

# Transfrontier Conservation Initiatives in Southern Africa: Observations from the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area

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The positioning of transboundary conservation approaches since the mid-1990s in the midst of southern African governments' conservation, regional economic integration and social development objectives heralded a remarkable convergence of interests in international relations. Transfrontier conservation initiatives have also been strongly supported by Southern African Development Community (SADC) wildlife-related policy and protocol, which seeks to promote these initiatives as a means for interstate cooperation in managing and sustainably using ecosystems that transcend political boundaries, and to develop a common framework for natural resource conservation (see SADC, 1999). The political interest aroused is demonstrated by the nine (current and former) presidents of the region, who are patrons of the Peace Parks Foundation, a South Africa-based NGO dedicated to raising funds for, and facilitating the implementation of, transboundary initiatives (Hanks, 1997). Further support to cross-border conservation occurred when, in the late 1990s, following years spent funding community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) programmes, foreign donors financing environmental initiatives shifted en masse to funding transboundary conservation activities (Hutton et al, 2005; Frei, 2007).

The central premise for transboundary approaches is that co-management of natural resources occurring along geopolitical boundaries (through national-level international agreements) can contribute to the peaceful resolution of interstate conflicts, promote regional economic development and integration, contribute to efforts to conserve globally significant biodiversity and to address a number of social issues. Yet, as Jacobsohn (undated) warns,

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their size presents a challenge in developing effective management tools and their success depends on being able to manage smaller units within the whole in a coherent manner.

There are several different types of transboundary approaches. A starting point is transboundary natural resource management (TBNRM), for which two different uses can be discerned in the literature: first, it is used to denote a 'more holistic approach' in processes 'across boundaries that facilitates or improves the management of natural resources (to the benefit of all parties in the area concerned)' (Griffin et al, 1999, pp2–3); and second is in relation to an up-scaling of CBNRM approaches across geopolitical boundaries (Jones and Chonguica, 2001). TBNRM can therefore imply a range of different activities and processes, for example, from managing or facilitating local collaborative management of wildlife and other natural resources through the relaxation of geopolitical boundary restrictions in certain areas, to the harmonization of national natural resource management policies and legislation (Griffin et al, 1999).

A transfrontier park (TFP, also known as a transboundary protected area or a 'peace park') involves a network of formally proclaimed state or provincial/regional protected areas straddling international boundaries and is subject to a shared management agreement among the countries involved. A transfrontier conservation area (TFCA), by contrast, can incorporate multiple use zones on state, communal and/or privately owned land as well as strictly protected areas. The implementation of all transfrontier conservation initiatives has, to date, focused on conserving biodiversity through the designation or extension of conservation areas across geopolitical boundaries – with implicit emphasis in southern Africa on re-establishing migratory routes for wildlife. Other objectives relate to regional economic development and integration (through conservation-driven tourism development)<sup>1</sup> and the promotion of peace and cooperation between neighbouring countries (see Griffin et al, 1999). Reuniting local communities estranged by colonial boundaries also forms an objective of many transboundary initiatives.

A TFP and a TFCA can be implemented simultaneously, as examples of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) and transfrontier conservation area (GLTFCA), and the !Ai-!Ais-Richtersveld TFP and the proposed Greater !Gariiep TFCA demonstrate. However, different categories of transboundary initiatives have different emphases on the various 'generic' objectives. In spite of the interest they have generated, the implications of transboundary approaches remain poorly understood, partly because they are still in their formative years (Dzingirai, 2004), and partly because they are pursued along narrow interests (such as the breakdown of fences along the Mozambique–South Africa border to allow animal movement, which later impacted on livestock–wildlife diseases), even as their implementation continues at an unprecedented pace (Katerere et al, 2001). This chapter uses

the case of the GLTP and GLTFCA to demonstrate some of the implications of the implementation of transfrontier conservation, and that despite the convergences implied, there are significant difference between TFPs and TFCAs in practice.

### **The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park and Conservation Area**

South Africa's General Jan Smuts first proposed the idea of 'a great fauna and tourist road through Africa' that would link Kruger National Park and the then Southern Rhodesia (National Archives of Zimbabwe quoted in Wolmer, 2003). In 1938, Gomes de Sousa, a Portuguese ecologist requested that the Portuguese colonial government in Mozambique enter into negotiations with South Africa about linking part of the adjoining areas of the two countries (Munthali and Soto, 2002). Efforts were made to rekindle these ideas in the 1930s with the establishment of the Gonarezhou Game Reserve in Southern Rhodesia, and in the 1970s when a Mozambique-based conservation biologist proposed a Mozambique-South Africa conservation area (Wolmer, 2003), both of which failed.

In the early 1990s, after the end of the civil war in Mozambique and the imminent end of apartheid in South Africa, the idea was raised once again. Anton Rupert, then President of the Southern African Nature Foundation (now WWF South Africa), is widely credited as having advanced the idea to the Mozambican president (PPF, 2006), leading to the commissioning of feasibility studies of the proposal (Jones and Chonguiça, 2001). The real impetus for the initiative came with the active involvement of the World Bank.

From around 1993, the World Bank actively supported efforts to establish the GLTFCA, funding millions of dollars worth of feasibility studies and consultancies, and by heavily influencing the Mozambican government (Anstey, pers. comm.). The World Bank's Transfrontier Conservation Areas Pilot and Institutional Strengthening Project for Mozambique made an important conceptual shift from strict protected areas to including multiple resource uses, in particular by local communities (World Bank, 1996). This reflected the broader World Bank policy which prevented it from funding activities that involved forced resettlement. At about the same time, Rupert requested another meeting with the President of Mozambique to emphasize the benefits of nature-based tourism growth, if the transfrontier initiative was implemented (Hanks, 1997), all of which subsequently led to an agreement on the need for cooperation among Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe in order to realize TFCA-related economic benefits.

In a parallel process in the mid-1990s, the premier of Limpopo Province in

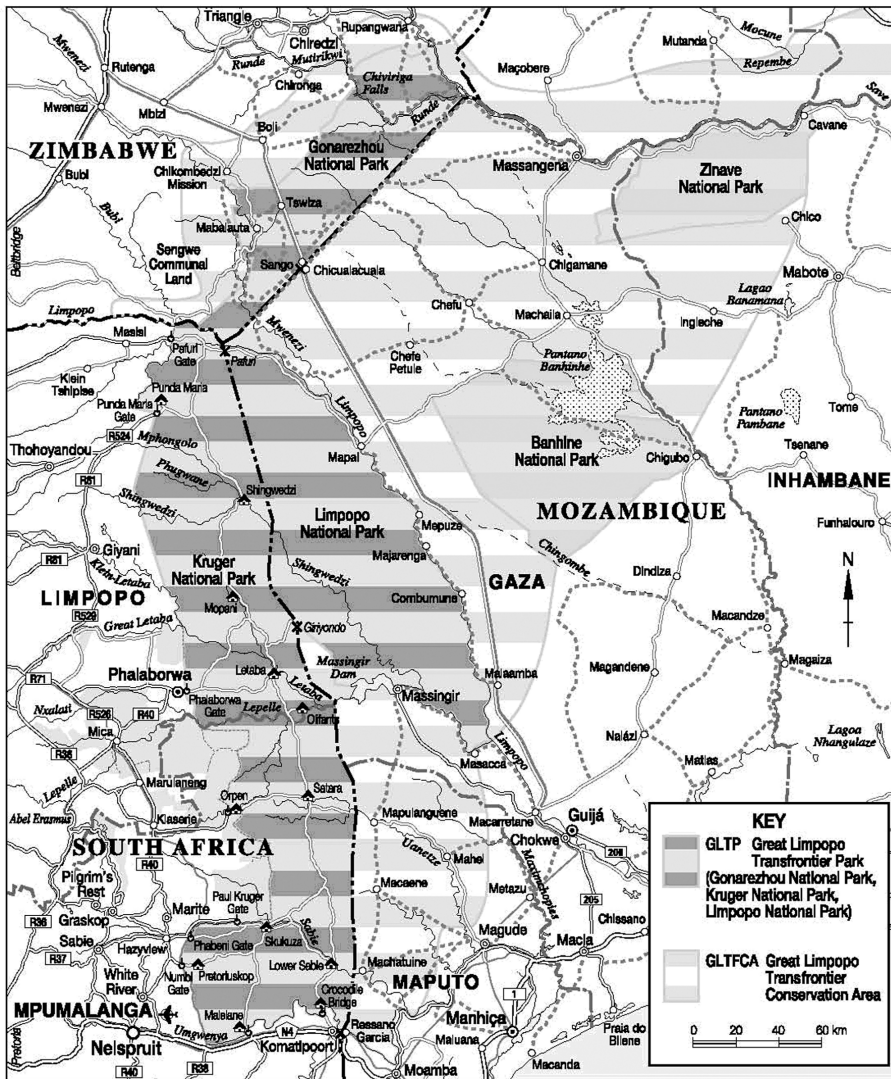
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South Africa met with the governor of Gaza Province in Mozambique to explore means of developing and improving economic linkages between the two provinces. While their motivations might have been different to those for establishing a transfrontier conservation initiative, their interest in building inter-provincial economic linkages gave credibility to the conservation initiative, which was framed in terms of developing the tourism industry as a means to stimulate local economic activity (Braack, pers. comm.). The interest in cooperation at the provincial level highlighted the growing political interest and support for transboundary initiatives, even as the understanding of what form these initiatives were to take diverged. For WWF South Africa, this was predominantly for marketing southern Africa as an integral tourist destination (Hanks, 1997), while the World Bank wished to shift from command-and-control to incentive-based conservation practices, encouraging the participation of local communities (World Bank, 1996). The more 'preservationist' aims of the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) have greatly impacted on the design of the Great Limpopo transfrontier initiative with their more dominant role since the late 1990s (Anstey, pers. comm.).

The signing of a trilateral agreement to the establishment of the GLTP occurred in November 2000. This agreement facilitated the formation of a technical committee and working groups (guided by a ministerial committee) to prepare the terms and conditions for an international treaty establishing a transfrontier park. In 2002, the presidents of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe signed an international treaty establishing the GLTP, a culmination of these historical events.

The GLTP, measures an estimated 35,000km<sup>2</sup> (see Figure 23.1) and incorporates the Kruger National Park and the Makuleke Contractual National Park in South Africa, the Limpopo National Park in Mozambique and Gonarezhou National Park, Manjinji Pan Sanctuary and Malipati Safari Area in Zimbabwe. The communal lands of the Sengwe corridor in Zimbabwe are also included, and are regarded as an important link between Kruger and Gonarezhou national parks.

According to the GLTP treaty, the transfrontier park aims to foster transnational collaboration and cooperation among the parties to facilitate effective ecosystem management in the area comprising the park. Additional objectives are to encourage social, economic and other partnerships among the private sector, local communities and NGOs to manage biodiversity, to harmonize environmental management across borders and remove artificial barriers to the movement of wildlife. The GLTP also aims to facilitate the establishment and maintenance of a sustainable sub-regional economic base through appropriate development frameworks, strategies and work plans, with cross-border tourism anticipated to foster regional socioeconomic development (Governments of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, 2002).



Source: Peace Parks Foundation

Figure 23.1 The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park and Conservation Area

The GLTFCA is not as yet subject to an official agreement, but is described in the GLTP treaty as including compatible conservation areas adjacent to the GLTP (and indeed has been described in many maps, including that of Figure 23.1). It is thought to incorporate approximately 100,000km<sup>2</sup> (the core of which is the GLTP), and include privately owned land (mostly game reserves and conservancies) in South Africa and Zimbabwe as well as communal lands in



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Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and other protected areas in the three countries (DAI Impacto, undated; DEAT and PPF, undated). Given the lack of formal development of the GLTFCA, the objectives of the initiative have not been publicly defined, nor have the envisaged differences with the GLTP in management objectives or interventions. So far, it appears that the GLTP agreement is taken to imply objectives for the entire GLTFCA and that the sections of the GLTP treaty referring to the sustainable utilization of natural resources apply to the much larger GLTFCA, where human habitation and sustainable natural resource use is allowed and multiple land uses are recognized. The lack of clear and separable objectives for the GLTFCA has meant that the multiple use activities in communal areas are often defined in relation to their impacts on the core protected area of the GLTP, rather than as a sustainable natural resource management determined by local social and political dynamics.

## **Achievements and challenges in implementing the GLTP**

### **Biodiversity conservation**

A variety of plant and animal species have been recorded within the GLTP – around 2000 plant species, 49 species of fish, 34 of frogs, 116 reptile species, approximately 505 of birds and 147 of mammals (DEAT, 2000). These species are supported by various vegetation communities, including mopane woodland and shrubland widely distributed in the northern half of the TFP, specifically the Makuleke contractual national park in the north of the Kruger National Park, as well as the Gonarezhou National Park. Mixed bushveld and riverine woodland are widely distributed in the Kruger and Limpopo national parks, sandveld to the east in Mozambique occurring both in protected areas and communal lands. These vegetation zones are variously located in the three constituent protected areas as well as the surrounding TFCA.

Hanks (2003) notes that transboundary approaches can facilitate the conservation (or re-establishment) of migratory and/or wide-ranging species. The GLTP – specifically the Limpopo National Park – is viewed as a way of dealing with the high elephant population numbers within the Kruger National Park by providing an expanded area into which they can easily move. Yet, the actual biodiversity impacts of linking and extending protected areas within the GLTP are not yet clear – the lack of baseline studies further presents difficulties for ascertaining the ‘true biodiversity benefits to the transfrontier park’ (Schoon, 2007, p7) and the JMB notes that as yet there are no monitoring studies to assess the impacts of the GLTP on biodiversity (JMB members, pers. comms).

From a protectionist perspective, the most important impact on biodiver-

sity of the GLTP to date has been the proclamation of the Limpopo National Park in 2001 (formerly *Coutada* 16), and the improved management of the area resulting from its proclamation and subsequent funding being poured in to its rehabilitation and development. Other activities have involved the translocation of more than 4000 animals from Kruger National Park since 2001, while others have moved out of their own accord (see [www.peaceparks.org](http://www.peaceparks.org)).

One of the most important biodiversity-related activities is the dropping of fences between the three countries. To date, however, only a small length of fence has been dropped between the Kruger and Limpopo national parks. Part of the reason relates to concerns regarding disease transmission between wildlife and domestic livestock, and it has been suggested that further fence removal will have to be associated with the fencing of the (currently unfenced) Limpopo National Park in order to prevent disease transmission, to control poaching and restrict human movement (Spenceley, 2005). Concerns about disease transmission from wildlife to domestic livestock have also prevented the establishment of a link between Kruger and Gonarezhou national parks through the Sengwe corridor (Daconto, 2003).

Since the GLTP agreement was signed, parts of the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe have been resettled (Ferreira, 2004; Spenceley, 2005) and there are unconfirmed allegations that hunting concession holders from the Sengwe corridor in Zimbabwe use helicopters to drive wildlife from South Africa into Zimbabwe, and Zimbabweans are said to be hunting and snaring wildlife within the Makuleke section of Kruger (Makuleke Contractual Park rangers, pers. comms). Thus, any assessment of the impact of the GLTP on biodiversity necessarily needs to factor in social and political issues as indicators of long-term sustainability, rather than focusing on indicators such as the length of fences dropped, the area dedicated for protected areas or increases in ranges for single species such as elephants.

### **Security, peace and cooperation**

In terms of the regional- and national-level institutional structures set up for the implementation of the GLTP, the Ministerial Committee provides policy and political guidance to the implementation of the GLTP (Mombeshora, 2005), which is interpreted by the JMB into implementation guidelines and action plans. The JMB consists of government officials from various ministries (for example those responsible for wildlife, security and agriculture) in each of the countries and also provides technical information to the Ministerial Committee. Other platforms for cooperation and communication are the sub-committees, structured according to specific issues within the GLTP – including conservation, veterinary, security, community relations, finance, tourism and human resources subcommittees.

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While many of the institutions set up for the GLTP encourage communication among government officials, similar levels of communication are not visible between government and local resource-dependent residents. For instance, local people were once represented in meetings and workshops for the GLTP but this decision was reversed on the pretext that governments represented their citizens (JMB member, pers. comm.; Whande, 2007). The result of this has been that local residents in already marginal areas (Katerere et al, 2001) are experiencing new forms of exclusion from the policy- and decision-making processes that impact on their access to and use of land and natural resources.

In an overlap with the objective of removing fences to facilitate wildlife movement, much of the public discourse surrounding TFCAs relates to their supposed effect on breaking down geopolitical boundaries as countries cooperate to manage common natural resource areas (Godwin, 2001). Ramutsindela (2004) notes the portrayal of TFCAs as leading to the breakdown of boundaries paints a picture of a decolonizing concept and process, thereby appealing to the post-Independence political establishment. In reality, however, there is little break with these established boundaries, as independent African countries perceive this as potentially leading to territorial conflicts (Mbembe, 2000).

The GLTP treaty indicates that transboundary cooperation and collaboration will occur in the pursuit of effective ecosystem management. However, in the process of planning, development and implementation of the GLTP, issues of national sovereignty and border security have come to prominence. The top-down, politically driven process of implementation (Gwature, 2003) has, on occasions, created conditions for conflict among different government agencies and between the government and local people (Whande, 2008).

Chidziya (2003) notes that the GLTP has resulted in conflicts among sectoral agencies, as security agencies felt their involvement was to legitimize the environmental agenda, while environment agencies were not regarded as having the mandate to negotiate agreements with potential impacts on national security and sovereignty. The result has been that geographical areas that have previously been politically and economically marginalized – yet regarded as important for biodiversity conservation – now assume importance for national security (Duffy, 1997; van Ameron, 2002). Thus, instead of leading to a breakdown of boundaries, the increased national security interests in these regions has had the opposite effect – territorial integrity is now of primary concern, effectively increasing control over the movement and activities of local people. For instance, the cooperation between police units from Masvingo and Limpopo provinces in Zimbabwe and South Africa respectively (Malelo, pers. comm.) is not meant to facilitate local people's movement but to intercept them.



The GLTP treaty recognizes the centrality of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, which has had significant effects on the GLTP. Article 6(2c) of the treaty emphasizes the need for parties to harmonize policies and legislation, while Article 5 emphasizes issues of national sovereignty in managing constituent protected areas of the GLTP according to existing management plans. In practice, this has meant that differences in national wildlife policies and legislation continue (Munthali and Soto, 2002), and the implementation of the GLTP has not resulted in any significant moves towards harmonization of policies and legislation, even for shared natural resources. Instead, issues of national security and sovereignty have continued to dictate the implementation of the GLTP, delaying the implementation of work that raises national security concerns (Braack, pers. comm.).

Concerns about the possibility of an escalation in poaching and smuggling of cars, drugs and even weapons resulting from relaxed border controls (Duffy, 1997; Mombeshora, 2005) have meant that security agencies are now involved in the planning of activities within the GLTP. It is not only government officials that are concerned about the potential for increased illegal activities, a senior ranger at the Makuleke/Kruger Contractual National Park noted that local transport operators should not be allowed to conduct their business across boundaries as they are likely to engage in illegal activities such as smuggling of drugs (Greefe, pers. comm.).

In terms of human security – which is understood as providing voice for the politically marginalized (Brauch, 2005) – the GLTP has arguably had a negative impact on the residents of the Limpopo National Park, who have been inadequately consulted during the implementation of GLTP activities and whose fate – in terms of resettlement out of the park – has still not been resolved (Huggins et al, 2003; Spenceley, 2005; Spierenburg et al, 2006). The international coordinators of the GLTP have recognized the weaknesses in dealing with improving local livelihoods, and have indicated that the next phase of implementation will focus on understanding how local people can be more meaningfully engaged in the process of decision making and the management of the initiative.

### **Economic development and regional integration**

Regional economic integration has received widespread support, specifically for opportunities for investment in nature-based tourism development (Wolmer, 2003). Considerable investment has been made in tourism and infrastructure development in the three parks by governments and foreign donors, a considerable proportion of which would probably not have occurred without the GLTP initiative. At least US\$30 million was spent on tourism infrastructure in the South African portion of the GLTP between 2000 and 2004, and

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almost US\$9 million in the Limpopo National Park alone. Since the Limpopo National Park was proclaimed, a number of tourism trails and facilities have been developed, and the tourism 'access facility' at Giriyondo, between Kruger and Limpopo national parks has been opened. In contrast, little tourism infrastructure development has taken place in Zimbabwe in recent years due to the unsettled political situation (Spenceley, 2005; Spenceley et al, 2008).

The private sector has taken the opportunities presented by the new approaches and often portrays itself as a primary engine of the success of such initiatives. Indeed in the South African and Zimbabwean parts of the GLTFCA, tourism is estimated to have generated approximately US\$144 million in 2007, and provided approximately 8900 jobs (Spenceley et al, 2008). Approximately 70 per cent of the US\$30 million spent on tourism infrastructure development in South Africa in the early 2000s was made by the private sector in developing tourism concessions within the Kruger National Park (Spenceley, 2005). It is likely that additional tourism investments have been made in South Africa in areas adjacent to the Kruger National Park – particularly on private game reserves – however, the extent of these investments is not known.

National security concerns have influenced investment in the GLTP; the current political situation in Zimbabwe discourages private investment in tourism facilities (ex-manager Pafuri River Camp, pers. comm.; Ferreira, 2004), foreign donors have pulled out of the country, and local NGOs therefore face funding deficits and are unable to facilitate or implement GLTP activities. The reduction in resources for the implementation of the Zimbabwe component has resulted in official perceptions that Mozambique and South Africa are proceeding without consideration for the Zimbabwean component (Pienaar, pers. comm.).

The importance of tourism investment figures is in assessing the pace and direction of regional economic integration in terms of a preferred land use. However, rather than paint a picture of regional economic integration, these investment figures highlight the dominance of South Africa over its weaker neighbours, specifically in terms of tourism benefits. The current imbalance is illustrated by the US\$137 million of tourism revenue earned in the South African section in 2007 and the US\$7.1 million earned in the Zimbabwean section over the same period (Spenceley et al, 2008). A criticism of the tourism industry is that it can perpetuate and reinforce regional and international inequality (Ferreira, 2004), which bodes ill for the GLTP unless proactive steps are taken to address the issue.

The economic integration objectives of the GLTP should have received a significant boost from the geographical overlap with the Limpopo spatial development initiative (SDI), though evidence on the ground indicates that the SDI appears to have been abandoned. Officials in Mozambique noted that the SDI had quietly been grounded to focus on the development of the Limpopo

National Park, with the focus on tourism and protected areas at the expense of more localized integration, which would have involved the upgrading of infrastructure such as the railway line linking Mozambique and Zimbabwe (Mozambique Department of Forestry and Wildlife official, pers. comm.).

### **Local level impacts of the GLTP and implications for the implementation of the GLTFCA**

Much of the research into the local-level impacts of the Great Limpopo has highlighted negative aspects, noting that local resource-dependent communities have been excluded from policy- and decision-making processes and that, to date, transfrontier initiatives have tended to replicate historically dispossessionary approaches to conservation (Dzingirai, 2004; Spierenburg et al, 2006; Whande, 2007; Büscher and Dressler, 2007).

As noted above, it is not yet clear if the GLTP treaty will also apply to the GLTFCA or a separate agreement will be negotiated, but the negative perceptions associated with the marginalization of local people from the GLTP will need to be addressed – the future participation of the (freehold and communal) residents in the development and decision making regarding the GLTFCA is likely to have a considerable impact on the success (or otherwise) of the initiative.

Those involved in the development of the GLTFCA should learn lessons from the implementation of the GLTP, as the implementation of the larger conservation area will become more complicated with respect to social and economic objectives, given that an estimated 500,000 people live on the communal lands of Mozambique and Zimbabwe that fall within the proposed GLTFCA boundaries (Cumming et al, 2007).

### **Biodiversity conservation**

The inclusion of non-state land and multiple use zones within the proposed GLTFCA suggests that implementers accept that some communities will not wish to take part in the initiative, impacting on the success of biodiversity conservation efforts (especially if the land is considered to be an important wildlife corridor). Conservation initiatives in southern Africa have often been contested at the local level, though not always successfully, and the establishment of many protected areas has resulted in the dispossession of local people – including Gonarezhou and Kruger national parks (Ferreira, 2004). Thus it should be recognized that while some communities may choose to be part of the GLTFCA initiative, others may not want to cede their land for conservation activities. The inclusion or omission of areas of land within the TFCFA also has implications for cultural restoration objectives (see Box 23.1).

**Box 23.1** *Madimbo corridor*

The Madimbo corridor is a piece of land along the Limpopo River (in South Africa), immediately to the east of the Makuleke Contractual National Park. The residents of the corridor were forcibly removed in the 1960s to make way for the South Africa National Defence Force (SANDF) and the establishment of the Matshakatini Nature Reserve. SANDF is still stationed along the Madimbo corridor, ostensibly for military training purposes, though they are more frequently engaged in intercepting Zimbabweans crossing illegally into South Africa.

Following the end of apartheid in South Africa and the passing of land claim legislation, the people who were removed from the Madimbo corridor have made a claim to have the land returned to them. The future use of the land is a source of local contestations between those in support of grazing and crop farming, conservation-driven tourism and human settlements.

Decisions over land use are complicated by the support for nature-based tourism as a land use by many stakeholders in the area – such as the local municipality, which borders the Kruger National Park, Makuya Park and the Matshakatini Nature Reserve, and the PPF that identified the area as a strategic link to the Zimbabwean portion of the GLTFCA, as well as to the Limpopo–Shashe transfrontier conservation initiative to the west of the GLTP (PPF, 2006). A local leader for the land claim for Madimbo corridor notes this is part of ‘conservation’s strategy as a land grabbing approach’ (Vhembe Communal Property Association leader, pers. comm.).

Because of its strategic location, its inclusion in, or omission from the GLTFCA will have significant impacts on the ability of the TFCA to meet biodiversity objectives (for example, re-establishment of migratory routes for wildlife), social objectives (for example, reuniting local communities estranged by colonial boundaries) as well as economic objectives (for example, regional economic integration).

In terms of regional economic integration, the Zimbabwean members of the security sub-committee of the GLTP noted in 2002 that the fence between South Africa and Zimbabwe should be maintained, except that part where the Kruger National Parks adjoins the proposed Sengwe wildlife corridor, in order to control illegal movement across the border. It is clear, therefore, that while the facilitation of regional economic integration through nature-based tourism development is supported, this does not apply to the localized economies that depend on informal flows of goods and services across borders.

In terms of the restoration of cultural integrity, the commitment of the Madimbo corridor to conservation would preclude a physical link between the Venda families in South Africa and Zimbabwe, perpetuating the current situation of separation by the Matshakatini Nature Reserve and the presence of the SANDF.

The lesson that can be learned from this situation is that land use options proposed by centralized planning initiatives are often at variance with local realities. Without the provision of mechanisms and incentives for communities to participate in planning and decision making, they are unlikely to support such initiatives, which will undermine their ability to meet set objectives. Indeed, given the experience of land dispossession resulting from the declaration of protected areas and ongoing conflicts over land, it is unlikely that the residents of the Madimbo Corridor will opt to use the land for conservation should their land claim be successful.

*Source:* Based on Whande (2007)

Buzzard (2001) argues that the different policy frameworks on, and approaches to, the use of natural resources act as a hindrance to joint management of natural resources. However, the GLTFCA could facilitate the harmonization of many natural resource management activities, particularly those undertaken by residents on communal lands, where cultural similarities frequently mean similar natural resource management practices are undertaken. Indeed it is likely that the most significant differences in resource management activities occur at the provincial and national levels. It is not yet clear how any national-level policy and legislative harmonization would impact on local people and their natural resource management practices, particularly as recent experience in southern Africa demonstrates the insignificant role that local residents tend to play in resource management initiative design or implementation, processes led by national governments, NGOs and foreign donors (Simon, 2003).

There have been recent moves to start addressing the impacts of the implementation of transfrontier initiatives on the social–ecological systems they incorporate (Cumming et al, 2007), measuring biodiversity impact by considering the sustainability of the whole system, specifically the ‘importance of wildlife/livestock/human/ecosystem health (the concept of one health) in sustaining large landscapes such as the GLTFCA’ (Cumming et al, 2007, p2). Focusing on human and non-human factors allows an assessment of the problematic areas between local livelihoods and efforts to achieve biodiversity conservation through expansion of protected areas. The incorporation of other aspects of biodiversity such as ecosystem health are not yet reflected in practical terms.

### **Security, peace and cooperation, social and cultural reunification**

A lack of explicitly stated objectives for the GLTFCA means it is difficult to differentiate between the GLTP and GLTFCA when considering security issues. While TFCAs are understood as multiple use zones and hence can accommodate local people’s livelihood needs, in reality it is not clear how this will be balanced with the TFCA’s role as extending conservation activities beyond protected areas. As noted above, the implementation of the GLTFCA provides opportunities for cooperation for harmonizing (and improving) the natural resource management practices of residents of the TFCA, improving relationships among residents, and also between residents and the managers of private and state-protected areas.

The prominence of sovereignty and border security issues is likely to have negative impacts at the local level. The GLTFCA is likely to result in new forms of control over human movement, specifically through the increased interest of state agencies involved in security issues (Dzingirai, 2004). The signing of the



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GLTP treaty has meant these agencies have become increasingly interested in the region, in terms of issues related to maintaining territorial integrity or reinforcing geopolitical boundaries, which can negatively impact on informal cross-border livelihood activities (for example, small-scale trading). The recent xenophobic attacks on foreigners in South Africa have put the issue of border control into the spotlight, with parliamentary portfolio committees on home affairs and security receiving submissions on the need to increase police patrols and to bring in the army. For an area such as the Madimbo corridor, currently occupied by SANDF, this could reduce the chance that local land rights will be restored, which would reduce the control of the state over sensitive border regions.

The reluctance to facilitate local-level social and cultural reunification across political borders is exacerbated by the economic disparities among the parties to the GLTFCA and the high levels of illegal migration from Mozambique and Zimbabwe to South Africa. The GLTP joint management plan makes specific recommendations regarding the definition of border access, securing the entire periphery of the GLTP and limiting or preventing commercial traffic (excluding tourist traffic) (Governments of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, 2002). Thus, in practice, claims that transboundary approaches will lead to a breakdown of fences are only partial, as controls over the movement of people within the wider GLTFCA are likely to be tightened. In addition to the human security issues already present in the GLTP, the implementation of the GLTFCA will raise additional issues – particularly in Mozambique and Zimbabwe where residents within the GLTFCA reside almost entirely on state land, often with poorly defined tenure over land and natural resources. These issues can only be resolved satisfactorily in consultation with these communities, and with their full participation in the decision making over, and implementation of, TFCA activities. The experience of the exclusion of communities from representation on the JMB of the GLTP is not encouraging.

**Economic development/regional integration**

Very little economic impact has been felt at the local level from developments associated with the GLTP. Though a recent study of some of the tourism enterprises in the GLTFCA estimates at least 8900 people are employed within the Zimbabwean and South African sections of the proposed TFCA, with local employees sharing approximately US\$25 million in wages between them (Spenceley et al, 2008), the bulk of these tourism enterprises were established prior to the implementation of the transfrontier initiatives. There is potential for involvement in tourism developments in the future, but it is likely that these communities will need significant technical advice and capacity building in order to maximize the benefits arising from these opportunities. The principles of sustainable tourism (emphasizing the need to achieve a balance between the

industry's environmental, social and economic impacts to achieve long-term sustainability) will also need to be adopted by those involved in the initiative to ensure that local benefits are maximized.

Experiences from villages along the Madimbo corridor (see Box 23.1) indicate that local people are often suspicious of tourism initiatives as a result of their experiences with conservation in the past and because a focus on tourism tends to simplify their often diverse and complex livelihood strategies (Whande, 2007). As mentioned, prospects for tourism development along the Madimbo corridor are a source of conflicts among locals who stand to benefit from different land uses such as conservation and tourism, crop agriculture and livestock production. Where local communities have already started tourism initiatives, they have not received much support from organizations such as PPF, as is the case with the Bennde Mutale youth initiative and the Pafuri Lodge, both along the Madimbo corridor (pers. obs.).

The dominance of conservation activities within the Limpopo region, after initial attempts at implementing an SDI, has also limited other possibilities for economic integration based on infrastructure development. While the proposed construction of a bridge across the Limpopo River linking South Africa and Zimbabwe would facilitate the movement of people and provide opportunities for localized cross-border trade, the proposal has already become a centre of conflict locally, due to uncertainty regarding whether it is predominantly for the movement of tourists or local people as well.

## Conclusions

The evolution of the GLTP has important lessons for the future of both the GLTP and the GLTFCA as well as for other TFCAs being developed across southern Africa. Widespread and high-level political support can justifiably drive initiatives involving state-protected areas; however, when private and communal lands are involved, then mechanisms and incentives for landholders and residents to participate in the decision making and implementation of the TFCAs need to be in place to ensure they act to support rather than undermine the initiative.

While those involved in the GLTP claim that they are only concerned with issues regarding the core protected area, as there is no agreement or set objectives for the GLTFCA, the divisions between the two initiatives are not so clear cut. Those driving the GLTFCA initiative need to recognize that processes for the establishment and management of core protected areas impact on local communities in several ways, most prominently through land alienation. The observed resistance to conservation-driven tourism along the Madimbo corridor and alleged acts of poaching highlights the continued conflicts between

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protected areas and local resource-dependent communities. Rather than plan further expansion of protected areas through TFPs, transboundary initiatives need to revisit the potential for up-scaling local-level initiatives, putting emphasis on getting the smaller units within the whole managed in a coherent manner. A starting point is to pay more attention to objectives of cultural integrity and to explore local transboundary collaborative processes and how they relate to formal government agreements.

Nature-based tourism development is viewed as necessary for the success of transfrontier conservation initiatives. However, the prescription of conservation-driven tourism as a means of economic development disregards the inequalities between investors and local communities, between the countries involved, as well as the impacts of these inequalities on the distribution of benefits. Experiences from the GLTP indicate that the shift in focus from sustainable resource use in the 1990s to a focus on the benefits of tourism and increasing the role of the private sector, in particular in relation to the Mozambique component, has contributed to a growing sidelining of local concerns. Clear strategies to facilitate the participation of communities in tourism development and an equitable formula of sharing benefits accruing from conservation-driven tourism have to be found if the GLTFCA is to make a meaningful contribution to local people's lives.

The paradox of the increased focus on previously politically and economically marginal areas that accompanies transfrontier conservation initiatives is that they are viewed by some residents in negative terms – interpreted as the beginning of new constraints on local people's access to and use of natural resources as a result of increased state presence (Hughes, 2002; Dzingirai, 2004). In order to counter these perceptions, the emphasis on national security within the GLTFCA zone needs to be revised, as does the manner in which communities are involved in planning- and decision-making processes related to the GLTFCA. In particular, consideration needs to be taken of the security concerns of local people, which include articulating their views on the ongoing planning and implementation of the GLTFCA, not as mere observers of interventions developed at national and regional levels. To date, community issues have been excluded from the joint GLTP agenda, and the drivers of the GLTFCA are the same actors that drive the GLTP, which is not encouraging. The importance of the inclusion of residents is unquestionable given that at least 500,000 people live within the GLTFCA (Cumming et al, 2007).

## Notes

- 1 Several transfrontier conservation initiatives in southern Africa have also been linked to spacial development initiatives (SDIs), particularly where (nature-based)

tourism development opportunities exist. SDIs were first conceptualized to address inequalities within South Africa's industrial and infrastructural development through targeted corridor developments. They have since evolved into regional initiatives to address transboundary economic cooperation and integration (Simon, 2003). Examples of SDIs that coincide with transboundary natural resources management include the Limpopo SDI (GLTFCA), the Orange River SDI (!Ai-!Ais-Richtersveld TFP and proposed Greater !Gariep TFCA) and Lubombo SDI (Lubombo TFCA).

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