

GREATER KOKSTAD TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



GREATER KOKSTAD LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

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List of Abbreviations

BEE	:	Black Economic Empowerment
BBBEE	:	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
CBD	:	Central Business District
CTO	:	Community Tourism Organisation
DEDT	:	Department of Economic Development and Tourism
GKM	:	Greater Kokstad Local Municipality
KZN	:	KwaZulu-Natal
LED	:	Local Economic Development
LTF	:	Local Tourism Forum
MICE	:	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions
NTSS	:	National Tourism Sector Plan
IDP	:	Integrated Development Plan
UDP	:	Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park
SMME	:	Small Medium Micro Enterprise
TKZN	:	Tourism KwaZulu-Natal
CATHSSETA	:	Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, Sports Sector and Education Training Authority
WHS	:	World Heritage Site
WTO	:	World Trade Organisation

1 INTRODUCTION

This document presents a tourism strategy for Greater Kokstad. The strategy does not provide an infinite formula but rather a framework to guide further growth and development of Greater Kokstad tourism. The strategy only presents part of a much larger effort with the real challenge and crux being its successful implementation. The strategy must not be considered “final” and implemented rigidly, but must be appreciated as a “live” document to be amended in accordance with the dynamics of the ever-changing environment.

This ever changing environment will require experimenting with new ideas and “learning by doing”. International experience in tourism and LED conclude that there is simply no “sure fire” recipe for development, as the environments and variables are simply too varied and dynamic. On another level, this concept is captured by Deng Xiaoping’s dictum “cross the river by feeling the stones”, which means that a development strategy of this nature, sometimes requires small steps, rather than extravagant plans and programmes. This is particularly true for a small and open economy such as that of Greater Kokstad, where changes in a lead sector such as tourism, or a change in political leadership, can change the landscape in a significant way, requiring a re-think and realignment of the strategy.

The Greater Kokstad Municipality forms part of the Sisonke District Municipality Area (DC43), which lies on the south west tip of KwaZulu-Natal, bordered by Matatiele Local Municipality on the West, Lesotho and part of Eastern Cape on the South. The Greater Kokstad Municipal area of jurisdiction is approximately 2680 km² in extent. The Municipality shares its borders with KwaSani, Matatiele, Umuziwabantu and Umzimkhulu Local Municipalities. It is one of the five municipalities that make up the Sisonke District Municipality.

Greater Kokstad functions as a district node and a dominant commercial centre in the Sisonke District. Areas of urbanisation in the Greater Kokstad Municipality consist of Kokstad Town, Bhongweni, Franklin and Swartberg. Land uses within these areas are typically urban mixed uses with acceptable levels of infrastructural and service development and a minimal provision of social facilities and services to support the resident populations. Industrial development is concentrated in Kokstad Town. The Greater Kokstad Municipality is crossed by a number of important transportation routes, such as the N2 Development Corridor that links the area to the major economic hubs such as Port Shepstone and Durban in KwaZulu-Natal Province and Umtata in the Eastern Cape Province.

Other regional access roads include the R56 to Cedarville and Matatiele in the west and the R617 to Franklin, Swartberg, Underberg and Pietermaritzburg to the north of the

municipality. The Greater Kokstad Municipality is reliant on the Agricultural Sector for its economic well-being. This sector contributes considerably towards the gross geographic product of the area and employs the majority of the workforce. The population distribution in the municipal area is characterized by relatively high population densities within urban nodes, and low densities in agricultural areas as a result of farms under white private land ownership.

The town of Kokstad is of great historical significance in that in 1820 the town became the capital of the Griqualand Colony. Kokstad Town is considered as the administrative centre of the Greater Kokstad Municipality, and comprises various government sectors, all basic shopping facilities, medical surgeries, churches, bed and breakfasts and community facilities such as halls, recreational centres, and superb homes in a quiet relaxed environment. The area is also located adjacent to Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park (UDP) which is a World Heritage Site (WHS) and one of the prime tourist destinations in the Province. It is also endowed with natural resources that give it a unique comparative advantage.

However, none of these positive attributes have been packaged into a unique tourism experience that captures the ever-growing tourism market both locally and internationally. As such, the municipality has identified as need to champion tourism development and facilitate a common vision and programme among stakeholders. The objectives of the Tourism Strategy for Greater Kokstad can be outlined as follows:-

- ☛ Provide a strategic framework to guide the municipality (in partnership with the stakeholders) in promoting and supporting sustainable economic development initiatives of the tourism sector within the Greater Kokstad area of jurisdiction;
- ☛ Identify and propose viable tourism market interventions in the area that will greatly contribute to economic development of the area;
- ☛ Develop a tourism marketing strategy, planning, facilitation and implementation that is in line with the district tourism plan;
- ☛ To describe and analyse the Greater Kokstad Local Municipality as a local tourism destination;
- ☛ Create tourism partnerships and alignment with the work and mandate of both the Southern Midlands Tourism Association and Southern Drakensberg Tourism Association;
- ☛ To increase employment opportunities;
- ☛ To formulate tourism aims, general objectives, development and management strategies, programmes, projects and action plans for Greater Kokstad Local Municipality and align these with Sisonke District, KwaZulu-Natal (Provincial) and South Africa (National) Plans;

- ☛ To conduct a SWOT and Gap analysis and to formulate conclusions and recommendations for product development diversification;
- ☛ To prepare a marketing strategy and land analysis in order to unleash the tourism potential for the municipality.

The Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan should generate the following benefits for the municipal area:

- ☛ Economic Growth –contribute to the creation of sustainable economic growth through the establishment of the competitive tourism sector. This would act as a catalyst for local economic development within Greater Kokstad. The preparation of a tourism strategy will also further explore opportunities and linkages of tourism with other sectors.
- ☛ Job creation – there are no direct jobs that would be created at this stage of the study. However, the study will identify opportunities which will lead to the creation of sustainable job opportunities within a medium and long term. The unemployment levels are a concern within Greater Kokstad as noted in the Integrated Development Plan (IDP).
- ☛ Poverty alleviation – the study would assist to determine the potential community-based tourism projects that can positively contribute towards eradicating poverty of the targeted groups.
- ☛ Improved Private Sector Investment – the tourism strategy will clearly indicate the opportunities for private sector investments in terms of the tourism industry. This may include tourism hospitality outlets and niche tourism enterprises that are deemed to be sustainable for the area.
- ☛ Common vision – the study would assist in terms of ensuring that all the tourism stakeholders within Greater Kokstad pursue specific actions that lead to the implementation of a common tourism vision.

The new strategic thrust for Tourism Development and Marketing contained in this document was developed through stakeholder consultation process and is based on the following framework:

- ☛ Tourism development enabling legislation at both national and provincial level and mandate for tourism development in South Africa.
- ☛ The national strategic tourism objectives and goals as outlined in the Tourism development policies, particularly the NTSS and provincial policies.
- ☛ The Sisonke District Tourism Strategy and the IDP.

- ☛ The development vision and agenda of the GKM as outlined in the IDP and the associated sector plans.
- ☛ Valuable inputs received from various stakeholders and interested and affected parties.

2 STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

2.1 RULES OF THE GAME

The rules of the game refer to the aspects of tourism that have to be complied with and are regulated. As such, the following have to be adhered to in the tourism industry and will not be addressed as separate objectives in the strategy. It should also be noted that these aspects should be included in the relevant municipal by-laws. This will enable the municipality to monitor the implementation of certain key issues.

2.1.1 TRANSFORMATION

The tourism industry within Greater Kokstad has not undergone transformation especially with respect to BBBEE, second economy and community tourism. This needs to be resolved in order to ensure that there is more broad-based participation in the tourism industry within the area. This section therefore identifies interventions that can be pursued in order to create an enabling environment for the sector to transform.

2.1.1.1 TOURISM BBBEE

The local tourism industry has remained relatively white as a result of the apartheid past and the manner in which the tourism is organised at present. As a result the majority of the tourism hospitality outlets, including the tourist accommodation, are almost completely white-owned. A need exists to encourage the black entrepreneurs to pursue investments which are tourism related. This may include investing in the existing businesses through partnerships and buying of shares or establishing new tourism businesses based on the opportunities that still exist.

It is fairly difficult and risky to enter the tourism industry through the traditional platforms such as accommodation. However, the tourism industry has a long value-chain which offers various business opportunities. At present, most of the product owner's source services through their own suppliers. It is possible to identify certain service items in the value-chain that can be outsourced to BEE businesses. The ultimate success of this intervention depends on whether targeted groups are interested on the tourism sector.

2.1.1.2 SMME AND SECOND ECONOMY INVOLVEMENT

There are SMMEs and second economy operators that can be involved in the tourism industry within Greater Kokstad. These include groups of people who are involved in arts and craft. The following are the proposed interventions that could be used to mainstream the SMMEs in the tourism industry:

- ☛ The SMMEs should be organised – the SMME's who are able to produce artefacts and crafts (that could be packaged as tourism products) must be organized. This implies that they must at least have an entity with a structure (i.e. chairperson and secretary) that will be the contact between the tourism SMMEs and other stakeholders.
- ☛ The SMMEs must be formalized – The process to formalize this group implies that they must be registered as tourism business entities with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. They must also consider applying for membership with the CTO (Kokstad Tourism Association). These SMMEs must also have representatives who will attend all CTO meetings. This will also assist to ensure that the products they produce are of appropriate quality and they benefit from the marketing activities undertaken by the CTOs.
- ☛ The other tourism activities that can be undertaken by SMMEs include the cultural tour guides which includes experiences on traditional dances, visit to Sangoma, traditional dressmaking and traditional food restaurants. The other tours may include natural tour guides (fauna and flora), professional hunting and township tours.

2.1.2 FORMALISATION AND REGULATION

The KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Act, 2002 makes provision for the registration of certain tourism-related enterprises. According to regulations that were promulgated under section 32(f) and (i), certain tourism-related enterprises may voluntarily register with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. However, in terms of these regulations, registration is mandatory for enterprises whose primary object is to provide services and facilities to tourists in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

A new process is unfolding, whereby tourism businesses need to register with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Some of the benefits of registration with DEDT are:

- ☛ Inclusion in a comprehensive database;
- ☛ Free listings in marketing material such as travel guides, trade directories, niche brochures and maps;
- ☛ A web-page hosted and generated by TKZN;
- ☛ Permission to display brochures at TKZN's flagship information office and airport office; and
- ☛ Access to the ZULU KINGDOM logo to assist in promoting KZN as a tourist destination, and own business.

The majority of the tourism operators and enterprises within Kokstad are not registered with the Kokstad Tourism Association and a few accommodation establishments are not star-graded. This situation will need to be addressed in order to strengthen the functionality of the tourism industry within the area.

2.1.3 SERVICE EXCELLENCE

The importance of tourism in South Africa makes it one of the most important service industries. As such, the tourism industry requires the constant measurement of service delivery. Programmes also need to be implemented to improve these levels. According to an occasional paper by TKZN, surveys revealed that KZN performs relatively well, but that there is room for improvement. In order to facilitate service excellence, TKZN has initiated a formal customer care, service improvement and registration programme.

The registration is voluntary for the tourism industry. Registration attempts to ensure that greater benefits accrue to all tourism stakeholders and that collectively, the tourism industry is able to provide a better service to consumers. In addition, TKZN launched a customer care service, whereby tourists can lodge complaints or compliments regarding tourism service in KZN. A customer care coordinator has to investigate incidents reported and find an amicable solution. The Department of Economic Development and Tourism has the right to deregister a particular service, in the case of repeat offences. An offending tourism service provider will lose access to the province's marketing and development programme. Service excellence programmes have also been instituted to improve the level of service delivery of all staff and to reward establishments that excel in the area of service delivery.

2.1.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) is responsible for a star grading and classification scheme. The scheme was introduced in respect of accommodation establishments and certain prescribed sectors, such as Conference venues and restaurants. Quality assurance provides tourists confidence in products and services, and also serves as an industry benchmark. In order to promote quality assurance in Greater Kokstad, tourism operators must be urged to be graded. Currently, there are a limited number of operators that are graded. Grading will provide these facilities with an added advantage in the tourism service industry and customer confidence.

2.1.5 STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION

The success of the tourism industry largely depends on setting up and implementing effective structures to manage tourism development and operation. This is important in order to ensure that the common tourism goal is achieved. The working relations between the local and provincial stakeholders is critical. The local stakeholders are Kokstad Tourism Association (CTO), Greater Kokstad Municipality (LED Unit), District Tourism Forum and Provincial Tourism Forum (PTF). The other potential stakeholders (SMMEs) at a local level maybe be included in the near future, however it is advisable that they be involved as the members of the CTO in order to avoid uncoordinated, conflicting and tedious actions within the tourism industry on the ground.

At a provincial level the key stakeholders will include Tourism KwaZulu-Natal and the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. The other departments that are important for some of the tourism products are the Department of Arts and Culture, Department of Transport, Department of Environmental Affairs and Rural Development as well as Amafa KwaZulu-Natal.

2.1.6 VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT

Tourism development and marketing taking place within Greater Kokstad should not be considered in isolation to the broader surrounding environment. There should be alignment amongst how the area is branded in line with Sisonke District tourism branding. The District branding should also be aligned with KwaZulu-Natal provincial branding. The provincial brand will ultimately be aligned with the manner in which South Africa is branded as a country. The main intention is to ensure that tourism products within the areas within the province and the country are properly packaged under a unified theme. This also promotes consistency in terms of marketing the broader country and province as a destination.

2.2 SWOT ANALYSIS

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages that impact upon the tourism environment and its development within Greater Kokstad. The situational analysis report highlighted some of the challenges that need to be addressed and opportunities that need to be pursued. The following represents a SWOT analysis, which assesses these favourable and unfavourable issues in the context of developing Greater Kokstad for tourism.

2.2.1 STRENGTHS

The main strengths of Greater Kokstad with regard to tourism development can be discussed as follows: -

- ☛ Diverse natural endowments – Greater Kokstad boasts with natural endowments such as mountains (including Drakensberg), rivers, scenic landscapes, wildlife, the nature reserves and the presence of rare and endangered species. Some of the intrinsic natural features are well-protected (i.e. Mount Currie Nature Reserve).
- ☛ Location along UKhahlamba Drakensberg Park which is a World Heritage Site.
- ☛ Historic significance – there are a number of historic, religious and cultural assets that exist within Greater Kokstad. This includes the history of East Griqualand and its cross-border history with Lesotho, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. There is an opportunity to build additional heritage tourism products based on the prominent figures that once existed in Kokstad (i.e. Adam Kok and Khotso Sethuntsha)
- ☛ Competitive catchment of business and transit tourism market –The growth of Kokstad town's tourism industry is mainly attributed to a brisk overnight business and transit trade related to the area's positioning as the service and economic hub of the broader sub-region and its proximity to the main N2 transport corridor. Business tourism is expected to be one of the hottest growth markets for travel industry providers in the future. Developing transition economies interested in expanding revenues from business tourism need to focus on both the individual business traveller and the meetings and conventions market. Business travellers typically have some free time when they are away from home.
- ☛ Municipal Planning – The municipality adopted the Spatial Development Framework (SDF) and Land Use Control Policies which assists to promote orderly development and appropriate amenities within Kokstad and its surroundings. This can serve as a guide for the development and location of further tourism facilities.
- ☛ Local products can be mainstreamed to the tourism market – An opportunity exists to engage SMME's and other entrepreneurs in the tourism sector. There are a number of other industries that may need to be explored to expand the tourism supply value chain as indicated in 2.1.1.2.
- ☛ Active and energetic community tourism structure with a relatively large membership of the existing tourist products and activities.
- ☛ A municipality which has a positive attitude towards tourism and is keen to promote the development of this sector as an integral part of its planning and development agenda.

2.2.2 WEAKNESSES

The weaknesses can be discussed as follows: -

- ☞ No common vision (theme) for tourism - Kokstad is not effectively branded as a tourism destination. The town is considered a “tourism hub” but the physical appearance of the town, and in particular the entrances of the town, does not support this status. The municipality gives very little financial assistance to tourism development and tourism marketing is financed mainly through membership fees and commission fees.
- ☞ Fragmented relationship amongst tourism players – few of the establishments are not star-graded (or maintain certification) and not all tourism enterprises belong to the Association. This implies that Greater Kokstad lacks holistic marketing and reliable tourism data (visitor figures).
- ☞ Lack of infrastructure – there is a general lack of good quality road infrastructure and the physical appeal of the town is poor. There are limited local tourism organisations around tourism development and marketing, and inadequate support from the municipality. There is no dedicated tourism information office within Kokstad. The area is also characterized by poor outdoor advertising and branding of the town.
- ☞ Lack of holistic and robust tourism development – there hasn’t been any progress made with regards to BEE and there are possible leakages through procurement and tourism value supply chain. This takes place when the local tourism enterprises decide to purchase the goods elsewhere while the similar goods are available locally.
- ☞ Lack of capacity within the municipality to drive tourism development. Municipal staff responsible for tourism is also involved in a number of other municipal functions that have limited bearing on tourism development and promotion.
- ☞ Relatively poor relationship between the municipality and private sector involved in tourism in the area. This compromises the industry and impedes effective participation of key stakeholders in municipal tourism affairs.
- ☞ General decline in the local economy particularly the agricultural sector a result, in part, of the land reform programme, liberalisation of trade and the withdrawal of agricultural subsidies.
- ☞ Location at the periphery of KZN Province and away from established tourism destinations in the Province.
- ☞ Lack of community involvement in the tourism sector which denies tourists exposure to local cultures and experience of authentic indigenous African way of life.

2.2.3 OPPORTUNITIES

The following represents the opportunities that are applicable for tourism development within Greater Kokstad: -

- ☛ Implementation of the Sisonke birding route feasibility study – a feasibility study has been developed for packaging avi-tourism within the Sisonke Area through a birding route concept. Avi-tourism products within Greater Kokstad will also benefit from this district-wide initiative. The details regarding this initiative are further expanded upon in the strategy content.
- ☛ Proximity to the South Coast – the tourism sector is a highly competitive industry and Greater Kokstad is adjacent to the South Coast which is a popular and well-established attraction amongst foreign tourists. It would not be sustainable for Greater Kokstad to directly compete with the South Coast in terms of tourism but the efforts should ensure that the tourism industry between these areas complement each other.
- ☛ Diversification - the opportunity exists to brand and reposition Greater Kokstad based on its competitive advantages within the broader Sisonke tourism market. This may include diversification from transit-business tourism to getaway, adventure, ecotourism and cultural tourism. There are still opportunities to attract the domestic holiday tourism market as elaborated further in this strategy.
- ☛ Well established agricultural sector involved in a range of agricultural activities providing an opportunity for agri-tourism.
- ☛ Strategic location in relation to the Eastern Cape Province and KwaZulu-Natal Province, Lesotho and established tourism destinations such as the Wild Coast, Ugu-South Coast and Southern Drakensberg.
- ☛ Relatively good regional and provincial access given the location of the area along the N2, R56 and R612 which are all major transport and trade routes between KZN and the Eastern Cape.
- ☛ Provincial tourism development and marketing programmes.

2.2.4 THREATS

The possible threats can be discussed as follows: -

- ☛ Low priority in terms of the KwaZulu-Natal Tourism Authorities product development strategy – The area does not constitute a key provincial tourism priority. The KwaZulu-Natal Tourism product development strategy (2002) makes only limited reference to the sub-district with respect to a proposed corridor linking Durban-Pietermaritzburg and the

Midlands with the Southern Drakensberg and the proposed “Lesotho loop”, using Ramatselisao's Gate and Qachas neck.

- ☛ Un-coordinated tourism development – The continued lack of co-ordinated planning and organisation around tourism development and marketing will limit the growth of the tourism sector within the area.
- ☛ The possible decline in the overall economic conditions of East Griqualand and the surrounding areas.
- ☛ The decrease in the number of tourists that visits South Coast may limit the increase of holiday tourists to also visit Kokstad.
- ☛ The proposed N2 toll road which runs along the coastline and by-passes GKM completely. At present, travellers between EC and KZN are forced to go through GKM and use Kokstad as a half-way stop.
- ☛ Competition from the neighbouring established tourist destinations such as Southern Drakensberg, Wild-Coast and Ugu South Coast.

2.3 KEY UNCERTAINTIES

There is a number of factors that will impact either positively or negatively onto the tourism sector which neither the municipality nor stakeholders have direct control over. These factors should always be borne in mind and considered when conceptualising projects and taking strategic decision.

2.3.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

South Africa has a relatively good weather pattern which is attractive to foreign tourists. However this weather pattern faces a threat due to climate change which is taking place at a global level. Global climate change is possibly the greatest environmental challenge facing the world in this century. Although often referred to as ‘global warming’, global climate change is more about serious disruptions of the entire world’s weather and climate patterns. This includes the impacts on rainfall, extreme weather events and sea level rise, rather than just moderate temperature increases.

According to the international studies undertaken by NFCC the impacts of a global average temperature rise of between 2.5°C and 3°C from the 1990 levels are countless, and in South Africa it is estimated that agriculture, tourism and conservation will be the areas which will feel the effects the most. Particular reference was made to the Kruger National Park which may encounter a situation whereby a third of the animal species are likely to become extinct

under those temperature changes. This will devastate the park in terms of its tourism revenue and effectively put amend to South Africa's oldest conservation reserve. For the global tourism industry, climate change brings more risks than opportunities. There will be regional and seasonal shifts in tourist flows, resulting in both winners and losers.

Although the majority of the developing world faces greater challenges than the developed world, South Africa is in a better situation compared to the rest of the African countries. This is due to the fact that South Africa has more heterogeneous and less climate-dependent products to offer tourists.

2.3.2 GLOBAL ECONOMIC CLIMATE

The growth of Greater Kokstad's tourism sector (in terms of foreign tourists) is dependent on the economic growth of the visitors' countries of origin. This is the biggest influence on demand for travel to Kokstad and South Africa in general. Tourism is especially vulnerable to economic uncertainty and volatility for a simple reason. Most travel and tourism involves discretionary income. During tough economic times people conserve their cash to cover the essentials of life and necessities. In the short to medium term there is almost certainty that a trend of travellers spending less on travel. Those tourism and hospitality businesses that can adapt to service travellers on a tighter budget will do well (i.e. business-related tourism and educational tours). The demand for the luxury end of the market is likely to decrease while demand for either low cost or perceived good value products and services is likely to grow. The greater the economic growth in a country of visitors, the more visitors will arrive in South Africa. Unfortunately, South Africa and Kokstad do not have direct control over the performance of the global economy.

2.3.3 STAKEHOLDER BUY-IN AND CO-OPERATION

Tourism development requires buy-in and co-operation from a range of stakeholders. This is particularly important for some of the initiatives that require joint effort in order to achieve synergies. There appears to be a fragmented relationship amongst different tourism stakeholders within Greater Kokstad. The scope of this strategy cannot guarantee that all stakeholders will buy in to the tourism vision and co-operate with each other on matters of common interest.

2.4 BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

An assessment of the tourism industry nationally and provincially suggests that the following are fundamental principles that any tourism strategy should built on (Harley Sharp):

- ☛ Tourists are the primary source of tourism revenue: This means that there is a need to maintain and increase the number of tourists from existing 'high-spend' tourist-source markets, at the same time as developing new tourist-source markets through existing product maintenance, new product development and effective marketing strategies for the tourism destination and/or product.
- ☛ Tourists are attracted into a destination either by the product(s) and/or product mix providing the 'primary attraction', or attracting tourists from the 'flow-through' effect of tourists on route to another destination.
- ☛ Tourism product is rarely commercially successful in isolation. Rather it needs to fit within its 'Destination Mix' (clustering of the variety of tourism attractions, resources, facilities and services) and to enhance the overall market reputation (attractiveness) of the Destination.
- ☛ For tourism destinations and/or product(s) to continue to be successful, they must meet the current, as well as future, needs of tourists in terms of location, operations and development. This includes the need to upgrade and regenerate tired and/or stagnant product where visitor decline is prevalent. However, more importantly is for the product to recognise its abilities, and limitations, in terms of its 'sphere of influence' of the strength of its attraction, or drawing power, into the geographical areas from which visitors will be drawn.
- ☛ Each tourism product should to 'FIT' within the internal existing and potential Destination Mix of the GKM, as well as the external tourism enabling environment. The Destination Mix must work holistically to increase the number of tourists into the Destination for the collective benefit of all.
- ☛ Tourism Local Economic Development will need to function as an integral component of Local Government and within the pre-determined structures of its policies and frameworks (including the Integrated Development Plans), but at the same time be sufficiently freed up of unnecessary bureaucratic processes, so that it will encourage tourism growth and investment within, what is essentially, a private sector and profit motivated industry.
- ☛ Tourism Local Economic Development will need to function within the tourism attraction hierarchal framework of facilitating 'Tourist Facilities' to support the 'Secondary' and 'Primary Tourist Attractions' of the 'Destination', whether or not the Primary and Secondary Attractions of the Destination are within the area of jurisdiction of the 'Local Authority'.

3 TOURISM STRATEGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The tourism development strategy for Greater Kokstad is based on a number of underlying principles and development approaches. It is presented in the form of the vision and strategic interventions for future tourism development within the area. It outlines the ideal framework for tourism development and development strategies that focus on the key themes to strengthen and expand the tourism productivity of the tourism sector. The strategic framework focuses on the main interventions (“what to do”) in order to further develop the tourism sector. The development strategies on the other hand focus on mechanisms (“the way certain things should be done”) that should be put in place in order to improve the area’s productivity in terms of the tourism sector.

3.2 TOURISM AND INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN GKM

The development vision for Greater Kokstad does not specifically mention tourism development. It is rather narrated as a broad goal by the municipality to achieve sustainable development in terms of service provision. Greater Kokstad Development Vision:

“To be the most effective in providing sustainable development services to all our communities” (Source: IDP)

On the other hand, the mission statement (IDP 2010:117), with a set of guiding principles to implement the vision, emphasize that GKM should strive to achieve economically viable development and sustainable services. Greater Kokstad Mission Statement:

“Working together to render community driven, economically viable and sustainable services” (Source: IDP)

This is aligned to this project since tourism is a sunrise sector at a global level, with virtually almost all global nations pursuing tourism development in an attempt to inject economic growth

Issues for Consideration	Strategic Objective	Development Strategies to achieve municipal vision
High unemployment and poverty rate that is facing the municipality.	To establish economic growth and development in all economic sectors with a particular focus on agriculture, tourism , manufacturing and industry. To identify and develop LED opportunities based on the functions of the Municipality.	Support and Grow Tourism: Tourism need to be given priority in order to create sustainable economic opportunities for wider section of society and in so doing to the tourism interest in cultural and social history.

capable of sustaining the ever-increasing population. The IDP extract table above indicates that tourism was identified by the 2010/ 11 Revised IDP as one of the priorities to implement the development vision of the municipality. This mandate will then be further refined by the tourism strategy.

3.3 STRATEGIC APPROACH: RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Responsible tourism can be defined as responsible choices made by tourists, such as responsible attitudes to the limiting of the extent of the sociological and environmental impacts their holiday may cause. The South African White Paper on the Development and Promotion of Tourism, 1996, states that responsible tourism as:

‘tourism that promotes responsibility to the environment through its sustainable use; responsibility to involve local communities in the tourism industry; responsibility for the safety and security of visitors and responsible government, employees, employers, unions and local communities’.

Responsible Tourism is identified as the key guiding principle for tourism development in South Africa. The Tourism White Paper further identifies the following:

- ☛ The tourism industry’s responsibility to the environment through the promotion of balanced and sustainable tourism with a focus on the development of environmentally based tourism activities (e.g. game viewing and diving);
- ☛ Government and business are expected to involve local communities that are in close proximity to the tourism plants and attractions through the development of meaningful economic linkages (e.g. the supply of agricultural produce to the lodges, out-sourcing of laundry);
- ☛ The responsibility to respect local cultures and protect them from over-commercialisation and over-exploitation;
- ☛ The responsibility of local communities to become actively involved in the tourism industry, to practice sustainable development and to ensure the safety and security of the visitors;
- ☛ Responsibility to visitors through ensuring their safety, security and health;
- ☛ The responsibility of both employers and employees in the tourism industry both to each other as well as to the customer;
- ☛ Responsible trade union practices and responsible employment practices;

- ☛ Responsible government as well as responsibility on the part of the tourists themselves to observe the norms and practices of South Africa, particularly with respect to the environment and culture of the country.

Responsible tourism also needs to include the concept of sustainability. This is defined by the World Tourism Organisation as:

"Sustainable tourism development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability."

In KwaZulu-Natal, there is evidence of responsible tourism practices, but this is of a limited nature. Evidence of responsible tourism:

- ☛ Notices in hotels to save water and that request guests to hand up their towels if they do not require them to be washed, and saving water as a result;
- ☛ Recycle bins;
- ☛ Few hotels have been seen to have installed energy saving light bulbs required to produce them;
- ☛ Fuel savings by ensuring that local produce are bought for kitchens;
- ☛ Skills development programs for all staff members to raise the level of competency and the standards of operation of associated personnel;
- ☛ Catering for a range of disabilities and making their establishments accessible to all tourists, e.g. wheelchair friendly access.

Tourism facilities in Greater Kokstad need to take note of the notion of responsible tourism, from a social and environmental perspective. In addition, responsible tourism can contribute to green economies. This term describes an economy that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. Greater Kokstad can start by implementing initiatives

Figure 1: Responsible Tourism



that will contribute to a sustainable environment, e.g. using solar power, using water wisely, catering for disabled people and making use of local labour and local produce. Another way to address the litter problem in Greater Kokstad is to implement recycling projects, which can in turn create employment and contribute to a more aesthetically pleasing and sustainable environment.

The strategic objectives recommended are in line with the responsible tourism guidelines which places a lot of emphasis on economic, social and environmental responsibility. The economic responsibility is intended to sustain tourism economic productivity and economic opportunities for the future. The social responsibility is intended to ensure the protection of human and cultural heritage as well as equitable access to resources, while environmental responsibility is intended for the preservation of essential ecological processes and protection of biodiversity. The strategic objectives can therefore be outlined as follows:

- ☛ Economic Responsibility – to maximise the economic impact of benefits flowing from tourism within the study area and to minimise leakages. This can be achieved through product development and packaging, linkages and partnerships, creation of jobs through tourism and development of infrastructure to boost the tourism industry.
- ☛ Social Responsibility – to promote local culture and heritage as well as ensuring that the wider society benefits from the tourism industry.
- ☛ Environmental Responsibility – ensuring that the tourism industry enhances the quality of the environment.

3.4 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT VISION

The GKM tourism development vision is formulated within the context of the broader tourism vision of Sisonke District and KwaZulu-Natal Province, but also acknowledges the influence of the Eastern Cape and Lesotho in the area. Greater Kokstad Tourism Vision has been formulated as follows:

“Greater Kokstad Municipality will be a leading holiday destination offering a unique adventure, nature-based and cultural heritage experience while also encapsulating the local spirit of togetherness and cooperation”

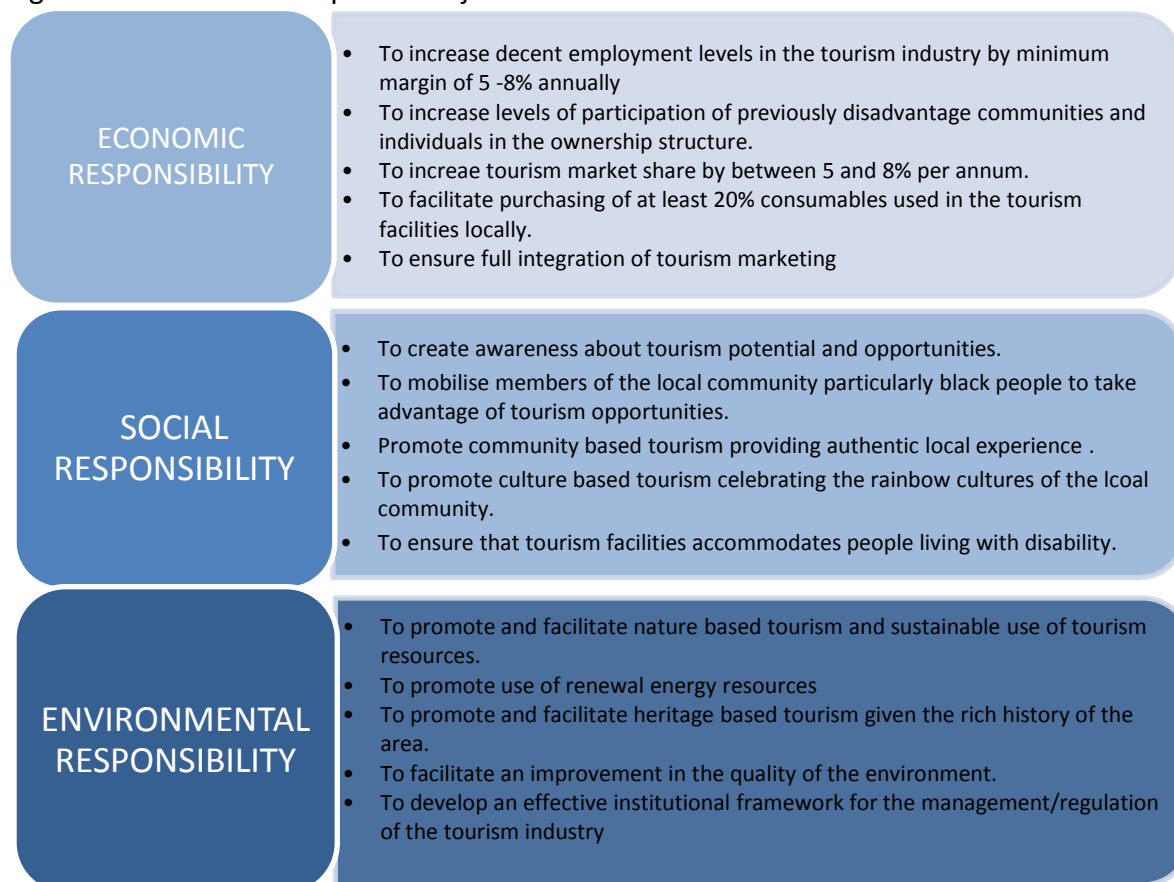
The following themes have been used to underpin the above vision:

- ☛ Contextual relevance
- ☛ Alignment with neighbouring destinations
- ☛ All inclusive
- ☛ Responsible and responsive tourism development

3.5 TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The recommended Strategic Objectives for the GKM area are in line with the responsible tourism guidelines as follows:

Figure 2: Tourism Development Objectives



3.6 STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

To be able to realise the development objectives and growth targets that have been identified in support of the strategic tourism vision of the GKM, the following development intervention strategies have been developed:

- ☞ Product development and diversification.
- ☞ Product packaging (tourism route development).
- ☞ Development of tourism support infrastructure.
- ☞ Industry regulation.
- ☞ Service excellence and customer care.
- ☞ Transformation of the tourism industry.
- ☞ Tourism marketing programme.

- Establishment of effective institutional arrangements for tourism management and governance.
- Cross-border alignment and coordination.

The details or key components of each of these are reflected in Figure 3 and outlined below.

Figure 3: Strategic Focus Areas

<p>PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFICATION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Business Tourism 12. Heritage and Culture Adventure Tourism 13. Avi-tourism 14. Agri-tourism 15. Rail Tourism 16. Events 	<p>SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CBD Public Realm Upgrade. 2. Road Infrastructure 3. Alternative sources of energy. 4. Information and visitor orientation. 5. Improving signage. 	<p>TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Heritage Sites. 7. Adventure Tourism Sites. 8. Birding sites. 9. Farm visits. 10. Township Tours.
<p>TRANSFORMATION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. Tourism awareness campaign 24. SMME Development 25. Verification and certification 26. Private Public Partnerships 	<p>INDUSTRY REGULATION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Municipal tourism by-laws. 21. Registration systems and procedures. 22. Land use regulation. 	<p>SERVICE EXCELLENCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Grading 18. Customer care 19. Tourism ambassadors
<p>ALIGNMENT AND COORDINATION</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37. Participation in district tourism structures. 38. Joint initiatives with neighbouring LMs 39. Cooperative marketing. 	<p>INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. Municipal Tourism Unit 33. Tourism Forum 34. Local Tourism Board 35. Community Tourism Organisation 36. Municipal portfolio committee 	<p>AREA MARKETING</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 27. Branding 28. Print Media 29. Website 30. Trade Fairs 31. Shows and exhibitions

Since the general infrastructure issues are well covered in the Sisonke District Municipality IDP and the associated sector plans, consideration of infrastructure issues in this document is limited to the aspects that support tourism directly. The last three area marketing,

institutional development and alignment are discussed in detail under the implementation plan.

3.6.1 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Tourism product development within the Greater Kokstad area will focus on turning the existing strengths and opportunities into concrete tourism activities and comparative advantages.

3.6.1.1 BUSINESS TOURISM

The Greater Kokstad tourism market is dominated by business tourists and it is important to differentiate all the sub-sectors of business tourism in order to precisely indicate which element of business tourism should be targeted. There are two sub-sectors involved in terms of business tourism. These are:

- ☛ General Business Tourism; and
- ☛ Meetings, Incentives, Conferencing and Exhibitions (MICE) Tourism.

3.6.1.1.1 PROMOTING GENERAL BUSINESS TOURISM

General business tourism relates to individuals travelling on business not because they wish to be business tourists per se. They are driven by business interests as opposed to a zeal to experience the area. This form of tourism is subject to a number of variables that combine to make the area attractive for business and investment. If the general business tourists does not find Greater Kokstad attractive, it is unlikely that general business tourism can be substantially enhanced via any intervention or activity in the tourism industry itself. The challenge, therefore is for the municipality and other government structures to market the area, promote investment and manage the image of the GKM. The consideration of appropriate strategies in this regard falls outside the scope of this exercise save to mention that these may include packaging investment portfolios, hosting business delegations, etc.

3.6.1.1.2 PROMOTING MICE TOURISM

MICE tourism is the new buzzword in tourism markets and relates to various forms of business tourism involving groups of business individuals rather than individual business travellers. MICE tourism is fundamentally different from general business tourism as it has everything to do with tourism industry infrastructure, marketing and perception and several crucial levers exist within the control of Greater Kokstad which makes it possible to expand demand in this sub-sector. MICE is defined as follows:

- ☛ A meeting is defined as an event designed to bring people together for the purpose of exchanging information, either from within one company or organization or from a broader spectrum of people: cocktail functions, product launches, lunch dinner and breakfast meetings, as well as special occasions such as weddings would constitute a meeting as defined by the WTO.
- ☛ Incentives are the second category of this market segment and include travel to a foreign country or domestically as part of a motivational incentive scheme to increase or reward employee effort. Travel incentive schemes are not part of South Africa's corporate culture. This element of MICE will not be investigated further in this document.
- ☛ The definition of conferences is highly contentious but is generally accepted as being a multi day event having at least 100 delegates attending the event for the purpose of exchanging information. Conferences are thus differentiated from meetings by both the duration of the event and the number of people attending.
- ☛ Exhibitions involve the bringing together of people for the purposes of viewing products and services.

The recommended interventions to strengthen this sub-sector can be outlined as follows:

- ☛ High quality accommodation facilities serve as the starting point for MICE tourists. It is therefore crucial that these facilities maintain good quality in terms of services offered as this will ensure that the number of business tourists increases. Feasibility for the development of a facility that has potential to accommodate a large number of people in one venue should be established.
- ☛ State of the art conferencing facilities with potential to accommodate a large number of people should be established. This should provide for break-away sessions, video conferencing, etc.
- ☛ “In-door tourism marketing” – Business travellers typically have some free time when they are away from home. Therefore they are most likely to participate in tourism activities if the effort required is minimal and the risks are low. Accommodation typically serves as the starting point in terms of providing information and tourist options. Longer-staying guests will also be looking for evening and weekend tourism options.

Target markets in this regard may include strategic planning sessions for corporate (large private companies) and public sector, public sector meeting involving large groups, consultative sessions, etc.

3.6.1.2 HERITAGE TOURISM

Heritage tourism exists in the form of historic and cultural resources within Kokstad. These include buildings and monuments that commemorate the history of the Griqua community and influential individuals such as Adam Kok and Khotso Sethuntsha. The recommended intervention for heritage tourism can be outlined as follows:

- ☛ Undertaking an investigation to identify and map all heritage sites within the municipality. Particular attention should be paid to sites that celebrate historic moments, influential individuals and historic moments that changed the area.
- ☛ Delineation, planning and development of the heritage precinct. The precinct area is located in Kokstad Town and has the Museum as its focus point. This initiative entails the upgrading of the environment in the vicinity of the museum, landscaping, and maintenance of buildings, the Statue of Adam Kok, etc.
- ☛ Development of Khotso's House as a tourism facility showcasing the history and life of Khotso. This includes the influence he had in the area.
- ☛ Development of a multi-cultural village celebrating the different cultures in the area. These include the Griqua, Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Bhaca, Afrikaner, Khoi-San and English. The village will celebrate cultural diversity and unity in the area.
- ☛ Development of a monument in Bhongweni to celebrate and honour the heroism of black people that fought against apartheid. GKM was used as one of the routes to Lesotho and back to South Africa.

3.6.1.3 ADVENTURE, LEISURE AND EVENT BASED TOURISM

Adventure tourism is an important component of the local tourism industry. It presents huge scope for further development and opportunities for broadening participation in the industry. Adventure activities that need to be developed as follows:

- ☛ Mountain biking;
- ☛ Quad biking;
- ☛ Photography;
- ☛ Hiking;
- ☛ Fishing;
- ☛ Clay pigeon shooting;
- ☛ Gyrocopter;

- ☛ 4x4 trails; and
- ☛ Horseback riding.

These activities could be developed as a package of activities linked to various tourist accommodation facilities or as separate activities that tourists visiting the area could undertake for amusement. At a broader scale, they can form part of a tourism route. Crystal Dam provides an opportunity for the development of a unique tourism experience featuring water sports, day-visitor entertainment areas (e.g. braai areas) and children play areas, etc. Conference facilities could also be located within this facility. Development of this area as a tourism node should take into account and be guided by the Environmental Management Plan as developed jointly by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife and Greater Kokstad Municipality.

3.6.1.4 AVITOURISM

Bird watching exists within Greater Kokstad but it has not been packaged as an Avitourism product. This is despite the feasibility study and business plan that was prepared for Sisonke (and covering Kokstad). The implementation of the Sisonke Birding Route (Feasibility Study and Business Plan) will assist to strengthen the productivity of this tourism sub-sector. The following activities are required in terms of avi-tourism development:

- ☛ Identify, map and profile key birding sites with an intention to link them to the district tourism route.
- ☛ Investigate specific breeding sites in the and the GKM possibility of allowing birders to view these sites;
- ☛ Extensive consultation with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Birdlife South Africa, and the Sisonke Birding route tour guides and stakeholders; and
- ☛ Establish functional and operational linkages with the district and provincial birding routes.

It is noted that some of the species are endangered and access to their breeding sites could be limited as part of the nature conservation activities of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

3.6.1.5 TOWNSHIP TOURISM

Although the tourism industry is generally well developed in South Africa and KwaZulu-Natal Province in particular, townships and the previously disadvantaged communities are still excluded from this industry. The GKM is no exception to this. Township tourism in the whole region remains one of the untapped and underdeveloped opportunities. A township route could be developed as a unique product focusing mainly on showcasing Bhongweni

township lifestyle and unique history of this township. Success of this initiative will hinges on the community being made aware of tourism opportunities, assisted to develop unique products and organising themselves in a manner that enables them to optimise benefits from the industry. Township tours may include the following:

- ☞ A host of cultural activities, including township jive/dance, traditional dance, music, etc
- ☞ Visiting income generating projects.
- ☞ Visit to a tavern where tourists could be served with refreshments.
- ☞ Visit to a normal township house to learn about township housing.
- ☞ Witnessing some income generating projects.
- ☞ Visit to township schools and churches.

The following activities should be undertaken as a means to stimulate and promote township tourism:

- ☞ Creating broad awareness about tourism among the residents. This includes providing general information about the benefits of tourism, industry manner of operation, and tips on how to make it work at a township level.
- ☞ Identification of various activities that could be packaged together into a unique tourism package that could be offered to tourist and tour operators. This may include visits to sites that are found exclusively in townships (e.g. taverns, shisanyama, etc).
- ☞ Promotion of township tourism as a products and one of the key highlights in the GKM.

3.6.1.6 AGRI-TOURISM

Although there are few Guest Farms within Greater Kokstad, agri-tourism does not appear to have been fully explored as a tourism product. The concept of agri-tourism can include the combination of any of the following elements:

- ☞ Visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation to enjoy the experience, be educated or be involved in activities.
- ☞ Examples of agri-tourism are farm tours for families and school children, day camps, hands-on chores, self-harvesting of produce, hay or sleigh rides, strawberry, peach or apple picking, lavender picking, buying home-made produce like risks, jams and venison pies.
- ☞ Overnight stays in farm guest houses;

- ☛ Structured foreign agricultural tours whereby the agricultural technical experts will visit the area and share knowledge with the well established farmers (i.e. dairy farmers and beef farmers); and
- ☛ Agri-tourists can choose from a wide range of activities that include picking fruits and vegetables, riding horses, tasting honey and cheese-making, or shopping in farm gift shops and farm stands for local and regional produce or hand-crafted gifts.

It is important to indicate that agri-tourism has the potential to be pursued as either a supplementary, complementary, or primary enterprise based on what may be deemed feasible and viable by the investors. The following provides an indication of these options:

- ☛ A supplementary enterprise. As a supplementary enterprise, agri-tourism could be a minor activity that would support the other products on the farm. For instance, if the primary enterprise is livestock production, then one may decide to invite school groups to the farm several days a month to learn about animals and the farming occupation. Occasionally hosting guests on the farm would make agri-tourism a supplementary enterprise to the primary enterprise as long as the agri-tourism activities are a minor part of your farm product mix.
- ☛ A complementary enterprise. As a complementary enterprise, agri-tourism activities would share equal footing with other enterprises in the farm product mix. For example, the farm owner may have an apple production enterprise on the farm. If one were to sell half of the apples to a wholesaler and the remainder to "pick-their-own" guests on your farm, then the two enterprises (the wholesale market and the direct market) would be complementary enterprises.

3.6.1.7 RAIL TOURISM

Rail Tourism is a unique experience that is offered by some of the municipalities (i.e. Ubuhlebezwe) within Sisonke District. However the district intends to extend the rail tourism route to reach Greater Kokstad as well. The intention will be to capitalize on the existing railway line that links Kokstad Town and the Franklin area. This railway line is not currently being used and it is well positioned to link some of the attractions between the two areas. These include birding sites, Baiden natural waterfall (with a Pub and a Restaurant), Emu and Ostrich Farm as well as Trout Fishing Sites.

3.6.1.8 TOURISM EVENTS

A calendar indicating all tourism events within the GKM should be developed. This will enable the CTO in association with all the relevant stakeholders to market the events widely

and engage strategic partners well in advance of the events themselves. The following are some of the events that take place in the GKM:

- ☛ Country Lifestyle (Fauna and Flora)
- ☛ Garden Festival
- ☛ Fishing Competition
- ☛ Fleamarket
- ☛ Cultural (Museum and Griquas)
- ☛ Children Art/ Photographic
- ☛ Flea Markets
- ☛ Vuthamlilo Traditional Festival

3.6.2 TOURISM ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

Tourism routes offer a cost effective opportunity to market tourism infrastructure collectively, while giving tourists a wider variety of services to choose from. The essential concept of route tourism is simple that of the linking together a series of tourism attractions in order to promote local tourism by encouraging visitors to travel from one location to another. Routes may vary considerably in length and scale as well as theme adopted and visitors attracted in terms of characteristics as well as numbers. The development of tourism routes offers opportunities for the formation of local development partnerships.

3.6.2.1 BENEFITS OF ROUTE APPROACH TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The importance of identifying, packaging and developing tourists' routes in and around the GKM cannot be emphasised enough. It has been shown that, if well-designed and imaginative, tourism routes can generate several positive advantages, including the following:

- ☛ Spreading the economic benefits more widely by developing tourist facilities, activities and services along tour routes in a manner that will facilitate tourist spending at these stopover points;
- ☛ Providing additional employment and income, both directly and indirectly, through local facilities and services used to operate tour programmes;
- ☛ Expanding the tourist markets and extending the average length of stay of tourists by providing a variety of attractions and activities.

The tourism products identified can be packaged by establishing few routes that links different niche products. These routes can be segmented into heritage route, avi-tourism route and adventure tourism route. The need will exists to engage with communities in rural areas, in order to establish routes through these areas and linking cultural/accommodation in these areas to the proposed routes.

3.6.2.2 PRE-CONDITIONS FOR ROUTE DEVELOPMENT IN THE GKM

A review of the international experience across tourism routes in both developed and developing countries suggests that there are several key preconditions that are necessary for successful tourism routes. In particular five factors have been identified as particularly significant ingredients for success.

3.6.2.2.1 COOPERATION NETWORKS

Cooperation networks, regional thinking and leadership: A pre-condition for establishing a route is the build up within a region of a good framework of collaboration between government, local council, private enterprises and associations, the tourism industry and local council. Cooperation is viewed as “a productive factor” that is necessary and able to harness the energies of all involved with local development for the benefit of job creation and LED. Conceptually, these collaborative associations are considered as ‘route networks’, characterized by participating parties being mutually dependent on resources controlled by others, albeit recognising that there are advantages to be accrued from a collective pooling of resources

3.6.2.2.2 INNOVATIVE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

The two critical foundations for designing a tourism route are innovative product development and establishing infrastructure and access. In terms of developing any route, it is critical to be familiar with the tourism segment that is being appealed to. However, one of the most difficult issues for route development is the extreme diversity of tastes and preferences that exist across the continent. Likewise in the GKM what would be extremely attractive for international visitors (heritage or township tours), may not necessarily hold appeal for the domestic South African market. What is therefore important is that at the outset, there is a clear and agreed ‘vision’ of what the region/locality aims to portray. A pre-condition for this is conducting a thorough assessment of the region’s needs and tourism assets, a task that requires the bringing together of all the region’s stakeholders in order to develop a product that is based on demand, satisfies all stakeholders and creates linkages with SMMEs.

3.6.2.2.3 ACCESS

Access to the route is fundamental requirement for success. It is evident that other major constraints on local tourism growth relate to transport access in terms of public transport linkages to specific destinations. The location of any route (GKM) and its proximity to the main tourism source or generating areas (Durban, South Coast and the Drakensberg) will determine the clientele that can be attracted and the needs that must be taken into account when planning for route development. The majority of route initiatives are geared towards day trippers, which can considerably reduce infrastructure and development costs. Routes which aim to attract tourists (stay-over's) are generally related to physical activity like hiking and cycle routes.

3.6.2.2.4 INFORMATION AND PROMOTION

It is essential that whatever agency takes responsibility for marketing that tourism promotion be an accurate and true representation of the tourism product as it exists in reality. Indeed, it is evident that promotion that is not handled in a responsible manner can be harmful to both tourist and local communities. The international experience suggests that the management and marketing of routes is usually undertaken by private sector tourism associations often with the support of local, regional or state authorities.

3.6.2.2.5 SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

As the backbone of development of any economy, the provision of infrastructure is a prerequisite towards attaining economic growth and improving the area's productive capacity. There are two major objectives for the infrastructure sector in the long-term:

- ☛ to provide adequate, convenient, fast and safe facilities and competitively priced services to meet the primary needs of the population; and
- ☛ to provide support facilities for the productive sectors and act as catalyst of development in desired areas.

Tourism is concerned mainly with the second objective.

3.6.2.3 IMPROVING SIGNAGE

Signage is a powerful, exciting way of letting people know what type of tourism products can be found in a place. It gives customers a better idea of what is available for them. If tourism signage is designed, used and managed well, it will be an effective silent, sales-media which could attract attention, give customers information and lead them to the right product.

Tourism signs are erected from the nearest numbered route with successive signs to the facility or service if necessary. In urban areas, where there is a congestion of facilities, it may not be possible to display individual attractions by name, in which case generic symbol signs may be used.

Road Traffic Signs, tourism direction signs and outdoor advertising are controlled by National, Provincial and Local legislation, the South African Road Traffic Signs Manual (SARTSM) and the South African Manual for Outdoor Advertising Control (SAMOAC). In addition, Local municipalities are applying their own by-laws and the manufacture of signs is subject to various regulations from the South African Bureau of Standards.

3.6.2.4 PUBLIC REALM

The majority of the tourism facilities within Greater Kokstad area are either located within the Kokstad town or along the main routes. The town should be appropriately developed and upgraded as a heritage development zone since the majority of the heritage tourism assets are concentrated there. The municipality must improve the amenity of the town through the urban renewal interventions. Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- ☛ Landmark (with the East Griqualand theme) at the entrances of the town as the means to enhance the image of town; and
- ☛ The main streets which are frequently used by tourists and have the tourism facilities should be upgraded with street furniture, special street lighting and pedestrian sidewalks in order to improve the image.

Figure 4: Tourists Accommodation



There are also a number of tourism facilities with tourism products (i.e. avi-tourism and nature based tourism) which are located along the provincial routes (R56 and D617). These roads should be maintained as the tourism routes. Since these belong to the KZN Department of Transport, it is important that the department is engaged.

3.6.2.5 ESTABLISHING TOURISM INFORMATION OFFICE

Access to tourism related information and promotion of local products could be improved through the establishment of integrated information centres in a strategic area such as Kokstad Town. The office may include a craft centre, coffee shop, internet café, etc. The type of information that should be available in may include the following:

- ☛ Accommodation bookings for hotels, self-catering chalets, bed & breakfasts, guest lodges, bush camps, caravan parks and camping sites.
- ☛ Activities information for the area including hiking, horse riding, carting, rafting and more.
- ☛ Area information such as weather condition, shopping, arts & crafts, banking, San rock art, what's on and where.
- ☛ Touring information for hiking guides, tours, cultural excursions and day tours.
- ☛ Foreign tourist advice on route planning, safety and health concerns, languages, tips and tales.
- ☛ Functions and cultural activities taking place in and around Greater Kokstad Municipality area.

3.6.2.6 ROAD NETWORK

A second critical aspect for any route development is the availability of infrastructure. In most cases this refers to the road or trail network on which tourists are supposed to travel, which must be to a quality standard that attracts and satisfies potential visitors. For drive tourists, the quality of the road network is vital. The scenic aspect of routes is viewed as especially vital for the day visitor whose focus is upon a 'leisurely drive' rather than getting from point A to B. Beyond the infrastructure, as represented by the road, other crucial aspects of the 'route infrastructure' include signage and provision of accommodation, refreshment facilities and sanitary areas.

3.6.3 INDUSTRY REGULATION

Improving public and private sector confidence in the ability of the municipality to administer public affairs and govern effectively and efficiently is a critical step in attracting investment and building loyalty to the area. In other words, the way GKM Municipality

conducts itself is a key determinant of local economic development. As such, the municipality is committed to providing good governance, reliable and effective services and sound administration in line with local government legislation and policy.

3.6.3.1 BY- LAWS AND REGULATIONS

By-laws are a set of regulations used by the municipality to give effect to its policies, including tourism and economic development policies. Although they are akin to legislation, they cannot be in conflict with provincial and national legislation. The GKM should develop by-laws to manage the tourism sector. The by-laws may include the following:

- ☛ Trading by-laws for regulating trading activities within the municipal area. This deals mainly with conditions under which trading should occur, storage of goods, etc.
- ☛ Outdoor advertising by-laws which regulated application procedures for advertisement, use of various medium of outdoor advertisement, transit advertising, etc.
- ☛ Registration of entities involved in the tourism industry and operating in the GKM. The by-laws will introduce application procedures, regulations and establish code of conduct for these entities.
- ☛ Environmental Health by-laws which will be developed and implemented by the District Municipality to ensure that tourism business is carried out in suitable and healthy environments.

Tourism by-laws should deal with the following:

- ☛ Set minimum health and safety standards.
- ☛ Establish registration fees.
- ☛ Introduce penalties for non-compliance.
- ☛ Regulate the relationship between the municipality and the community tourism organisation (CTO).

In addition, the municipality should also undertake an audit of its suite of by-laws to establish potential impact on tourism.

3.6.3.2 LAND USE MANAGEMENT

A consolidated Land Use Scheme (LUS) should be developed on the basis of the SDF. This is also a legal requirement in terms of the Municipal Systems Act and the recently promulgated KwaZulu-Natal Planning and Development Act. Preparation of the LUS for GKM should focus on the following:

- ☛ Identification of sites and introduction of appropriate zoning for sites targeted for tourism development (e.g. hotel, lodge, information office, etc).
- ☛ Clarification of processes and procedures for obtaining development and zoning approvals.
- ☛ Building the capacity of staff to deal with applications efficiently and timeously, and advice council appropriately. Similarly, council should be capacitated to make informed decisions on each development applications.

It is important to note that any change in land use requires approval from the municipality even areas that fall outside of the town planning scheme.

3.6.3.3 REGISTRATION SYSTEM

The amended national and provincial tourism legislation requires the municipality to play an active role in the promotion of tourism within its area of jurisdiction. In particular, it requires the municipality to regulate the tourism industry and ensure that all entities involved in tourism are registered with the municipality and other relevant authorities. In other words, the municipality is required to incorporate tourism registration systems into a tourism asset database. The rationale for this is to (DEDT, 2002):

- ☛ Ensure that tourism services meet a set of minimum standards, particularly in terms of health and safety;
- ☛ Establish a register of services that meet these standards and can thus be marketed with confidence to prospective tourists;
- ☛ Develop marketing tools which provide comprehensive information on all tourism establishments in the province; and
- ☛ Provide accurate information for tourism development, planning and research.

The registration fees obtained through this system will assist the municipality in maintaining its database, systems and services and to continue to improve its services to the tourism industry. Therefore, it is critically important for the municipality to set-up and maintain a system for registration of all tourism entities operating within its area. This may entail the following:

- ☛ Development of an electronic (on-line) system for the registration of tourism entities.
- ☛ Development of registration systems and procedures.
- ☛ Conducting information sessions to sensitise tourism business operators about the need and the benefits for registration.

- ☛ Identification, profiling and spatial mapping of all tourism entities operating within the GKM.
- ☛ Establishing and running a campaign to register all tourism entities within the GKM.

3.6.4 SERVICE EXCELLENCE

The purpose of the programme is to create an awareness of the importance of service excellence and the impact thereof on the ultimate visitor experience. Profitability is one of the main criteria in business today and is achieved through increased sales and return guests. By improving the service performance delivery of all tourism entities, the number of visitors will increase and profitability will become reachable. Service Excellence requires confidence and the right attitude towards visitors.

3.6.4.1 VISITOR SATISFACTION SURVEY

A questionnaire system whereby visitors to each destination or product will be requested to indicate their level of satisfaction with quality of service and value for money should be introduced. The questionnaire should be simple, easy to complete and enable a visitor to provide feedback on the quality of service at both facility and destination level. It should help to identify areas that require improvement.

A visitor satisfaction survey will provide a sound basis for monitoring performance and for future marketing, infrastructure and business development. Some of the ways it can achieve this (depending on the questions asked, the people spoken to and the type of research carried out) are by:

- ☛ identifying the profile and origin of visitors
- ☛ examining their behaviour once at the destination
- ☛ evaluating the effectiveness of marketing activities
- ☛ assessing the quality of facilities, services and levels of visitor satisfaction
- ☛ testing reaction to new or proposed developments, services or promotional materials.

Carrying out visitor satisfaction surveys should not be seen as a one-off exercise. It is important to carry out these surveys at a destination level initially throughout the year, but latter on at least every two years. More importantly, this will allow visitor reaction to any changes made at the destination to be monitored, and trends to be identified.

Visitor satisfaction surveys at a facility level should be an ongoing process. The dedicated Tourism Manager and the tourism information officers will capture the information, analyse

data and determine trends. Where there are repeated incidents of dissatisfaction and complaint about a facility, the Tourism Manager will investigate these incidents and attempts to find an amicable solution to any problems.

This Manager will also have the support of inspectors from the broader customer care programme of the province. In the event repeat offences, the Municipality should be empowered to deregister the affected facility, which implies that it would lose its right to operate as a tourism facility.

3.6.4.2 SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The GKM, in collaboration with the CTO, will introduce the service excellence awards to support an integrated approach to service excellence in the tourism industry, and to create an environment which is conducive to a positive culture of service excellence. The service excellence awards have as its primary objectives to:

- ☛ Encourage the tourism industry to deliver positive and unforgettable service experience to all visitors by embracing the highest standards of service excellence.
- ☛ Recognize and reward tourism entities that continually train and motivate staff to achieve excellence in customer service delivery
- ☛ Recognize individual workers who have and continue to surpass customer service delivery standards and to select, showcase and award the Best in Service Excellence
- ☛ Ignite a spirit of competitiveness and to position the award as fair, transparent, well recognized and highly coveted within the tourism industry.

In line with the national strategy, the following actions should be undertaken to develop service excellence culture:

- ☛ conducting research to gain an understanding of service levels;
- ☛ the development of service skills and attitude;
- ☛ the creation of public awareness of world-class service standards;
- ☛ the development of a tourism consumer feedback system; and
- ☛ the implementation of a 'know your customer' campaign focusing on language and culture for key markets.

The municipality acknowledges that service excellence is an issue for the whole tourism value chain. This includes hospitality and leisure, transport, financial services, retail and public service.

3.6.4.3 TOURISM AMBASSADORS

The tourism ambassador program provides front-line employees and volunteers critical training that helps improve their attitudes and their performance. It gives them a chance to meet one another, learn from each others' experiences, and celebrate together. It works on the premise that if front-line employees and volunteers (those who come into immediate contact with the visitor) provide quality service to visitors (convention attendees, visitors, business travellers, etc.); the visitor is more likely to have a positive experience. Visitors who have a positive experience are more likely to return at some point in the future, and are most likely to share their experiences with their friends. The benefits of the program are as follows:

- ☛ It enhances the visitor experience: An enhanced visitor experience will lead to more frequent visits and better word-of-mouth about the GKM, which can lead to additional conventional and tourism business.
- ☛ Builds a positive destination image: If every experience is a good experience, the GKM will be easy to market as a destination to visitors, and this will strengthen its brand awareness, while the ambassador delivers a brand promise.
- ☛ Increases tourism economic and social impact: Not only will additional tourism result, but visitors are likely to spend more on each visit if they are directed by ambassadors to venues that match their interests (food, attractions, shopping, entertainment, etc.).
- ☛ Builds Public and Private Partnerships – Brings key corporations and hospitality organizations (museums, attractions, venues, etc.) together to support a program of critical importance to the future of tourism. It may also help local corporations recruit and retain top talent.
- ☛ Enhances the Current “Product,” While Building the Future – Telling visitors about the exciting things that are on the horizon will help drive future business and motivate the Ambassador corps. These shared learning experiences will help to ensure that visitors hear a consistent story about the attributes of the region (GKM).

In short, the program has many features that translate into a wide variety of benefits that help strengthen the entire hospitality and business community.

3.6.5 INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT

3.6.5.1 SMME DEVELOPMENT

There can be little doubt that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) play an important part in destination competitiveness generally. Although large firms have a significant influence on the nature of what is supplied to particular markets, for example tour operators in relation to mass tourism, SMMEs represent the most significant unit of supply in the GKM. The quality of the tourist experience is, therefore, influenced heavily by the quality of the encounter with such businesses. This creates inter-dependence between tourism SMEs. If this is recognised (and often it is not), it can be harnessed to encourage a degree of co-operative behaviour which reflects the shared interest in successful destination development.

However, in rural areas such as the GKM, the opportunities for successful tourism entrepreneurship are reduced by problems of infrastructural deficiencies both in terms of human resources as well as physical resources. From the enormous weight of problems that face contemporary tourism entrepreneurs in the GKM, it is noted that most of the emerging rural tourism entrepreneurship in this area operates at bare survival levels and approximates a situation of ‘forced’ or necessity entrepreneurship

The following key interventions are suggested as a means to promote SMME Development:

- ☛ On-going review and dialogue with key stakeholders about creating a business environment that is transparent, understandable to enterprises and enabling of entrepreneurship. This includes improving understanding of the regulatory environment, access to information about SMME support (technical, financial, etc) information, etc.
- ☛ Recognising the diversity of SMMEs and seeking to understand more about the characteristics of local businesses. Such knowledge should be used to encourage participation in local business initiatives. A particular feature should be to encourage various businesses to see themselves as part of a local “tourism sector”. Supporting the creation of tourism business networks would be useful in this context.
- ☛ Devise flexible support mechanisms that relate to the world of the entrepreneur rather than mass produced training courses which will not be seen as relevant to their world and development needs. Training is particularly suggested in respect of broadening understanding of the tourism industry and business, business management and development, etc.

It is clear that, in terms of the future development of the tourism economy in line with government objectives of transformation and Black Economic Empowerment, the promotion of SMMEs is an issue that is of critical concern for policy-makers. Despite the importance of SMME development in the contemporary South African economy it remains that relatively little research has been undertaken on the issues and developmental challenges that confront tourism SMMEs.

3.6.5.2 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Tourism Human Resource Development (HRD) is one of the pillars of the development of a new responsible tourism culture in South Africa. As such, the national government, through the Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education Training Authority (THETA) has introduced a range of skills training programmes in the fields of tourism and travel services, as well as the hospitality sector. GKM can tap into these programmes and introduce local initiatives to build capacity to run an efficient and effective tourism industry, with priority being paid to the training of staff, SMMES and community leadership.

Staff training can range from generic topics applicable to everyone (e.g. understanding tourism and the tourism business, “responsible tourism”, the potential positive and negative impacts of tourism, improved environmental and cultural awareness, and customer service) to more specific and technical topics that are focused on particular job descriptions. Skills training programmes are available through THETA.

Local community members need to be aware of the potential of tourism. As such, there is a need to broaden tourism education to include broader community members and the local leadership as follows:

- ☛ Institutional Capacity Building relates to the flow of information between community leadership and the broader community. Capacity building could focus on such issues as convening meetings; taking minutes; building consensus; and the role of community representatives in tourism development.
- ☛ Education on tourism and the functioning of the tourism enterprise in order for community leadership to participate in discussions regarding the tourism enterprise.
- ☛ Excursions to successful and developing tourism initiatives elsewhere in the country to provide a better understanding of the constraints and potential advantages.

Activities required to address skills development are:

- ☛ Tourism operations needs to be made aware of skills programmes that is available for the hospitality and tourism sector;

- ☛ Interested members of local communities needs to be made aware of skills programmes that is available for the hospitality and tourism sector;
- ☛ Potential people/personnel can be identified to take part in skills programmes, such as events management, hospitality reception and hospitality;
- ☛ Other skills programmes that would be appropriate in the GKM are tourism guiding that includes nature site guides, adventure site guides, culture site guides and hiking guides;
- ☛ Linkages to Sisonke Schools Tourism Education Programme and Vocational Tourism Training needs to be established.

3.6.5.3 TOURISM AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Improving the understanding and the importance of tourism for the country has already been defined as one of the key success factors while developing sustainable tourism for the GKM. In order to mobilize support for the sector across GKM, it is deemed necessary to implement a public awareness and education through a well researched and structured campaign. Campaigns will be designed to reach 5 key target groups, namely:

- ☛ township communities;
- ☛ farming community;
- ☛ career deciders (students);
- ☛ workers in the tourism industry; and
- ☛ municipal staff, management and councillors .

Increased public awareness contributes to increase in tourism activities. Careers in tourism will be positioned as the career of choice, while entrepreneurs will be encouraged to participate in new tourism product development. The population at large will also become more sensitive to tourists' needs. The increase of public awareness also contributes to the accelerated implementation of the National Tourism Sector Strategy, specifically to highlight the importance of tourism, and the urgency of supporting regulatory and institutional change that would result in the implementation of the strategy, and increased economic opportunities for the area.

Some illustrative awareness activities could include:

- ☛ Assessment of tourism information, communication, and education needs and a plan to implement them to achieve program results;

- ☛ Public awareness campaigns, school programs, and outreach programs to help residents gain a better understanding of tourism and help mitigate potential negative social impacts;
- ☛ Advertising which may include direct advertising, on a cost-share basis with the private sector, to improve the image of the industry as an attractive source of employment and an investment opportunity;
- ☛ Youth-based campaigns to launch tourism awareness classes in schools;
- ☛ Grassroots campaigns to build awareness among local residents of the potential benefits of tourism and to encourage the community to start entrepreneurial ventures related to tourism.
- ☛ Observation of various tourism related calendar days and the celebration of the associated activities.
- ☛ Creating awareness among the tourism operators of the importance of BEE compliance and the process that should be followed to achieve BEE verification.

Preceding the design and implementation of the awareness campaign, an Attitudinal Survey is to be designed and conducted, to be used as a baseline for the level of awareness, opinions, values and beliefs of the people of the GKM towards tourism. The attitudinal survey, as well as a number of assessments, will be designed to provide directions as to whether the campaign and the overall communications strategy are on the proper track.

The survey aims to measure awareness and attitudes towards tourism by the general community in the GKM. It will also be used to measure the level of awareness, opinions, values and beliefs that people hold towards tourism. These will be cross co-related with knowledge of tourism, experience of meeting tourists and experience of being tourists.

3.6.5.4 MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

The programme is intended to accelerate the development of Black-owned tourism businesses, by partnering a select few with established leaders in the marketplace. The focus of mentoring is to develop the whole person and so the techniques are broad and require wisdom. The well established tourism entrepreneurs within Greater Kokstad can perform the role of the mentors to the new tourism operators. This process can be run and managed by the CTO with the support of the Municipality, Sisonke District and the DEDT. The latter is currently implementing a mentorship programme throughout the province.

3.6.5.5 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The implementation of this tourism development strategy will require the municipality to develop synergistic relations and partnerships with a range of stakeholders and role-players. These include the following partners:

- ☛ Tourism KwaZulu-Natal;
- ☛ Department of Economic Development and Tourism;
- ☛ Department of Arts and Culture;
- ☛ Department of Economic Development and Tourism;
- ☛ Sisonke District Municipality;
- ☛ Tourism Associations (SMT); and
- ☛ Private sector generally.

Throughout the world, governments, facing an enormous resource challenges in providing quality public services, are increasingly looking towards collaboration with the private sector and where possible civil society as well to help deliver their public service mandate. At the same time, businesses should become much more sophisticated in their understanding of how their relationship with the rest of society can impact their profitability. Business is an intrinsic part of the society in which it operates and only through a healthy society can a healthy, sustainable tourism business be sustained. It is within such sustainable development partnerships – in which government, the private sector and, where appropriate, civil society can work together and pool their skills and resources – that more innovative and potentially more sustainable solutions to tourism development in the GKM can be found and sustained.