

NARRATIVE MID-TERM PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE PROJECT

*Balancing Ecotourism And Livestock Production- Implications For Livelihoods And
The Environment*

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Introduction

This project contributes towards the discussion on the key issues of concern as the GLTFCA evolves. The project departs from the more common ecological and veterinary approaches and takes a socio-economic perspective which includes engagement of rural communities in the GLTFCA.

The objectives of this project are to

- determine household income benefits of ecotourism through assessment of consumers' willingness to pay and communities' preferences for ecotourism projects
- analyse the incentive structure to engage in specific economic activities and the trade-offs for alternative scenarios of livestock and ecotourism as livelihood options in consultation with stakeholders through spatially explicit bio-economic modelling

Activities that have been done so far

- Since January we have held focussed group discussions with groups of stakeholders and key informant interviews in the study area adjacent to the Punda Maria Gate of Kruger National Park. At the end of this exercise we managed to establish the main opportunities for community engagement in ecotourism and the related constraints that limit community participation in ecotourism based livelihoods . We have also established the current state of community involvement in ecotourism activities.
- A questionnaire has been designed in consultation with communities which will be used to determine tourist preferences for ecotourism support
- Some preliminary interviews have also been done to establish general tourist attitudes towards various ecotourism related activities
- A theoretical framework for analysing livestock and ecotourism as land use options has also been developed. This will form the basis for community engagement
- A presentation of the project proposal was also done at the 9th AHEAD working group meeting in Naamacha, Mozambique in March 2009
- The work done so far is mainly consisted of preparatory work to enable the survey with tourists that has been scheduled for July as well as a more active process of community engagement during the agricultural off season when farmers have more time to participate in workshops. Although the detailed survey was planned for the months of February and March, this was not possible because of the low volume of tourists. It is expected that more progress will be made in the second

half of the year as the questionnaires have now been prepared and the tourist season also gets underway.