

THE REINTRODUCTION OF RHINOS TO  
GONAREZHOU NATIONAL PARK, ZIMBABWE:  
A FEASIBILITY STUDY

Institutional, Management and Security Issues related to the  
Implementation of a new Rhino Intensive Protection Zone in Gonarezhou  
National Park, Zimbabwe

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## **ACRONYMS**

CPA	Communal Property Association
DNPWLM	Zimbabwe Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management (now P&WMA)
DNPWC	Nepalese Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
DUAT	Land concession (Mozambique)
GPS	Global Positioning System device
IPZ	Intensive Protection Zone
NP	National Park
PCP (Nepal)	Participatory Conservation Programme
P&WMA	Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority
PPP	Public/Private Partnership
PPP (Nepal)	Park People Programme
SADC RPRC	SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation
SANParks	South African National Parks Board
TFCA	Transfrontier Conservation Area
TFPA	Transfrontier Protected Area
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Commission

## **1. SWOT ANALYSIS**

As a scoping exercise for the feasibility study of the proposed rhino IPZ in northern Gonarezhou NP, a workshop was held at Malilangwe on 11 February, 2005 to undertake a SWOT analysis (review of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities pertaining to the IPZ).

The following factors were identified by the workshop participants as critical to the success of the plan to reintroduce rhinos to Gonarezhou NP:

- Resolution of the present and any potential future land claims and occupations;
- Securing adequate funding and resources;
- Development of suitable mechanisms for co-operation and co-ordination with potential partners; and
- Improved access to the Park and the IPZ, for tourists as well as staff.

Participants were as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
D. de la Harpe	The Malilangwe Trust
E. Gandiwa	P&WMA Chipinda Pools
C. Foggin	Wildlife Veterinary Unit, Division of Livestock & Veterinary Services
R. du Toit	SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation
C. Nyaguse	PWMA Midlands Province
K. Dunham	Freelance Biologist
T. Madawo	P&WMA Chipinda Pools
B. Clegg	The Malilangwe Trust
L. Mungwashu	WWF SARPO
C. Wenham	The Malilangwe Trust
L. Dodzo	PWMA Masvingo
G. Connear	Save Valley Conservancy

**The results of the SWOT analysis for the proposed Intensive Protection Zone (IPZ) for rhinos**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Increased staff establishment has been approved	Roads are much improved but still inadequate	“CAMPFIRE” project on Mozambique side Profile of TransFrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) leads to high awareness and potential for “leverage”	Proximity to Mozambique: long and insecure boundary
Is a national park: thus institutional capacity exists	Poor communications by radio. No phones	Regional co-operation and support as a result of TFCA	Present and potential future land claims
Sheer size of the Park	Rugged terrain	More tourists to visit as result of TFCA	Hostile and hungry neighbours
Existence of suitable habitats?	Inadequate funding and therefore inadequate resources	Rhino introduction will encourage tourist visitation	Tsetse fly encroachment: white rhinos susceptible to trypanosomiasis?
Natural water supply: little augmentation needed?	People and domestic animals living in the Park, close to proposed IPZ	Leverage TFCA development for improved funding	Other diseases such as anthrax and TB
Proximity of multiple sources of potential support	?Habitats for both species do not coincide?	Opportunity for Public-Private Partnership (PPP)	General breakdown of law and order
Proximity of sources of founder stock	Excess fire modifying park habitats	IPZ can be springboard for reintroductions of other species	Donor fatigue
Ease of integration into regional rhino conservation effort	?Competition from and habitat destruction by elephants		
Improved regional stability	Lack of natural and other boundaries to the IPZ		
Water distribution may limit expansion of an expanded population into the rest of the Park			
Wilderness appeal to tourists	Lack of trained and experienced staff Few visitors, therefore limited income generation. Reliance on donors Confusion over status of Park plans		

## **2. SECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **2.1 Previous Consideration of an IPZ**

Information not for public distribution.

### **2.2 Poaching History**

Information not for public distribution.

### **2.3 Infrastructure**

Information not for public distribution.

## **2.4 Recent Land Invasions**

Information not for public distribution.

## **2.5 IPZ Management Issues**

### **2.5.1 Staffing**

Information not for public distribution.

**2.5.2 Training**

Information not for public distribution.

**2.5.3 Intelligence Gathering and Reward Systems**

Information not for public distribution.



**2.5.4 Auxiliary Support**

Information not for public distribution.

**2.5.5 IPZ Staff Distribution**

Information not for public distribution.

**2.5.6 Forward Bases**

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**2.5.7 Transport**

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**2.5.8 Roads**

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**2.5.9 Fences**

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**2.5.10 Accommodation**

Information not for public distribution.

**2.5.11 Communications**

Information not for public distribution.

**2.5.12 IPZ Immediate Infrastructural and Equipment Costs**

Information not for public distribution.

Information not for public distribution.

## **2.6 Monitoring of Reintroduced Rhinos**

Information not for public distribution.

Information not for public distribution.

### **3. PRIVATE/PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP FOR THE IPZ**

#### **3.1 Background Considerations**

The proposed IPZ faces two significant challenges:

- Insufficient anti-poaching manpower and a general lack of resources and funding;
- A community land claim on the part of the neighbouring Shangaan community.

Both the above factors would undermine the security of rhinos that are re-introduced to the IPZ. In addition, unless the land claim is handled sensitively, the issue could well result in adverse international publicity and pressures from some human rights organizations who take the view that TFCAs are designed to benefit wildlife rather than communities.

On the one hand, the invasion into the Park is completely illegal so these invaders can certainly be described as squatters and forcibly evicted as such. But on the other hand, the invasion is an opportunistic outcome, during Zimbabwe's revolutionary-style land reform process, of decades of dissatisfaction on the part of the Shangaans regarding their eviction from the Park, which was a phased and harsh process and thereby created much confusion and aggravation for the destabilized community. It is therefore important to deal with the issue in a way that recognizes the human rights element (as it has also been recognized in the resolution of the Makuleke land claim within Kruger NP) but does not simply constitute appeasement of the invading group. A politically expedient but narrow solution, such as simply giving the invaders land elsewhere, may create a very difficult precedent for P&WMA in view of invasion pressures in other areas of Parks Estate.

The challenges of the land claim and the lack of IPZ investment may well be addressed concurrently through the development of a Public/Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement that brings in private sector support but also creates a significant shareholding for the Shangaan community. To avoid the impression of a forced response to the current squatter pressures, this businesslike arrangement should involve a wider Shangaan community and should be presented in the context of the overall TFCA process that seeks to accommodate legitimate land claims while not compromising biodiversity conservation within protected areas.

#### **3.2 Stakeholder Interest in a PPP in Northern Gonarezhou NP**

A stakeholders' workshop was held, under the auspices of P&WMA and the Zimbabwe National TFCA Tourism Sub-Committee, at Malilangwe on 5-6 April, 2005, to discuss tourism development scenarios related to the Great Limpopo TFCA. Participants were drawn mainly from the relevant Rural Districts Councils, but also included some central government officials and NGO representatives.

A major concern to emerge from the workshop was the lack of progress, after more than five years of discussions, in the implementation of actual projects to develop the TFCA within Zimbabwe, particularly in terms of "benefits beyond park boundaries". The participants therefore focussed their debate on four potential projects or programmes that they agreed are feasible and necessary as next steps in the TFCA development. Among these was the development of ecotourism in the northern and southern sections of Gonarezhou NP, where the workshop participants suggested that tripartite arrangements could be developed to link the private sector, P&WMA and local communities into mutually beneficial operations. A working group that explored this concept further identified the key issues as follows:

- Gonarezhou NP is a cornerstone for the TFCA (insofar as Zimbabwe is concerned);
- Initial park plans were for low volume/high value tourism (only 400 tourists in the park at any time), but a greater diversity of tourism operations (including elements of cultural tourism in surrounding areas) may be required;
- Any new operations need linkages with local/regional components to achieve economies of scale, with these components including the existing tourism operations at Mahenye and Chilo Gorge, conservancies, and the rest of TFCA;
- Gonarezhou NP has particular wilderness attraction, but the downside is poor access and limited infrastructure;
- 14 ecotourism concessions have recently been advertised in Gonrezhou NP but P&WMA is likely to have an income-generation motive in selecting concessionaires for these (because



P&WMA is now a parastatal) and may therefore overlook “win-win” opportunities that create benefits for other stakeholders.

The working group identified the constraints to ecotourism development as:

- Development funding is currently limited, either from donors or from Government;
- There is the land claim issue in Gonarezhou NP, currently exhibited through occupation of the north-eastern section, which creates insecurity of investment;
- Gonarezhou NP has poor access and limited infrastructure;
- Gonarezhou NP has low wildlife densities, possibly due to long-term poaching pressures, high frequency of fires and elephant overabundance;
- Tourist support services (particularly air transport) are extremely limited;
- Other local wildlife operations (conservancies) that could help built critical mass (e.g. for air services and marketing) face uncertainties over security of investment;
- External investors see an unfavourable climate for tourism development (poor services, “unfriendly” attitude by customs/immigration officials, negative international political perceptions, insufficient security of investment).

The following assumptions were made:

- There will be resolution of the tenure and political uncertainties that are undermining investment, with a more conducive policy framework established;
- A Tourism Development Zone will be designated to encompass Gonarezhou NP;
- There will be overall improvement in Zimbabwe’s image as a tourist destination to gain the confidence of tourist agents and their clients;
- Tripartite agreements, involving communities, will reduce the incidence of fires and poaching in the Park.

Taking the above key issues, constraints and assumptions into account, the workshop recommended that:

- The joint vision of key stakeholders regarding park development should be outlined in an succinct umbrella “constitution”, expressing overall policy for management and development of the park, addressing equity issues and encouraging private sector investment;
- Specific development plans should be developed, under this overall park policy, for a.) northern Gonarezhou NP b.) southern Gonarezhou NP, involving tripartite arrangements based on recently-advertised ecotourism concessions.

Overall, the outcome of this workshop was a strong expression of stakeholder interest in PPP arrangements, of immediate relevance to the development of the proposed IPZ.

### **3.3 Some Relevant Precedents for PPPs**

#### **3.3.1 *The Makuleke Land Claim, Kruger NP***

This situation is described by Turner (2004), Steenkamp and Uhr (2000), and Magome (undated).

In 1969, the Makuleke community of about 2,000 people was forcibly removed from a 24,000 ha area in the north-eastern corner of South Africa near the borders of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The community was resettled in Ntlhaveni, a newly established reserve for Tsonga-speaking people. In 1971, almost all of their area of previous occupation was incorporated into Kruger NP, and the rest was included a military no-go zone along the Limpopo River (the Madimbo Corridor). Forced removal to Ntlhaveni was accompanied by political and economic changes.

First, political authority within the homelands was structured by “traditional” authorities as recognized by the Department of Bantu Affairs. At removal, the Makuleke chief was made a headman, subordinate to Chief Mhinga (a similar process to the demotion of the former Chief Chitsa after the removal of his community from Gonarezhou NP). Because recognized chiefs had considerable discretion over land and revenue allocation, the demotion of the Makuleke chief had material

consequences for his people. Secondly, removal brought a shift in the relative importance of subsistence agriculture and wage labour. The Makuleke were concentrated on a relative small parcel of land, comprising 6,000 ha divided into three villages, and agricultural plots could no longer be scattered. Ntlhaveni lacked the wildlife, wild fruits, lala palm, and fish of the Makuleke area, so the Makuleke had to adapt their farming practices to the different agricultural conditions of the dry savanna. Wage labour became essential to survival, but employment opportunities were limited.

Apartheid's end provided an opportunity for the Makuleke (now comprising some 15,000 members) to reclaim the Makuleke area. The new South African Bill of Rights established the right to restitution for persons and communities who had lost their property as a consequence of racially discriminatory laws; groups could seek individual or collective restoration, alternative land, or compensation. The Makuleke filed a collective restitution claim, and established the Makuleke Communal Property Association (CPA) as the legal vehicle to pursue the land claim and receive title. The CPA membership included all individuals who had lived in the Makuleke area and their descendents, as well as individuals who have joined the Makuleke community.

Representatives of the Makuleke then negotiated with the National Parks Board (now SANParks) and other government ministries. The Makuleke agreed to preserve the Makuleke Region's status as a conservation area early in the negotiation process. Three years after the claim was filed, the parties reached a settlement. In late 1998, Land Claims Court recognized the settlement and ordered the transfer of title to the Makuleke area to the Makuleke CPA.

The court order marked the first successful settlement of a land restitution claim involving a South African national park. The Restitution Agreement included the proviso that the Makuleke area would be administered as a contractual national park for 20 to 50 years. Although SANParks resisted the Makuleke's land claim for most of the negotiation process, the final resolution was portrayed as a "win-win solution." The Makuleke gained the symbolic victory of official recognition of injustice, formal title to the land, and commercial rights. For SANParks, the most important outcome was the retention of the Makuleke area within Kruger NP. In fact, the Park grew slightly with the addition of the 3,000 hectares the Makuleke reclaimed from the Madimbo Corridor. SANParks also gained a formal commitment to continued conservation of the area, and the ability to monitor and sometimes participate in Makuleke decision-making. Because visitors to the Makuleke area enter from a gate outside of its boundaries, SANParks retains gate revenues as well.

Since the resolution of the land claim, the Makuleke area has been co-managed, in theory, by the Makuleke CPA and SANParks, the parastatal that manages all national protected areas. Because the CPA does not possess sufficient conservation expertise or manpower to manage the region without assistance, SANParks has undertaken day-to-day conservation management. The CPA must present all commercial plans to the Makuleke-SANParks Joint Management Board, compare proposals with the Park's conservation management plan, and conduct environmental impact assessments for each proposal. The CPA must justify its decisions to SANParks, although SANParks' ability to block ventures is limited. Initially SANParks was obligated to bear all operational costs, but with up to 50% of these costs to be borne by the Makuleke CPA once profitable operations are underway.

Because of their general poverty, the Makuleke must partner with other actors who possess material resources and/or necessary expertise to develop wildlife operations. Bid documents clearly state that the private partners will be responsible for financing any joint projects. Although partners are expected to have a reasonable rate of return, they are also required to implement their ventures in a manner that advances the community. Each venture will include provisos for the eventual transfer of lodges built on Makuleke land to the CPA. Although this strategy seeks to protect the Makuleke's interests while advancing their tourism initiative, it may also render the area less attractive to investors. A series of joint ventures have been agreed with private sector partners such as Wilderness Safaris. The Makuleke receive 8% of the income from Wilderness Safaris and other ecotourism operators on their land. Because these operations have had a slow start, limited safari hunting was allowed in the Makuleke area as a way of generating income until ecotourism became established.

The restitution of the Makuleke land claim has not been without controversy, for instance:

- There was great concern about the perceived threat to the integrity of Kruger NP, especially since there was initial consideration by the Makuleke of mining opportunities, followed by the pressure for safari hunting in part of a National Park;

- Power struggles were intensified amongst local communities (between the Makuleke leadership and Chief Mutele);
- Sociologists have expressed reservations about the risk of exploitation and unequal partnership in joint ventures with the private sector;
- Some of the Makuleke have voiced opposition to the TFCA concept, seeing it as a process that will “re-colonize” land that they have won back;
- The inflow of benefits to the Makuleke people as a whole (in the form of community projects) has, so far, been limited and disparities have been perceived when, for instance, some of the community income has been used for transport for the chief.

Notwithstanding these areas of controversy, the overall assessment of one analyst (Turner, 2004) is as follows.

*Although the Makuleke people I interviewed hope that the Makuleke Region will improve economic conditions, that is not the only basis on which they judge success. All indicated that regaining title to their ancestral home was an immense symbolic achievement independent of subsequent commercial success or failure. It was equally evident that the conditions of engagement with SANParks mattered immensely. The Makuleke CPA was explicitly empowered to make commercial decisions; the scope of SANParks authority was limited. This CBNRM initiative is based in explicit recognition of past injustice and the partners meet on somewhat equal ground. Ultimately, participation, rather than development, may prove the determinant of CBNRM “success.”*

### **3.3.2 Manica Province, Mozambique**

The following outline is based on a paper by Durang and Tanner (2004).

The Government of Mozambique has been implementing a market-driven rural development programme after years of socialized agriculture. This has encouraged investor interest in apparently unoccupied land, including interest in wildlife operations, but there are concerns that this commercial thrust will threaten local rights and production systems still recovering from civil war. To clarify the policy situation and to minimize conflicts, a National Land Policy was implemented in 1995.

This policy recognizes that security of tenure is essential for both investors and communities. If land tenure and property rights are insecure, any investment project, regardless of its apparent long-term profitability, will employ practices to take out the profit in the quickest way regardless of the environmental consequences. State-allocated land-use rights in Mozambique are given as a formal approval (the Portuguese acronym for which is DUAT) to each investor, but recognizing customary rights of access and management. A DUAT can be conferred through:

- Local community occupation (customary laws and practices);
- Through “good faith” occupation, when a Mozambican national has used the land without objections or counter-claims for at least 10 years;
- Through a formal request to the State (this is the only option available to an external investor, and if granted will be in the form of a 50-year lease).

Investors have to consult and get the approval of local communities before they are able to obtain a DUAT. This process of community consultation still requires streamlining and has led to highly variable levels of conformity between investor expectations and local community perspectives. In Forest and Wildlife Regulations promulgated in 2002, a requirement is entrenched that 20% of public revenues from commercial forest and wildlife ventures are given to local communities to support local development.

A fundamental question for the implementation of these policies is: what is the “local community”? Under the Mozambican Land Law, community delimitation is achieved through a pragmatic process of self-definition of stakeholder groups, breaking away from the more artificial delimitation of communities under local government jurisdictions (as is the case with Communal Land wards, under Rural District Councils, in Zimbabwe).

In Mozambique, the delimitation process is required to identify and register the land unit over which a local community has a DUAT arising from customary occupation. The process centres around a

participatory rural diagnosis in which local people draw upon their own knowledge of their history, land use, and socio-political organisation to define their community. The spatial boundaries identified by a community for their DUAT must also be discussed with and agreed by neighbouring communities, and then are mapped and registered. Once the community DUAT is identified, the land-use rights are managed by a community land committee that represents its local community in all subsequent process that involve the disposal of or shared use of its DUAT, and it is then clear to an investor whom to negotiate with for usage rights within that area.

The delimitation exercise automatically serves as a kind of resource inventory, undertaken in a participatory way that sets the stage for future land-use planning and development initiatives.

To date, the community delimitation process has been slow and fragmentary, and is often driven by NGOs that seek to develop rural development projects and see the need for greater community security over the project areas. In Manica Province, for instance, only 10 community delimitations were completed over the period 2000-2004. One initiative in this Province that has particular relevance to wildlife-based land-use is in Coutada 9, which is a 3,763 sq. km hunting reserve in which a significant local population is resident and is involved in subsistence agriculture, hunting and honey extraction. These activities compromise the viability of safari hunting operations, particularly through habitat degradation and disturbance in key dry-season wildlife refuges and through the unregulated offtake of potential trophy animals. Therefore the safari operator who has invested in this reserve has recognized the rights of the local community, under the overall authority of the Ministry of Tourism (which has jurisdiction over hunting reserves).

A kind of PPP has been developed, with support from FAO, in which Coutada 9 has been zoned as follows:

- A core area, in which the investor manages all the resources and from which ultimately, and at their own free will, the resident people will move;
- A buffer zone that is managed jointly by the investor and the community for two years, and thereafter by the community alone;
- A peripheral community zone in which the community undertakes subsistence agriculture and other non-hunting activities.

The community receives a share of the trophy fees in the core area (25%) and in the buffer zone (76%). A process of community delimitation and registration of the DUAT (or more than one DUAT) is underway to finalize the land-use and business plan for this area.

### **3.3.3 People-Park Programme, Nepal**

The term PPP was modified in Nepal to refer to a “Park People Programme”, initiated by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) as a buffer zone programme, supported technically and financially by UNDP from 1995-2001 (UNDP, 2004). After PPP completed its implementation cycle, the Participatory Conservation Programme (PCP) took over from May 2002 with the aim of building on and institutionalizing the successes and achievements of PPP.

The Nepalese PPP and PCP programmes arise from a policy transition by DNPWC which has changed from an agency working in protected areas for natural resource protection and conservation, to one that is now driven by the concept of bringing about sustainable development and a congenial park-people relationship by striking a balance between biodiversity conservation and human needs. To this end, PPP and PCP adopted a participatory approach by taking local communities as partners in the effort. DNPWC/PCP carries out all buffer zone management activities in close consultation and partnership with the various community-based institutions like User Groups, User Committees, and Buffer Zone Management Committees.

DNPWC/PCP has implemented the buffer zone programme in the buffer zones and proposed buffer zones of Royal Chitwan National Park, Royal Bardia National Park, Khaptad National Park, Rara National Park, Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Parsa Wildlife Reserve and Royal Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve.

Apart from striving to improve the park/people relationship, the major objectives of DNPWC/PCP's buffer zone programme are:

- To minimize human impact on protected areas;
- To support alternative avenues for fulfilling the natural resource needs of local communities, and to introduce appropriate technologies for sustainable rural development;
- To stimulate local communities to organize themselves into strong, self-governed institutions capable of undertaking pro-conservation and pro-development activities in and around the areas that they inhabit;
- To institutionalize sustainable financial mechanisms (savings and credit programmes) for funding community-centred conservation and development activities in the buffer zones.

The scope of rural development activity of the Nepalese PPP/PCP has gone well beyond basic resource management (which has included agro-forestry activities) to include skill enhancement training such as productive livestock rearing, poultry farming and feed production, fishery and nursery management and operation, vegetable farming, fruit plantations, herbal farming, biogas production, veterinary skills, etc. These interventions are aimed at reducing the dependency of the buffer zone communities on the natural resources of the Parks/Reserves.

Despite recent political turmoil in Nepal, agencies such as WWF have found it possible to continue their support for these holistic activities because they have maintained momentum owing to a high level of local interest and motivation, taking them beyond the political disputes.

### **3.3.4 Salient Points Emerging from these PPP Examples**

Each of the above examples highlights different aspects of relevance to a PPP approach in northern Gonarezhou NP.

- The situation in Coutada 9 of Manica Province illustrates shareholding arrangements that are relevant to the Mozambican situation, which is in turn relevant to the Great Limpopo TFCA because Mozambique is a part of this TFCA and there needs to be some harmonization of policies within the TFCA. This is especially the case since Shangaan communities, closely linked to those around the proposed IPZ, will in due course be likely to be involved in the formalization of their land rights in their areas of Mozambique, adjoining Gonarezhou NP.
- The Makuleke situation similarly illustrates a precedent for community involvement within the TFCA. The restitution of the Makuleke land claim has given rise to various controversies and the overall benefit to the community is sometimes questioned, indicating that a similar process to deal with the Shangaan land claim in Gonarezhou NP through a PPP will not be universally applauded. However, the alternative of doing nothing about the historical land claim, and simply evicting the invaders, will be even less acceptable to sociologists, human rights activists, etc, to say nothing of the local community attitude.
- In amelioration of these criticisms, the Nepalese PPP and PCP programmes highlight the potential of a strong programme for biodiversity conservation to draw in governmental, donor and NGO support for holistic rural development adjacent to a protected area. Enhancement of human livelihoods adjacent to Gonarezhou NP is essential because a community shareholding in the PPP will not in itself constitute sufficient income generation for the people who live in this area, with its poor potential for dryland farming.
- The Mozambican example illustrates a process of community self-delimitation, which is likely to be much more important to the Shangaan community around the proposed IPZ than any local government boundaries.

## **3.4 Conformity with Broader TFCA Policies**

The implementation of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Protected Area (TFPA) is guided by the Joint Management Plan (Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park Joint Management Board, 2002), which outlines general policies to harmonize activities within the sections of Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe that comprise the transfrontier park. It is important to refer to this document when any new initiatives are considered, to avoid the risk of creating an uncomfortable or unacceptable precedent for other member states within the TFPA.

The following policy recommendations, of relevance to a PPP arrangement in the proposed rhino IPZ, are expressed in the Joint Management Plan.

*One of the goals of the Great Limpopo TFPA should be to ensure that neighbouring communities should have the opportunity to acquire equity in the Park and not only in employment.*

*Some form of community involvement in the security of their park must be developed with the neighbouring communities. This is particularly the case with rhino conservation and it has also been shown in several areas that only when communities are convinced that conserving rhino will bring them long-term benefits, will rhino be assured of a long-term future.*

*It is recognized that there are differences in the capacity and resources of the national conservation agencies and the time is now ripe that the private sector should be called upon to undertake some of the wildlife management responsibilities in one or more of the protected areas. It is felt that this change in the traditional paradigm is acceptable, on condition that the conservation objectives of the area are upheld and the standards of the service provided are at least equivalent to those that the conservation agency could provide.*

*It is recognized that many of the GLTP development and management activities can be cost-effectively outsourced to the private sector, either independently or in joint ventures with community organizations or Park management.*

From the above, it is apparent that the concept of a PPP arrangement to reinforce the proposed IPZ is in total conformity with recommendations of the overall Joint Management Plan for the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. Indeed, any attempt to implement a rhino IPZ in northern Gonarezhou NP without significant community and private sector participation, and with inadequate and manpower resources available from P&WMA, would be contradictory to the policy framework.

### **3.5 Possible Elements of a PPP in the Proposed Rhino IPZ**

By definition, a PPP arrangement can only be elaborated through a significant amount of participatory planning involving all stakeholders. Given that one of the stakeholder groups is the Shangaan community, some members of which are involved in an illegal invasion of the Park, there is potential to create further political tension if a participatory planning process is initiated without official endorsement. Therefore, it has been inappropriate within the current feasibility study to explore the PPP concept in any detail and only a conceptual outline can be presented. If and when the concept is approved, a great deal of participatory planning will be required to develop a detailed outline of the PPP project.

A related issue that has to be resolved by the authorities is the selection criteria for awarding a number of concessions that have recently been advertised for development within the Park. Two of these concession sites (Masasanya, and Lower Pombadzi) are within the proposed IPZ. In addition, the Chilojo lodge site is on the southern boundary of the proposed IPZ in the most likely direction of expansion of the black rhino population. A concession site at Tambahata Pan on the eastern side of the IPZ has also been advertised, and would be relevant to the PPP, although concerns have been expressed about the ecological impact of a lodge at this sensitive site (there is also concern that the Chilojo site requires reconsideration as it will have an aesthetic impact in the scenic area of the Chilojo Cliffs and may unreasonably restrict the access of park visitors). If these sites are allocated to one or more operators who wish to enter into a PPP arrangement and can bring relevant experience into it, then the concept will be feasible. But if the sites are allocated to concessionaires who are unwilling to participate or who are ignorant of basic principles of community involvement, then the PPP will obviously be compromised.

Because ecotourism is at a very low level in Zimbabwe at present owing to negative international perceptions, new ecotourism ventures will struggle to maintain critical mass and therefore the PPP should, if at all possible, be linked with the existing lodges of Chilo Gorge and Mahenye. This will enable the PPP to benefit from existing support and marketing services. Chilo Gorge and Mahenye already have community participation, which is likely to be the reason why the Shangaans living in this area (who have as strong a land claim within the Park as those living in the Chitsa area) did not invade

the Park. By including these existing lodges in an overall PPP for the northern section of Gonarezhou NP, the resolution of land claims can be presented as a general TFPA process to create community shareholdings, rather than as an appeasement process focussed specifically on the Chitsa squatters.

If the PPP option is developed as recommended by this feasibility study, then consideration should be paid to regarding the re-stocked rhinos (that are the “flagship species”) as resources that can have an asset value for the PPP. This asset value could be derived from an agreement that in return for providing a rhino monitoring service within the IPZ (as demonstrated through a specific procedure of reporting to P&WMA or maintaining a rhino population database such as WILDb), the PPP will be entitled to a proportion of the value of rhinos that are captured in the area in order to restock other areas. Such an arrangement will create a significant opportunity for incentives-based conservation funding by donors within the TFCA process; by paying an agreed amount per rhino to the PPP, these donors would not only be encouraging the local community to prevent poaching in the IPZ, but would also be maintaining a supply of rhinos to facilitate the restocking of other areas of the TFCA.

#### **4. REFERENCES**

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