



SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM



Accelerating tourism growth

South African Tourism

South African Tourism (SA Tourism) is the national tourism agency that markets South Africa internationally as a preferred tourist destination. Its broad objectives are to increase the contribution of tourism to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), to create jobs and to transform the industry to truly represent the South African nation.

SA Tourism recently concluded advertising contracts to the value of R200 million, which will run over the next three years. The ability to invest in advertising campaigns in the global media puts South Africa on a much steadier footing against its competitors. South Africa's presence on these platforms will increase awareness of the brand among its target audiences and increase the country's ability to attract more tourists.

An important development that has helped SA Tourism further its impact in this area is the recent acquisition of Meetings Africa from the Thebe Exhibitions and Events Group. This is in line with the country's positioning of South Africa as a preferred business tourism destination.

Building on its success over the past few years, SA Tourism has a number of key international conferences lined up for the near future, including the World Congress of Psychologists, to be held in 2009. It is also hoped that South Africa will be named the host of the IUCN conference in 2012. An estimated 10 000 delegates are expected to attend this conference.

International tourist arrivals for 2007/08 totaled 9,07 million (compared to 8,4 million in 2006/07). This is an 8.1% increase. Global growth over the same period was just over 6%, indicating that South Africa continues to outgrow global rates. This growth was seen across all air markets. Arrivals from Europe over the period grew by 2.3%, represented by France (8.5% increase), the Netherlands (3.5% increase), Italy (2.2% increase) and Germany (1.4% decrease). The negative growth in the case of Germany was largely due to market-specific activity. Arrivals from the Americas have shown consistently good growth since 2002. South Africa attracted over 22 000 more travellers from the USA in 2007/08 than it had in the previous year. This translates to an 8.7% increase. The USA is now South Africa's second biggest source market. The Asia and Australasia region showed fantastic



Tourism numbers are increasing steadily

growth in 2007/08. Growth in this region was represented by China (12.9% increase), India (16.9% increase) and Australasia (6.9% increase). The only market to show a slight decrease was Japan, which dropped by 0.4% during 2007/08. The African air markets also showed good growth for the year.

This was represented by Nigeria (12.8% increase) and Kenya (14.7% increase). Angola has also shown good growth from a low base by 10.2%. In the South African Development Community (SADC), Botswana continued its growth curve with 55 000 more visitors coming to South Africa from this country. This translates into a 7.3% increase in the past financial year.

The increase in arrivals – in particular air arrivals – from across all regions of the world reflects the success of the airlift strategy passed by Cabinet in 2006. This resulted in increased access to the local market for foreign carriers. With the exciting global projects planned for the coming fiscal year, there is reason to be confident that South Africa will continue to attract even more tourists and reach its target of 10 million visitors by 2010.

SA Tourism supplies marketing material to embassies and missions in the countries in which it does not have offices. In the countries with SA Tourism offices, joint activities are undertaken with the embassies.

These include events on National Tourism Day, co-hosted economic and political missions, state dinners, and tourism fairs. SA Tourism aspires to be among the top three holiday destinations in relation to its competitors (Australia, Brazil and Thailand).

The current percentage of domestic tourists is 82% (based on domestic trips), while international arrivals account for 18% of total arrivals. SA Tourism has identified key segments in each of the markets in which it operates and aggressively targets each of these segments with campaigns aimed at increasing arrivals. On the international front, the following activities illustrate marketing initiatives to increase brand recognition:

- ‡ Establishing a partnership with *National Geographic* across print titles, television and websites.
- ‡ Participating at key travel trade exhibitions, including the World Tourism Market (WTM) in London and the International Tourism Fair (ITB) in Berlin.
- ‡ Conducting negotiations with key global media partners, which resulted in the launch of a global campaign valued at over R200 million that will run on CNN, BBC, Eurosport and various channels in the NewsCorp stable of companies for the next three years.

SOUTH AFRICAN TOURISM

- ‡ Undertaking trade familiarisation trips themed specifically around the needs of identified segments, such as wildlife, natural beauty and urban experiences.
- ‡ Launching radio and print promotions to generate excitement and an urgency about travelling to South Africa during the Christmas and Easter seasons and for flagship events.
- ‡ Trade partners launching aggressive sales campaigns to sell the destination, including direct marketing tactics such as presentations at clients' points of congregation, over and above their traditional campaigns.
- ‡ Making use of the opportunity presented by the preliminary draw for the 2010 Soccer World Cup that took place in Durban in November 2007 to host over 300 media representatives from the biggest and most influential media houses in South Africa and take them on a tour to showcase the very best the country has to offer.



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On the domestic front, the Sho't Left campaign has been extended. A partnership with Kulula.com provides affordable packages for the domestic market. The partnership is spearheaded by a marketing campaign, which includes television, radio and print advertising, in addition to give-aways to consumers. Through the Welcome Awards campaign, SA Tourism continued collaborations with the industry and government to improve service delivery standards. The year under review saw a 400% increase in participation from the industry.

In the sphere of business tourism, SA Tourism acquired Meetings Africa – the continent's most significant business tourism exhibition. Over 230 exhibitors and approximately 2 700 visitors participated in the first event that took place in February 2008. Feedback from exhibitors and buyers has been positive. This acquisition will enable SA Tourism to communicate with key target audiences in a focused environment and provide the opportunity to attract more associations, intergovernmental meetings and incentive houses.

SA Tourism recognised the importance of the 2010 Soccer World Cup as a marketing opportunity for the country. It commissioned a study into the opportunities and challenges presented by the World Cup. One of the recommendations of the study was the need for a dedicated unit to lead the tourism industry's input around leveraging events. The agency has since launched the Events Platform, a unit with the sole purpose of leveraging events for maximum tourism arrivals. The Events Platform will allow South Africa to take advantage of events-based tourism to increase the number of leisure travellers.

The Head of the Unit, Sugun Pillay, is SA Tourism's key representative at the National Communications Partnership and is coordinating input from all provincial and national bodies, including host cities in the 2010 Tourism Stakeholders Portal to be launched in April 2008. In addition, the team has been working with the Local Organising Committee to leverage events such as the preliminary draw, and with MATCH – the company that facilitates ticket sales and accommodation on behalf of FIFA for the 2010 Soccer World Cup – on the tour operator programme and graded accommodation.

As champions of the skills development programme, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) and SA Tourism have developed a human resource development plan for the tourism industry. SA Tourism has engaged in joint ventures with the Department of Transport that centre around capacity-building to allow more airlines to fly directly to South Africa. These ventures are particularly focused on markets in which South Africa makes an investment through SA Tourism.

The average spend by foreign tourists was below the growth target during 2007/08. This was driven off the decrease in spend per tourist from land markets. However, SA Tourism will continue to work with industry partners to extract value from tourists and encourage operators to improve their service offering by including value-added services on their itineraries.



TOURISM GRADING COUNCIL
OF SOUTH AFRICA



Standards for a quality destination

Tourism Grading Council of South Africa

The Tourism Grading Council of South Africa (TGCSA) is a public-private partnership that develops and manages a quality assurance system for the tourism industry in South Africa. This is achieved by grading the full spectrum of tourism facilities, including hotels, bed and breakfast establishments, guesthouses, lodges, restaurants and transport services. Ms Thembi Kunene was appointed as Chief Executive Officer in August 2007.

Although the grading scheme implemented by the council works on the universally familiar one- to five-star scale, it is not limited to a rigid and prescriptive assessment of the facilities offered. Instead, facilities are graded on the range of services offered and the level at which these services are rendered. The result is a grading scheme that offers a benchmark of the entire tourism experience.

In 2006/07, the Tourism Grading Council signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with MATCH – the company that facilitates ticket sales and accommodation on behalf of FIFA for the 2010 Soccer World Cup. By the end of February 2008, the council had signed up 5 202 rooms and is well on its way to meeting its target of 10 000 rooms signed up by December 2008.

During 2007/08, the Tourism Grading Council extended its universal accessibility scheme to also rate accessibility for disabled tourists (people in wheelchairs and with physical disabilities, including sight and hearing impairments). The scheme was designed in collaboration with organisations representing people with disabilities, and the concept was well received by the industry. It will serve as an addition to the star grading system by signifying the type of disabled access offered by the establishment. The scheme includes a searchable database of establishments with universal access.

The council is proud to announce that Francolinhof in Hermanus (Western Cape) became the first guesthouse in South Africa to receive a universal accessibility rating in the mobility category.



Almost 6 000 establishments have already been graded in preparation for 2010. A summary of the gradings per province is as follows:

Category	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	North-West	Northern Cape	Western Cape	Total
Backpacker and hostelling	8	2	14	10	4	6	4	7	15	70
Bed and breakfast	200	60	177	272	13	34	39	61	304	1 160
Caravan and camping	14	5	5	25	14	25	7	18	19	132
Country house	8	8	15	29	7	17	3	2	58	147
Food and beverage	1	1	29	2	1	0	3	1	18	56
Guest house	202	92	348	170	67	99	110	153	672	1 913
Hotel	51	21	104	54	32	29	17	28	160	496
Lodge	53	19	41	63	83	66	44	18	28	415
Meetings, exhibitions and special events venues (MESE)	3	4	89	7	15	19	16	4	20	177
Self-catering	124	49	90	159	82	91	33	59	526	1 213
Total	664	261	912	791	318	386	276	351	1 820	5 779

This gold rating means that all Francolinhof's public areas and at least one room comply with the standards set by the council in terms of universal accessibility.

The Tourism Grading Council trained 20 assessors during 2007/08. Training included sensitivity training. This scheme was launched on 1 August 2007. It also improved its interaction with assessors. Interaction with assessors is a way to increase the number of graded establishments. This will enable the council to become self-sustainable without compromising the quality of graded establishments. Assessors signed a service-level agreement to ensure that all grading is done correctly and according to the same standards. The council also managed to get all assessors together under the same roof for a two-day workshop in March 2008 to discuss issues such as the grading system.

A grading system has been developed for conference venues in collaboration with

the conference sector. During 2007/08, 165 conference venues were graded. The restaurant grading scheme, which was launched in 2005, experienced a slow start. It was, however, suspended until the accommodation grading is fully on target. The same applies to the transport grading scheme.

The Tourism Grading Council plans to grade 1 500 new establishments during 2008/09 and to renew the existing gradings of 5 600 establishments. Furthermore, the council aims to implement the terms of the service-level agreements with assessors, as this goes hand in hand with customer management. Customers are encouraged to provide feedback (either positive or negative) about their experiences at graded establishments. This is the only real measurement to determine the success of both the council and its assessors.



Conserving our heritage

South African National Parks

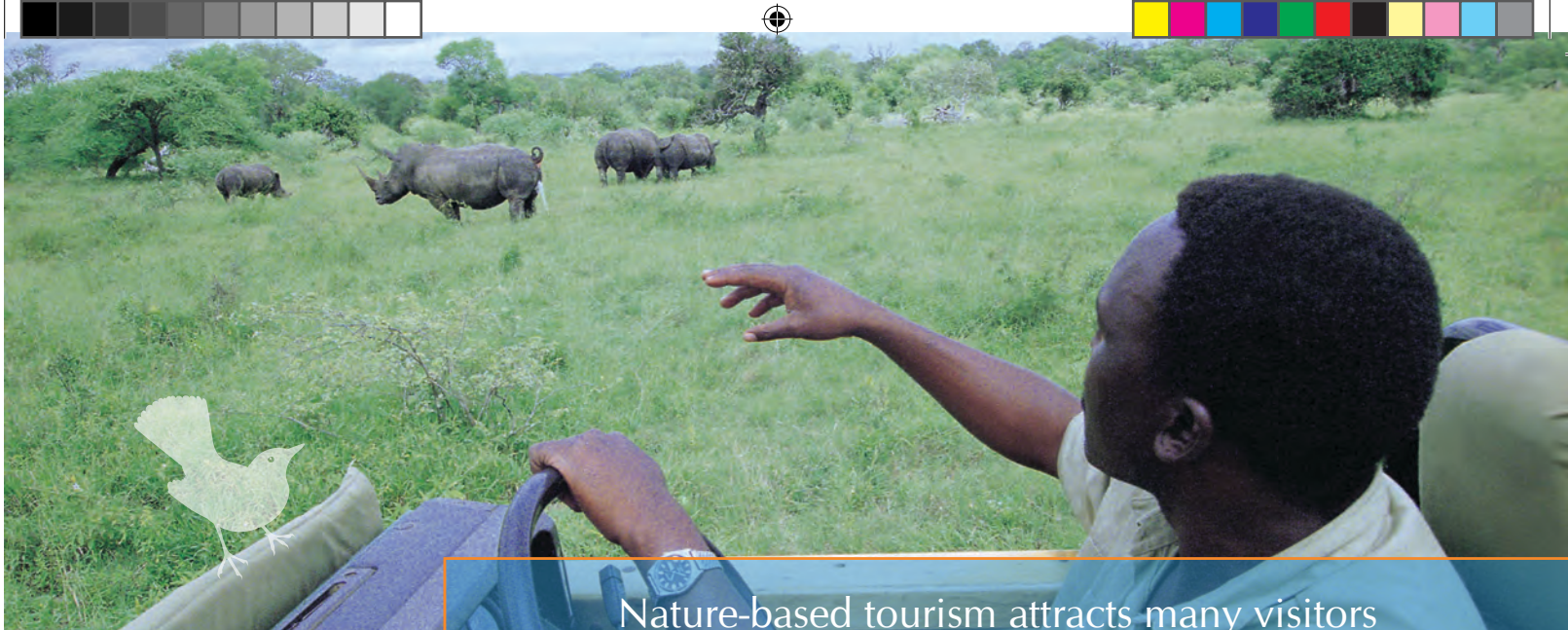
South African National Parks (SANParks) promotes the conservation of the country's natural and cultural heritage by managing a network of 22 national parks. SANParks also promotes conservation at local, national and international level, and plays an important role in promoting nature-based tourism.

South Africa aims to have 8.5% of the country's terrestrial areas under protection by 2013, and 12% by 2020. Marine targets include the conservation of 20% of coastline areas by 2013. SANParks has contributed significantly to the national conservation estate figures over the last decade through its parks expansion programme. In 2007/08, it acquired an additional 13 462 hectares of land. The current terrestrial surface area under SANParks' custodianship is 3 942 732 hectares, while the marine protected areas under SANParks' management is 148 419 hectares. This includes 300 km of coastline.

The organisation has increased the biome representation of the national park system through park expansions that occurred in the under-protected succulent Karoo and lowland fynbos biomes, as well as through the consolidation of the indigenous forest areas under its management. A new national park in the Northern Cape, Mokala National Park, was proclaimed on 19 June 2007.

The 2007/08 financial year marked the roll-out of the second year of the Infrastructure Development Programme (IDP) and the last year of the three-year cycle of the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), excluding some delayed projects. Twenty-eight new accommodation units were added to SANParks' estate in 2007/08. This included the opening of new rest camps at the Bontebok, Tankwa Karoo and Namaqua national parks. Exactly 145 existing tourism units were upgraded. This will ensure that SANParks' facilities comply with the requirements of the Tourism Grading Council and provide a quality product for visitors. The opening of access points at Mata Mata in the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park and the Sendelingsdrift pontoon in the !Ai-!Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park have become a gateway for new routes to Namibia.

The holistic approach to service delivery included attention being paid to staff accommodation. Eleven staff units have been upgraded and 95 new units constructed. An additional 52 km of tourist roads was completed.



Nature-based tourism attracts many visitors

SANParks works in collaboration with the communities surrounding its parks to help alleviate poverty. In 2007/08, various social responsibility programmes that form part of the EPWP and are funded by DEAT and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry contributed to temporary jobs, training opportunities and the establishment and procurement of SMMEs. In 2007/08 some 2 059 people employed in temporary positions worked 554 967 person days, some 56 331 training days took place that were focused on non-accredited training, and the services of 383 SMMEs were procured. An amount of R40 million was paid to these SMMEs.

The IDP has also contributed to job creation in the communities neighbouring the parks. To date, 60% of all contracts have been awarded to black-owned companies.

SANParks has improved on the reporting of incidents of workplace injuries. The Disabling Injury Severity Rate improved from a baseline of 3,5 to 0,94. This followed a communication and training process to ensure improved legal awareness and compliance. In 2007/08, technical specifications and tender processes were finalised for the appointment of a service provider for the provision of a Medical Occupational Health Surveillance Programme for 2008/09. This programme will assist SANParks to monitor employees' health

status and manage the reduction of the consequential impact of ill-health on SANParks' operations, which may result from non-compliance with occupational health standards. Early detection and treatment of occupational diseases and illnesses will result in reduced claims arising from occupational diseases. This will assist SANParks in reducing absenteeism due to occupational diseases.

Activities of its Employee Wellness Programme for 2007/08 included an anonymous survey of the prevalence of HIV/Aids and a know-your-status campaign. This led to 34.3% of SANParks' employees knowing their HIV status. Mobile health-care facilities were established in the Kruger National Park and a 24-hour counselling service was launched during 2007/08. An organisational climate survey was undertaken to determine employees' levels of satisfaction with the organisation in terms of aspects such as leadership, change and transformation. The results show that 54.7% of employees have a positive experience of the organisation. Internal interventions to deal with the identified issues are being developed for implementation in 2008/09.

The organisation has a very extensive research programme, particularly in the field of biodiversity and conservation. However, SANParks had previously not established performance targets or measured the overall performance of the

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS

research programme across the organisation. The 2007/08 financial year was therefore used to develop a system to monitor the delivery of the research programme against specific key performance indicators. As part of this process, a database was compiled of all research projects that are officially registered at SANParks. This database classifies projects according to research field and according to relevance to SANParks' research objectives (the categories that were used are: essential, important, useful and neutral).

A baseline report classified the 423 research projects currently registered at SANParks in terms of the organisation's research objectives. It was found that 267 were considered essential or important, 122 were useful and 34 were neutral. Only 8% of the projects were considered neutral, with the remaining 92% being at least useful to SANParks' research objectives. In this regard, therefore, the annual target of 80% of research projects that are useful to SANParks was achieved.

The organisation also enlisted the services of an external service provider to undertake a macro-economic impact study of SANParks. This study indicated that SANParks contributes positively to South Africa's GDP directly and indirectly.

Summary of economic impact for 2005/06

Impact on:	Impact of R230 m CAPEX spent by SANParks in 2005/06	Impact of R1 068.8 m OPEX spent by SANParks in 2005/06
New business development	R294,9 m (direct) R342,5 m (indirect and induced) R637,4 m (total)	R1 193,4 m (direct) R1 181,7 m (indirect and induced) R2 375,1 m (total)
Jobs/employment affected	1 586 (direct) 1 078 (indirect and induced) 2 664 (total)	6 750 (direct) 1 868 (temporary and concessionaires) 3 644 (indirect and induced) 12 262 (total)
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	R97,6 m (direct) R122,9 m (indirect and induced) 220,5 m (total)	R706 m (direct) R423,3 m (indirect and induced) R1 129,3 m (total)

SANParks annually embarks on initiatives to raise awareness of the organisation and its parks and promote a sense of pride in national parks in the general public. Free access is provided to parks during National Parks Week, thus making parks accessible to citizens who cannot easily afford to visit the parks. During the annual South African National Parks Week, 32 000 people gained free access to the parks.

The organisation's tourism business performance for 2007/08 was satisfactory. The tourism-related revenue was 101.3% of the budget, and the average accommodation occupancy level for the year was 69.7%. This is a 0.5% improvement on the occupancy rate of 69.2% achieved for the same period in 2006/07. The total number of visitors to national parks increased by 2% from 4,6 million in 2006/07 to 4,7 million in 2007/08.

Black visitors grew by 25% from the previous year. This can be attributed to market research to identify the needs of this market and the relationship they have with the products on offer. A focused plan and strategy was designed to specifically address the needs of the market. Sixty percent of the budget was allocated to ensure that the communication directed at the market was effective. Partnerships were formed and were aimed at leveraging



communication designed to ensure effectiveness. Tactical opportunities were identified and utilised to ensure brand visibility in the market. A relevant media plan was implemented in accordance with the needs of the market.

The Wild Card continues to be an important tool to build relationships with the organisation's loyal visitors. SANParks managed to grow Wild Card sales to 95 300. This represents a percentage increase of 11.2% from the previous year's 85 700 to the highest total ever achieved in a financial year (95 302 cards). At a slightly higher annual average revenue of R369,61 per card, SANParks earned a gross revenue of R35,2 million (an increase of 12.1% from R31,4 million in 2006/07).

These impressive results were achieved through the organisation's newly improved communications with cardholders in the form of the magazine *Wild*, which was launched in 2007/08, its e-mail newsletters and improved e-mail and SMS communications. The 2008/09 financial year will see a revamped Wild Card programme as SANParks intends to review the entire programme with the aim of providing members with benefits.

During 2007/08, significant progress was recorded in the implementation of the strategic plan for commercialisation. The Kruger National Park restaurant agreement was awarded on 1 April 2007. The successful tender of the Darlington Lake Lodge concession was awarded in the Addo Elephant National Park. An operator was appointed for the Geelbek restaurant facility in the West Coast National Park. An operator with higher BEE equity and employee participation (32%) than the original unsuccessful tenderer in 2006 was sourced for the Tshokwane and Nkhuhlu picnic facilities in the Kruger National Park. Construction commenced with local community approval on the

long-delayed Koeel Bay concession in the Table Mountain National Park. The Klein Skrij community agreement was successfully negotiated and the !Xaus Lodge in the San and Mier community section of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park started operating in July 2007. The Knysna Oyster Company commenced operations from the newly constructed restaurant on the Thesen Island state land in the Knysna National Lake Area. The infrastructural development for the Thesen Island development in the Knysna National Lake Area was concluded. Significant progress was made with the Roundhouse Project with approvals from the South African Heritage Resources Agency, Heritage Western Cape and the Cape Town City Council. The refurbishment of the restaurant is in progress. The project and tender on the Ratel River farmstead in the Agulhas National Park were concluded. However, regrettably, no interest was shown by the private sector and SANParks will review the way forward.

The organisation's financial performance for the year was very positive. The income to cost ratio target of 80%, being the ratio of gross operating revenue (excluding grants) to gross expenditure, was exceeded, resulting in an actual performance of 81.9%. The organisation's gross operating revenue (excluding grants) of R562 million was an improvement on the budget of R540 million, and total expenditure was contained at R654 million against a budget of R674 million. This performance led to a positive net operating income/surplus of R25 million against a break-even budget. The surplus of R25 m can be attributed to the sale of game. The variance of performance against budget on income and expenditure are both below 10%, which is the range determined as an acceptable variance to provide predictability and certainty of sound budgeting and adherence to the budget by the organisation.



Protecting our national biodiversity

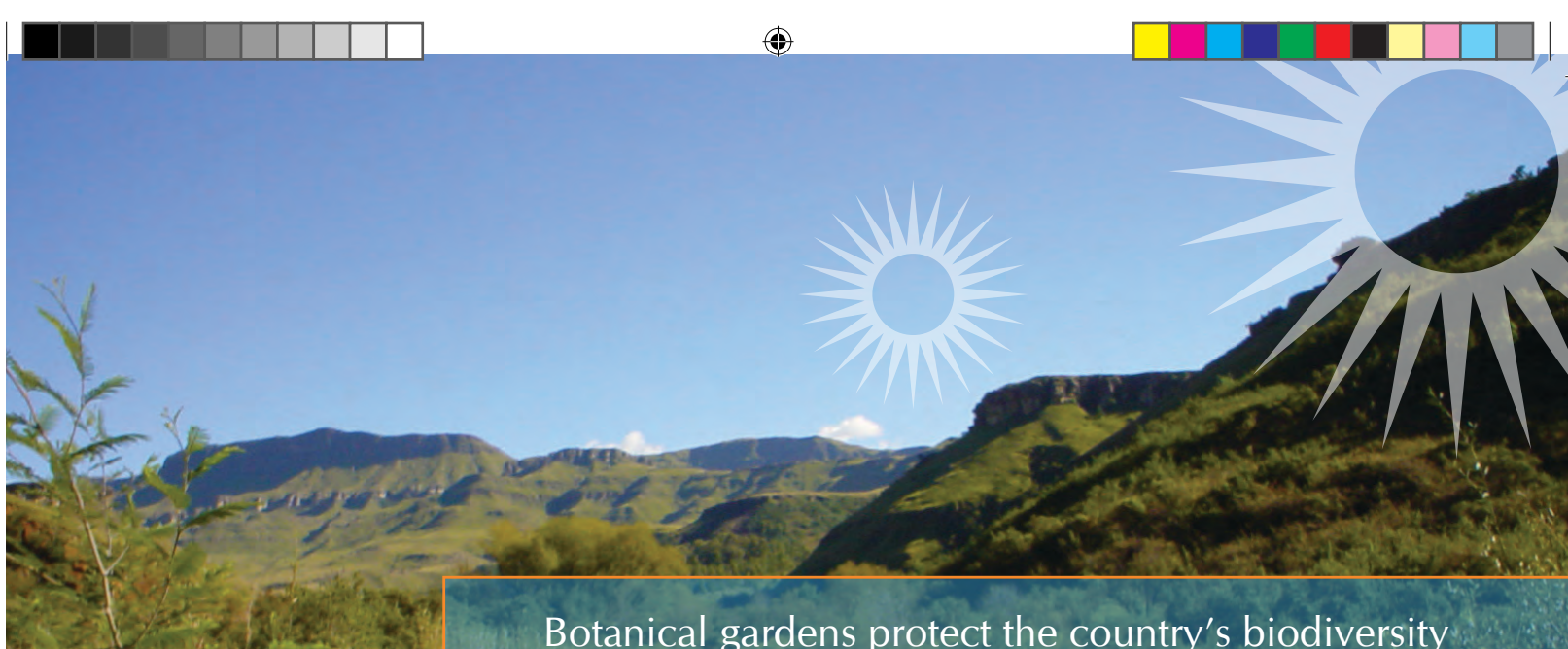
South African National Biodiversity Institute

The South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) contributes to the management of the country's biodiversity resources in terms of its legal mandate under the National Environmental Management: Biodiversity Act. SANBI's core activities involve research, conservation, sustainable use, biodiversity information systems, education, garden development, horticulture, ecosystems rehabilitation and bioregional planning programmes and policies. During 2007/08, Dr Tanya Abrahamse was appointed as the new CEO of SANBI.

South Africa has a network of nine botanical gardens, which showcase and contribute to the conservation of the country's rich plant biodiversity. These are Kirstenbosch (Cape Town), the Free State (Bloemfontein), Harold Porter (Betty's Bay), Karoo Desert (Worcester), KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg), Lowveld (Nelspruit), Walter Sisulu (Roodepoort), Pretoria and Nieuwoudtville national botanical gardens.

The Nieuwoudtville National Botanical Garden in the Northern Cape is the latest addition to South Africa's constellation of biodiversity reserves. This reserve will serve as a centre for biodiversity research in the world-renowned Bokkeveld Plateau. It is located on the farm Glenlyon and covers over 6 300 hectares of land in this region, which is famous for its range and density of bulbous plants. The garden also incorporates large natural patches of renosterveld fynbos and succulent Karoo vegetation. The purchase of the farm was made possible by funding from the South African government, Conservation International through the Global Conservation Fund, and the Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust through the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF South Africa).

Visitor numbers in South Africa's national botanical gardens reached 1 250 743 in 2007/08 (representing a 3% increase on 2006/07). This is the highest combined visitor number in the history of the organisation. Visitor numbers at the Pretoria National Botanical Garden increased by 29% and those at the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden by 7%. A permanent stage was completed at the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden, where Sappi-sponsored concerts were held and attended by 30 495 visitors. The Department



Botanical gardens protect the country's biodiversity

of Environmental Affairs and Tourism purchased an additional 2 178,57 hectares of land, which was incorporated into this botanical garden.

SANBI developed and implemented a biodiversity knowledge and information management strategy in 2007/08 to integrate existing information resources for easy user access. This generates activities that are strategically aligned with the needs of both internal and external end-users, and brings greater efficiency in tacit and codified knowledge resource management and wide, equitable access to value-added biodiversity information for South Africa.

The SANBI Integrated Biodiversity Information System, the South African Biodiversity Information Facility (SABIF) and the Biodiversity Geographic Information Service were expanded to broaden user access. This further increased the number of data records being accessed through the SABIF portal and the number of data providers contributing through the same portal.

Information sharing was supported by effective documentation and information technology (IT) systems through the appointment of skilled staff. The SANBI website was redeveloped and redesigned and should be fully functional by April

2008. This website will provide greater online access to information.

The SANBI Environmental Education Programme was expanded to Limpopo, the Northern Cape and the Eastern Cape and provided guided garden visits to 17 960 learners. A total of 46 580 learners participated in the programme at the Lowveld, Pretoria, Kirstenbosch and Walter Sisulu national botanical gardens.

SANBI is currently engaged in nationwide biodiversity conservation assessments involving reptiles, butterflies and arachnids (spiders). It is also updating the Southern African Bird Atlas. All projects involve field trips for the collection of data and interested members of the public can participate.

The Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 (SABAP2) is an update and refinement of the first Southern African Bird Atlas Project, which ran from 1987 to 1991, culminating in the publication of two volumes on the distribution and relative abundance of southern African birds in 1997. The four-year project includes information from South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland. It is funded by SANBI and BirdLife South Africa and is managed and run by the Avian Demography Unit (ADU) of the University of Cape Town (UCT) and BirdLife South Africa.

Three conservation assessment studies were continued in 2007/08. The Southern African Reptile Conservation Assessment (SARCA) is a four-year project launched in 2005 that will improve the general understanding of the conservation status of reptiles. The South African National Survey of Arachnida (SANSA) is an umbrella project initiated in 1997 to unify and strengthen biodiversity research on arachnology in South Africa and inventorise the arachnofauna. The second phase of the project started in 2006/07 and will continue until 2010. It is coordinated by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) in association with SANBI to provide a detailed database of arachnids in South Africa. The Southern African Butterfly Conservation Assessment (SABCA) is a four-year conservation assessment launched on 14 May 2007 to determine the distribution and conservation priorities of all butterfly species in southern Africa, especially those threatened by extinction.

SANBI's biodiversity programmes include biodiversity mainstreaming, applied biodiversity research, conservation gardens and tourism, and collaborative projects. The Conservation Gardens and Tourism Division manages SANBI's national botanical gardens and is responsible for the organisation's infrastructure development and maintenance programmes. Good progress was made with the construction of new tourism facilities in the Harold Porter, Walter Sisulu and Karoo Desert national botanical gardens. Work also proceeded with the development of a new tourism infrastructure in the KwaZulu-Natal National Botanical Garden and the upgrading of the Grahamstown Botanical Garden in the Eastern Cape.

Highlights for 2007/08 include the completion of the new geological garden in the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden and the Khoisan useful plants garden in the Harold Porter National Botanical Garden. Consolidated biodiversity checklists for birds, mammals, reptiles, butterflies, dragonflies, scorpions and spiders were prepared for the national





botanical gardens. Biodiversity walks and talks on subjects such as birds, trees, snakes, aloes, insects, frogs and spiders are available to members of the public in the various gardens, while stargazing events are held in the northern gardens.

Rehabilitation of a selected section of the river bank along the Crocodile River in the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden was completed using Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) funding allocated to SANBI. SANBI also conducted a review of the Lost City Botanical Garden in North West.

Collaboration continued with the Millennium Seed Bank and local conservation authorities on the integration of SANBI's garden-based plant conservation programmes, as well as reintroduction programmes where plants are cultivated in botanical gardens and reintroduced into their natural habitats.

The Biosystematics Research and Biodiversity Collections Programme of the National Herbarium aims to discover, describe and document southern Africa's rich biodiversity in monographs and other inventories, and produce predictive, knowledge-based classifications that can be assembled into efficient databases to benefit various end-users.

Eight publications were printed and distributed during 2007/08. This included two issues of *Bothalia*, two issues of the SANBI *Biodiversity Series* (on invasive alien flora and fauna in South Africa and on project development planning for biodiversity conservation), three issues of *Strelitzia*, and one issue of *Flowering Plants of Africa*. The Aloes of the World Project was launched by means of a workshop that was attended by 40 national

and international experts, while a two-day workshop was held in Pretoria on the Red Data listing of ethnomedicinal plants.

The Millennium Seed Bank Project made a total of 217 seed collections for ex situ conservation. This brings the number of seed collections for this project to 2 971, which is estimated to represent approximately 2 290 species collections. The project team visited the last site of *Protea odorata* to collect plant material for the future planting of these plants in stock beds at Kirstenbosch for seed collection, material propagation and possible future rehabilitation. A new, useful (medicinal) plant ex situ conservation programme, based at the Lowveld National Botanical Garden, was launched with a workshop held in August. In partnership with the Lowveld National Botanical Garden and the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Authority, this project aims to contribute to the ex situ conservation of 120 medicinal plants of the Lowveld. A comprehensive report on the outcomes of the first biodiversity collecting permit workshop has been completed and circulated to all the delegates and other interested parties. The document will inform future collaboration among provinces and public entities on this important topic.

SANBI's targets for 2008/09 entail a wide spectrum of work, including contributing to biodiversity policies, setting agendas for marine, coastal and wetlands research, adding another national botanical garden to its collection, generating sets of biodiversity information, expanding the participation of like-minded institutions and organisations, duplicating SANBI's botanical success in zoology and beyond, consolidating its position as a world-leading institute, and expanding its biodiversity education programmes to become national programmes.



Developing a national treasure

iSimangaliso Wetland Park

The Greater St Lucia Wetland Park was the first South African site to be listed as a World Heritage Site in 1999. The park stretches over 330 000 hectares south from the Mozambican border for 220 km along the coast of KwaZulu-Natal and is an area of exceptional cultural and biological diversity. During 2007/08, the name of this park was changed to the iSimangaliso Wetland Park.

An event to celebrate the launch of the new name was held at Mngobokazi in November 2007. It was attended by approximately 5 000 people who live on the borders of the park to demonstrate support for the name change. These events will be followed by a brand roll-out in the surrounding schools in 2008/09 to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the park, its new name, heritage and conservation value.

The park is committed to providing opportunities for the neighbouring communities to benefit from tourism. The iSimangaliso Authority has continued its implementation of the park's craft programme, and the chain store, Mr Price, has placed ongoing orders throughout the year. In addition, the buyer base was broadened by engaging the services of Bridge for Africa, an American NGO, to market these products through its promotional network in the USA. Local buyers attended a workshop where the crafters were granted the opportunity to introduce their products. The iSimangaliso Authority is engaged in negotiations with these buyers. One order has been received and others are in the process of being finalised.

Five SMMEs took part in an arts administration skills programme, which focused on the business aspects of performing arts, including management, administration and computer literacy. In addition, some 48 carefully selected candidates were challenged to develop their own small businesses by means of a learning programme that has been customised to each individual participant's business model. By the end of 2007/08, the participants in the programme all had profitable, smoothly running operations and iSimangaliso will have invested R4 million in this venture.

The three-year tourism skills development programme, funded by the Flemish government, was successfully concluded in December 2007. During this time, 110 people were trained



Sensitive wetlands need to be managed with caution

in tourism and the hospitality industry. More than 60% of these participants have found jobs. A further highlight in this regard was the development of About iSimangaliso – a basic 101 course that will set the standard for interpretation of the park – including information on both the cultural and natural aspects of the park.

Substantial progress was made with the park's infrastructure programme during 2007/08, particularly with regard to developing infrastructure to enhance visitors' experiences of the park. Infrastructure projects included new tourism roads on the eastern and western shores, the construction of public facilities such as hides and picnic sites, and Big 5 game fencing in the Ozabeni section of the park. The total value of contracts issued in 2007/08 was R37 500 000. The target is to involve 13 community-based SMMEs in contracts to the value of R17 400 000.

In addition to the infrastructure programme, the park implemented a land care programme, in which 74 SMMEs were subcontracted to perform environmental rehabilitation work and the control of alien vegetation. The SMMEs comprise members of the neighbouring communities, including those communities who have submitted land claims against the park. The total value of these contracts for 2007/08 was R6 677 945, of which R4 659 715 was

paid to the 1 230 workers employed by the SMMEs. This contributes significantly to poverty alleviation and developing the local economy.

The fencing of the Ozabeni section of the park represents an important component of establishing a single ecological area that supports migration, breeding, nutrition and the habitat requirements of animals. The open ecological area of iSimangaliso encompasses six major ecosystems, stretching from the Lubombo mountains in the north-west to the coast in the east. A consolidated area that includes an additional 66 000 hectares of grassland that supports animals such as eland, elephant, black rhino, white rhino and wild dog would contribute to their conservation. The challenging issue for the park is that fencing requires consensus from the neighbouring communities, who live in five tribal councils. Today, fences can be designed in such a way that where an area has been fenced off near the place where women go to collect rushes, for example, access can be granted to natural resources from neighbouring land. The historical relationship between conservation areas and communities, however, results in protracted processes to gain trust.

The first 20 km of the proposed fence had been completed, making use of SMMEs

ISIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK

for the construction work to make sure that benefits flow to local communities, with an additional 25 km underway. However, the work had to be temporarily suspended, due to a boundary dispute between two of the community members because of land claims that had to be settled. Resolving this issue required the intervention of the Regional Land Claims Commission (RLCC).

An agreement was reached with the South African Forestry Company Limited (SAFCOL) to cease operations on the western shores of iSimangaliso, and for the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry to include 8 200 hectares of forestry land into the park. This is a significant piece of land for the hydrological health of the Lake St Lucia system. All SAFCOL plantations have been removed east of a hydromorphic line (marked by an ecotrack), thus freeing the Mpathe catchment area of commercial plantations, which were having an effect on the hydrology of the park.

Funding has been sourced to rehabilitate the SAFCOL land. The community will benefit through rehabilitation contracts and jobs, opportunities to act as tour operators and



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opportunities with other downstream industries for the redevelopment of the area for tourists (including the introduction of game and the redevelopment of the Charters Creek tourism facility). The rehabilitation and development of this area are ongoing activities in support of tourism development, the creation of jobs and empowerment opportunities.

In 2007/08, five land claims were settled, bringing the number of settled claims on the park to eight. This affects 75% of the total land area of the park. The resolution of these claims by the RLCC was a significant milestone for iSimangaliso, as it has created stability and outlined a clear way forward in establishing a working relationship with the new landowners. A co-management framework is in place and a formalised programme of action is being developed together with the land claimants.

The equitable access programme enables people from neighbouring communities to visit the park. Through this programme, school visits to the park were undertaken by 35 school groups in 2007/08, and the youngsters of the land claimant communities undertook youth trails. It is a key objective of iSimangaliso to grant access to the many people living on its boundaries who have never had the opportunity to visit the park for purposes of relaxation and education. The programme enables all South Africans to experience the wonders of this world heritage site and, through environmental education, contributes to its conservation. About 40 000 members of the public enjoyed

the park's beaches of St Lucia and Sodwana on New Year's Day.

The park's primary challenge concerns the settlement of land claims and working towards the successful implementation of settlement agreements. In addressing the challenge, the iSimangaliso Authority is building effective relationships with the RLCC and the land claimants, based on tangible benefits and co-management. It takes its role of supporting the RLCC to settle land claims very seriously and has dedicated staff members who undertake this work. Furthermore, it engages in extensive programmes that deliver benefits to land claimants and participates in DEAT's People and Parks Programme, which includes commitment to a People and Parks implementation plan.

The iSimangaliso Authority has set the following targets for 2008/09:

- ‡ Launching the tourism facility redevelopment programme in line with the 2010 plan and beyond.
- ‡ Conducting the brand and signage roll-out of the new identity of the park.
- ‡ Providing SMMEs with opportunities for tendering.
- ‡ Continuing with infrastructure development.
- ‡ Continuing with the implementation of the land care programme and the training and capacity-building programme.



Forecasting for economic growth

South African Weather Service

The South African Weather Service (SAWS) is an agency of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) and is governed by a board. It provides two distinct services: public good services (funded by government and delivered to the public free of charge) and commercial services (where the user-pays principle applies).

The SAWS is the authority for weather and climate forecasting in South Africa. As a member of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), it complies with international meteorological standards. As the aviation meteorological authority, the SAWS is designated by the state to provide weather services to the aviation industry and to fulfil the international obligations of the government under the Convention of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). The organisation also provides maritime weather forecasting services for the vast oceans around southern Africa up to Antarctica.

The SAWS has a very strong relationship with the Aviation Association of South Africa. It participates in regular industry meetings and serves on the Advisory Committee for Aeronautical Meteorological Services. The SAWS strives to be a world-class meteorological organisation and, as such, provides the best possible service to the aviation industry in South Africa. It regularly shares its initiatives on improving aviation meteorological services with the aviation industry. Representatives from the SAWS frequently attend industry meetings and give talks on weather and safety in flight.

The SAWS is involved in research initiatives – several in collaboration with other academic and research institutes locally and internationally – to ensure that its services are improved. The organisation has the following research priority areas:

- ‡ **Early warning service:** It conducts research and development (R&D) to enhance early warnings of weather hazards over all time scales.
- ‡ **Numerical weather prediction:** In the light of the introduction of the new unified model for short-range forecasting, an ideal opportunity exists for the SAWS to ensure that cooperative research in the field of numerical weather prediction is focused on this particular model, its verification, improvement and the development of user-friendly products.



Weather services are provided to the public

- ‡ **Climate change:** The SAWS is interested in ways to downscale the possible effects of global climate change and to determine impacts on local scales. These impacts will be important to guide the SAWS on ways to evolve its services and the types of systems required to deliver these services.
- ‡ **Air quality, atmospheric monitoring and research:** The sustained monitoring and research of atmospheric characteristics, trace gases, pollutants and aerosols that are critical to global climate change and air pollution monitoring are carried out by South Africa's global atmosphere watch station at Cape Point.
- ‡ **Science/social impact research:** The SAWS strives to align its products and services with user needs, ensuring that these needs are correctly interpreted when developing and packaging new services. It also aims to optimally include indigenous knowledge in its services.
- ‡ **Technology development:** The SAWS aims to ensure that all technological developments with regard to instrumentation, new methods of observation, improved signal acquisition, data processing and interfacing to instrumentation are undertaken.

Research and development is actively pursued in all the above research priority areas and collaborative research with several international institutions is underway. These include cooperation with the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) and overseas universities in the field of now-casting, joint research with the UK Meteorological Office on numerical weather prediction and the global atmosphere watch community of the WMO, the National Centre for Atmospheric Research on Airborne Studies.

University cooperation in South Africa includes projects applicable to SAWS service delivery in the above fields with the University of Cape Town (long-range forecasting), as well as with the University of Pretoria on several projects that form part of the honours degree in meteorology, in which SAWS personnel provide guidance. Research cooperation with other universities in South Africa is constantly pursued in relevant areas.

During 2007/08, a study on indigenous knowledge was initiated to investigate how this source of information can assist the SAWS in its service delivery.



SOUTH AFRICAN WEATHER SERVICE

In a new initiative funded by the UK High Commission, research is being conducted on numerical weather prediction, air quality forecasting, climate variability and data collection over the oceans around South Africa. Air quality forecasting has been identified as a need in South Africa and this project will lay the foundation for future activities.

As SAWS activities are data-intensive, the development of new observation and communication methods also received attention in 2007/08. This includes the use of cellphone GPRS communication technology to collect data from automatic weather stations and a newly developed automatic rain gauge system.

Education is crucial in growing capacity and achieving sustainability in an organisation and the SAWS is currently pursuing accreditation as a recognised training provider. The SAWS has long recognised the importance of investing in the development of human talent, not only to support its own growth, but also that of the environment in which it operates. It is also the aim of the organisation to broaden access to education for previously disadvantaged and





academically competent learners, and to contribute to South Africa's national goals by expanding the skills base.

As part of its social investment strategy and in an endeavour to recruit and develop talented individuals, the SAWS endows bursaries to learners in order to enable the organisation to meet its growing need for skilled scientists. Bursaries are awarded to learners to qualify as weather observers, as well as for undergraduate degrees in meteorology and atmospheric science, honours degrees in meteorology and atmospheric science, and a bridging course for BSc students without a meteorology qualification.

Training interventions in which the SAWS is currently involved include weather observer training, weather observation refresher training, forecaster training, conducting an honours course in meteorology in collaboration with the University of Pretoria, a six-month bridging course in meteorology for general BSc learners who have not studied a BSc in Meteorology, as preparation for the honours degree in Meteorology, training of weather observers based on Gough Island, Marion and Prince Edward Islands and at the South African National Antarctic Expedition base (SANAE IV) on Antarctica, and ad hoc training. Aviation training with the UK Meteorological Office is planned for April 2008.

The SAWS's products and services for public good include general forecasts for the public, severe weather warnings and advisories, seasonal outlooks for farmers and the Department of Agriculture, and marine forecasts.

The SAWS represents South Africa on the WMO and is currently an executive council member of the WMO. SAWS personnel are also involved in a number of expert and management committees of the WMO. The SAWS is an active member and member of the Secretariat of the Meteorological Association of Southern Africa (MASA), which is concerned with regional cooperation in meteorology and its applications in the SADC region. Furthermore, the SAWS has a number of international obligations under the WMO, which includes overall management of the meteorological area that covers the South Atlantic and Southern Oceans south of 6°S from 20°W to the coast of Africa, and then south to the Cape of Good Hope, the South Indian and Southern Oceans south of 10°30'S from the Cape to 55°E, and then south of 30°S to 80°E. This is known as METAREA VII of the WMO Marine Broadcast System for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System. The SAWS is also involved in the management of the Regional Telecommunications Hub and the Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre.

One of the SAWS's major challenges for the following review period is the attraction and retention of the specialised scientific and technical skills required in a modern national meteorological service. To address this, the SAWS is currently working on exchange programmes, attachments, and providing lecturers for the training required, and is developing a holistic human resource management framework to address this challenge as a priority.