

PARKS, PEACE, AND PARTNERSHIP: GLOBAL INITIATIVES IN TRANSBOUNDARY CONSERVATION

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Fast-Track Strengthening of the Management Capacity of Conservation Institutions: The Case of the Effect of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park in Mozambique's Capacity

Bartolomeu Soto

INTRODUCTION

The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) was established in December 2002, when the Head of the States of Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe signed a treaty in Xai-Xai city in Mozambique. The treaty that establishes the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park has the following objectives:

- (i) foster transnational collaboration and co-operation among the parties which will facilitate effective ecosystem management in the area;
- (ii) promote alliances in the management of biological natural resources by encouraging social, economic, and other partnerships among parties, including private sector, local communities, and non-governmental organizations;
- (iii) enhance ecosystem integrity and natural ecological process by harmonizing environmental management procedures across international boundaries and striving to remove artificial barriers impeding the natural movement of wildlife;
- (iv) facilitate the establishment and maintenance of a sustainable sub-regional economic base through appropriate development frameworks, strategies, and work plans;
- (v) develop transborder ecotourism as a means of fostering regional socio-economic development; and
- (vi) establish a mechanism to facilitate the exchange of technical, scientific, and legal information for the joint management of the ecosystem.

Mozambique's system of protected areas was in a bad state as the country has just faced a long period of war (1976–92) that affected the country's wealth, destroyed the infrastructure in protected areas, and disturbed the development of human resources in conservation. According to the World Bank (1996), Mozambique was one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income of US\$80 in 1995.

Government priorities were directed to support emergency programs, the people who were affected by the war, and poverty reduction. However the political commitment of government was demonstrated by the fact that it pursued the funds from Global Environment Facility (GEF) and

after accessing it, the government had taken the step to lead the process of establishing transfrontier conservation areas with its neighbours in 1997. These efforts resulted in the establishment of three transfrontier conservation areas five years later, namely the Lubombo TFCA, involving Mozambique, Swaziland, and South Africa, established in 1999, the Chimanimani TFCA involving Mozambique and Zimbabwe, established in 2001, and the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, established in 2002, involving Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

One of the greatest benefits of TFCA formation is the increase in capacity among respective national partner institutions to manage resources. Capacity-building in less-developed partner nations is also an area where donor organizations need to focus to create a long-term option for sustainable management (Metcalf 1999).

South Africa and Zimbabwe were regarded as the most advanced countries in southern Africa in terms of parks and wildlife management. Kruger National Park is one of the largest parks of the region with a highly capable technical team in the field, operating with sufficient means. The Gonarezhou Park in Zimbabwe has less capacity and fewer resources than Kruger, but Zimbabwe had a highly successful community-based natural resource management (CBNRM): the Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE).

Local non-governmental organizations and the private sector were very active in the conservation practices within both South Africa and Zimbabwe. In Mozambique, however, the majority of non-governmental organizations were international and devoted to emergency actions and less to conservation and development. In addition, the Mozambican private sector was still relatively new to, and did not have experience in, conservation-based business.

Mozambique has defined two fundamental considerations for entering the GLTP: (i) the need for rural communities to benefit from new economic activities associated with natural resource utilization; and (ii) the need for these resources to be managed on a sustainable basis so as to safeguard biodiversity and maintain options for the future (DNFFB 2001). To achieve the needs mentioned, the Mozambican government faced the challenge of providing the required capacity for all role players, namely

government institutions at all levels (which are the leaders of the initiative), the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and local communities. An important challenge for government was to build consensus and common goals with stakeholders in the GLTP through effective inter-institutional coordination.

Although capacity-building for conservation and sustainable development is a complex endeavour, TFCA initiatives can act as catalysts for developing countries to increase expertise and the implementation of best practices. Working across borders can help to share resources more equitably across a region. Less-developed countries can benefit from the financial resources and capacity of more-developed countries, while all parties share the benefits of transboundary connections.

This paper aims to discuss the effect of the decision taken by the Government of Mozambique to engage in transfrontier conservation area projects. There were significant challenges associated with this decision because Mozambique did not have a fully functional national system of protected areas and was suffering from a lack of financial resources, professional capacity, institutional frameworks necessary to implement TCFAs, and the necessary partnerships with the private sector.

MOZAMBIQUE'S INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT FOR CONSERVATION AREAS

Protected areas and wildlife were under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADER), specifically within the National Directorate for Forestry and Wildlife (DNFFB), until 2001. Prior to the independence of Mozambique (1975) from the Portuguese, parks and wildlife were managed by Veterinary Services.

The Department of Wildlife within the DNFFB was responsible for execution of the TFCA project. It was this department that led the preparation of the TFCA project, and it was within the department that the TFCA Project Unit functioned for the implementation of the project, which started in 1997. The Department of Wildlife of the DNFFB had an insufficient budget for protected areas. In addition, about 95 per cent of

the budget was committed to paying salaries. There were few qualified and experienced staff at all levels (senior management, middle level, and game scouts) and their numbers were reduced. However, DNFFB had a number of expatriates working for a donor-funded project, mainly implemented by the FAO, on a forest plantation of exotic trees and forest management. However, none of them had skills in wildlife and parks management. In addition, the donors were not supporting any activity of the Department of Wildlife.

The Department of Wildlife faced serious communication problems between headquarters and the provincial offices, which were all under equipped. The lack of manpower and capacity at all levels of government (district, provincial, and central) was considered as the most serious constraint to the implementation of the TFCA concept, which was recognized as demanding an appropriate integrated land-use plan and practices to realize its success (DNFFB 2001).

The Ministry of Tourism was established for the first time in Mozambique in 2000. In the past, tourism was under other institutions such as the Secretary of State of Tourism and then the Ministry of Trade and Industry. In 2001, the government determined the transfer of conservation areas from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to the Ministry of Tourism (MITUR). The areas transferred were: (i) national parks and game reserves, (ii) controlled hunting areas (iii) projects for exploitation and development of ecotourism, and (iv) ecotourism community programs. The transferred areas were put under the National Directorate of Conservation Areas (DNAC). The transference of conservation areas from MADER to MITUR caused a lack of clarity regarding the roles of each ministry. While national parks and game reserves and controlled hunting areas are declared by law and are well-defined areas, the projects for exploitation and development of ecotourism and the ecotourism community program areas were not defined in any of the existing regulatory frameworks of the country. This was caused due to technical level disputes of what would be transferred from one ministry to another following the government determination. It resulted in drafting a list of services to be transferred in an attempt to keep part of the services of the Department of Wildlife of the DNFFB within the Ministry of Agriculture.

This fact imposed challenges in management of protected areas and wildlife as the remaining ambiguity over the responsibility of the two ministries with regard to wildlife causes conflicts despite the fact that subsequently the Government of Mozambique passed a regulation of forest and wildlife (2002). This regulation attempted to specify the roles of the MADER and MITUR in administration of wildlife-related activities, stating that the wildlife that is outside protected areas is under the management of MADER and within protected areas it is under MITUR. Similarly, it was clarified that the TFCA project would be implemented by the Ministry of Tourism. However, this project is implemented in areas between the protected areas.

The establishment of the Ministry of Tourism by the Government of Mozambique in 2000 was done with the intent of unlocking the tourism business in the country, recognizing that the country's natural resources were the main tourism attraction. The intention was to establish strong links between wildlife and protected areas with tourism of coastal areas. This institutional arrangement has played a key role in strengthening the position of the TFCA within government agencies. The project was supporting biodiversity conservation inside and outside protected areas and providing direct linkages to developing socioeconomic benefits through tourism.

The TFCA project was under the National Directorate of Conservation Areas in the Ministry of Tourism until 2002. Subsequently the Ministry of Tourism decided to create a TFCA Unit that was directly under the Minister of Tourism. The TFCA Unit was created due to the fact that the main activity of the project was interaction with the neighbouring countries and there was an increasing demand on its services that required high-level government decisions. The placement directly under the Minister of Tourism helped to reduce the bureaucratic steps and provided more power to the project unit to make decisions that were referred to the National Director of Conservation Areas.

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF GLTP

The GLTP establishment achieved an objective that was identified as early as 1938 when Gomes the Sousa proposed that the Kruger National Park could be linked to the former Coutada 16 in Mozambique. Since then, the issue of linking the two areas was sporadically raised by both countries. In 1989, Dr. Rupert from WWF South Africa paid a visit to the President Chissano of Mozambique and proposed that actions be taken to hatch the idea of a transfrontier park. In 1991 the proposal was discussed in the Council of Ministers of Mozambique, which supported the project but felt that there was a need prior to implementation for some political conditions to be resolved such as ending the war in Mozambique (it ended in 1992) and establishment of democracy in South Africa (first elections took place in 1994).

Nonetheless, Mozambique started to discuss the transboundary park project in 1991 with the World Bank. The intention was to prepare to access the GEF and be ready when the implementation conditions were favourable. In 1994 the country completed a final preparation study of the project that led to a change from the idea of a transboundary park to the concept of the transfrontier conservation areas and identified the three TFCAs, namely Lubombo, GLTP, and Chimanimani. These were later defined on the project appraisal document concluded in 1996 as relatively large areas, which straddle frontiers between two or more countries and cover large-scale natural systems encompassing one or more protected areas. These are areas where human and animal populations have traditionally migrated across or straddled political boundaries.

The Government of the Republic of Mozambique signed a legal agreement with the World Bank for financing the Mozambique Transfrontier Conservation Areas and Institutional Strengthening Project. The project became effective in 1997. This project was the first phase of a long-term TFCAs program of fifteen years in order to ensure the consolidation and sustainability of the initiative.

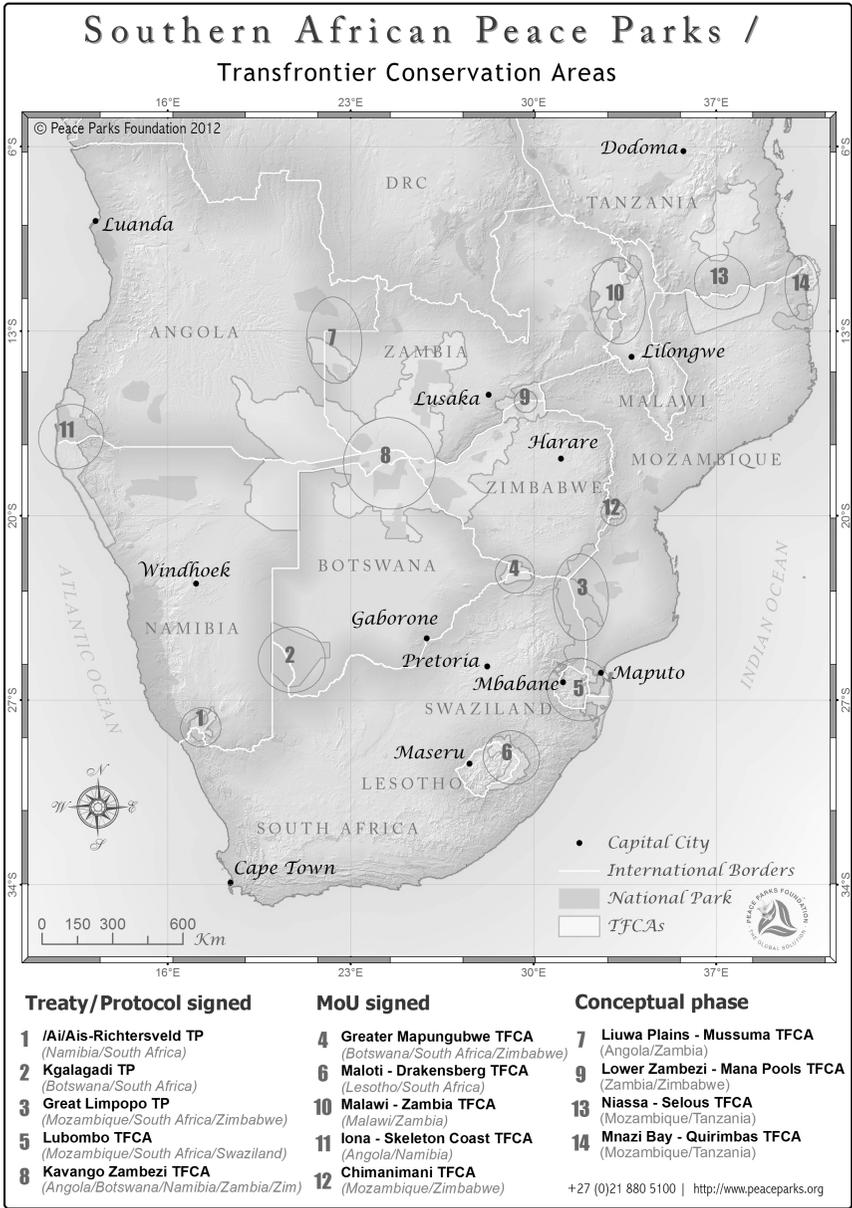
In 1998, wildlife officials of Kruger National Park, Kwa Zulu Natal Nature Conservation Services, Swaziland Wildlife Trust Commission, and Zimbabwe Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management

discussed the need for moving ahead with the establishment of pilot TFCAs. The group achieved consensus and an interim International Technical Committee (ITTC) was created. The ITTC completed the following activities: (i) defined a vision for the TFCA development; (ii) drafted terms of reference for sub-committees, which were formed for each TFCA, namely Chimanimani, Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou (the current GLTP), and Lubombo; and (iii) drafted an international agreement, which could be reviewed and signed by the respective ministers of the participating countries.

In 1999, the first ministerial meeting was convened in Maputo with a purpose of introducing the TFCA concept and reviewing the draft international agreement. The ministers approved in principle the need to establish TFCAs, and signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to that effect. The MOU showed the road map that would lead to the establishment of the GLTP. With the ministerial committee leadership, the countries undertook long negotiations that resulted in the signing of: the Gaza Kruger Gonarezhou Agreement by the ministers of the three countries in 2000 at Skukuza, South Africa, and the treaty between Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe in Xai-Xai, Mozambique.

The extent of the area that was delineated by the Treaty for the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park was the following (Map 1):

- (a) in Mozambique, the area known as – Limpopo National Park;
- (b) in South Africa, the areas known as –
 - (i) Kruger National Park; and
 - (ii) the Makuleke Region;
- (c) in Zimbabwe, the areas known as –
 - (i) Gonarezhou National Park;
 - (ii) Malipati Safari Area;
 - (iii) Manjinji Pan Sanctuary; and
 - (iv) The community areas which constitute the biodiversity corridor linking Gonarezhou to the Kruger National Park further south.



MAP 1. TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREAS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (PEACE PARKS FOUNDATION).

The establishment of the GLTP required adequate expertise, performance, and dedication from the parties. The Mozambican institutions were forced to apply a considerable effort. The development of the GLTP is continuing to demand more capacity of national institutions, which makes the institutional strengthening a continuous challenge.

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING IN MOZAMBIQUE

Following protracted periods of armed conflict, governance structures are often weakened and unable to control or effectively manage natural resources. A common underlying factor in conflict situations is a weak state system, which reduces the ability to maintain territorial integrity and thus the authority to control access to resources (Shambaugh et al. 2001). One of the most important results expected from the first phase of the TFCA program was the institutional strengthening of Mozambican institutions to be able to adequately manage the natural resources.

According to Hall-Martin and Modise (2002), capacity will have been established when: (i) there has been general development of skills and competence in government agencies responsible for TFCA implementation; (ii) there has been the particular enhancement of the TFCA project staff capabilities; (iii) the number of staff in national parks and game reserves has reached the critical threshold required to manage and protect these areas effectively; and (iv) the establishments are adequately financed and equipped to carry out their work.

The TFCA project was executed directly by government, which had the responsibility of leading and involving various stakeholders. For the implementation of the project, there were national committees and international committees. At the national level, the TFCA Project Unit was responsible for coordinating the participation of local communities, the private sector, and the government sector, e.g., customs, migration, human health, veterinary, and security. Internationally, the GLTP established the joint management committee and the ministerial committee through the treaty (2002). The joint management committee has the following roles:

- (a) be responsible for periodic revision and implementation of the Joint Management Plan for the Transfrontier Park;
- (b) determine mechanisms for administering funds received specifically for the transfrontier park;
- (c) be responsible for identifying financial needs and sourcing such funds as are required to achieve the effective implementation of the joint management plan;
- (d) establish such committees as may be necessary; and
- (e) provide reports to the ministerial committee.

The ministerial committee has the following roles:

- (a) be responsible for the overall policy guidance in the management of the transfrontier park;
- (b) be chaired on a rotational basis;
- (c) meet at least once a year; and
- (d) monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the joint management plan.

Over the years, implementation of the TFCA project has helped to leverage other donors' support for the TFCAs which has contributed to the rapid development of capacity of various stakeholders in the country. The GLTP received the support of the KfW, which was instrumental in determining the current development of the Limpopo National Park and the support of USAID. Recently, the French Development Agency has joined the group of donors who are supporting the Limpopo National Park. Further, the World Bank is financing the second phase of the TFCA program with a larger project, which in addition to conservation is supporting the development of tourism. The second phase started in 2006 and will last up to 2011. This set of support mechanisms is playing an important role in influencing the development of capacity within the country. Table 1 shows the evolution of government staff working in conservation areas in the country from 1994 to 2007.

Table 1. Number of Mozambique staff working in conservation.

	1994	2003	2007
<i>National Level</i>			
BSc and above	5	4	9
Middle level	0	0	4
Rangers	1	1	0
Scouts	0	–	0
<i>Provincial level</i>			
BSc and above	0	3	13
Middle level	11	5	5
Rangers	11	2	10
Scouts	28	–	–
<i>Protected Area Level</i>			
BSc and above	0	7	28
Middle level	2	7	35
Rangers	0	2	493
Scouts	40	120	121

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN GLTP AREA OF MOZAMBIQUE

The GLTP is a new opportunity that creates a socioeconomic dynamic that generates interest from the stakeholders. The private sector is seeing investment opportunities in tourism and related business and the non-governmental organizations are playing the advocacy role to protect the interest of local communities. Moreover, the TFCA project and the Community Forestry and Wildlife Management Project carried out the first training needs assessment (DNFFB 1999b) in 1999 that was used to help to orientate the training of various officers.

The TFCA project funded training that included short courses, seminars, study tours, an MSC course, a BSc course, and diploma courses in Mweka College (DNFFB 1999a). The TFCA also supported the development of the following key government institutions: DNFFB, SPFFB, District Agriculture Department, and local communities. The benefits were in technical assistance, logistical support, training, establishment of a GIS unit, and promotion of private-sector participation to establish conservation partnerships and support to international collaboration (DNFFB 1999b).

In addition, the TFCA project supported the DNFFB in developing job descriptions for staff (DNFFB 1999b). Due to the fact that the government plays the role of coordinator and regulator, its capacity was forced to increase to be able to provide the necessary services to the stakeholders.

Government Capacity-Building

The staff development had a significant evolution in protected areas such as Banhine, Zinave, and Limpopo since 1997. Particularly the upgrade of Coutada 16 to Limpopo National Park created opportunity to allocate qualified staff to the park. This park is actually benefiting from a co-management arrangement with the Peace Parks Foundation. The Banhine and Zinave National Parks had slower evolution in terms of staff but, since 2003, the staff numbers have increased. Similarly the Banhine National Park is benefiting from co-management that is being done with the African Wildlife Foundation. Table 2 provides details on staff evolution within the aforementioned parks and the respective provincial headquarters where they are located.

Table 2. Protected area staff employed.

	1994	2003	2007
<i>Gaza and Inhambane provinces</i>			
BSc and above	1	1	1
Middle level	1	–	–
Rangers	4	6	4
Scouts	2	4	4
<i>Bahnine National Park</i>			
BSc and above	–	–	2
Middle level	–	1	–
Rangers	–	1	20
Scouts	–	20	27
<i>Zinave National Park</i>			
BSc and above	–	–	1
Middle level	1	2	1
Rangers	1	2	2
Scouts	15	25	35
<i>Limpopo National Park</i>			
BSc and above	–	2	4
Middle level	–	4	5
Rangers	1	5	5
Scouts	3	90	120

Inter-governmental Technical Cooperation

One important achievement in the GLTP was the rational use of resources and technologies available in the region. Under the initiative, the Kruger National Park has collaborated in a number of activities with the Limpopo National Park. These include: wildlife veterinary surveys on tuberculosis and on foot and mouth disease of resident buffalo in Limpopo Park, the relocation of 4,200 animals of different species from Kruger to Limpopo, and aerial surveys of Limpopo National Park done jointly by the technical staff of both parks. Security control of the border involves the participation of various relevant departments. On this issue there is

a remarkable collaboration as well between the Gonarezhou Park and the Limpopo Park.

Private Sector

The Mozambican private sector is still in its emerging phase. At the same time that the government has promoted foreign investment, it is providing incentives to support the growth of the national private sector. The major concern is that the Mozambican private sector is particularly weak, inexperienced, and of limited capacity to undertake business based on conservation. To get involved in this type of business, the Mozambican private sector establishes partnerships with foreign investors most of the time, which result in a robust investment with adequate technical and financial capacity. Most of partners that are invited to establish partnerships are from South Africa.

The Limpopo National Park is implementing the first phase of a tourism development program. As part of the implementation of the Limpopo National Park Tourism Plan, the first phase included the establishment of facilities for camping, wilderness trails and 4 × 4 paths, including one luxurious eight-bed tenting camp. The park is currently preparing the implementation of a second phase. According to the minutes of a park meeting (2007), the second phase will be composed of three opportunities that were put out to tender late in 2007:

- (i) Madonse Concession, consisting of a three- to four-star lodge which could be expanded during the concession period to include a second four- to five-star lodge;
- (ii) Massingir Resort consisting of seventeen self-catering units and twenty-six camping stands, which can expand during the concession period to include an additional twenty-nine self-catering units; and
- (iii) House Boats in Massingir dam with eight beds each.

A further option will include Aguia Pesqueira, a popular campsite currently managed by the park, as a private concession opportunity for Mozambican businesses. The advantage for a local business opportunity is that infrastructure is already in place and visitation rates are very good. There is also good potential for facility expansion as park visitation is increasing.

Non-governmental Organizations and the Local Communities

The non-governmental organizations that are working on the GLTP in Mozambique have been playing primarily an advocacy role. Like others, their attention was attracted by the beginning of the negotiations toward establishment of the GLTP. Before the park was proclaimed, they worked with local communities on awareness of Mozambique's policy and legal framework. The Mozambican land law recognizes that communities living in an area for more than ten years automatically have the same rights equivalent to a title. So, if the government makes another decision on that land they deserve fair compensation. The land law also allows for delimitations of the community land. This is a reinforcing mechanism to help the community and government to clearly recognize the boundaries of the land that is for community. In this land any intention of use is subject to previous consultations and consent by the communities. Due to the need to strengthen the presence and better coordinate their actions, the NGOs established an NGO Forum, consisting of a number of local NGOs that are interested in issues of GLTP.

The government decided in 2004 to resettle 6,000 people that are living within the park. Based on the resettlement policy and process frameworks developed under the TFCA Program, the government conducted a process through a consultative committee for resettlement, composed of government representatives, leaders of the affected communities, and a representative of local NGOs appointed by the NGO forum.

The NGOs are also working on promoting income-generating activities for local communities. There is a community lodge that has been built with support of an NGO located south of Limpopo National Park.

Currently there are intentions of expanding the capacity of the lodge and initiating similar activities with other communities surrounding the park.

PREVENTION, MEDIATION, AND RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

The participation in the GLTP is steadily demanding more capacity from the stakeholders as the current dynamics are leading to increased complexity. The area covered by the GLTP became a prime area for investment. The land is becoming scarce and conflicts over the land are rising. In the GLTP, the committees established at both national and international levels are continuously working. The participating countries have decided to establish a permanent secretariat that will be based in South Africa and will have the responsibility of supporting the development of the GLTP. This will ensure that stakeholders will be maintained in constant collaboration and the upcoming challenges will be addressed properly and in a timely manner.

CONCLUSION

While the situation in Mozambique after the war in 1992 was very difficult for conservation, the hope was that peace was opening an opportunity for the country to develop conservation areas in a fashion that would capture the most advanced approaches. This implied that the participation of stakeholders was crucial. One important aspect to ensure effective participation is that the stakeholders have to have adequate capacity. With the few resources available to the Mozambique Government, it opted to establish regional partnerships. These partnerships have resulted in increased capacity and a rebuilding of the institutions involved in conservation.

In fact, the GLTP resulted in significant capacity-building of many stakeholders. It played a role in fostering national awareness and debates on the value of biodiversity and opening new opportunities for socioeconomic development mainly through nature-based tourism development. At same

time, the current developments in GLTP are attracting the attention of the local stakeholders positioning this TFCA as one of the most important in the country. This poses the challenge that the country will increasingly need to improve the capacity of its institutions and their effectiveness.

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