better with 86.5% using energy saving light bulbs and 61.5% encouraging guests to switch off room lights. However 36.5% do not have geysers on timers and hardly anybody uses renewable energy sources, such as solar energy.

Recycling is going in the right direction with nearly 70% of the businesses recycling all their glass and paper and 56% other material, such as plastics, metals, and cartridges.

Overall, the commitment to environmental issues is still limited, which shows by the lack of written environmental policies. People may underestimate the power of the written statement - the power of an intention is magnified when you write a statement to reflect your intention.

### 3.1.2 Economic Results

The following statements relate to the benefits & impacts of the tourism business on the local economy and community.

	Yes	No	Sometimes	N/A
We employ people from the local community	92.3%	1.9%	3.8%	1.9%
More than 50% of our permanent staff are from the local community	76.9%	7.7%	-	15.4%

We train all our staff continuously	76.9%	5.8%	1.9%	15.4%
We train previously disadvantaged people to fill more senior positions	44.2%	23.1%	7.7%	25%
We are BEE registered	19.2%	46.2%	-	34.6%
Our staff stay on average less than 1 year with us	11.5%	65.4%	3.8%	19.2%
We pay our staff statutory minimum wages	32.7%	48.1%	5.8%	13.5%
Our staff is paid well above statutory minimum wages	73.1%	7.7%	9.6%	9.6%
We have a tip box that is shared amongst ALL staff	34.6%	34.6%	-	30.8%
Our staff benefit economically through a profit sharing scheme	15.4%	51.9%	1.9%	30.8%
We source food & other produce from local suppliers (within 50 km radius)	69.2%	9.6%	9.6%	11.5%
We buy all our supplies from the cheapest sources	23.1%	51.9%	17.3%	7.7%
We use local services, e.g. builders, handymen, plumbers, where possible	96.2%	3.8%	-	-
We encourage our guests to buy local arts & crafts	92.3%	5.8%	1.9%	-
We advise our guests on available local activities	98.1%	1.9%	-	-
We encourage our guests to visit community projects	63.5%	25%	9.6%	1.9%
Comments	<p><b>Anonymous:</b> We are a very small family-run B&amp;B and do not have any permanently employed staff.</p> <p>As my unit is self-catering for two people only, I do not have staff. I am however active in the community.</p> <p><b>Platbos</b> attracts visitors to the area, so local tourist establishments benefit indirectly from the forest.</p> <p><b>Southernmost B&amp;B</b> is a small accommodation facility that caters 90% for foreign (mostly European) guests.</p>			

### Summary of Economic Commitment:

The vast majority of the tourism businesses (92.3%) employ people from the local community, but only 19.2% are BEE registered. Many of their staff are employed on a long-term basis (65% stay for more than a year) and are paid more than the statutory minimum wages (73.1%). How much more than the statutory minimum wages however was not established.

Most businesses invest in their staff through training (76.9%), but very few share business profits with their staff through e.g. profit sharing schemes (15.4%). Even tips are not always shared as standard amongst all staff. Only 34.6% of the businesses share tips amongst all staff.

Most tourism businesses are committed in terms of supporting the local community economically by buying produce locally within a 50 km radius (69.2%) and using local trade's people (96.2%). However for 23.1% of the businesses, price is still the most important factor in buying supplies.

### 3.1.3 Social & Cultural Results

The following statements relate to staff welfare and how the tourism businesses address social and cultural issues.

	Yes	No	Sometimes	N/A
Our staff are on proper contracts	73.1%	3.8%	5.8%	17.3%
Most of our staff are casual workers	19.2%	65.4%	3.8%	11.5%
Our staff are NOT paid when they are absent due to illness	-	86.5%	-	13.5%
We provide work clothes & uniforms	55.8%	19.2%	7.7%	17.3%
We provide meals for our staff	50%	30.8%	9.6%	9.6%
We provide HIV/AIDS awareness for our staff	48.1%	26.9%	9.6%	15.4%
Our staff have to make their own way into work	34.6%	48.1%	7.7%	9.6%
We facilitate education for staff's children	13.5%	50%	13.5%	23.1%
We encourage our staff to share their culture & traditions with our guests	30.8%	23.1%	17.3%	28.8%
We inform guests of local customs and appropriate behaviour within the local community	42.3%	26.9%	13.5%	17.3%
We are actively involved in the upliftment of our local community	61.5%	25%	9.6%	3.8%
We support a local school or sports club	55.8%	28.8%	9.6%	5.8%
Comments	<b>Anonymous:</b> We support a local feeding scheme and safe-house project. We support local environmental bodies and projects.			
	<b>Anonymous:</b> Being such a small accommodation provider, we have only one lady, who works one day a week, and a general worker, who works two days a week. Neither have any interface with the public.			
	<b>Anonymous:</b> My husband helped two of our staff to get their own houses and we are constantly training staff in various aspects of our small business. Most of our people have been with us for more than 10 years.			
	The owners and managers of <b>Southernmost B&amp;B</b> have been active for 20 years in the protection of our natural environment.			
	<b>Anonymous:</b> We are a self-catering lodge and have one cleaner, who we employ when guest require her service.			

	<b>Anonymous:</b> We supply trees to local schools. Local, disadvantaged schools are able to visit the forest free of charge.
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### **Summary of Social & Cultural Commitment:**

Three quarters of the tourism businesses have staff on proper contracts, but 19.2% still make use of casual workers. In terms of secondary staff benefits, about half of the businesses provide work clothes or uniforms (55.8%), meals (50%), and transportation into work (48.1%).

Still nearly a third of the tourism businesses do not provide HIV/AIDS awareness for their staff (26.9%) and 50% do not facilitate education for staff's children. Further community involvement has similar responses, with 25% **not** actively involved in any upliftment community project, **not** supporting a local school or sports club (28.8%), or not even informing guests of local customs and appropriate behaviour within the local community (26.9%).

## **3.2 Site Visits in the Agulhas Plain Region**

### **3.2.1 Responsible Tourism Flagship Examples**

#### **Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa**

Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) is a fair trade label for tourism products and is the only one of its kind in the world. It was established by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and given to South Africa as a legacy project of the World Summit for Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002. FTTSA encourages and publicises responsible business practice, respect for human rights, culture, and the environment. The international Fair Trade brand is recognised across the world, especially in Europe, and has increasingly influenced consumer purchasing decisions.

The FTTSA certification process evaluates the environmental, social, and economic impacts of tourism businesses. Companies can apply for FTTSA certification, if they can demonstrate a practical understanding of fair trade principles. Tourism businesses can apply online, but must then undergo a stringent evaluation process with an assessor, who spends time with the business, examining their commitment to fair wages and working conditions, fair operations, fair purchasing policies, and distribution of benefits.

The southern Overberg has a healthy cluster of FTTSA certified businesses within its boundary. It has one of the highest densities of FTTSA companies in the country and includes two accommodation providers (Grootbos and Farm 215), two shark cage diving operators (Marine Dynamics and White Shark Projects), and two boat whale watching operators (Dyer Island Cruises and Southern Right Charters). This shows that since the original Tourism Development Framework of 2004, positive changes are already evident of the destination working towards sustainability.

#### **Biodiversity & Wine Initiative**

In 2004, faced with just 4% of the Cape Floral Kingdom's unique renosterveld remaining and much of its lowland fynbos ecosystems under threat, the wine industry developed a conservation partnership with the Botanical Society of South Africa, Conservation International, and The Green Trust, which led to the establishment of the Biodiversity and Wine Initiative (BWI). Widely praised as a pioneering

partnership between the country's wine industry and conservation sector, its mandate is not only confined to protecting natural habitat. It also encourages wine producers to farm responsibly and express the advantages of the Cape's abundant diversity in their wines.

The core focus of BWI is to create a network of wine estates that are committed to sustainable farming methods with the goal to conserve natural areas of outstanding conservation value, and to promote sustainable agricultural practices, in order to maintain living and productive landscapes.

BWI enlists interested wine producers as Members or Champions and assists them in identifying relevant areas to be set aside for conservation and in developing farm specific management plans.

It is particularly encouraging to see the substantial number of wine farms in the southern Overberg already working with BWI. The commitment of the vintners along the recently re-launched Hermanus Wine Route and in the Elim area is working in harmony with nature. A large percentage of wineries in the region are now members of the BWI and have embraced the Integrated Production of Wine (IPW) process, earning their wines the unique Seal of Sustainability, a South African Wine and Spirit Board guarantee. As a result there is a good understanding amongst the wine farmers about the value of sustainability in terms of managing both its environment and its staff.

### **Award Recipients**

In addition to the FTSA certifications, a number of businesses in the region have received recognition in local and international responsible tourism awards. The award schemes in question are the Imvelo Responsible Tourism Awards for Africa, the Virgin Holidays World Responsible Tourism Awards, and the World Travel & Tourism Council Awards. Businesses that were finalists in these responsible tourism award schemes or actually received an award are again all based in the Gansbaai area and include Grootbos and Farm 215 both accommodation providers, Dyer Island Cruises - boat whale watching operator, and White Shark Projects - shark cage diving operator.

### **3.2.2 General Tourism Businesses**

For the purpose of the site visits, a short list of tourism related businesses in the respective destinations was selected for site inspections. This entailed a face-to-face interview with a relevant person, i.e. preferably a manager, owner, or senior staff member of the business, and a formal evaluation of each product. Tourism businesses in Hermanus, Stanford, Gansbaai, Napier, Bredasdorp, Agulhas, Struisbaai, Arniston, and De Hoop areas were visited and assessed. A large variety of businesses was chosen for this process in order to get an appropriate cross-section of the industry within the Agulhas Plain region. A number of small B&B and self-catering businesses, guesthouses and lodges, large hotels, breweries and wineries, farm stalls, as well as conservation and community initiatives, were interviewed to give some insight into their understanding of responsible tourism.

The general level of understanding of the concept of responsible tourism and running sustainable tourism businesses in the Agulhas Plain region is rather limited. When questioned, many business owners and managers were unable to answer simple questions regarding the ethics of their operations. For example, the Birkenhead Brewery, who uses a large amount of water in its production process, did not appear to have water saving initiatives in place. They were also not able

to answer questions on what they were doing in terms of empowerment of the local community and protection of the local environment.

As also presented from the online survey (section 3.1), the vast majority of business owners seem to do relatively little when it comes to responsible tourism. However, when businesses have implemented a responsible tourism policy and have environmental, economic, and/or social procedures in place, they generally do not communicate this adequately to their clients. For example, Birkenhead House in Hermanus has a range of energy & water saving actions and a simple recycling scheme in place, and employs many people from the local community. Unfortunately, very few of these positive steps are communicated to their (potential) guests. The most obvious way of communicating this kind of information is through their website and printed marketing materials. Notes to engage with guests in and around the property are also highly recommended and more on this can be found in section 4.2.

It is interesting to note that one tourism product owner in Hermanus had recently received a detailed questionnaire from an international tour operator requesting details on the ethics of their operation. They were not able to answer the questions and had contacted us for assistance. This indicates a worrying lack of real understanding when it comes to responsible tourism. This is not an isolated incidence of this kind, as we know from the international tour operating side of the industry that the need for social and environmental responsibility information from suppliers is becoming more and more a basic requirement. Hence there is an urgent need to review the level of awareness of responsible tourism of tourism bureau supervisors. If knowledge is limited, the training and education process will need to begin from a grassroots level up, so that tourism bureau employees are able to guide and influence their members adequately.

**Elim** is a valuable potential tourism centre. It is the place, where the skills of thatching, as well as basket weaving, are still very much alive. Its streets are visually attractive and the town has an incredibly rich cultural heritage to share. The opportunity exists to create new tourism attractions, but it first needs a concerted effort to tidy up the town and to repair some of the buildings, including the guesthouse. The village needs to develop some local hospitality projects, which could include a teashop or small restaurant, either attached to or independent of an Elim guesthouse. The town currently holds its own events, but these events do not seem to aid the growth of general tourism in the town.

**Bredasdorp** is an attractive town and is the main link to Agulhas. There are two tourism related flagship projects that are dynamic responsible tourism attractions, as well as job creation opportunities in the town. Julian's, owned and run by Julian Keyser and his wife, began in their garage as a ceramics studio. It is now located in a large, visually attractive property off the main street and is home to an extensive ceramics and fabric printing studio as well as a café, restaurant, gallery, and shop. The business has developed into a specialist centre for hand-crafted arts, including ceramics and fabric printing. It employs and up-skills approximately 30 people, and ships its high quality creations across the globe to countries, such as the US, UK, Canada, and Namibia. Kapula Candles began 17 years ago and now employs over 80 artisans creating colourful, ethnic candles. A large warehouse is open to visitors and attracts buyers from far and wide. There is a crafts centre nearby that offers a wide variety of local crafts, including South African mohair and a coffee shop offering the vital catering component essential for generating income and encouraging visitors to stay longer.

### 3.2.3 Areas of Nature Conservation Value

The two key areas of nature conservation value in the Agulhas Plain region are De Hoop Nature Reserve to the east (managed by CapeNature) and Agulhas National Park at the southern tip (managed by SANParks).

**De Hoop Nature Reserve** has received substantial financial investment from The Madikwe Collection, the company now managing the accommodation in the park. The Madikwe Collection also provides the marketing platform for the park and its products, which has seen a much improved awareness of De Hoop as a destination.

De Hoop is an area of spectacular beauty, but not without its challenges. Customer feedback comments specifically on the lack of speed regulation on all roads within the park boundaries, resulting in a high incidence of road kill within the reserve. The second overwhelming comment is about litter along the coastline, specifically for clients walking the popular Whale Trail. Plans need to be put into place to formulate a litter monitoring system, to limit further damage to the ocean environment. The Dyer Island Conservation Trust recently created special bins for coastal litter, especially fishing line, and perhaps a partnership could be developed to introduce a campaign in De Hoop.

Alien vegetation is still a problem in certain parts of the park, except in the dune areas where the alien vegetation stabilises the dune systems. When questioned, the accommodation management and guides identified the main obstacle to establishing a comprehensive clearing programme a lack of finance. An alien removal programme should be prioritised to protect the indigenous vegetation and groundwater tables, and reduce fire risk.

**Agulhas National Park** has made the decision to restrict the use of part of the main park near Sand Bay to day visitors and made it available to overnight visitors only. This situation is far from ideal if tourists, both local and international, are to be encouraged to visit this iconic landmark. SANParks is limiting its own potential for growth, and its income generating potential for the park. In view of the relatively new and marketable accommodation here, it appears on the surface to be a short sighted decision. Allowing access to the main park area creates free, but important visual marketing, which in turn will generate more sales for overnight clients. The attractive accommodation in the park has been created with a light carbon footprint and is not currently marketed to its full potential.

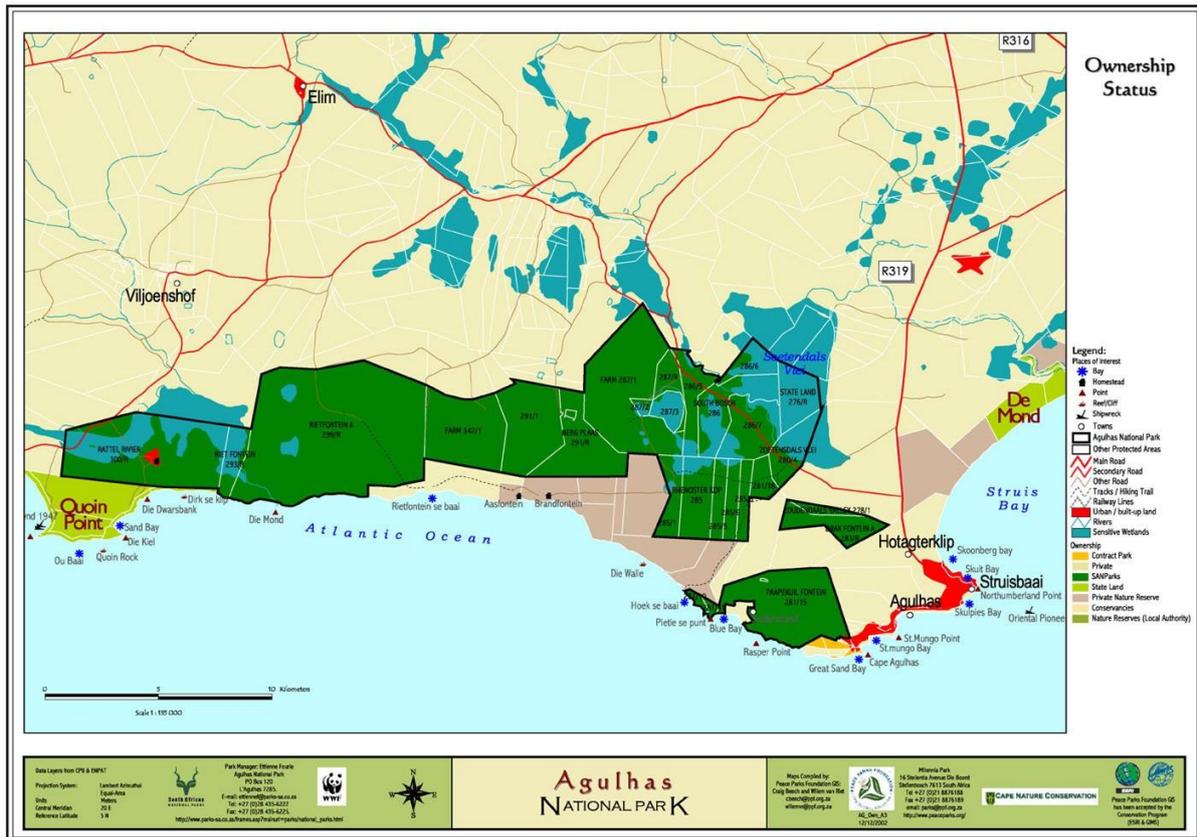
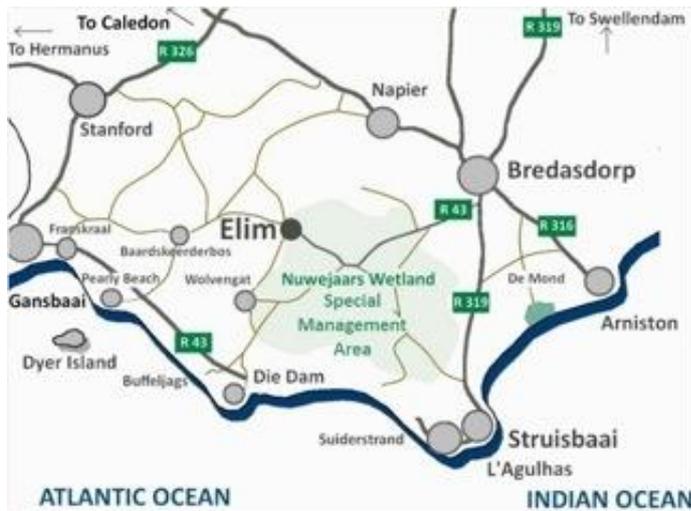


Figure 4: Agulhas National Park location map

The **Nuwejaars Wetland Special Management Area (SMA)** is a unique opportunity to create a tourism product linked directly with agriculture. The SMA is essentially a group of 25 farmers/landowners, who have committed to conserving rare and endangered habitats on 45,600 hectares of previously farmland. Initial start-up funding resulted in the securing and fencing of the area, the management and control of alien invasive species, and the reintroduction of a number of species of game, such as Bontebok, zebra, buffalo, and hippo.

Although nature conservation is the main objective of the SMA, the need to create nature-based tourism attractions within the SMA has been identified. The farmers intend to develop an environmentally sensitive tented camp and a number of nature trails on the land, while promoting awareness of and protecting the integrity of the wetland. The shared vision of the landowners is to successfully combine agriculture and nature conservation with tourism, and from this partnership facilitate effective conservation (Appendix 5).

As wetland areas decline across the world, this is a valuable and innovative private initiative that deserves particular credit. Creating dynamic and supportive partnerships with like-minded local products will increase the flow of economic benefits to the entire region.



**Figure 5:** Location of the Nuwejaars Wetland Special Management Area

In general, finding a healthy balance between generating income from tourist accommodation and protecting natural environments is an on-going concern. Recently, SANParks' chief, David Mabunda, and other senior officials toured American and Canadian national parks to look at how this delicate agenda is managed in the northern hemisphere. One of the important findings was that all parks reported a need to maintain good relations with surrounding towns and communities, which is particularly relevant to Agulhas.

SANParks currently gets 85% of its income from tourism. Our concern is that if Agulhas National Park continues to restrict day visitors to the main park area, it may result in a disconnection between the park and the public. Buy-in from surrounding businesses and tourists is essential, if the income to the park is to continue or preferably increase. Agulhas has the potential to open up new activities in the park, such as hiking & cycling routes, and perhaps a small shop so that overnight guests can purchase supplies and emergency items.

We must not lose sight of the fact that the primary reason for creating reserves is to protect the natural environment from excessive development, and that tourism is the way to fund on-going conservation. It is therefore necessary to cultivate partnerships. One possibility is to link the SMA, De Hoop, and Agulhas National Park, if corridors can be established between these areas of nature conservation value. This would enable future collaboration between these areas, explore new tourism attractions, and increase their total share in tourism revenue.

### 3.2.4 Tourism Offices

Our visits to tourism offices that make up the Overstrand and Agulhas Plain region was very informative, and our findings revealed that there is a huge disparity between the best and the worst examples, as well as a varying knowledge and enthusiasm for presenting information on the destinations. The three most impressive tourism offices were Cape Agulhas, Elim, and Gansbaai.

**Hermanus**, despite its economic importance to the region, had little knowledge of nature-based tourism and the consultants 'at the coal face' showed little in the way of passion for engaging with people and selling the destination. The actual office, although located in an impressive building, is

not particularly appealing to the visitor and the number of accommodation brochures on display is daunting and confusing.

Hermanus has experienced additional challenges recently in that product owners have misunderstood the role of the marketing organisation, Cape Whale Coast. Members believed it to be a separate entity to Hermanus Tourism, whereas it was in fact intended to be a unified platform for promoting tourism. Confusion seems to have originated, because two different subscriptions were charged – according to feedback we received from tourism product owners. One subscription was applicable for membership of the tourism office and a second for membership of the destination marketing body. This has led to considerable confusion. We understand that Hermanus municipality has addressed this issue recently, but there appears to be a general loss of confidence in the tourism promotion body, along with claims that money has been wasted and mismanaged. Particularly, the investment in the German tourism expo ITB was mentioned, where no representation was sent for region. In addition, concern was expressed over people with vested interest being in charge of marketing the destination.

**Stanford** is trying its best to maintain a good presence, and has a diverse range of trades that form part of its membership base, from vets to bottle stores. The reason for this is that the majority of tourism products tend to be self-catering establishments that remain ‘on the fringe’, though Stanford Valley Farm and Mosaic Farm are two properties that have positive environmental initiatives in place and could be used as flagship examples. The tourism bureau communicates with their members through regular e-newsletter updates and monthly networking meetings.

**Gansbaai** tourism bureau promotes its surrounding area with success, but to make this happen it has an interactive and open relationship with local product owners. Though the staff present had little to offer in the way of nature-based tourism outside of the FTSA certified products. There was however a positive attitude and willingness to engage and the bureau presents a good platform to promote their members and events.

**Bredasdorp** tourism is well placed to oversee and guide the ‘satellite’ regions to be more involved and dynamic as a collective, and its established relationship with the municipality can provide a synergistic partnership to co-ordinate overall management strategies. The municipality may in turn need assistance to understand the developmental role of tourism, particularly in terms of assessing the true economic value of responsible tourism and its potential to lead environmental and social change.

A visit to **Napier** tourism office was marked by a distinct lack of tourism product knowledge. It may well be that the person on duty that day was not the main tourism consultant, but nonetheless when questions were asked about what activities were available in the town, the person present could only find one attraction worthy of promoting. On further investigation on foot, we discovered many worthwhile and viable tourism attractions exist in the town and its surrounding area that could create the foundation for a solid Napier network. One or two are involved in positive responsible tourism initiatives and could be earmarked as town trailblazers.

There appears to be a feeling from tourism product owners in town that the Napier tourism office is failing in its directive and because of this, a small collection of businesses have formed an alternative tourism information office, as a private initiative. These issues need to be addressed constructively, so that a more cohesive and united identity can evolve, particularly as Napier’s location key in terms

of gateway into the region. The town itself is charming and has a lot to offer, if the correct guidance is given.

**Elim** tourism is in a state of flux, primarily because of the Moravian Church, which allegedly has a controlling influence over the town. Amanda Cloete, Elim's tourism officer, is currently doing her best to run both the museum and the tourism bureau. She informed us that her salary is paid in two halves, 50% from Cape Agulhas Municipality and 50% from the Moravian Church. It seems that the church has reneged on its payment for a considerable length of time, leaving her compromised financially. As a result, Amanda is working to try and keep the tourism office going with minimal support. If this is a true reflection of the actual situation, the system needs to be urgently reviewed, especially as Elim could be the jewel in the crown in terms of developing far-reaching tourism opportunities and the potential to position Elim as a bridge to the rest of the Overberg.

**Agulhas** is ideally situated at the entrance to the national park, and it is one of the most important satellite tourism offices. Its professionalism should be an inspiration to others. The tourism officer on duty was committed and passionate about the area and was extremely knowledgeable. A detailed map of the area is in place along one wall and is used as a practical and visual orientation tool for visitors asking questions. A comprehensive array of brochures was on display, carefully arranged in an organised way to promote and represent the different towns and attractions in the area. Even though one would expect Agulhas to be a flagship office, because of the importance of its location, it was certainly the best interaction with any of the region's tourism offices and staff. There is room for improvement at a number of the others.

## **4. Agulhas Plain Responsible Tourism Recommendations**

### ***Developing a guiding principle that can be used as a toolkit and manipulated for local use***

The idea and concept behind a visitor's guide and a responsible tourism toolkit is that it gives individual tourism offices a framework for assisting business owners on their responsible tourism journey, as well as a framework on how to guide visitors to be 'responsible' when visiting the region. From personal experience we know that the request to address issues, such as water, energy, and waste, can seem overwhelming for tourism businesses, and therefore better outcomes are achieved if small steps are taken and actions are motivated by good business sense.

There is no doubt that more accurate monitoring of water and energy leads to actual financial savings, and therefore it is more likely to affect behaviour change when it can be felt in the pocket. The matter of reducing waste, recycling and resource reuse is generally more complicated, because it requires more investment in time and effort, and compliance at municipal level.

### **4.1 Visitor's Responsible Tourism Guide for the Southern Tip of Africa.**

#### **4.1.1 Introduction**

The following visitor's responsible tourism guide for the southern tip of Africa has been developed for use in the whole of the Agulhas Plain region. It is recommended that a comprehensive version is used for the tourism offices in the area, as well as a similar document for distribution to visitors and tourism related businesses. At this stage, it is primarily to give a guide on what points are going to be relevant for the purpose of this strategy, with resource references.

This visitor's responsible tourism guide for the southern tip of Africa is intended as a potential resource to be:

- distributed as Agulhas Plain/Overberg wide leaflet
- designed and branded in line with the new regional identity
- printed as DL flyer
- made available to all regional tourism offices, as a printed brochure, as well as an e-brochure for websites
- given to all visitors to the area, i.e. domestic and international tourists
- made available to accommodation & activity providers in printed version and as an e-brochure for their websites.

#### **4.1.2 A Draft Visitor's Responsible Tourism Guide for the Southern Tip of Africa**

##### **Travel in the spirit of Ubuntu – Tourism in harmony with nature**

The Agulhas Plain is at the tip of Africa, the most southern point of this rich and colourful continent. It is where two mighty oceans, the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, meet. This southern part of the Overberg has a rich history and natural heritage. It is part of the Cape Floral Region, one of South Africa's eight World Heritage Sites. Its unique fynbos vegetation displays some of the highest species diversity, density, and endemism in the world. The area encompasses a range of national parks and privately owned nature reserves, offering the visitor a spectrum of eco-tourism attractions to enjoy.

With the privilege of having these incredible natural and cultural assets to enjoy, comes the responsibility of conserving the region for future generations. With this in mind, this guide offers some practical tips on how to minimise your impact and play your part in conserving the natural environment, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the area. Remember, we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors - we just borrow it from our children.

### **Cultural sensitivities: Listen and observe, rather than just hear and see**

South Africa is often referred to as the Rainbow Nation, reflecting the diversity of its population. There are 11 official languages spoken in South Africa, however English is used in most urban areas.

Be sensitive to the beliefs, values, customs, and feelings of the local people, and consider what might be considered as inappropriate or offensive behaviour.

Try to learn some of the local language. A simple greeting and thank you in Afrikaans or Xhosa will connect with the local people.

Respect the dignity and privacy of others, and ask permission before you take a photo.

Do not give money to beggars and street children as it creates opportunity for exploitation. It is better to donate to a local charity, which supports community projects, such as Child Welfare SA (<http://www.childwelfare.org.za/>).

Pay a reasonable amount for goods. Bartering is commonplace when buying curios and handicrafts at local markets and local sellers can inflate prices for tourists. As a guideline, you can take about one third off of the quoted price as a starting point, however bear in mind that what is a small amount to you will be a lot more significant to the seller. Keep things in perspective; don't haggle too aggressively over a few Rand. Pay a fair price and always bargain with humour.

If you wish to leave a gratuity at your accommodation, use the tip box at reception, so your contribution gets divided amongst the entire staff. In restaurants, it is usual to tip 10% on the total bill if you are satisfied with the food and service. It is customary to give car guards and petrol station attendants a small tip for their services.

### **Reduce, Reuse & Recycle**

Wherever possible help to save limited natural resources. Try not to waste water, take a shower instead of a bath, re-use your towels, switch off unnecessary lights, televisions, fans, and air-conditioning in your room.

Tap water in South Africa is amongst the best in the world and is safe to drink. Avoid buying bottled water as it takes 3-5 litres of normal water to produce just 1 litre of bottled water, as well as a considerable amount of energy and tonnes of plastic waste.

Try local wines, beers, and spirits instead of drinking international brands. South Africa's wines are excellent. You then support the local economy and reduce the carbon footprint of your favourite tittle.

When ordering seafood in restaurant, make sure it has come from a good source and is not on the list of endangered species by checking the WWF Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) guide. You can find a copy on the following web link:

<http://www.wwfsassi.co.za/sassicard.pdf>.

Dispose of rubbish carefully, recycle where possible, and reuse your beverage bottles and shopping bags.

Consider offsetting your carbon footprint. South Africa offers various carbon-offsetting schemes, e.g. Trees for Tourism (<http://www.treesfortourism.co.za/>), a local biodiversity reforestation project.

Support local enterprise and support local community projects. Buy local crafts, use locally owned restaurants, and travel with local tour guides to get the most authentic experiences. By doing so, you can be sure of making a positive contribution to the local economy and to the community. South Africa has a fantastic variety of arts & crafts make ideal souvenirs or gifts. Try to buy direct from the original crafts people rather than from high street or hotel shops, unless they are supporting Fair Trade as it means the original artist probably loses out.

A number of accommodation and activities providers in the area are accredited by Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA). The certification is based on 6 Fair Trade principles: fair share, democracy, respect, reliability, transparency and sustainability. When booking accommodation and/or activities look for the FTTSA logo. Other tourism related accreditation labels to look out for include Green Leaf, Heritage, and Green Globe.

### **Leave only Footprints - Take only Memories**

When visiting areas of nature conservation value (e.g. national park, game reserves) or getting involved in environmentally sensitive activities (e.g. diving, whale watching), please observe the following points.

- Always follow the relevant park rules and regulations.
- Never touch, feed or disturb wild animals.
- Do not pick flower or collect shells.
- When driving in national parks or nature reserves, stick to the speed limit.
- When hiking, stay on the paths.
- Do not litter, dispose of waste appropriately, and recycle where possible.
- Take care not to start a fire with your cigarette butts or matches.
- Do not purchase products that are made of coral, endangered animals or plants. Think twice before buying any curio with porcupine quills.
- Always make sure that you chose ethical operators who work in an environmentally sensitive manner.

### **4.1.3 Further Reading**

Cape Town Responsible Travel tips: [http://www.capetown.travel/guide/responsible\\_tourism\\_tips/](http://www.capetown.travel/guide/responsible_tourism_tips/)

Green Travel Tips for Visitors to Hawaii:

<http://www.hawaiiecotourism.org/default.aspx?pageid=178270>

Make Travel a Great Experience: [http://www.unwto.org/ethics/pdf/make\\_travel.pdf](http://www.unwto.org/ethics/pdf/make_travel.pdf)

The Responsible Tourist & Traveller:

[http://www.unwto.org/ethics/responsible/en/pdf/brochure\\_e.pdf](http://www.unwto.org/ethics/responsible/en/pdf/brochure_e.pdf) and

[http://www.unwto.org/ethics/responsible/en/pdf/resp\\_tour\\_e.pdf](http://www.unwto.org/ethics/responsible/en/pdf/resp_tour_e.pdf)

Tourism Concern Tourist's Guide to our Holidays in their Homes:

[http://www.baobabtravel.com/\\_userfiles/files/Tourism\\_Concern\\_leaflet\\_web.pdf](http://www.baobabtravel.com/_userfiles/files/Tourism_Concern_leaflet_web.pdf)

Responsible Tourism Code for the Pacific:

[http://www.responsibletourism.org.nz/pdf/Responsible%20Tourism%20Code\\_web\\_english.pdf](http://www.responsibletourism.org.nz/pdf/Responsible%20Tourism%20Code_web_english.pdf)

Responsible Traveler Guide: <http://green.hotelscombined.com/ResponsibleTravelerGuide.php>

Scotland - Responsible Visitor Guide: [http://www.rabbies.com/responsible\\_tourism/responsible-tourism.pdf](http://www.rabbies.com/responsible_tourism/responsible-tourism.pdf)

Tips for responsible travel in South Africa: <http://www.alternativeroute.net/tips-for-responsible-travel-in-south-africa.html>

## **4.2 Responsible Tourism Implementation Toolkit for Tourism Businesses**

This responsible tourism toolkit is by no means a 'one-size fits all' solution for potential actions that can be implemented into tourism businesses, and it will evolve organically as the regions implement new responsible management practices and give due consideration to sustainability issues. However, its aim is to provide a broad overview of what can be done and how best to begin the process of education and awareness raising. It will require a larger investment of time and resources in some areas, but not in others. Those that are already immersed in the process can provide a learning platform, and it is fortunate that there are some fantastic examples of products already benefitting from the business model. These flagship products bear witness to the fact that responsible tourism does work, and more importantly does make a difference at all levels of tourism and in a variety of business types.

### **4.2.1 Benefits of Responsible Tourism**

Many of the suggested action ideas, such as reducing energy and water consumption, will reduce day-to-day operating costs, and thereby make businesses more efficient and streamlined. Adopting responsible tourism as a business model not only makes economic sense, but also creates a positive image for potential customers. It is evident from existing responsible tourism businesses that there is a positive marketing advantage to making this change. Products can be encouraged to strive towards becoming certified through recognised accreditation programmes, if they wish to do so, such as Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA), Green Leaf Environmental Standard, or the Heritage Environmental Rating Programme. This gives an added credibility, especially as the demand from consumers for more authentic and environmentally friendly travel options increases.

By adopting responsible tourism policies and practices, business automatically contribute towards the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) scorecard. At least four of the seven key indicators on the tourism scorecard are central to the South African Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism, namely skills development, preferential procurement, enterprise development, and social involvement.

As members of a global society, we have a collective responsibility to work towards the common goals of ensuring environmental protection, sustainable use of resources, and reducing the impacts of pollution and climate change. The tourism industry is already well on its way to realigning long term sustainability plans, especially as tourism often depends on sound natural resources and is recognised as a consumptive industry. Therefore it is in our own interest to change the way we do business, for the good of our future. There has always been a misconception that becoming 'greener' costs money, but this is certainly not the case. Local and international responsible tourism awards recognise tourism best practice, and some products in the area are already recipients of high profile accolades for their efforts.

### **4.2.2 Responsible Tourism Policy**

To start improving your business operations in terms of measuring its responsible tourism performance, a written policy should be formulated, as a starting point to state the intent of your planned actions. The information box below is an example of a comprehensive responsible tourism policy that correctly addresses the triple bottom line principle of responsible tourism of

environmental, economic, and social considerations. This policy can easily be adapted according to the needs of individual tourism businesses, either by making it simpler, or adding examples of what the business is doing.

It is recommended that the document is personalised and printed on an official business letterhead, together with a commencement date and signature. This will make it a tangible part of the overall business plan. It is visible for staff and visitors alike, as a strong commitment to running a more responsible business. The policy can be displayed on websites or used in marketing material. However as a word of warning, if a responsible tourism policy is publicly advertised, there must be no doubt that clients will witness evidence of its implementation. Tourists are well-informed, and if they discover that there is a flaw in the written policy, it will detract from their overall experience. Rather be on the safe side and state actual achievements and short term goals, rather than providing inaccurate information thus avoiding the risk of green-washing.

This may all seem rather complicated, but it is actually where the real fun starts. Businesses undergoing this process often discover they are doing more than they originally thought and it is often recognised as an interesting time of self-assessment. Businesses can be creative in putting a policy document together, which instils a sense of pride and a chance to examine the big picture.

### **Sample Responsible Tourism Policy Statement**

[INSERT BUSINESS NAME] strives to achieve economic and social development in ways that do not negatively impact the environment. We operate and market out tourism business in a manner that upholds the guiding principles for Responsible Tourism, being tourism that:

- Minimises negative economic, environmental, and social impacts;
- Generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities, improves working conditions and access to the industry;
- Involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances;
- Makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, to the maintenance of the world's diversity;
- Provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues;
- Provides accurate information about accessibility of facilities and infrastructure for people with disabilities (visual, communication, mobility) to customers; and
- Is culturally sensitive, engenders respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence.

In doing so the staff and management of [INSERT BUSINESS NAME]:

- Strive to continuously improve our performance in the context of sustainable development and management of tourism.
- Encourage our partners, suppliers and sub-contractors to improve their contribution to the sustainable development and management of tourism, and work with them and share information to assist in this.
- Endeavour in our communication with visitors to promote behaviour and activities compatible with the principles of Responsible Tourism.

**Date:**

**Signed:**

### 4.2.3 How to use this toolkit

The following recommendations can be used as a list of potential ingredients to improve the responsible tourism and sustainability credentials of accommodation venues, activity providers, and any other tourism related businesses in the Southern Overberg.

Every business will start at a different entry level in terms of its responsible tourism status. For some businesses the concept will be completely new, whereas other businesses have already achieved FTSA accreditation. The time to evolve from where your business is now to a fully-fledged responsible tourism outfit is however not going to happen overnight. This will take time and dedication, but by taking small steps in the beginning will eventually generate a substantial benefit. Each business can also take its responsible tourism strategy only as far as they feel comfortable with. However the tourism industry as a whole should strive to achieve the South African Minimum Standards for Responsible Tourism (Appendix 3).

When using this responsible tourism toolkit, individual modules should be selected from the three pillars of responsible tourism, namely environmental, economic, and social sustainability. The modules within these three areas can be picked relatively randomly. However businesses should start with a focus on the seven priority areas determined by the City of Cape Town, i.e. conservation of water resources, energy efficiency, integrated waste management, preferential procurement, enterprise development, skills development, and social development.

Select preferably one priority issue for each of the three pillars of responsible tourism (see diagram below). Establish your baseline for this priority issue by measuring your starting point or baseline. For example, the priority issue reduction of energy consumption under the environmental heading is a good place to start, as this makes good financial business sense to reduce your operating costs. Measure your baseline energy use in total kilowatt hours used over a whole month or preferably one year, as this will take account of all seasons, including those in which you potentially use more energy for heating and cooling. This total energy use figure is then divided by the number of bednights sold over this same time period (for e.g. accommodation providers), number of staff members (for e.g. tour operators), number of clients (for e.g. activity providers), or whatever is appropriate for your business.

Baseline Energy Consumption =  $\frac{\text{total kilowatt hours for one month OR one year}}{\text{No. of bednights OR staff members OR clients}}$

If you find calculating the total kilowatt hours used for a particular period too complicated, you can also use your total electricity cost, as this is a reflection of the number of kilowatt hours used. However this is not as accurate as the actual kilowatt hours used, and in the case of future increases in electricity pricing would wrongly imply a greater energy use.

Set a target to reduce your energy consumption and follow this exercise by implementing some action ideas from the environmental toolkit – energy efficiency, as described below. For example, replace all normal light bulbs with energy savings ones, put timers on geysers, operate dishwashers and washing machines only with a full load.

Re-measure your energy consumption on regular intervals to quantify your real progress made over time. You can also calculate the amount of money saved on these operating costs, showing your actual improvement in business efficiency and profitability.

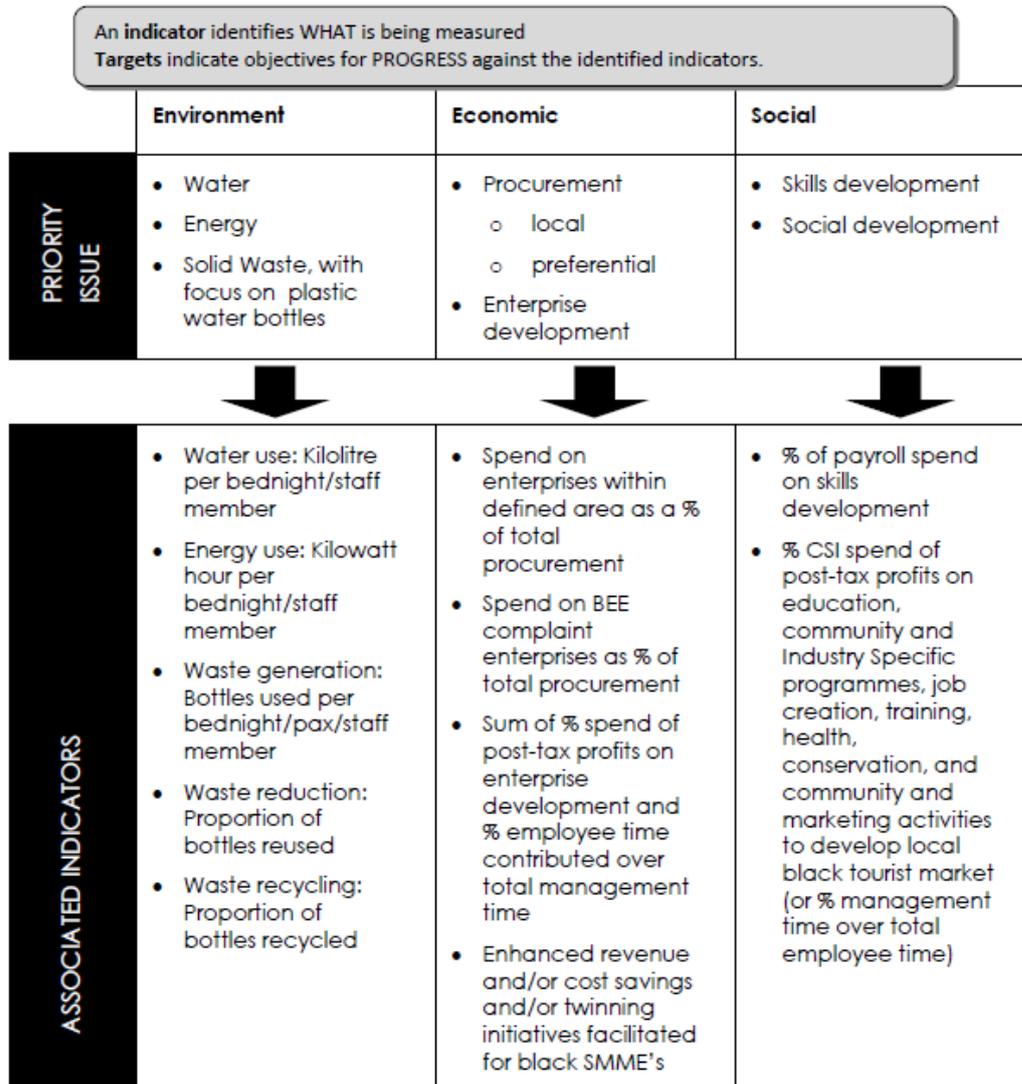


Figure 6: Seven priority responsible tourism action areas and its indicators. (Source: City of Cape Town Responsible Tourism Framework and Campaign Plan, 2009)

#### 4.2.4 Environmental Toolkit

Maximise the economic benefits for your business and minimise the negative impacts for the environment.

##### Energy Efficiency

- Conduct an energy audit, measuring your total energy consumption, and identifying areas within your operation, where most energy is used. Set targets to what extent you want to reduce your energy consumption and keep records of your monthly energy consumption and cost.
- Educate both your staff and guests on your energy saving policy and encourage them to actively take part and give practical advice on how.
- Make sure there are no hot points or 'grounded leaks'. Turn off all lights and unplug appliances. If your electricity meter still indicates usage, you will need to check your wiring.

- Replaced incandescent light bulbs with energy saving ones. From the total energy used by incandescent light bulbs, 85% dissipates in form of heat and only 15% is transformed into light.
- If energy saving bulbs cannot be installed, replaced incandescent bulbs for low Watt light bulbs, such as 25 or 40 Watt.
- Turn off lights, heating, ventilation, and cooling systems, when rooms are unoccupied.
- Install sensors and timers in all indoor and outdoor areas, so lights are switched off when not required.
- Turn off appliances and office equipment, such as TVs, computers, at its power point when not in use. Appliances still use energy, even on stand-by mode.
- Unplug battery chargers, such as for cell phones, laptop computers, and cameras, as they all consume energy while plugged in, but not actually recharging.
- Operate appliances, such as dishwashers and washing machines, with full loads only, on the shortest possible cycle, and lowest temperature.
- Avoid using tumble dryers, when you can take advantage of drying your laundry outdoors.
- Ensure refrigerators and freezers are not placed near heat sources, such as ovens or against non-insulated walls exposed to the sun, as they need to use more energy to maintain their required temperature.
- Ensure the seals on fridges and freezers are working efficiently to prevent energy wastage from cold air escaping.
- Cover geysers with geyser blankets/jackets, adjust the water thermostat to 50-60°C, and put timer switches on the geysers. Alternatively, geysers can be switched off when hot water is not required.
- Clean air-conditioners regularly. Check your unit manual or contact the manufacturer to establish an appropriate maintenance regime.
- When purchasing new equipment, select energy-efficient refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers etc. For example choice one with a short wash cycle option. Also select the smallest appliance that will fit your needs.
- Consider introducing key cards for hotel guestrooms, thereby ensuring that lights and electrical equipment are only operated when rooms are occupied.
- Invest in renewable energy systems, such as solar water heaters.

### **Best Practice – Energy Efficiency**

#### **Birkenhead House, Hermanus (Luxury Boutique Hotel)**

- All geysers are fitted with geyser blankets for insulation.
- The pools are currently not heated, but management is looking into possibility to have solar panels installed for pool heating.
- All outside lighting have been fitted with energy saving bulbs.
- Although the property is upmarket, the decision has been made **not** to install air-conditioning units in guest rooms.

#### **Farm 215, Baardskeerdersbos (4\* Country House Accommodation) FTSA accredited.**

- In terms of energy efficiency, Farm 215 has gone the renewable energy route and the main source of energy in their eco-suites is solar for both electricity and hot water. They have a gas back-up system for the solar water heaters on rainy winter days.

## Water conservation

- Conduct a water audit, measuring your overall water consumption and identifying the areas within your operation, where most water is used. Set targets to what extent you want to reduce your water consumption and keep records of your monthly water consumption and cost.
- Educate both your staff and guests on your water conservation policy and encourage them to actively take part and give practical advice on how.
- Fix any leaks and dripping taps. A slow dripping tap can waste about 22 litres/day or 8,000 litres/year of water.
- Provide guests with the option to re-use linen and towels.
- Install flow control valves on taps and tap aerators on all sinks. Normal tap flow is around 20 litres/minute, which can be reduced to 5-10 litres/minute with flow control valves. Tap aerators give the sense of increasing the tap flow by combining water with air.
- Use low flow shower heads. Conventional showerheads use 15-20 litres of water/minute. A flow of 9-12 litres/minute can still provide a quality shower.
- Install dual-flush or water saving toilets. Conventional toilet cisterns use 9 litres of water to flush the toilet, whereas water saving or low volume toilets only use 6 litres. The dual-flush system can flush either 3 or 6 litres of water with two separate push buttons. If your toilet systems do not need replacing yet, cistern floats can be adjusted to reduce the flush volume. An old fashioned remedy is adding a brick wrapped in a plastic bag into the cistern to reduce the water quantity needed to refill the tank.
- Use passive infra-red (PIR) sensors for urinal flushing systems in men's toilets.
- When purchasing new appliances, select water efficient washing machines and dishwashers, such as appliances with short wash cycles.
- Use insulated covers for all swimming & splash pools to reduce evaporation.
- Water plants and gardens in the early evening/night and on non-windy days, to minimise evaporation.
- Switch off automatic watering systems during wet periods.
- Clear any alien invasive vegetation from your property, as they use huge quantities of water.
- Plant drought resistant plants where possible, reducing the amount of irrigation water needed drastically.
- Use mulch in your gardens to reduce evaporation.
- Collect rainwater from roofs in water tanks for cleaning use and irrigation.
- Recycle grey water from sinks and showers to supply toilets and use for irrigating the gardens. A simple filtering and disinfection process needs to be applied to use the grey water.

### Best Practice – Water Conservation

#### **The Arniston Spa Hotel, Arniston (Hotel accommodation)**

- Have signs in all bathrooms to encourage guests to reuse towels.
- They installed a part grey water recycling system for lawn irrigation.

#### **Eagles Rest Guest Lodge, Napier (S/C accommodation)**

- Have been working persistently on alien vegetation clearing on their property, which is an on-going task.
- They are now in the process of installing water collection tanks for rain water of all building roofs.

## **Waste management – Reduce, Reuse & Recycle**

- Conduct a waste audit identifying the types of waste both solid and liquid produced and the areas within the operation that generate the most waste. Set targets for waste management reduction and keep records of your monthly progress.
- Educate both your staff and guests on your waste management policy and encourage them to actively take part and give practical advice on how.
- Avoid single-serving containers for sugar, butter, condiments, and coffee.
- Avoid using disposable cutlery, crockery and napkins. If disposable kitchenware is necessary, purchase those made from recycled material and/or compostable, biodegradable materials, such as sugar cane.
- Provide (filtered) tap water in flasks/jugs/reusable water bottles rather than bottled water and inform your clients that the tap water is perfectly safe to use. Remember it takes 3-5 litres of water to produce just 1 litre of bottled water. In addition, it takes a considerable amount of energy and produces tonnes of plastic waste.
- Use refillable bulk dispensers for guest toiletries in bathrooms, instead of individual soaps, and small shampoo & conditioner bottles.
- Use recycled chlorine free toilet paper.
- Use rechargeable batteries in all battery operated equipment. Remember every rechargeable battery replaces approximately 100 disposable batteries. If you need to use non-rechargeable batteries, recycle them appropriately. Most Pick 'n Pay supermarkets have e.g. battery recycling points.
- Buy fresh produce, reducing the packaging necessary for transportation, such as plastic, polystyrene, and cardboard containers and foil and plastic wrapping.
- Donate all surplus food to a local feeding scheme or local pig farmer.
- Compost all organic waste from restaurants and kitchens by setting up a worm farm or compost heap. Use the compost and worm tea to fertilise your gardens.
- Set up a simple recycling system for paper, plastics, aluminium, and glass with e.g. colour coded or labelled bins for the different waste products.
- Work with local community projects, who will use recycled materials to make crafts, e.g. by collecting beer or milk bottle tops.
- Recycle cooking oil. Biogreen e.g. will turn old cooking oil into bio-diesel.
- Recycle print cartridges. Most Pick 'n Pay supermarkets have cartridge recycling points. Some of the larger print cartridges can be sent back to the manufacturer for refilling.
- Take all e-waste to a certified e-waste recycling company. Incredible Connections also have a recycle scheme, whereby they use recycled hardware components to rebuild computers that are donated to disadvantaged schools.
- Minimise paper use by printing and photocopying double-sided.
- Minimise paper use by making your office 'paperless. Use e-documentation wherever possible.
- Use recycled, chlorine free office paper.
- Reuse one-sided printed paper as scrap paper.

### **Best practice – Waste Management**

#### **De Hoop Collection, Stanford (B&B and S/C accommodation in De Hoop Nature Reserve)**

- All guest toiletries are in bulk dispensers that can be refilled with shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, and body lotion.

- The Fig Tree Restaurant has replaced all single serving products with larger packaging, such as butter, preservatives, and sugar.

#### **Stanford Valley Guest Farm, Stanford (B&B and S/C farm accommodation)**

- All recyclable waste, including paper, glass and tins, is collected from the guest accommodation and the farm and taken to Stanford municipal waste disposal site. This waste disposal site takes not only household waste, but also recyclables and garden waste, and is open 7 days a week.
- All organic waste from their operations is used in the on-site biogas digester and the biogas produced is used for amongst other cooking.

#### **Other environmental issues**

- Use environmentally friendly, biodegradable cleaning products and detergents.
- Do not use aerosol products containing chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).
- Use environmentally friendly building materials and paints, such as low volatile organic compounds (VOC) paints.
- Use seasonal fruit and vegetables, reducing the carbon footprint of your food purchased.
- Use organic food produce, grown without the use of artificial pesticides, fertilisers, and herbicides. Please note that the definition of organic products is often used loosely, so research the company's credentials properly and don't assume the general definition.
- Use free-range eggs and meat, where possible. Please note that the definition for free-range products is also often used lightly. Again, research a company's credentials properly and don't take their promotional blurb at face value.
- Offer sustainable seafood choices by participating in the Southern African Sustainable Seafood Initiative (SASSI) and make SASSI guides available to your guests.
- Offer not only local beverages, but also wines that participate in the Sustainable Wine South Africa (SWSA) initiative, which amongst others integrates the Biodiversity & Wine Initiative (BWI) and the Integrated Productions of Wine (IPW) scheme.
- Reduce clients' carbon footprint by promoting public transport, green transport, e.g. electrical cars, or carbon free transport, such as walking, cycling, horse riding, or sailing.
- Clear any alien invasive vegetation from your property. Aliens not only use huge quantities of water, but are also a fire hazard and a threat to the natural flora and fauna. The wood from the alien clearing can be used as fire wood or donated to a local enterprise to be made into charcoal.
- In your gardens, replace exotic trees & plants species with indigenous species. Indigenous plants are not only adapted to drought conditions, but also support a more diverse population of birds, insects, and small mammals.
- Avoid buying curios and furniture made of hardwoods and/or rare or endangered species.

#### **Best Practice – Other Environmental Issues**

**Farm 215, Baardskeerdersbos (4\* Country House Accommodation) FTSA accredited.**

- Step one - clearing of all alien invasive vegetation. At the start of the project a few years ago, the mountainous areas were still pristine with very little alien invasive vegetation. However the lowland areas and kloofs were largely infested by Bluegum, Port Jackson, Accacia longifolia, and Australian myrtle, which are detrimental to the indigenous vegetation and water-levels.
- Step two - restoration of the natural integrity of the land. Where natural seed-banks were still intact in the newly cleared areas, rehabilitation was left to natural restoration processes. In

some places the natural seed bank was virtually absent due to years of over-grazing or invasion of alien species. In those areas, local seed mixtures were used. Zones particularly vulnerable to soil erosion were planted with indigenous seedlings to speed up the rehabilitation process.

- Step three - reforestation of the kloof areas. The lower kloof areas cleared from alien vegetation have now been reforested with indigenous tree species. Although it will take a long time for these forested areas to reach maturity, the first steps to rehabilitation of natural forest communities have been made.
- Farm 215 has also been instrumental in the establishment of Trees for Tourism, a carbon off-setting initiative for the tourism industry (<http://www.treesfortourism.co.za/>).

**Dyer Island Cruises**, Gansbaai (Boat whale watching operator) FTSA accredited.

- On Dyer Island, the African Penguins would naturally burrow into the soft guano to nest. In the mid 1800's to early 1900's however, the guano was removed from the island and sold as fertilizer. The penguins now struggle to burrow into the hard, rocky substrate and have been forced to nest on the surface, leaving their eggs and chicks exposed to predation by Kelp gulls. CapeNature, in partnership with Dyer Island Cruises and the Dyer Island Conservation Trust, has embarked on a programme to introduce artificial nests on Dyer Island, providing extra shelter for breeding penguins. This led to finding funding for 2,000 artificial penguin shelters on Dyer Island to house its dwindling and endangered penguin colony.
- The 'Marine Litter Project' aims at educating the public and local communities about the devastating effects of pollution on wildlife, whilst also initiating clean ups of the coast. This includes the Fishing Line Bin project, an innovative project aiming to reduce the severe environmental damage caused by discarded fishing line on our coastline. A network of fishing line recycling bins has been created and placed by the municipality at local beaches and popular fishing spots in Kleinbaai, Franskraal, Gansbaai harbour, and Romansbaai.

#### 4.2.5 Economic Toolkit

##### Fair practice – Sustainable procurement

- Recruit & employ staff transparently.
- Create a diverse workforce in terms of gender, ethnicity, and age.
- Pay above minimum wage and link wages to positions and experience.
- Provide staff with incentives and bonuses linked to performance or service levels.
- Let staff benefit economically from the success of your business through a profit sharing scheme, which can be a great incentive for increased performance.
- Have a tip box that is shared amongst all staff, including those behind the scenes.
- Set up fair contract for all staff and include benefits, such as sick pay and paid leave.
- Provide work clothes or uniforms for staff.
- Pay fair prices for goods and services sources from local communities.
- Apply fair practice when marking up goods.
- Use Fair Trade coffee & tea, wine, and chocolate.

##### Best Practice – Fair Practice

**White Shark Projects**, Gansbaai (Shark case diving operator) FTSA accredited.

- The company has all its staff on proper employment contracts, outlining amongst others their wages, leave allocation, details of overtime, and pension plan (if applicable).

- The company subsidises medical aid.
- The company is a BBBEE contributor: Level 1 and incorporates a staff shareholding scheme with currently 25% staff ownership through BEE deal.

### **Local Procurement**

- Define a radius within which you will source the vast majority of the goods and services necessary for your business, e.g. 50 km radius.
- Source as many of the goods and services necessary for your business within the set radius as possible.
- Set up a supplier register and recognise order localities. This may help in identifying ways to combine deliveries and reduce transportation/carbon footprint.
- Recruit & employ local staff. Set targets to increase the number of local people you employ and the percentage of the business's wage bill that supports local residents (e.g. 50% supports people living within 50 km radius of your enterprise with a 5% increase per annum).
- Replace mass-produced items with locally produced hand-made items, e.g. room numbers, keyholders, guest amenity containers.

### **Best Practice – Local procurement**

**Farm 215**, Baardskeerdersbos (4\* Country House Accommodation) FTSA accredited.

- Buy ALL goods and services locally from within a radius of 60 km from the farm. Only if certain products cannot be sourced locally, will they look beyond this radius.
- All wines stocked are also local from the Hemel en Aarde Valley and Elim region and most are from vineyards, who are members of the Biodiversity Wine Initiative.

**White Shark Projects**, Gansbaai (Shark case diving operator) FTSA accredited.

- The company employs the first trained black skipper in South Africa.
- Their local procurement policy looks to support local suppliers first and foremost. They started the Little Shoppe in Hermanus as a way to support a new business and provide job creation. The current manager has now taken over the day-to-day running and has started up a second Little Shoppe in the harbour, which is run by one of the trainees from the first Little Shoppe.

### **Enterprise Development**

- Encourage clients to visit local food & craft markets.
- Exhibit and display arts & crafts from local artists and make these items available for sales to your clients.
- Support small businesses on a long-term basis and thereby assisting them to grow.
- Mentor and assist emerging (tourism) enterprises, especially community-based initiatives.
- Mentor new enterprises on how to implement sustainable business practises.
- Provide micro-loans or small interest free loans to help start small businesses in disadvantaged communities.

## **Best Practice – Enterprise Development**

### **Southern Right Charters, Hermanus (Boat whale watching operator) FTSA accredited**

- A couple of years ago, the company provided funding to local entrepreneurs with interest free loans to purchase three container shops. These were intended to be used as Chat Centres, where people from the local community can get advice on cell phones, buy airtime, and make phone calls for those without cell phones. People were initially trained by cell phone network providers and subsequently run the Chat Centres as independent small businesses.
- As the whale watching operation is a seasonal business, staff were given first refusal and currently one Chat Centre is run by the family of a member of staff and the other two by community members from the local underprivileged community.
- More recently, they provided a grant to a local community member to obtain his truck driver's license.
- An interesting observation is that Southern Right Charters decided to go for the FTSA accreditation, not only because they want to do the right thing, but also as they saw the benefits of FTSA accreditation from companies in Gansbaai and understood the commercial value of taking this step to increase their market share.

### **Farm 215, Baardskeerdersbos (4\* Country House Accommodation) FTSA accredited.**

- Early in 2011, Farm215 has made some farm buildings and land available to the Centre for Appropriate Rural Technology (CART) to set up CART Koudeberg. CART has already been active in the former Transkei homeland for over five years and in Koudeberg CART wants to focus on three core areas, a Centre of excellence for sustainable and responsible agriculture, a developmental education centre, and urban food security.

## **4.2.6 Social Toolkit**

Maximise social and cultural benefits to the local community and minimise potential negative impacts.

### **Community and Social Development**

- Set an annual budget allocation for your community & social initiatives.
- Support a non-profit organisation or NGO by setting up a scheme within your business, where all staff will donate some time and money to this charity.
- Make plans on how to raise funds for your chosen cause, by e.g. raising a levy, hosting charity event.
- Provide information to your clients of your chosen cause, e.g. on their pillow at down-turn service, and encourage them to make donations or donate e.g. unwanted clothes.
- Encourage clients to visit local projects and attractions.
- Support community development initiatives.
- Support local conservation projects.
- Sponsor charity event auctions by donating an accommodation voucher or free activity.
- Advise tourists in making charitable donations in appropriate ways rather than giving sweets or money to children. This however requires knowledge and understanding of appropriate local charities to support.
- Promote local cuisine by including local dishes on your menu offered to guests. Consider including at least one local dish on your menu and create opportunities for local entrepreneurs to produce, supply and serve local cuisine.
- Assist with recording of oral history for destination brochure.

## **Best Practice – Community and Social Development**

**White Shark Projects**, Gansbaai (Shark case diving operator) FTTSA accredited.

- Masekhane/White Shark Projects Swop Shop combines conservation, social improvement, and education in a unique way. The children of Masekhane collect bottles, tins, plastics, and other recyclables and bring them in bags to the White Shark Swop Shop. In return, they earn buying points that they can 'spend' in the shop. For example, one bag of tins might be traded for a bar of soap, two might be worth a pencil, four a secondhand T-shirt and so on. Or the children can 'save up' for something more special like a toy. The shop carries only worthwhile items, such as stationery, simple clothing, and food basics, and relies solely on donations.
- This way, children learn valuable lessons about caring for their environment and earn something for the upkeep of their community surroundings. It also empowers historically disadvantaged children, helping them grow into self-sufficient, contributing adults.

## **Skills Development**

- Set up an in-house training programme for skills development, including HIV/AIDS awareness, adult literacy, first aid, and environmental awareness. Ensure all staff are involved in the planning, allocation, and execution of the own skills development.
- Facilitate education for staff's children.
- Offer career talks on your industry at local schools.
- Employ and train an intern.
- Offer high school students a job shadowing programme.
- Commit to employing a graduate from a local tourism college.
- Organise an on-site tourism career day for the local community.

## **Best Practice – Skills Development**

**Dyer Island Cruises**, Gansbaai (Boat whale watching operator) FTTSA accredited.

- Nolwandle Crafts Project is a community development programme initiated in 2006 to provide skills and employment for previously disadvantaged people in the local community. Fifteen women from the local township of Masakhane were provided with beading and craft training, which empowered them by giving them skills that they can subsequently use to become financially independent and self-sufficient.
- They now produce beaded jewellery and accessories, as well as pieces of traditional clothing. They sell their works of art to locals within the township, at various community events, and to the many of tourists that come to Gansbaai for whale watching and shark cage diving.
- In December 2007, the Nolwandle women received a contract to make 1,000+ bags for the participants of the 17th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, hosted by the Society for Marine Mammals, in Cape Town.

**Grootbos Private Nature Reserve**, Gansbaai (5\* luxury accommodation) FTTSA accredited.

- On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011, as part of the Grootbos Foundation, a Spaza shop was opened that currently sells fresh produce from the Growing the Future project, as well as a variety of smaller items like cold drinks, chips, and sweets.
- The Growing the Future project is all about food production, training eight women per year in growing vegetables and fruit, beekeeping and animal husbandry. This will not only enable them to feed their own families, but also make a living by selling the surplus through this Spaza shop.

#### 4.2.7 Further Reading

Guide for Sustainable Tourism Best Practices (no date) Rainforest Alliance. [http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/sites/default/files/site-documents/tourism/documents/tourism\\_practices\\_guide.pdf](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/sites/default/files/site-documents/tourism/documents/tourism_practices_guide.pdf)

Responsible Tourism Handbook – a guide to good practice for tourism operators (2003) Greening the WSSD.

[http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/tourism/Documents/Responsible%20Tourism/Tourism\\_RT\\_Responsible\\_Tourism\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/tourism/Documents/Responsible%20Tourism/Tourism_RT_Responsible_Tourism_Handbook.pdf)

Responsible Tourism in Cape Town (no date) City of Cape Town, Tourism Department.

[http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/tourism/Documents/Responsible%20Tourism/Responsible\\_tourism\\_bro\\_web.pdf](http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/tourism/Documents/Responsible%20Tourism/Responsible_tourism_bro_web.pdf)

Responsible Tourism in Cape Town: A How-To Guide. Guidelines for implementing responsible practices in the tourism industry (2011) City of Cape Town, Tourism Department.

Responsible Tourism Manual for South Africa (2002) Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, RSA.

[http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/tourism/Documents/Responsible%20Tourism/Tourism\\_RT\\_Responsible\\_Tourism\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/tourism/Documents/Responsible%20Tourism/Tourism_RT_Responsible_Tourism_Manual.pdf)

South African National Standard – Responsible Tourism – requirements (SANS 1162:2011 Edition 1) (2011) SABS Standards Division.

<https://www.sabs.co.za/webstore/standards/product.php?id=1400024207>

### 4.3 Regional Identity

The concept of regional branding was already one of the main recommendations in the Cape Agulhas Tourism Development Framework (2004). This report states clearly that a strategic, focused, and consistent brand and marketing message shared by all the role-players in the destination must be created. Destination branding therefore must aim to reflect the characteristics of the region, while providing potential visitors with an indication of the benefit offered to them for visiting the destination.

The logic behind creating a strong regional brand is to bring together, under one central theme, an encompassing identity to promote and position the area and its attractions. First though, the brand structure and identity needs to be developed.

We would suggest two main 'gateways' to be identified that can be promoted as feeders to the southern Overberg. Our proposal would be to position Hermanus on the coastal side, and Napier as the inland approach zone. However, while the highlights of Hermanus are already promoted, the nuances of Napier are not, so creating a priority list for marketing, training, and networking is required to improve this situation.

It will be important to identify an overarching theme that can function as the nucleus of the tourism effort. Nature-based and responsible tourism would identify with the real essence of the southern Overberg, describing its unspoilt nature, heritage, wines, whales, and wildlife. The pelagic birds that visit Dyer Island each year already make it one of the richest and most bio-diverse populations in the world. The area is home to the Marine Big 5 (whales, sharks, dolphins, penguins, and seals), trademarked to recognise the oceanic uniqueness, especially when it comes to marketing at an international level. The underdevelopment and wildness of the area is another positive attribute.

Hermanus is without a doubt the most well-known town and possesses a strong identity and brand as one of the best land-based whale watching sites in the world. However, with climate change and the impact of food availability, as well as the health of the ocean environment taken into account, there are indications that whale populations may be migrating more into other areas. In 2011, there has been anecdotal evidence that the animals occurred in greater numbers in the area around De Hoop. Rather than this being seen as a negative evolution, it provides the greater Overberg with scope for extending the reach of the marine attractions and opening up new potential tourism opportunities and a natural flow into other towns.

Gansbaai and its immediate area show the largest concentration of Fair Trade Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) certified companies in the country (see also section 3.2.1), which is a positive draw card for the 'new' tourist, looking to support fair trade and responsible holiday destinations. The current demand for fair trade holidays comes primarily from international visitors, whereas the domestic visitors are less aware of these factors. However, awareness is on the increase in South Africa as well, due to the growing popularity of greener lifestyles.

Particularly inspiring is the commitment by landowners in the Nuwejaars Wetland Special Management Area (see also section 3.2.3), between Elim and Bredasdorp, to conserve environmentally valuable wetlands areas and other rare habitats, recognising the opportunity for skills development and job creation through tourism.

The Biodiversity in Wine Initiative (BWI) endorsed by WWF has increasing numbers of member wine estates in the Overberg (see also section 3.2.1), which is encouraging as it indicates that other industries, such as the wine trade, are also buying in to the concept of sustainability and recognise the potential importance to the tourist industry.

With the development of a more cohesive and inclusive regional identity centred on nature and sustainability, should naturally enhance visitors' understanding of the area and provide insight in the diversity of the overall destination instead of identifying with just one or two destinations.

### **Findings of Other Tourism Development Frameworks in the Overberg**

Many of the above tourism attractions are also mentioned in the Cape Agulhas Tourism Development Framework (2004). The report states that the Cape Agulhas region has a number of product strengths, such as unique natural and cultural attractions, and icons, such as the Southernmost tip of Africa, the Agulhas lighthouse, dwarf Elim fynbos, the 'ship graveyard', which present unique marketing and branding opportunities. However the southern-most tip is poorly defined and is situated in an uninteresting environment, without dramatic topography or vegetation. In addition, the present approach to the area through Struisbaai and Agulhas is not attractive and the environment along the coastal road to the southern-most tip represents 'more of the same', without any climax or 'sense of arrival' at the southern-most tip.

They furthermore state that a strategic, focused, and consistent brand and marketing message shared by all the role-players in the destination must be created. Branding is essential in positioning and communicating the desired image to the market. Destination branding therefore must aim to reflect the characteristics of the region while providing potential visitors with an indication of the benefit offered to them for visiting the destination.

The Cape Agulhas Spatial Development Framework (SDF) (2002) proposes the following vision for advancing tourism to the area.

Develop tourism as a sustainable industry, supporting or enhancing marginal industries, and contributing significantly to the improvement of the quality of life of all the communities of the Cape Agulhas Municipal Area.

The SDF proposes that the planning and design principles known as critical regionalism be adopted to provide a theoretical framework for planning, design, and development. Critical regionalism is based on five principles that guides the planning, design, and management of development, namely:

**Sense of Place** – In practice, when preparing and considering development applications (including architecture and placement of new infrastructure) it is important to ensure that the sensed quality of the unique components of a particular place, including its identity, character, structure, local climate, topography, vegetation, building materials, building practices and local authenticity, are included in the planning and design.

**Sense of History** – The Cape Agulhas district and its people have a particularly rich history that needs to form the basis of the development and land use of the district.

**Sense of Craft** – The unique architecture that characterises traditional settlements in the Cape Agulhas district is one of its most unique features. These characteristics and the craftsmanship of the local people evolved in response to the challenges of nature and the needs of the historic people of



A study was commissioned by the Provincial Administration of the Western Cape (PAWC) in 2003-04, to investigate the costs/benefits and feasibility of upgrading several of the regional routes, as well as prepare a Tourism Development Framework. Several years on, proposals are still in place to improve road access into the region however it is recognised that infrastructure budget limitations exist.

Until such a time that a more comprehensive arterial road structure is developed, access for larger coaches (40-50 pax) carrying visitors into the region will be restricted and therefore the opportunity of increasing tourism benefit to many towns remains precarious. The condition of the existing gravel road network is generally good however, making it only possible for 8-16 seater minibuses to manage all routes. Many tour operators are happy to use vehicles of this size, and generally these operators are the ones more sensitive and aware of environmental impacts and they tend to travel with due caution. However from an economic point of view, it is beneficial to attract larger sized tour groups into the region.

There are a number of factors to consider when attracting large tour groups based on the 40-50 passenger capacity coaches. The downside of dealing with this type of tour operator is that they often have little consideration for true sustainability issues, including fair pricing, supporting local communities and/or businesses, and environmental impacts. The cost structure of large tour groups is often aggressive with very narrow profit margins, leaving the suppliers with a choice of either cutting their prices drastically or losing business. It should also be noted that tourism sustainability of the region heavily depends on conserving its natural resources, which is easier with manageable numbers of visitors rather than attempting to tap into the mass tourism market.

Accommodating large numbers is also a challenge, as Hermanus and Arniston are currently the only two towns with hotels large enough to accommodate group tours. Innovative thinking is required, so that the area does not by default exclude groups, but rather examines the possibility of creating a novel transport system. Mini-busses could be used to ferry visitors from either Hermanus or Arniston to local attractions that are not accessible for larger coaches. In addition, this would create job and skills development opportunities for local people.

### **Road signage**

The region is ideally situated between two of South Africa's icons, Cape Town and the Garden Route, and therefore should be more influential, as a destination in terms of securing a larger market share. Critical to improving the region's market share is improving road signage. Inadequate road signage prevents visitors from seeing many of the potential highlights in the region. This is compounding the loss of income for the area, which has already been affected by the global economic recession. Lack of signage will continue to restrict tourism businesses from accessing the market until it is resolved.

A collaborative approach to improving signage, driven by CAT, will be more powerful if done as a regional brand liaising with the government departments influential in decision-making processes.

### **Destination Marketing**

Up until now, marketing for tourism in the Overberg has tended to focus on products and destinations within the region in isolation. Operators in the shark cage diving industry, whale watching companies, and nature reserves have created their own singular identities, which has resulted in polarised and restricted tourism flows, leading to some areas being neglected. Linkages feeding out from strong products are minimal, except perhaps in Gansbaai, and the region has not been successful in building a critical mass of elements to entice tourists outside of these traditional areas.

A nucleus of tourism businesses in the Agulhas Plain region have excellent responsible tourism credentials, including many wineries on the Hermanus Wine Route and in the Elim area, FTSA accredited businesses, and businesses such as Stanford Valley Farm (section 3.2.1). These best practice examples can be used as role models, and not only help to increase the understanding of the principles, but also explain the commercial value of responsible tourism. Interestingly, Southern Right Charters recently decided to apply for the FTSA accreditation, not only because they feel it is the ethical business route to take, but also based on the marketing edge they see it has given their competitors.

Interestingly, these flagship responsible tourism businesses evolved typically as a result of bottom-up and not a top-down direction, and this is essentially why they have been so successful. In the roll out of the new strategy and in terms of keeping all stakeholders involved, it will be necessary to adopt a general approach, so that there is a top-down flow of motivation and action that will help to inspire change in businesses towards greater sustainability at all levels. The process will start with the tourism departments of the individual municipalities to encourage them to engage and lead the way. This is actually in their interests, if they are to meet environmental and social targets set by the provincial government in terms of sustainability.

It is vital to re-evaluate the existing marketing methods and incorporate modern technology, including social media as well as other dynamics that will help to broaden the reach. Tourism offices should be looking at electronic marketing facilities, such as Facebook and Twitter, and touch screen information centres that can enhance the current, more traditional promotional platforms. By consolidating and linking all tourism related websites for the area and associating these with the new brand identity will create a bolder and more prominent web presence.

The current experience of the Cape Agulhas region is perceived as uninteresting and short-lived due to a limited supply of tourist facilities and lack of capitalization on existing assets. There is an urgent need to bring together the various initiatives and attractions, so that when successfully marketed and branded collectively, it will provide an exciting overall experience worthy of the visitors' interest, time, and monetary spend. In terms of improvements, much of this will depend on the correct training of tourism officers and personnel involved at the 'coal face', so that they are made aware of the region's key attractions and the diversity of product base available to them as brand ambassadors.

The roll out of the responsible tourism toolkit should be timed carefully, so that business owners can collectively begin to access the resources they need, know where to find them, and enter the learning process together. This is a streamlined approach that will create a more thorough and comprehensive level of understanding, allowing business owners to accept the principles of sustainability as a logical operational model that makes sound business sense. This will require top-down training, starting with all municipalities and tourism offices, so that they too are familiar with what needs to be achieved.

One of the most important selling points that will impress today's financially savvy traveller is the economic value of the area. The southern Overberg offers a diverse and interesting range of attractions, with a range of accommodation and adventures to suit every pocket. This interpretation is particularly relevant when it comes to comparing the area to the more established Garden Route, which is now seen as an expensive destination. It therefore makes sense for operators to encourage visitors to consider breaking their journey, discover something new and get to know the Overberg. This needs to be incorporated as part of the new marketing campaign, as a way to increase market share.

It is interesting to note that the Cape Agulhas lighthouse at the southern tip of Africa attracted an average of 25,251 visitors per annum between 2005 and 2009. Over the same period De Hoop Nature Reserve's average number of visitors was 14,890 per year. It is expected that this number will increase now that the Madikwe Collection is managing and marketing its accommodation.

The shark boat operators in the Gansbaai area claim to have received more than 60,000 visitors per annum over this same period. One of the concerns raised by provincial government and also identified in the second UCT study (Appendix 2) is that many of the shark cage diving tourists generally use the daily shuttle from Cape Town, i.e. visiting the area just for the day. This prevents visitors from exploring the area further and hence resulting in a relative loss of income for the Overberg as a whole.

It is vital to change this demographic of visitor pattern, i.e. that many of the Overberg visitors only stay for literally one day. This economic reality is the result of a weak destination brand and can be improved by a new collaborative approach.

By adopting an overarching identity connected to nature, the marketing reach, and economic accomplishment of the region will be infinitely more successful, particularly if the area positions itself with sustainable development its guiding principles. This commitment to work collectively towards managing tourism in partnership with nature will in itself be a pioneer project that will bring with it potential spin-offs. It has huge marketing and media value, especially being the first region to wholeheartedly embrace sustainability and conservation, in line with the directive from both the provincial and national government tourism departments. It will be a useful blue print for others looking for novel ways of approaching tourism business management in the new green economy. A regional policy to conduct responsible, nature-based tourism has the added benefit of attracting funding from NGO's and organizations that specifically seek opportunities to work with projects that interface sustainable economics with environmental integrity and tourism.

## **5. Legacy Report**

### **5.1 Recommendations for implementation of a Visitor's Responsible Tourism Guide**

A visitor's responsible tourism guide should be designed and branded in line with the new regional identity. Both a printed in DL format and an e-brochure version should be produced and distributed across the various regional tourism bureaus and their members. However the distribution of the visitor's guide to the tourism bureau members should be through a themed networking meeting, so that everybody understands the purpose and importance of a visitor's responsible tourism guide and will use it accordingly.

### **5.2 Recommendations for implementation of the Responsible Tourism Toolkit**

If the responsible tourism toolkit were to be rolled out through the regional tourism bureaus, all their staff will need to be trained properly, as to what responsible tourism entails. At present, tourism bureau staff is lacking a full understanding of the concept of sustainability and would not be in a position to assist tourism businesses in directing and empowering them on their responsible tourism journey. In this case, one person in each tourism bureau should be given the responsibility for the implementation of the responsible tourism toolkit to its members. This will require proper responsible tourism training for the tourism bureau staff and a suitable trainer or training organization should be appointed.

Alternatively, regional workshops for tourism and tourism related businesses on how to implement responsible tourism into their business model can be set up. Workshops should be developed for different levels of expertise, to make them interesting for both the novices and the more advanced.

The promotion of product knowledge exchange between business owners is an extremely powerful tool. Hence, the practical understanding of running a sustainable tourism business and the expertise of FTSA accredited and other flagship businesses should be utilised in the roll out of the responsible tourism toolkit.

Likewise, the implementation of networking training between tourism offices should also be employed and promoted.

Equally it would be beneficial to engage with municipalities to provide training opportunities to those people responsible for tourism within these organisations in order to bridge sustainability across all platforms.

Rates for a suitable trainer for the above workshops are generally in the region of R3,000 per day plus travel expenses & subsistence. It would be advisable to have at least three separate workshops to cover the triple bottom line principle of responsible tourism with sessions on environmental, economic, and social action plans. Serendipity Africa would be well placed and qualified for training of Agulhas Plain tourism bureau staff, tourism officers from municipalities, and/or tourism and tourism related businesses.

### **5.3 Recommendations for implementation of a Regional Identity**

#### **Create an overarching brand/mission statement.**

Appendix 6 shows a fully cost example of a 'brand positioning' proposal with a quotation for the development of a brand identity for the Agulhas Plain region, focused on 'pristine nature-based tourism' being the key marketing message. The company we have selected to do this has worked with nature-based and environmentally motivated projects and is well equipped and qualified to be able to put into action a broad spectrum plan of campaign that will include the design of a new destination logo, the set-up of a simple website or bog with associated social media platforms, as well as a suggested budget for monthly on-going support and assistance with social media, until such a time that there is suitable knowledge to be able to continue unaided.

It is important to concentrate on bringing the region together first and foremost, and to define what it is that makes it so special and how this can be incorporated into a brand/mission statement that will build pride in the area and appeal at to the potential visitor on an emotional level.

Look to develop special interest routes that will expose the more unusual projects in the region. Heritage is particularly relevant as there are many stories to tell.

Develop new marketing material in collaboration with a brand specialist.

Roll out a targeted media campaign and plan for product launch. If necessary, appoint a suitable PR company or appoint a qualified media individual.

Decide where best to position the marketing spend in terms of which shows and exhibitions to attend, as well as consider collectively what finance is available to reveal and platform the new brand in the market.

Utilise available finance in an efficient and co-ordinated way so that the marketing spend delivers real value.

### **5.4 Further Recommendations**

The success of responsible tourism businesses and the foundation of sustainability already in place in the region, gives credibility to the goal of creating a destination that prides itself on responsible management of its natural resources. The region's sustainable identity can be further enhanced through projects such as:

#### **Developing Elim as a tourism centre**

As was stated in section 3.2.2, Elim has a real potential to become a tourism gem within the Agulhas Plain region. However, it needs assistance with town maintenance, job creation, and skills development outside the traditional thatch roofing craft. Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) would be able to assist with the training and funding of four nature eco-guides from the Elim district, with the idea that they would be available to promote both Elim as well as the wider region, including the Nuwejaars Wetland SMA.

#### **De Hoop Nature Reserve**

To enhance De Hoop's nature conservation value, on-going alien vegetation removal and litter

management are essential. WESSA would be willing to assist De Hoop to fund an alien vegetation removal programme under their Alien Clearing Project. A partnership with the Dyer Island Conservation Trust can be developed to introduce a coastal litter clean-up campaign in De Hoop.

### **Tourism Bureaus**

In order for Agulhas Plain tourism bureau staff to promote their members' businesses to their full potential, educational/familiarisation trips for tourism office staff should be on offer. This will enable them to truly experience the region's tourism offerings and expand their product knowledge.

### **Other projects**

Re-evaluate access policy to parts of the Cape Agulhas National Park (in-house)

Liaise with highways to request better signage (in-house)

Develop conservation projects and apply for donor funding.

It is recommended, if Agulhas Plain regional tourism bureaus are to implement some or all of the above projects, to appoint a consultant who can coordinate the project(s) and find funding from external sources. Serendipity Africa has not only ample experience in project management and fund raising, but is only very familiar with the Agulhas Plain tourism situation and future nature-based tourism strategy.