

Item:



CORPORATE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING NO:

27 March 2009

CULTURAL TOURISM CASE STUDY: TWYFELFONTEIN WORLD HERITAGE SITE

1. UNIT REQUESTING THE SUBMISSION:

Advisory Unit

2. PURPOSE OF SUBMISSION:

Presentation of a tourism case study for approval.

3. BRIEF INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

Approaches to cultural tourism site development are generally not well-documented. Research is necessary to better understand ways of formalising relationships and benefits streams. World Heritage Sites, given their international status, are required to formalise management plans and stakeholder structures. They are also potentially major tourist attractions which can galvanise destination development. For this reason they are particularly interesting case study sites. Recognising this, a case study was undertaken to consider the operations of a cultural tourism World Heritage Site in Namibia: Twyfelfontein. This case study is the first in a series of research reports on cultural World Heritage Sites in the SADC region.

4. DECISIONS REQUIRED FROM THE COMMITTEE:

Approval

5. ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED:

20 minutes including questions/ answers

6. NAME OF PRESENTER:

K Rivett-Carnac

7. ATTACHMENTS, REPORT SUBMISSIONS:

Case study document

EXECUTIVE MANAGER:
RESEARCH & INFORMATION DIVISION

DATE



CULTURAL TOURISM CASE STUDY: TWYFELFONTEIN WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has great potential to bring socio-economic development to countries. For this reason it has been prioritised as a sector for development in the SADC region. Most of Africa's tourism offerings (those packaged and marketed to tourists at any rate) are natural. That is, safari tourism, birding, beaches, mountains, and wildlife experiences in general are well-associated with the continent's tourism offering. Cultural tourism also presents great opportunities for development but has not received the same level of attention or support from either governments or industry as has nature tourism. In Europe, the leading tourism region in the world in terms of tourist arrivals received each year, cultural tourism is the main tourist offering. Old cities, churches, mosques, palaces, and the like receive hundreds of thousands of visits annually.

It is well-recognised that the cultural diversity of Africa, which comprises its history, heritage and cultural practices and products, is remarkable: the continent is the cradle of humankind, offers rock art and fossil sites, remnants of ancient civilizations, trading ports, music, art, dance and so on. There also exists the raw side of human suffering in the continent's past - that of the slave trade, Apartheid, and the various wars/conflicts. Contemporary culture is dynamic and exciting, as exemplified by the nightlife, markets, creative industries (including craft, music, art, dance, décor and design), and festivals on offer.

As the nature tourism offering becomes increasingly developed and marketed, the opportunity to use culture as a lever to diversify the tourism offerings, build new destinations, create bridges through enhancing understanding both within and between countries and people, and to distinguish countries on the continent from each other, presents itself.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CASE STUDY

Turning cultural resources into successful tourist attractions is no easy task. This requires plotting a course between commercial viability and the preservation of cultural integrity. It also involves ensuring not only community beneficiation but the ownership of the production of the experience by those people whose reality and/ or history it is. 'Township tourism', as a form of cultural tourism practiced in South Africa, indicates how the commodification of culture can raise difficult questions about authenticity, respect, benefits and so on. Furthermore, specific and deliberate institutional and financing models are needed to manage diverse stakeholder interests (from local communities, to international and national heritage agencies, and private sector operators) and to ensure financial viability of cultural tourism businesses.

A few examples of major cultural tourism attractions are emerging in SADC. At these sites tourism is often viewed as a means to an end – it is the means through which income and knowledge as well as interactions are furthered – in order to achieve the end of preservation of sites, educational outreach and development, cultural understanding and upliftment, profits and monies for stakeholders, and strides in scientific research.

Within the specific context of the DBSA, and its tourism portfolio, increasing demands for cultural tourism site development are being experienced. A number of cultural tourism projects have been proposed by clients such as district municipalities and provincial governments. Current examples include proposals around a West Coast Palaeo-tourism route, a Dinosaur Park and Khoesan village experience in Graaff Reinet, and the development of the Makapansgat, as part of an United Nation's Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage site (WHS). There are also opportunities to partner the African World Heritage Fund around world heritage site development on the continent.

It is thus critical to develop an understanding of cultural tourism practice at sites in the region. This will both entrench and formalise some of the knowledge regarding cultural tourism attraction development. A case study methodology has been chosen to highlight technical issues and options for cultural site development. UNESCO World Heritage sites have been chosen as the first case studies in this regard as their official international status confers certain responsibilities around site management, participation and reporting which facilitates scrutiny of their operations.

2.1 Case Study Methodology

Two case studies are to be developed for cultural UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Twyfelfontein in Namibia and the Cradle of Humankind in South Africa have been purposively chosen as the sites. The sites have been selected based on their complex partnership structures and financing arrangements, as well as their significant cultural status and community development agendas, and strong private sector participation.

Also, although both are cultural sites, their settings are very different: Twyfelfontein is in rural Northern Namibia, with a local population of less than three hundred people; the Cradle of Humankind is located just outside Johannesburg, in a peri-urban setting. One's development involved a massive financial commitment from government (Cradle of Humankind) and has a large visitor attraction that is privately managed. The other received little funding for capital expenditure purposes from government, and is managed by the relevant state heritage agency (Twyfelfontein). Both are reasonably 'successful' in that they receive substantial visitor numbers. Their differences allows for a useful comparison of approaches to cultural site development.

This document documents the case study findings for Twyfelfontein. The case study takes its direction from the approved Case Study Framework. The research question that this project seeks to answer is:

“What are the key considerations in cultural tourism attraction development from both a commercial viability and development impact, perspective?”

The case study research is being undertaken in partnership with ComMark, a policy institution based in Pretoria. ComMark has a particular interest in making markets work for the poor, and has chosen tourism as a sector to consider in this regard, and cultural tourism a particular area of investigation.

The research method combined secondary research through documentation provided by specialists and available online through websites such as the official UNESCO WHS website; and a limited number of personal interviews with project stakeholders. The interviewees pertaining to this case study, that is, for the Twyfelfontein case study, were:

- Sylvia Gansises, Tour guide and Conservancy member
- Gabes Geigub, Manager of the Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site, National Heritage Council of Namibia.
- Bernd Boehmcker, Lodge Manager for the Twyfelfontein Country Lodge

- Erika Ndalikokule, National Heritage Council of Namibia
- Trudy Amlungu ICOMOS committee chairperson

The site visit and interviews were held over four days. An interview guide was developed to capture salient issues and guide the discussions, although this was not used to formally sequence the discussions.

The following aspects of the cultural tourism developments were given particular consideration during the research. The findings thereof are discussed later in this case study report:

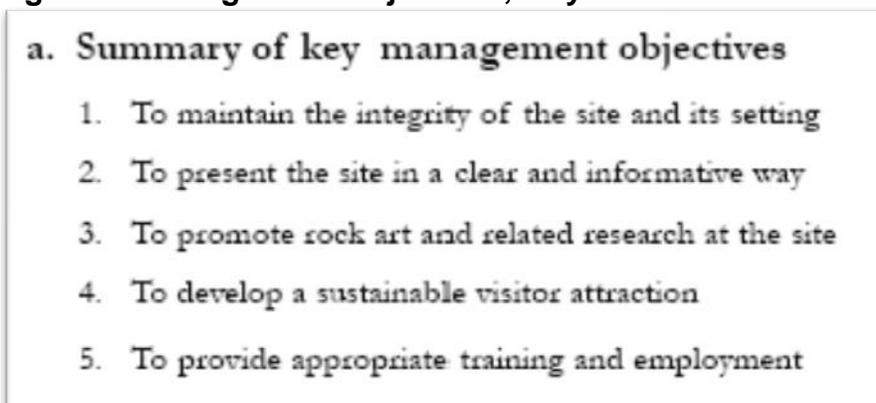
- The institutional structures (on paper and in practice)
- The financing models as well as revenue streams
- The existing and potential visitor markets
- Socio-economic and community impacts: participation and inclusion in the process of development and operations, as well as other benefits/ negative effects experienced
- Linkages between tourism and culture, science and education
- The natural environment, and management thereof
- The linkage between the cultural tourism attractions and broader destination development

3. CASE STUDY FINDINGS

3.1 Site Description and Context

Twyfelfontein, also known as /Ui-//aes, became Namibia's first UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) in 2007. It remains the only WHS in that country to date. Twyfelfontein has one of the largest concentrations of rock art in Africa with over two thousand images recorded (UNESCO, 17). According to the Property Management Plan (National Heritage Council of Namibia, 5) there are five main objectives for the site. These are shown in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Management Objectives, Twyfelfontein

- 
- a. Summary of key management objectives
1. To maintain the integrity of the site and its setting
 2. To present the site in a clear and informative way
 3. To promote rock art and related research at the site
 4. To develop a sustainable visitor attraction
 5. To provide appropriate training and employment

Source: National Heritage Council of Namibia, 2006

The aforementioned Management plan was developed as part of a submission from the Namibian government to UNESCO in order to achieve the World Heritage Site status for Twyfelfontein. UNESCO has a number of fairly onerous documentation and planning requirements in order to consider this ratification.

The formal UNESCO document describes the site as follows:

“The rock art is found on dramatic weathered and fragmented sandstone hills some 90 kilometres west of Khorixas, in the centre of Damaraland, which stretches between the Erongo and the Etosha Pan in the north-west of Namibia. The sedimentary and volcanic rocks are disjointed and break up along fault lines into flat boulders of Etjo sandstone on which the rock art is found. Along one of the fault lines is an aquifer that feeds the spring after which the site is named. This flows into the Aba Huab River, which drains to the Atlantic Ocean. Twyfelfontein lies within a transitional zone between semi desert and

savannah and receives less than 150mm annual rainfall. The rock art is found in loose clusters on boulders on the lower slopes of the scarp. The paintings and engravings have been recorded on 235 separate surfaces on which have been found 2,075 identifiable images” (UNESCO, 17).

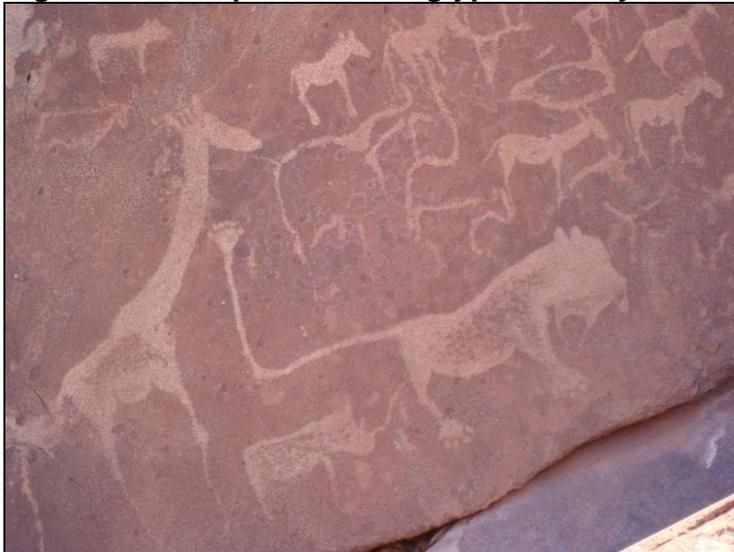
Figure 2: Typical rock formation, Twyfelfontein



Source: Author's photograph, December 2008.

Petroglyphs account for most of the rock art images. Petroglyphs include images that are pecked on the surface of rocks through a chiseling technique, as well as through grinding and polishing.

Figure 3: Examples of Petroglyphs at Twyfelfontein

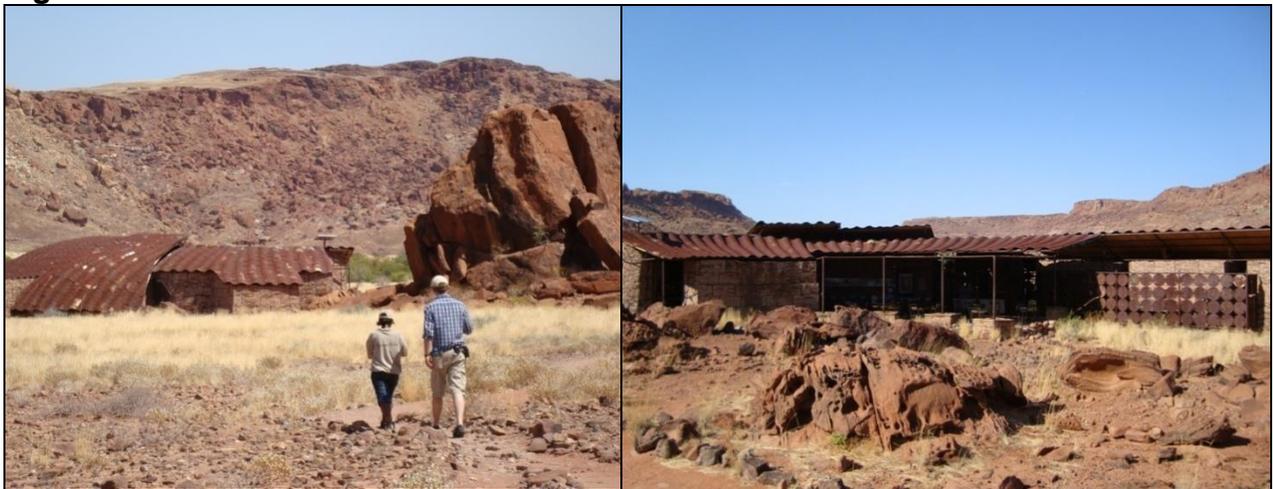


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Source: *Author's photograph, December 2008.*

A low-key, purpose built visitor centre provides the entrance point for all visitors to the site. It has information on the history of the area and an explanation of the rock art symbolism found at the site. Also found within the centre and its environs are a craft shop, an area for sitting with a kiosk to purchase drinks, toilets and parking. The walkways from the visitor centre to various paintings are also part of the site development. There are three walking paths that can be chosen: a self-guided tour, a thirty minute guided tour, and a forty minute guided tour. These trails take in some of the main images that are within easy access of the visitor facility. As the entrance fee of N\$/ZAR 30 applies whether or not a guided tour is taken (and this guided tour is at no additional cost), most visitors opt for a guided tour.

Figure 4: The visitor centre – front and back view



Source: Author's photograph, December 2008.

3.2 Institutional Arrangements

3.2.1 Stakeholder and partners to the project

UNESCO

UNESCO confers the World Heritage Site (WHS) status upon globally significant cultural and natural sites. UNESCO conferred WHS status upon Twyfelfontein in 2007. Their involvement includes monitoring of the site and ensuring that countries that are signatory to the World Heritage Act make good on their obligations. In particular, that the national authority of member status meets its various obligations. In this regard sites must regularly compile and submit reports on site management, actions taken to mitigate risks, and so forth. If the site is not adequately managed, and the paperwork requirements

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are not met, the site can be delisted, or listed as 'in danger'.

National Heritage Council and the National Commission for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention

The National Heritage Council (NHC) of Namibia is the official agency responsible for Twyfelfontein. They take overall responsibility for management of the site and chair the Joint Management Committee (one of UNESCO's requirements for co-operative governance of inscribed sites).

Twyfelfontein is the only proclaimed site which has NHC staff members on site. The manager is also responsible for two other proclaimed monuments (some 150 kilometres away) and is tasked with, amongst others, the banking of cash income in the regional capital of Khorixas.

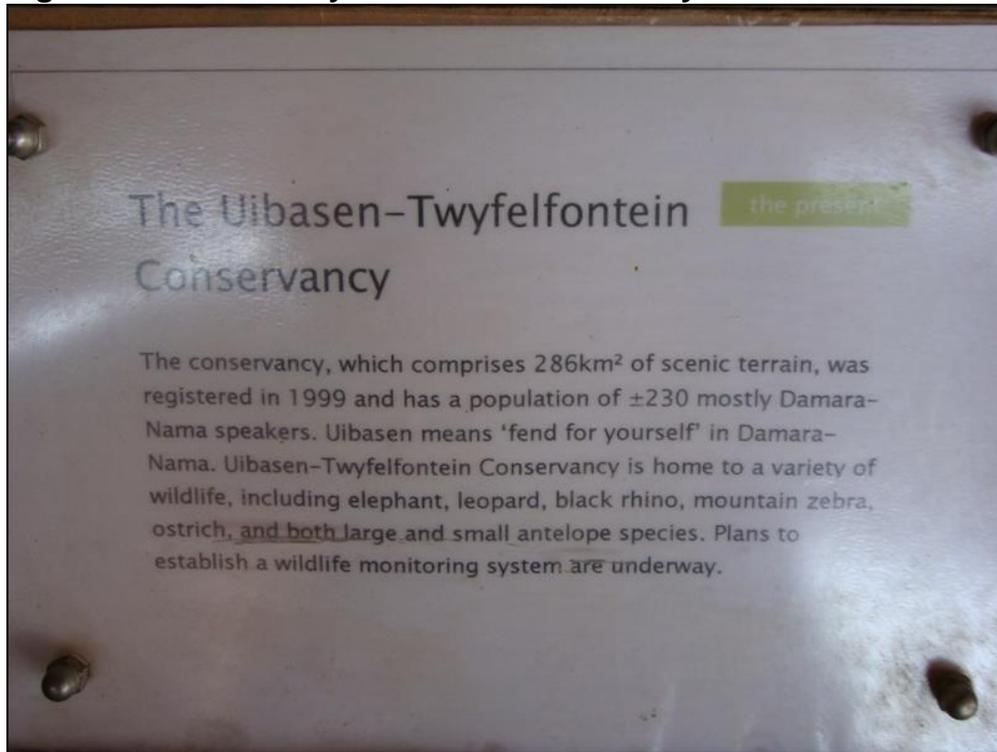
The Namibian National Commission for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention championed the process of getting the site inscribed with UNESCO and comprises representatives for all the relevant national bodies, in particular, the different government departments. The commission is responsible for the production of an annual report on all its activities, including the management of the proclaimed site at Twyfelfontein.

Uibasen Conservancy

The Namibian law makes provision for the establishment of conservancies; being legal, constituted membership bodies able to obtain economic benefits from wildlife resources within a clearly defined and demarcated area. The Twyfelfontein heritage site falls within the boundaries of such a conservancy, namely the Uibasen-Twyfelfontein Conservancy, which comprises some 230 people (members)

The conservancy has obtained a lease-hold for tourism activities from the regional Land Board for the entire area and is able to sublease this to private sector tourism operations. A management plan, environmental plan and benefit distribution plan are to be included with the application for leasehold rights. The control over the actual implementation of and adherence to that plan rest solely with the conservancy, however. Members can question actions during annual general meetings. The Ministry of Environment & Tourism in Namibia does nevertheless possess the right to revoke the conservancy status.

Figure 5: Uibasen-Twyfelfontein Conservancy



Source: Author's photograph, December 2008.

Tour Guides Association

Long before the proclamation of the site as a UNESCO WHS, local tour guides provided guiding and control services under a verbal agreement between the (that time) National Monument Council (now National Heritage Council) and a local business man, Mr. Elias Xoagub. Since the inscription of the site and the development of a visitor interpretation centre at the entrance to the site, the tour guides have organised themselves into a constituted association. This association works according to a formalised agreement with the National Heritage Council.

Tour guides must be members of the local conservancy thus channeling direct benefits to the local community. These tour guides provide visitors with an interpretative experience during their tour of the rock art. They work on a retainer salary and a percentage of revenue for services rendered (based on how often they work). They often double their income through tips.

Private Sector Lodges and Campsites

A number of private sector tourism concessions have been negotiated between the Conservancy and private sector investors. Currently the Uibasen

Conservancy has concession agreements with the following private sector operators:

- Twyfelfontein Country Lodge
- Mowani Mountain lodge
- Aba-Huab Campsite
- Abadi lodge (a small campsite with fixed tents which was open for one month only, before it was hit by a storm).

Twyfelfontein Country Lodge, the biggest of the accommodation offerings in the area (120 beds), has an agreement with the National Heritage Council and the local tour guide association that it can provide its own tour guides to guests at the lodge who choose to book an excursion package to the site.

The Traditional Authority

The Traditional Authority exists for a wider area – including the proclaimed monument site “Petrified Forest”, relatively close to Twyfelfontein. It receives an income of NS \$24 000 per annum from the National Heritage Council (this includes payments for other heritage sites in the broader area too). In this instance, the Chairperson of the Uibasen Conservancy is also the representative of the Traditional Authority.

3.2.2 Institutional Structures

Joint Management Committee

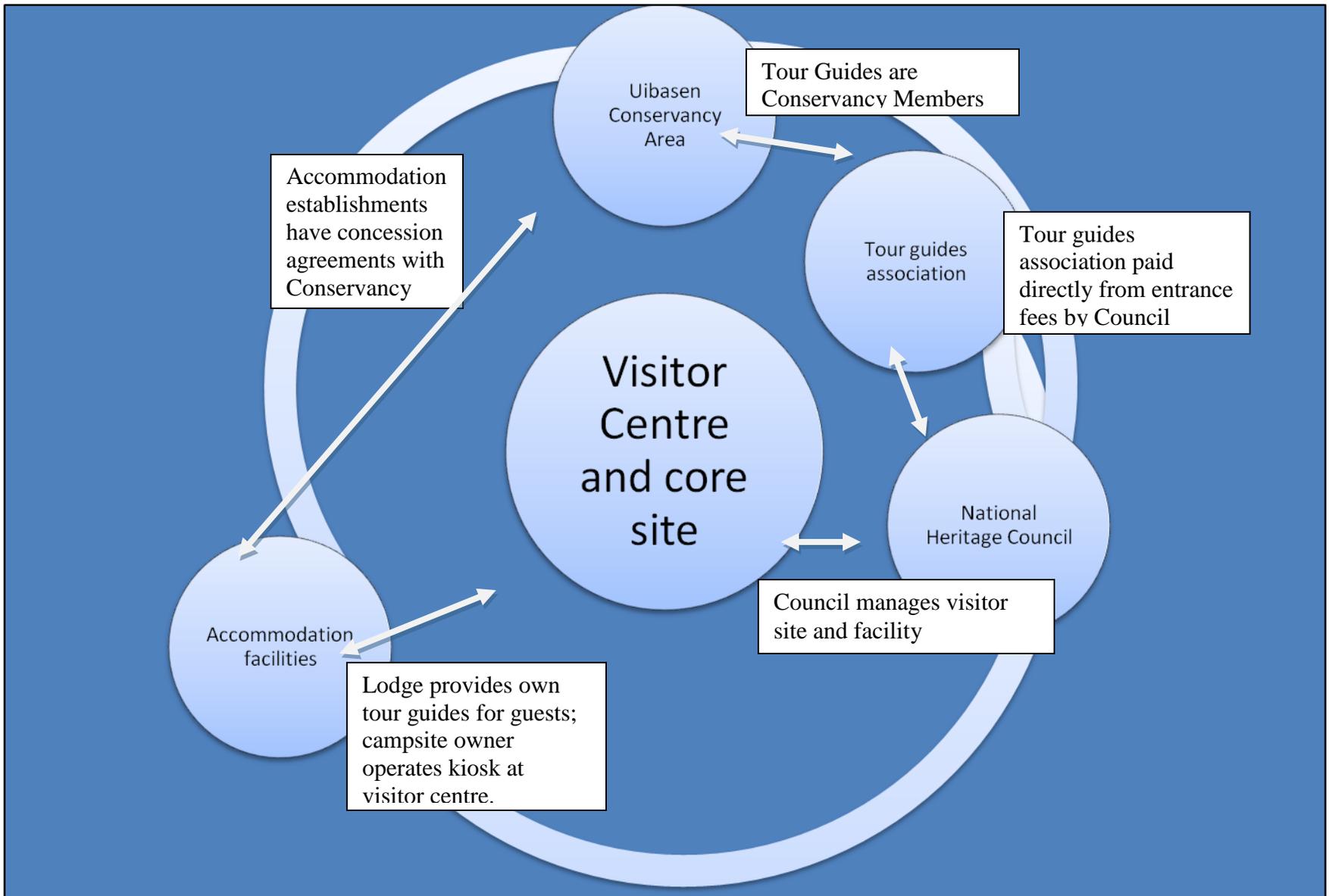
As per UNESCO requirement, a Joint Management Committee (JMC) exists for the site and its stakeholders. It consists of the National Heritage Council, the lodges, the tour guides association, the Conservancy, the Traditional Authority, the cultural office of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture in Khorixas and the Conservancy officer of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in Khorixas. It is chaired by the National Heritage Council’s site manager. It meets as and when there are issues for discussion. Issues can be brought forward by any one of the stakeholder groups.

To date it appears that discussions have been held about Conservancy members’ cattle straying onto the core site, litter, off road driving and the tour guides’ service offering.

Private Sector Concession agreements

With respect to the private sector concessions, a typical agreement of this sort in Namibia involves a long term lease (usually 30 years) of the land against a rental fee and a bednight levy payable from the operators to the conservancy for each guest night sold. Thus the income of the Conservancy is linked to the success (or not) of the private sector operations. Benefits for the Conservancy and its members also relate to the number of staff employed from the area (up to 80 staff members at Twyfelfontein Country Lodge) and the commitment by the private sector operator to train staff to management positions.

Figure 5, over the page, graphically depicts the relationships between the various stakeholder groups.



3.3 Financing Models and Revenue Streams

3.3.1 The Visitor Centre and Core Site

Donor funding was realised from the European Development Fund (through the Namibia Tourism Development programme) for the development of the visitor facility and interpretation facilities at the site. Operational costs for the visitor attraction and core site area are borne by the National Heritage Council. These relates to staff costs, maintenance, supplies, and the like.

The Twyfelfontein site is the most lucrative heritage site for the National Heritage Council of Namibia. It raised some \$2 million Namibian dollars from entrance fees (30 Namibia \$ per visitor) in 2007/8. This is the most by far of any (cultural) heritage site in that country and provides an important income source for the Heritage Council and its work. In effect, visitor fees from Twyfelfontein cross-subsidise many of the smaller, lesser-known, and more inaccessible sites and monuments in the country.

In terms of services, however, the visitor centre runs on solar panels. However, the solar panels have been proven not to be a reliable source of energy for laptop use. The centre receives water (for staff use only) from the lodge as the boreholes and spring at the site have not been used from some time. In terms of communication services, the satellite dish installed for the purpose was out of order during the site visit and the eco-toilets (dry sanitation units) were not functioning optimally due to a combination of poor maintenance and being wrongly positioned.

Main access roads in the area are maintained by the Namibian Roads agency. Local roads are maintained by the relevant party (e.g. the lodges maintain the gravel roads to the premises off the national road, and so on).

3.3.2 The Uibasen Conservancy

The Uibasen Conservancy receives income from the lodge concessions. Most of the income from bednights received by the Conservancy comes from the Twyfelfontein Country Lodge. The lodge currently pays 10% of bednight revenue to the Conservancy (up from a lower percentage during the first five years of operation), accounting for in the region of 1, 3 million NS Dollars in 2007. The actual fees paid vary on a monthly basis depending on bed occupancy (as affected by seasonality).

Mowani Mountain Lodge, a luxury lodge with 26 beds, pays a conservancy fee of 20,000 annually and N\$ 55 bed night levy. With an occupancy of 60% (based on a management estimate), a total of some N\$ 350,000 in bednight levies are paid annually to the conservancy by Mowani. Figures are not

available for the other two, smaller tourism concessionaires, but levies paid are likely to be considerably less than those for the two lodges.

Per original agreement, the Uibasen Conservancy is also meant to collect 35% of the entries fees charged at the visitor site, and retain the 5% while the 30% is paid to the tour guides. Discussions indicated that the Tour Guides Association is being paid directly, and it was not clear if the Conservancy still collects 5% of the entrance fees at the visitor centre.

The craft shop at the visitor centre is managed by the Conservancy, with community members providing craft items for sale. Furthermore, the kiosk concession is operated by Mr. Elias Xoagub, owner of the Aba-Huab campsite and a Conservancy member. Neither the craft shop nor kiosk appeared busy at the time of visit. The prices at the craft shop were extremely high compared to Windhoek and Swakopmund, and the quality of products on sale was below average.

The Conservancy has a separate office structure comprising two buildings with a number of rooms located off the main road, a number of kilometers from the core WHS site.

3.3.3 The Tour Guides Association

As indicated above, the tour guides receive a percentage of the entrance fees paid by visitors. Working on about 60 000 visitors to the site, this amounted to some N\$600 000 in 2007/8. Tour guides are remunerated on the basis of actual shifts worked. A retirement fund is in place as are maternity leave benefits. At the time of the site visit, there were a total of 15 tour guides employed (down from over 20 guides originally) and only 3 were working that day (December is the second slowest month after January).

In addition to the formal pay from entrance fees, the tour guides receive tips from visitors, which probably accounts for significant supplementary income.

3.3.4 The Lodges

Twyfelfontein Country Lodge is the best performer of the Namibian Country Lodges group. Gross income was in the region of N\$14 000 000 in 2007. Income was received from bednights, food and beverages and tour operating activities.

Twyfelfontein Lodge provides water for free to both the visitor centre and the community village in the area, which it transports daily to these sites at its own cost. The lodge also assists the visitor centre with banking its income and with communications' services.

3.4 Existing and potential visitor markets

Although the formal nomination process only concluded in 2006, with the inscription of the site by UNESCO in 2007, Twyfelfontein rock art has been a tourist drawcard for some years. As the site is located roughly on the tourist circuit between Swakopmund and Etosha National Park, a number of lodges and tourist operations have been in place for some time, prior to inclusion on the UNESCO WHS list. The protection and appropriate promotion of the rock art site is of critical importance to these private sector tourism operations too: the rock art is the drawcard that sustains their existence.

The visitor centre at the site received in the region of 60 000 visitors in 2007 up from 40 000 in 2006. This represents a significant increase. Namibia tourist arrivals also grew by about 30% over the period, perhaps accounting for the increase. An inability to interpret visitor trends relates in part of the lack of accurate and up-to-date visitor numbers. Figures are not compiled regularly on site, and the annual reports are released some time after the fact.

Nevertheless, according to the site manager, visitors are a mixture of independent travelers and tour groups, with most being independent visitors. Most visitors hail from Western Europe. South Africans are also an important source market. Few Namibians visit the site, other than organised school groups. The National Heritage Council has identified the low level of support from Namibians as a challenge and is hoping to mobilise more local travel in the future.

Despite its strong performance and growth, tourism remains highly seasonal in the area (and in Namibia at large), with Twyfelfontein Country Lodge operating at full capacity during the high season (from June to September) and between 35% and 40% occupancy during the remainder of the year. This equates to an average annual bed occupancy in the region of 55%. The same is true for the visitor centre. The Tour Guides Association have adapted to the seasonality by reducing the number of tour guides on site during low season (as experienced when the site visit was conducted), and retaining income from high season revenues to supplement lower revenues in the low season, thus ensuring a consistent paycheck.

Dissatisfaction was expressed with the Tour Guides Association by a number of stakeholders. Comments related to the level of service provided by tour guides to visitors to the site with respect to enthusiasm, and the depth of the interpretative experience imparted.

Tourism Facilities

As indicated earlier, other than the Twyfelfontein Country Lodge and Mowani Mountain Lodge, there exist two campsites. One, run by Elias Xoagub (one of the Conservancy members), has been operational for some time. Discussions indicated that certain tour groups that used these facilities (mainly overland camping tours) have recently moved elsewhere due to inconsistent service.

A new camp opened (and closed) in the months of November/ December 2008. That campsite was purportedly a joint venture agreement between the chairperson of the Conservancy and three Dutch investors. The actual agreement was not confirmed during the research. One month after opening, the camp was hit by a freak storm, and serious damage was done to tents and other infrastructure, necessitating closure. The investors were unclear whether they would re-invest, and at the time of meeting them were packing up and heading to Swakopmund to reconsider their options.

A cultural village site is currently (December 2008) under development. It is being developed by one of the staff members of the Twyfelfontein Country Lodge, with the lodge's support (transport of building material) and that of donor funds and technical assistance from NACOBTA (the Namibian Community Based Tourism Association).

Figure 6: The cultural village – under development



Source: Author's photograph, December 2008.

The cultural village will augment the offering in the area which is largely focused on the World Heritage Site rock art.

There also exists the opportunity to further develop two other sites within proximity –the organ pipes, a rock formation resembling an organ; and the Burnt Mountain. The Burnt Mountain is a proclaimed national monument under the auspices of the NHC.

There also exist wildlife attractions in the area, including desert elephants that migrate up and down the Aba-Huab River and are frequently sighted.

3.5 Socio-economic and community impacts

Significant revenues are received by the Conservancy from the private sector operators in the area. With respect to the usage of these funds, it was clear from the site visit that a Conservancy office has been constructed. But infrastructure development in the community informal settlement appears limited with no power, water or roads visible, despite access to nearby power cables.

Although NACOBTA, an NGO focusing on community tourism development, was involved in the initial stages of setting up the Conservancy and Tour Guides Association, they are no longer involved with the Conservancy. Discussions indicated that the Conservancy's financial statements have been delayed. There appeared to be some dissatisfaction with the functioning of the Conservancy from various stakeholders.

The National Heritage Council has limited formal interaction with the Conservancy. The formal relationship relates mainly to the buffer area, and management thereof by the Conservancy (with respect to animal grazing, litter, etc.) and the Tour Guides Association. The National Heritage Council has paid and continues to pay for the training of tour guides, although this is incremental as funding is minimal.

The Tour Guides Association has undoubtedly benefitted the community of the area. These tour guides earn high wages relative to the staff at the lodges in the buffer zone. Tips probably also account for a significant share of income. As indicated, fifteen tour guides are currently employed, which benefits household income substantially given the small size of the Conservancy. The tour guiding experience has not been without its detractors and additional training and quality mechanisms, as well as possible incentives, need to be considered to constantly improve the standard of the tour guiding experience offered to visitors. Travel by tour guides to other sites where they can experience tour guide excellence should also be encouraged.

The National Heritage Council's direct socio-economic impact in the area includes the staffing of the site. At present there are two security guards, two receptionists, the manager, and two cleaners. Where possible, locals (members of the Conservancy) are hired for these posts – the Conservancy gets the opportunity to identify possible staff. During the site visit it emerged that not all existing staff are from the area. The National Heritage Council representative indicated this was as appropriately skilled staff were not identified by the Conservancy.

The craft shop, also a Conservancy benefit at the visitor site, was fairly empty during the site visit. There were craft items both from Conservancy members, and crafters from outside of the Conservancy, with no Conservancy manager on site.

The lodges have the biggest socio-economic impact in the area. Twyfelfontein Country Lodge employs 80 junior staff (and 11 management staff) on an '8 weeks on, 8 weeks off' basis. They also employ local women to undertake needlework for uniforms, sheets, etc. for the lodge, thus assisting with supplier development. In addition, they provide critical services like water to both the visitor centre and the community.

An additional socio-economic matter relates to the participation of the San (the creators of the rock art that is celebrated). The formal UNESCO site report recommends in this regard that an effort should be made to include the San community at the site. Responses to questions posed indicated that this was being discussed at a 'political level'.

3.6 Linkages between tourism, culture, science and education

The National Heritage Council expressed their desire to hire a full time rock art specialist for the site (which also happens to be a recommendation from UNESCO) but identified a lack of technical skills in Namibia as an impediment. In fact, the National Heritage Council indicated that there are serious capacity deficits in Namibia not just with respect to the specialist skills required for rock art, but also archeological work, as well as the broader technical skills to inscribe sites (compilation of UNESCO dossiers, etc.). This limits the scientific work that can be undertaken on site, and visitor and school interpretive material. It also impacts on the ability to inscribe and develop new sites. An opportunity in this regard would be to identify tour guides who might be interested in advancing their training to a specialist level. This could allow for tour guides to move into certain of the research and education areas of archeologists and rock art scientists.

On a separate matter, one relating to national relevance and ownership of this significant cultural site, the National Heritage Council is active in an effort to reach out to the broader community. In this regard, Namibian school groups visit the site from time to time, extending the visitor market beyond (mainly foreign) tourists and hoping to encourage local interest in and 'ownership' of the site.

3.7 The natural environment, and management thereof

UNESCO recommendations for the site include improved management of the buffer zone. Matters on the agenda of the Joint Management Committee to date have largely been reactionary and concerned with this buffer zone, and the grazing of cattle, littering and the like. The Conservancy has hired staff to monitor the buffer zone as part of its responsibilities in terms of land management. It is unclear if much consideration has been given to the tourism carrying capacity of the area, and potential future demand for more lodges or other forms of accommodation, which has been an issue since permission was granted for the construction of accommodation in the area.

3.8 The linkage between the cultural tourism attractions and broader destination development

Twyfelfontein is one of the main tourist attractions in Namibia. The rock art plays a critical role in attracting both independent and group travel to the area, stimulating tourist services and facilities (such as accommodation, crafts, and the like). As indicated earlier, a cultural village is under development at the site, and a new campsite has opened (and subsequently closed). These developments can be directly linked to the visitation of the site demonstrating the role that a major attraction can play in developing a destination.

The fact that the site is well established as part of a typical Namibia travel route is beneficial to the area, bringing income, jobs, etc. to a rural part of Namibia which appears otherwise to have little basis for economic development.

Beyond the buffer zone, the socio-economic effect of the destination extends to crafters whom line certain of the access roads into the area. Most roadside craft stalls appeared to sell the same items, thus increasing competition for all. A development programme aimed at improving and diversifying the craft product, consolidating the various stalls, as well as exploring wholesaling to intermediaries for on-selling, could improve income streams for the (largely female) crafters. Figure 7 below shows one such craft stall.

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SOUTHERN AFRICA
CORPORATE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Figure 7: Craft Store on road to Twyfelfontein



Source: Author's photograph, December 2008.

In addition to formalising the craft, and as indicated earlier, there are a number of sites in close proximity to Twyfelfontein that could be better developed (and protected). These include the 'Burnt Mountain' and 'Organ pipes'. Further afield, the Brandberg Mountains, although receiving development support some years ago, have not yet realised their potential as tourist attractions. A coordinated effort at developing these sites, creating local work and income opportunities, and linking the sites to existing markets in the area, could enhance the destination overall. This could result in visitors extending their stay from one or two nights to more than this. The reality is, however, that there is much competition by sites to appear on travel itineraries and lengthening stay amongst visitors, particularly first time visitors to the country, is difficult. Concentrating on other visitor markets, i.e. those that are independent travelers with more time, repeat visitors, and local and domestic markets can extend the average length of stay at destinations.

4. LESSONS LEARNT

4.1 Creating Local Benefits

The case study research indicates that a tour guides' association made up of local community members can be an effective mechanism for creating direct benefits from a cultural site. Fifteen jobs of a reasonable income have been created in the area. This is not inconsiderable given the community's size.

Furthermore, the National Heritage Council is investing in upgrading skills which will allow the guides to become more mobile increasing the transferability of their skills to other sites and work opportunities in the sector. However these improvements to skills and knowledge (especially command of foreign languages) remain ad-hoc and linked to available funding. Neither the association nor the Conservancy make funds made available for this.

Interviews indicated that although perhaps not adequate, there exists some self-regulation within the Association, with members applying peer pressure on each other's performance. Nevertheless, the perception/ reality exists that the quality of the tour guiding delivered by the official tour guides remains inconsistent in content and quality. One recommendation in this regard could be to institute a visitor feedback system post-guided tour, which could be anonymous. The data from this sort of guest satisfaction form would need to be collated and monitored and discussed at Joint Management Committee meetings. This would allow for a frank discussion on performance and the adoption of measures to improve performance. It could also be linked to some sort of incentivised system (this could be similar to the one that was piloted at Brandberg some years ago). Other suggestions relate to improving and increasing the training of tour guides, and creating opportunities for tour guides to experience other sites where the guided experience is excellent. This recognizes that community members may not naturally be the best tour guides and that a deliberate process of training and development, and selection needs to be instituted to address this reality.

The lodges in the area, particularly Twyfelfontein Country Lodge with over one hundred beds, create significant employment and income streams both directly for staff, and to the Conservancy in concession fees. What is not clear is how effectively the concession fees are being channeled to address community needs. This matter is addressed in more detail below.

4.2 Reporting and Documentation

Formal documentation should be improved upon with respect to the National Heritage Council's documentation of visitor numbers and trends at site.

Furthermore, the Conservancy's income and expenditure accounts appear to be delayed, leading to ill trust. It was clear that basic service provision was lacking in the community. Although a meeting was not held with a Conservancy representative despite a number of attempts, it appeared as if local stakeholders, including members of the Conservancy themselves, were not clear how the Conservancy's income was being utilised.

Formal reporting, documentation, monitoring and evaluation could be improved amongst all stakeholders.

4.3 Private Sector participation

In Twyfelfontein's case, the private sector appears to play a positive role in the community: they are the largest employer, provide banking and water services to the site, and water to the community, pay significant concession fees to the Conservancy and facilitate the tourist experience in general.

Twyfelfontein Country Lodge appeared largely happy with the arrangements, although it acknowledged the responsibility that came with their important role in the area. The fact that concession agreements are well-understood and transparent in Namibia assists with the positive relationship. It appeared that beyond the terms of the concession contract, Twyfelfontein Country Lodge was willing to be an active participant in the area in addressing socio-economic challenges.

4.4 Institutional Arrangements

The WHS conferred status requires certain formalised relationships and structures, hence the formation of a Joint Management Committee. At present the committee plays an ad hoc role in managing site-related issues and only meets when "issues" arise. This could be extended to a more formal role that encourages co-operative governance and site excellence.

As already indicated, the concessions between the Conservancy and accommodation establishment lend transparency to these partnerships – at least with respect to flows from the lodges to the Conservancy which are based on formal monthly reports generated by the lodges on their performance.

An opportunity to further entrench and formalise (and make transparent) the Conservancy's operations exist in this regard. At present the Conservancy is only held accountable by its members. As this Conservancy concept is relatively new in Namibia, a mandatory reporting on income and expenditure and activities to be provided not only to the Conservancy members but to either the Ministry of Land, or Environment and Tourism (or both) should be considered to bring some rigour and transparency to the system. These

government departments could institute minimum requirements in this regard and assist with best practice and capacity building support services.

Discussions indicated that the Uibasen Conservancy is not the only one where there is a lack of clarity regarding the utilisation of funds. Transparency can help increase accountability and reduce ill-trust and suspicion. It can also ensure that funds are used to address needs in an area.

4.4 Capacity constraints

The National Heritage Council's limited capacity and funds impact on its ability to play a larger role with respect to the hiring of specialists, tour guide training (which although existing is limited), service provision (staff housing, water, communications' services) as well as reporting and documentation (with respect to up-to-date visitor numbers).

The reality is that heritage and culture must compete at a national level with pressing basic needs' provision – a situation common across most developing countries, where limited resources require choices regarding the allocations of a limited fiscus. There may be an opportunity for the National Heritage Council to both improve existing and pursue new partnerships with donors and other support institutions which could provide both technical support and grants to complement its earnings from visitor fees at sites.

4.5 Destination Effect

The site's inclusion on travel itineraries for some years (pre-dating its inscription with UNESCO) has brought great benefits to the area, which otherwise would have little economic activity. Tourist demand has resulted in accommodation development, which in turn creates employment, and income for the Conservancy. More can be done to enhance the destination, through the introduction of additional facilities and attractions, in order to lengthen the average stay from one night to two or more nights. This recognizes that not all tourist markets would be able to extend their stay, giving competing destinations. Independent travelers are more likely to be able to extend their trip, given additional activities and experiences being offered in the area.

It is not clear that the Joint Management Committee or existing private sector relationships currently play a cooperative marketing and development role, as well as tourism advocacy role. Collaboration is particularly important in tourism to allow for shared management of the attractions' base and joint marketing activity.

5. CONCLUSION

A clear advantage of this case study site is that the limited number of stakeholders at Twyfelfontein provided for a (relatively) unambiguous picture of flows and interactions.

Twyfelfontein's status as a well-known attraction, and support from the tourism trade, indicates the benefits that tourism can bring to an area. Questions that arise through this case study relate more to the distribution of benefits, and effective management of institutions and experiences at the destination, than market dynamics. Having said this, given the reliance of Twyfelfontein on tourism, a very real threat exists in the downturn from tourist markets in response to local or global events (such as is being experienced at the moment). A strategy of economic diversification needs to be pursued where possible, as does the development of local and regional markets to provide a core base of visitation to protect against long-haul tourism volatility.

Relevance to the DBSA

Twyfelfontein World Heritage Site provides a concrete case study on the dynamics of one cultural tourism site. It provides useful lessons on how to structure relationships effectively, indicates in which areas community benefits can be achieved, highlights the challenges that exist in an environment where institutional capacity (amongst community, tour guides and government structures) is limited, and identifies the potential 'developmental' role for private sector operators.

An important lesson here is that appropriate institutional structures need to be set up in an area to manage relationships but, further, that these structures need to be capacitated and active in their roles. They also need to be held to account for their actions. Building effective institutions takes time, but should be recognized as a pre-condition for the optimal functioning of tourism destinations.

The case study also points to the interconnectedness of difference sectors and how these underpin the tourism experience. For example, education and training are critical elements of the tour guiding experience offered and these require a broader enabling training environment to be in place. This also points to the need for creativity in addressing skills gap (e.g. the possibility of up-skilling certain tour guides to play a para-archeologist/ rock art specialist role).

Also, the research indicates the critical role played by the private sector in providing basic services in the area, such as potable water. Other services

provided include ICT access, and banking for the National Heritage Council. Thus not only is tourism reliant on an enabling environment which include skills, transport infrastructure, and the like, but tourism businesses can also help with the provision of services into local communities. This is a key point in the development impact that tourism can bring – the private sector can in part also fulfill certain roles that the public sector is unable to fulfill.

Finally, the case study has relevance for the Tourism Investment Strategy of the Bank. It clearly demonstrates the role of core or anchor attractions in destination development. The rock art at Twyfelfontein is a good example of a world-class asset that has formed the basis of a small tourism cluster in the North-West of Namibia. This points to the opportunity to commercialise / develop special attractions to drive tourism destination development in rural areas. It also confirms the logic of ‘anchor projects’ as the driver of destination development – in keeping with one of the investment themes identified in the Tourism Investment Strategy.

Realistically, however, attractions of global appeal are limited in number, and must compete with existing sites. This is perhaps more the case in South Africa, with its developed tourist attraction base, than other countries in the region. Nevertheless, appropriate development of tourist attractions is certainly one way of going about the building of new tourist destinations.

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