

Evaluating Cross-Border Natural Resource Management Projects

Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative
Lubombo Conservancy – Goba TFCA



SLE



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1 Introduction: Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative

The project “Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative” is one of nine cross-border pilot projects within TFCA in the SADC region that receive GIZ funding within the first phase of the GIZ/SADC TFCA programme. The TFCA programme is one component of the technical cooperation measure Trans-boundary Use and Protection of Natural Resources (TUPNR). The project area of this concrete pilot project covers two communities on the border of Swaziland (Mhlumeni) and Mozambique (Goba) in the vicinity and within the Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA (LCG).

The stage of the implementation is unequal on both sides of the border. Therefore, the main research interest leading the evaluation of this project was to find out why no progress was made in Goba. Thus the focus in Goba is laid on the analysis of the current situation and context to provide a better basis for future activities. On the other side, in Mhlumeni, the activities are part of the larger Eco Lubombo Program (ELP) run by Lubombo Conservancy and have been funded mainly by CEPF¹ via ELP until now. Therefore, an identification of the purely GIZ-funded project activities was difficult.

2 Context: Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA

The **Lubombo TFCA (LTFCA)** has been established in 2000 through the General Trans-frontier Conservation and Resource Area Protocol signed by the governments of Mozambique, Swaziland, and South Africa (Lubombo General TFCA Protocol, 2000), resulting from the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative. Based on this protocol, Lubombo is recognised as a category A TFCA, yet it does not name the single parts or its geographical extension. Today the whole LTFCA consists of 5 pockets which are individual TFCA that are not yet physically linked (see Figure 1).

¹ CEPF is the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, a joint program of a joint program of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank (see <http://www.cepf.net>).

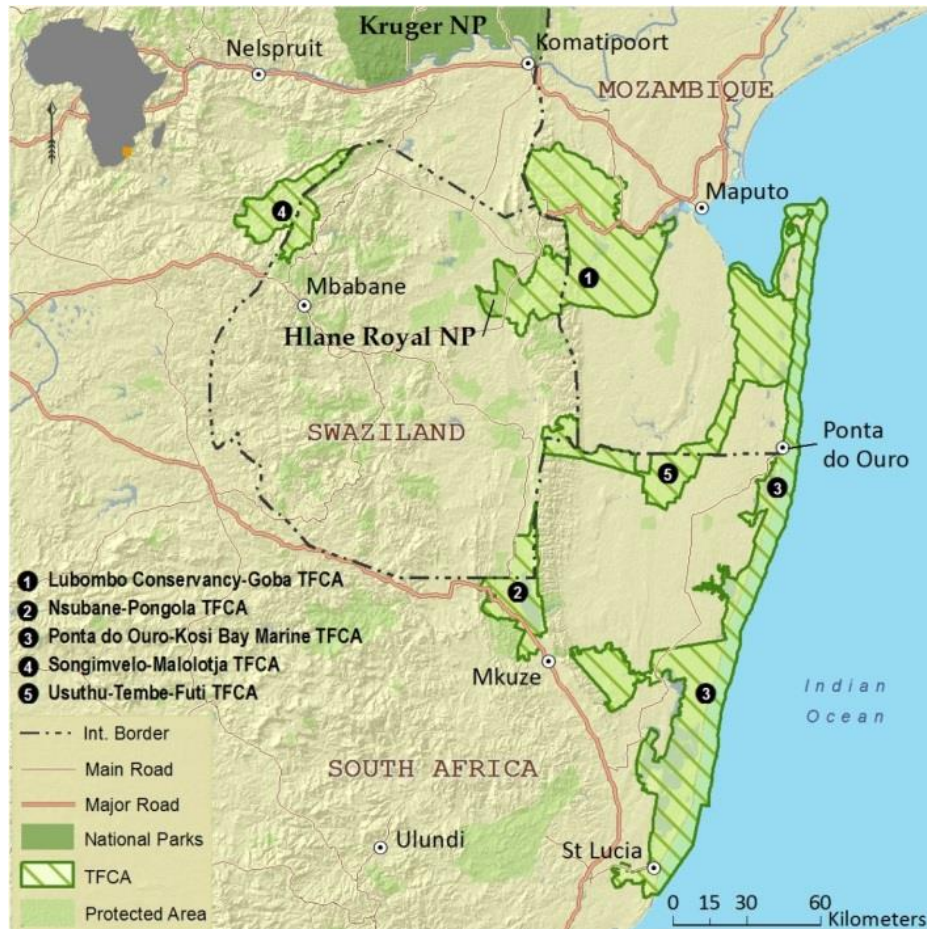


Figure 1: Lubombo TFCA. Source: <http://www.peaceparks.org>

The project area lies within the **Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA (LCG)**, composed by the Lubombo Conservancy in the northeast of Swaziland and Goba District in the southwest of Mozambique. The LCG was constituted in 2000 through the LCG TFCA Protocol (LCG TFCA Protocol, 2000) and is coordinated by the Ministry of Tourism (TFCA unit) of Mozambique and the Swaziland National Trust Commission (SNTC)². The protocol foresees the establishment of a LCG Task Group, a permanent secretariat and a fund, which all are still not in place. Figure 2 shows the envisioned area of the LCG TFCA. The pilot project area is roughly framed with the red circle.

A new development on the LCG TFCA level is the drafted Integrated Development Plan for the combined Lubombo Conservancy-Goba and Usuthu-Tembe-Futi Transfrontier Conservation Area (IDP LCG-UTF) (LTFCA Commission, 2014), to be signed by representatives of Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland. The

² SNTC is a parastatal organisation running the nature parks without big game. They get their mandate from STA (Swaziland Tourism Authority) within the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

vision is to manage the two TFCA jointly. The objectives within the IDP LCG-UTF include defining the TFCA extent, aligning of component plans and putting up effective and functional institutional arrangements (LTFCA Commission, 2014, p. 1). It is meant to be a strategic document for a combined TFCA development and could be of importance for the effective implementation of the LCG TFCA. From the perspective of the IDP LCG-UTF, an integrated management plan for Mhlumeni-Goba should be completed by December 2014 and the TFCA should be fully functional within ten years (LTFCA Commission, 2014, pp. 16, 18).

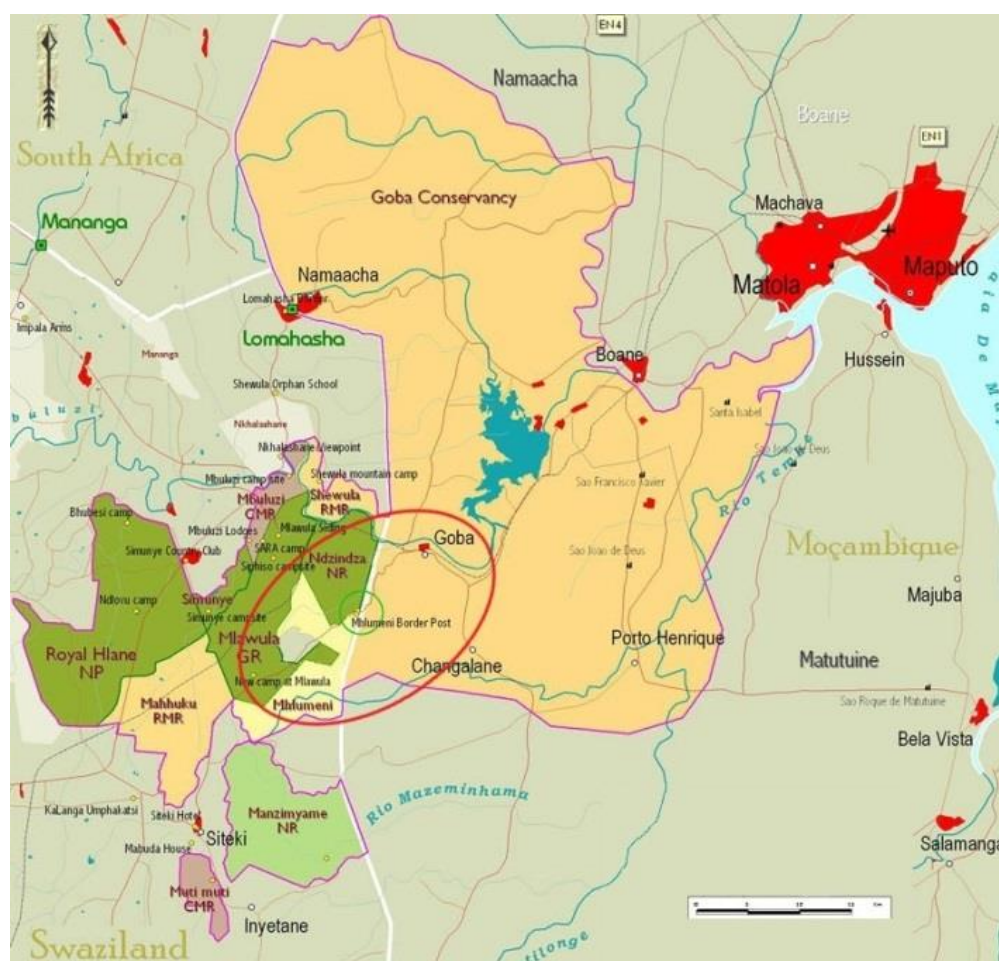


Figure 2: Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA. Source: <http://sntc.org.sz>

The TFCA Lubombo Conservancy-Goba has an important **ecological value** as it is part of the Lubombo mountain system, a larger, integrated conservation-worthy ecosystem. It falls within the 1.7 million ha Maputaland Centre of Endemism, and is a key biodiversity area within the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany biodiversity hotspot (LTFCA Commission, 2014, p. 4; CEPF, 2010, p. 2; UNDP, 2014, p. 195). IUCN has listed the area as Centre of Plant Diversity containing many sensitive and unique ecosystems spanning over national borders. CEPF selected it as one of the most biologically rich yet threatened areas for a support of

6.65 million USD (CEPF, 2010)³. At the same time, millions of people live in the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany region based on its natural resources (CEPF, 2010, p. 5) increasing pressure on the ecosystem.

External consultants conducted a biodiversity assessment in Mhlumeni, the Swazi territory of the project, and identified a huge diversity of habitats, flora and protected species. Their report confirms the ecological value of the Mhlumeni area as biodiversity hotspot which is still in a good condition and worth of conservation. It also affirms the potential to be an important transboundary protected area including a territory of Goba (McClelan, 2014, p. 2), the area on the Mozambican side identified for the project, which has been set aside by the community for conservation reasons since the late 1990ies. This area called "reserve" seems to be still ecologically intact and worthy of protection.

As in whole Swaziland, the main **threat to the ecosystem** in Mhlumeni is overgrazing by cattle (UNDP, 2014, p. 187) whereas in Goba charcoal production (partly for the nearby market of Maputo) and other burning practices are problematic. Another threat to biodiversity are invasive plant species, e.g. *Chromolaena odorata*. Medicinal plants are gathered, some of which are already difficult to find because of over-harvesting. Especially cycads endemic to the area face extinction because they are sold to purchaser outside the community.

2.1 Lubombo Conservancy (Swaziland)

In 1999, the Lubombo Conservancy (LC) was established as a not-for-profit association to attain "*long-term conservation of the ecosystems in the north-eastern Swaziland and more generally in the Lubombo region through a process of cooperative nature conservation management, and the development of conservation-based opportunities which create benefits, and contribute to improvement of the quality of life of all the people in the region*" (LC, 1999, p. 1). The LC was founded by representatives of the Shewula Game Reserve Trust, Hlane Royal National Park, Mlawula Nature Reserve, Sisa Ranch and Mbuluzi Game Reserve. Just in 2013 LC was turned into an NGO and incorporated in the Swaziland Companies Act, and therewith gained a legal status (LC, 2014, p. 6–7; UNDP, 2014, p. 195). The area of the Conservancy is a mosaic of different protected areas that form Swaziland's largest conservation area, with approximately 66,000ha (LC 2014, pp. 6–7). The area of the Lubombo Conservancy is under a permanent state of transformation,

³ Based on this ELP received its funding from CEPF.

step-by-step incorporating new territories. The LC has the particular characteristic of combining very different types of protected areas managed by different stakeholders like SNTC, Big Game Parks, communities (Swazi Nation Land) and the private sector (UNDP, 2014, p. 106) (see Figure 2). Mhlumeni as the pilot project community on the Swazi side is surrounded by the Lubombo Conservancy. It has no protected area status yet, but it is planned to be incorporated.

2.2 Goba District (Mozambique)

The Mozambican part of LCG is the Goba District (see Figure 2) (Mozambique/Swaziland, 2000, p. 1). This area to date does not include any protected area.⁴ The CBO Goba Ntava Yedzu has been entitled to manage an area of 9,701ha (details see 2.4) which falls under the competence of the Provincial Department of Agriculture (DPA) as sub-unit of the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG), while the responsible unit for TFCA in Mozambique is the Ministry for Tourism and Environment (MITUR). From a conservation and institutionalisation perspective concerning the TFCA, nothing has been done in Goba since the proclamation of the LCG TFCA in 2000. Within the 2nd phase of the Mozambican TFCA programme Mozbio programme (2005–2013)⁵, which was meant to have a focus on TFCA and tourism development, Goba has not been taken into consideration (MITUR, 2014) as only national conservation areas were financed. Currently the institutional framework in Mozambique is shifting. Within the Ministry for Tourism and Environment a new department for National Administration of Conservation Areas (Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação, ANAC) has been founded and the 3rd phase of the Mozbio programme is to be implemented from mid-2015. According to the draft of the Mozbio programme, LCG TFCA is again not among the areas selected for any measure (Thompson & Gaye, 2014).

A novelty is the option of creating community conservation areas in Mozambique through a new law on the protection, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity adopted in June 2014. Article 22 on “*Área de conservação comunitária*” provides communities with the right to create conservation areas and to sustainably manage these areas which remain public communal lands (Lei no. 16/2014, Art. 22). The allowed land uses include, amongst others, concessions for touristic

⁴ Some confusion around this fact arose through the wording in some documents, as e.g. the IDP LCG-UTF calls it Goba Ntava Yedzu Community Conservancy (p. 1).

⁵ The first phase of Mozbio started in 1998. It has been funded by GEF and World Bank. The current third phase has a funding volume of 40 million USD.

activities and the sustainable use of natural resources depending on a management plan as a requirement (Art. 26).

2.3 Community: Mhlumeni

Mhlumeni is a Swazi community of about 1,500 inhabitants bordering Mozambique and surrounded by Mlawula NR on the Swazi side. The community is made up by 153 dispersed homesteads giving home to extended families.

The land of Mhlumeni community is Swazi Nation Land (SNL) which is held by the king of Swaziland in trust for the nation. De facto, SNL belongs to the community and the chiefs have the right to allocate land in their respective areas to all members. It is the responsibility of the chief to ensure availability of land for cultivation to heads of all homesteads (Mushala et al., 1998).

The **political structure** of Mhlumeni is based on the traditional system. Mhlumeni is one of several communities under the Ka-Langa chieftancy with the Langa council and the Langa chief being the most important institutions. These are located far away from Mhlumeni. Within Mhlumeni the inner council ("Bandlancane") and its chairman ("Induna") administer the community on behalf of the Langa chief. The representatives within the inner council in Mhlumeni are eight elder men and women from the community, directly appointed by the Langa chief based on recommendations from the current inner council or the community. The inner council is the institution to be contacted first when planning any activity or project within the community. Yet, for all major decisions, e.g. on any economic activity, investment or development project, the Langa chief has to be consulted. For each of the four sub-areas of Mhlumeni one headman is in charge. A traditional authority ("Imisumbe") is dealing with land and land conflicts within the community. Community meetings open to any interested member of the community are held regularly. The main strength and opportunity of the community is the strong social cohesion, organisational structures including various interest groups and good communication within the community.

Livelihoods in the region, and so in Mhlumeni, traditionally depend on rain-fed agriculture for subsistence and harvesting of natural resources. Main crops are maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, sorghum, beans and other vegetables. Community members report a shift of the farming season and decreasing productivity as a result of poor soil fertility in combination with low precipitation. The only cash crop is cotton, cultivated by few people only. Animal husbandry also plays an important role, such as poultry production, cattle herding and goat keeping. Cattle are not only a source of livelihood but also a symbol of wealth and influence. Near-

ly 50% of all households own cattle. But also people from outside let cattle graze in Mhlumeni. The total number of cattle is 1,091, of which about one fifth is owned by non-residents.⁶ Even though the number of households increases, the number of cattle within Mhlumeni has been decreasing in the last eight years by about 14%. Nevertheless, pressure on land by cattle remains high due to the fact, that Mlawula NR that was used for grazing in the past is fenced now.

Apart from agriculture and animal husbandry, some people make their living with small business in the informal sector and others are employed outside the community by the sugarcane company RSCA, the Swazi Railway Company or the government (as teacher, police or military), but formal employment is very scarce.

Mhlumeni has one primary school for approximately 200 children, but no secondary school. Only a small number of Mhlumeni children manage to graduate. No basic health care facility exists apart from a mobile clinic once a month with the next hospital being in Siteki, about 25km away. There is a rural electrification scheme although only few people can afford electricity. Water access is provided by one borehole for the whole community, other wells and rivers fall dry during the dry season. A water pipeline towards the community is going to be built. Further infrastructure entails gravel roads through the village and a small grocery shop. Transport within and outside the community is a general problem and might become an issue in the context of tourism development. Main problems of Mhlumeni are access to water, lack of formal employment, low education and high HIV/AIDS infection rates.

According to statements of community representatives, before the pilot project started, the people of Mhlumeni had a critical position towards **biodiversity conservation**. They did not recognize the value of the ecosystem and based on conflicts with neighbouring Mlawula Nature Reserve (NR), Mhlumeni community had even a hostile attitude towards conservation. Reasons for the conflicts were disputes over boundaries, as the community accused the park of grabbing communal land by incrementally moving the fences. In turn community people conducted illegal activities inside the park, such as poaching, grazing cattle, collecting firewood, plants and grass and setting fires.

There are many **cross-border contacts** between Mhlumeni and Goba, based on personal relationships, visits of family relatives, and businesses. Despite this, cross-border conflicts exist as well. Members of Mhlumeni community blame

⁶ Official number of cattle belonging to non-residents is 215.

Mozambicans for stealing cattle. However, the only institutionalised cross-border cooperation is between the police concerning anti-poaching.

2.4 Community: Goba

Goba community on the Mozambican side has an estimated number of 2,500 inhabitants. The centre of the village is situated about 11km away from the Swazi border on the way to Maputo. For the understanding of the complex situation in Goba, it is useful to give a brief historical background on the FAO intervention.

2.4.1 Historical Background: FAO Intervention in Goba

As one of the first programmes in community-based natural resource management in Mozambique, the FAO provided “Support for Community Forestry and Wildlife Management”⁷ (Project GCP/MOZ/056/NET) from 1997–2002 to the National Directorate for Forests and Wildlife.⁸ Goba was one of the project areas to experimentally implement community forest management with the objectives of sustainable natural resources use and rural poverty alleviation. The community was chosen because of widespread illegal exploitation of forest resources for charcoal production for the market of Maputo and the resulting over-exploitation and degradation. The government entity cooperating in the project responsible for Goba was the Provincial Department of Agriculture (DPA) (Kumagwelo, 2000, pp. 1–2; Tanner et al., 2006, pp. 24, 26–27).

Participatory methods were applied for several exercises, i. a. to establish natural resources inventories and zonings (Kumagwelo, 2000, p.7; Tanner et al., pp. 31–32; FAO, 2001, p. 26). Along the process, several interest groups were formed and trained, including local community scouts (“fiscals”) in order to prevent illegal resource use through patrolling (FAO, 2001, p. 10). The activities of community user groups were accompanied by a resident extension officer in Goba (Kumagwelo, 2000, pp. 4, 7).

Supported by the project, a community association, Goba Ntava Yedzu (“Our Mountain”) for natural resources management was founded. Goba was represented by 30 elected members. They were supposed to link the project with the rest of the community and represent their interests related to sustainable use of natural resources in the area in dealing with the private sector, government authorities,

⁷ Co-funded by the Dutch Government

⁸ Although recognising the complex set-up of the programme and the participation of several stakeholders, we hereinafter refer to this period as the “FAO intervention period”.

neighbouring communities and other stakeholders. 50 percent of the members were women and ten out of the 30 had specific roles forming the Executive Council, which met every Friday and reported regularly to local authorities (Kumagwelo, 2000, pp. 5, 7; Tanner et al, 2006, p. 32).

Since 2001, still in the context of the FAO intervention, Ntava Yedzu has possessed a community land tenure certificate over 9,701ha (Certidão No.16/DPAPM/16/SPGC/2795/2001, DPA 2001). This area has been given to Ntava Yedzu to manage it on behalf of the community and use it for socio-economic purposes. By this, the land rights have been transferred from the local authorities to the association. For the management of the area a participatory management plan was developed that states seven different use zones for settlement, farming, grass/grazing, charcoal production, indigenous forest/thatch grass, recreation/eco-tourism and forest plantation (Plano de manejo comunitário dos recursos florestais e faunísticos de Goba , DPA 2000). As well, inhabitants of Goba participated in exchange visits to the community-based tourism project of Shewula Mountain Camp (Swaziland) (see Box 1) to collect some ideas on community tourism opportunities.

As a result of the new measures, many immigrants moved out of Goba, reducing charcoal production enormously, with only local residents remaining to produce charcoal on a license basis issued by governmental authorities.⁹ By this, the pressure on resources could be limited (FAO, 2001, pp. 25–26), yet fires, poaching and illegal settlements have remained a problem (FAO, 2001, p. 13).

In 2002, the overall project was transferred to the responsibility of PROAGRI¹⁰ for the second phase (Project UTF/MOZ/0074/MOZ) and the activities in Goba collapsed. The community lacked information on acquiring funds and felt abandoned (Tanner, 2006, p. 69). All interest groups have ceased to function. The income generating alternatives did not prove viable and economically sustainable without FAO subsidies. Even though awareness for conservation had been raised; without external incentives and compensation mechanisms, participation in community organisation was not attractive anymore (FAO, 2001, pp. 10, 25; Tanner, 2006, pp. 30, 36).

⁹ A charcoal production quota of 3000 bags/year was defined.

¹⁰ PROAGRI was the National Agricultural Development Programme of the Government of Mozambique.

2.4.2 Current Situation

Political structures in Goba are complex as modern and traditional systems coexist. The national government is represented by the community council, dominated by FRELIMO officials (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique)¹¹ and headed by the local administrator called *chef de localidade*¹². The traditional system is led by the traditional chief who is *chef de terra*¹³ at the same time. These parallel structures do not interact on a regular basis as rules of communication and information are lacking and meetings are held only when the administrator invites. The third powerful party is the CBO Ntava Yedzu which still holds the land rights over the community land (see above). The *chef de terra*¹⁴ has been deprived of his task of land allocation as all land rights were handed over to Ntava Yedzu. There is mistrust between Ntava Yedzu and the local administration, demonstrated by mutual accusations of abusing their power to gain individual benefits. This is fuelled by lack of transparency by Ntava Yedzu about negotiations with people interested in land.

Livelihood of Goba community members is based on subsistence farming (mainly maize, millet, cassava, sweet potatoes, vegetables, peanuts). However, a vast majority of households gets income from employment in the four big farming companies (macadamia and banana) in Goba district. Some people still rely on charcoal production for their living, although it is forbidden on a commercial basis. Basically all families in Goba produce charcoal legally for family consumption. Other activities include animal husbandry (mainly cattle), commercial activities (trading, running small shops or cafés) and others (teacher, police). Migration flows due to the civil war had weakened social structures and cohesion. Today, Goba is ethnically mixed; most of the people speak Portuguese and Shangana, a local language.

In Goba, the only organised group is the CBO **Goba Ntava Yedzu**. Yet after the external funds and support ended in 2002, many of the members left the association. Ntava Yedzu had not received enough capacity-building, was dependant on external subsidies and therefore not able to work self-sustainingly. Ntava Yedzu initially was meant to represent the whole community of Goba and guarantee the

¹¹ FRELIMO (=Mozambican Liberty Front) is the strongest party in Mozambique and currently governing the country.

¹² Comparable with a mayor

¹³ Chief of the land

¹⁴ Furthermore, the current *chef de terra* is the father of Ntava Yedzu's chairman.

benefit from the communal area by the community as a whole. Today the performance of Ntava Yedzu is quite poor, but they still have the right of land allocation. Based on our research in Goba it has to be stated that the actual representation of the community by the CBO is limited. Neither institutionalised communication channels nor direct links to the local administration or the general community exist. There are about six to ten members; most of them are still the same people as at the time of foundation. According to the current president of Ntava Yedzu, last elections were held in 2007¹⁵. So, they do not follow their regular procedures anymore, e.g. of having elections every four years (Estatutos da Comunidade Goba Ntava Yedzu).

The zoning of the communal land granted to Ntava Yedzu which had been carried out during FAO intervention is still accepted, and an estimated area of 2,500ha, the so-called reserve, is preserved and could be used for tourism as well. The idea of a tourism development project in this area is still followed by Ntava Yedzu. Prominent example is a site located directly at a waterhole bordering the "reserve" area, where the construction of a lodge has been initiated in 2007. After the project developer abandoned the construction site, the initiative was taken over by another private investor in 2011. However, the touristic infrastructure has not been completed yet and progress has been slow, supposedly due to financing reasons. Ntava Yedzu gave further parts of the communal land to people from outside the community for different purposes. In return, the community should receive some benefits such as classrooms, cows, a clinic building, etc. The current investor in the tourism infrastructure has promised to build six touristic chalets in the village centre for a community tourism project, what has not happened yet. All agreements are made verbally, no written contracts exist and nobody is aware of the concrete figures about the land that has been leased and under which conditions.

During the FAO intervention described above some awareness about forest conservation has been raised and people's behaviour partly changed, especially reducing charcoal production. However nowadays knowledge and **consciousness on biodiversity conservation** seems to be limited again within the community. The depletion of biodiversity outside the "reserve" area is notable (LTFCA Commission, 2014, p. 31; own data collection).

¹⁵ Differing information stated 2002 as last time of elections.

2.5 Tourism

A good potential for tourism is being anticipated in the LCG region due to the proximity to Maputo of only 80km. LCG is thus a promising location to target expatriates and the growing middle class for recreational eco-tourism. Road infrastructure is good and the place well located on the way between Durban and the Kruger National Park, with a 24 hours border post improving its accessibility (LTFCA Commission, 2014, p. 8). Small trails in the region exist and could already be used for hiking, mountain-biking, bird-watching and enjoying the landscape.

That means, the target region has a potential for eco-tourism, but there are still some challenges to overcome, such as:

- Lack of (basic) facilities like camp-sites.
- Lack of experience and skills in the communities concerning hospitality and tourism attendance.
- Visa regulations that impede free movement of hiking tourists across the border within the area.

3 Project Description

The proposal for “Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative” was submitted jointly by Lubombo Conservancy and SNTC for Mhlumeni, and CESVI and Ntava Yedzu for Goba. It was signed by the Swazi national TFCA coordinator (SNTC) and the focal point for TFCA in Mozambique (MITUR). The first project proposal was submitted to GIZ in May 2013. The work plan and budget from November 2013 contained some minor adjustments. The first instalment of GIZ funds were received in July 2014.

3.1 Implementing Partners

Lubombo Conservancy, with two employees, one project manager and one community and eco-tourism expert, is in the lead for the implementation of the pilot project. The project activities are part of the larger Eco Lubombo Program (ELP) which is mainly financed by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) so far and co-financed by COSPE¹⁶, an Italian NGO with 15 years of experience in community-based development in Swaziland. COSPE staff assists the ELP in par-

¹⁶ COSPE stands for “cooperation for development in emerging countries”.

ticipatory and GIS¹⁷-assisted mapping and zoning, for the development of eco-business plans, and implements livelihood projects in the Lubombo communities.

The implementing partner on the Mozambican side is CESVI¹⁸, an Italian NGO active in the country since 2000. One of their foci lies on environment and natural resource management. CESVI is based in Maputo and had no experiences in the project area. Within the planning phase of the project, the idea was discussed between the project manager of Lubombo Conservancy and the country director of CESVI. During the project phase, from the planning until the end of the cooperation, the country director of CESVI changed twice, in February and September 2014. Apart from that, CESVI reduced its staff to currently two (including the director) and funding for the organisation is secured until end of the year 2014¹⁹, only.

The pilot project, at least on the Swazi side, is embedded in the larger Eco Lubombo Program. The ELP is the implementation strategy of the Lubombo Conservancy with a planned spatial extension over the whole Lubombo Mountain Ecosystem. It started in 2013, funded by CEPF with 270,000 USD for a first programme phase until June 2015. The goal of the ELP is to foster biodiversity conservation and to create an eco-tourism product in the Lubombo mountain range, possibly extending it to the whole LTFCA at a later point. The holistic approach includes the following components: institutional strengthening of the LC (incorporating further communities, private and state owned land within the context of a protected landscape approach), eco-business plans²⁰ on community level, a community-based Lubombo eco-trails initiative and a partnership-based research, monitoring and evaluation programme. The tourism product focuses on a community based eco-trail network, including a chain of community owned eco-lodges (LC, 2014, pp. 7–8). The whole pilot project and its activities can only be seen within this broader context.

¹⁷ GIS stands for geographic information system, a computer system designed to capture and manage spatial or geographical data.

¹⁸ CESVI stands for “cooperation and development”.

¹⁹ CESVI received funding from CEPF from March 2014 until September with an extension until December 2014. This was earmarked to activities in the districts of Goba and Matutuini.

²⁰ These eco-business plans are management plans for community development based on an ecosystem approach and community-based management of natural resources. The aim is to combine ecosystem conservation and improved sustainable livelihoods and thereby creating business opportunities based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

3.2 Objective and Outputs

The overall objective of the GIZ funded pilot project as stated in the proposal is *"to protect biodiversity through economic development and skills training, specifically ecotourism and related activities"* (proposal, p. 4). The project work plan and budget specifies the project objective as *"to establish a viable, eco-friendly and attractive community tourism product with associated sustainable livelihood activities, spanning the areas of Mhlumeni in Swaziland and Goba in Mozambique"* (work plan and budget, p. 2).

The work plan envisages the following outputs: an integrated management plan for the two communities and an eco-tourism product. This product should focus on eco-recreational and adventure activities like mountain-biking, hiking and 4x4-drives. The trails connecting Mhlumeni and Goba are part of the planned Lubombo eco trails network, which encompasses accommodation facilities and campsites in a design reflecting the natural environment. The individual tourism products should be developed in cooperation with the communities (work plan and budget, p. 2).

3.3 Activities

The proposal included activities financed via GIZ and the ELP over a total period of 24 months, from mid-2013 up to mid-2015. The work plan specifies these activities including the respective timeframe.

The following list presents the activities and milestones/outputs planned to be co-financed by GIZ within the period from beginning of 2014 until mid-2015 based on the work plan (pp. 6–11) and partially on the original proposal. Subsequently, the status of implementation is outlined for those which should have been conducted so far. Yet all activities have been pre-financed by the CEPF-funding. For a better overview, the main aspects have been extracted and summarised.

1. Planning and governance:

- *Establish Mhlumeni-Goba cross-border NRM forum (first quarter 2014) and consecutive cross-border forum meetings*

Conducted: one joint visit of small groups of each three to five representatives of Mhlumeni, Goba and Shewula to Madjedjane (Maputo Special Reserve), one exchange visit of Goba people to Mhlumeni; no forum established yet

- *Spatial planning of ecosystem services and functions (first quarter 2014)*

Conducted: seven sessions with 32 key informants (incl. four moderators), accompanied by GIS-expert (sharing of mapping results with community still outstanding), Mhlumeni. No sessions in Goba.

- *Developing a baseline with socio-economic data, NRM status and activities, governance analysis, main recreational values*

Conducted: baseline for Mhlumeni recorded on a basic level

- *Developing eco-business plans for Mhlumeni and Goba*

To be drafted at the end of 2014 and implemented in 2015

- *Integrated management plan for Transfrontier Community Conservation Area*

To be drafted at the beginning of 2015

2. Infrastructure:

- *Designing of camp (consultant and communities) (until third quarter 2014)*

Conducted: first ideas on a design in cooperation with a constructor developed; site for camp/lodge is chosen (in Mhlumeni).

- *Construction of the camp (starting third quarter 2014; completing in 2015)*

Has not started yet/delayed

- *Lodge constructions (throughout 2015)*

To be done in 2015

3. Trail development (by communities and consultant):

- *Designing the route with GPS and mapping (until mid-2014)*

Conducted: consultant on tourism product development in Mhlumeni engaged since August 2014

- *Development of the trail (from mid-2014, official opening at the beginning of 2015)*

Has not started yet/delayed

4. Training (of selected community members of Mhlumeni/Goba)

- *Training in basic hospitality for eco-tourism, including guiding as well as on basic accountability, small business non-financial administration, planning and budgeting (ongoing)*

Conducted: no trainings on tourism and administration yet

5. Marketing:

- *Recruiting a marketing consultant for market analysis and tourism product development (first half of 2014)*

Conducted: no consultant on marketing has been engaged, but assessments have been carried out with eco-tourism experts

- *Designing marketing material (from mid-2014)*

Conducted: first steps in marketing have been done: Lubombo eco-trail brochure is available, networking with stakeholders²¹

Further activity areas mentioned in the proposal and in the work plan are project management and international facilitation. According to the work plan, these are not planned to be covered by GIZ funds and hence do not appear in this list.

In contrast to the abundant activities in Mhlumeni, no activities within the GIZ-funded pilot project were undertaken in Goba (see 4.7). Since the implementer agreed that the objectives were not achievable anymore, the proposal for the Mozambican side was reviewed and adjusted in July 2014. The amendment request to GIZ stated new objectives for Goba, focusing on institutional networking, organisational development and capacity building of the responsible CBO Ntava Yedzu and first mapping and analysing of Goba as preparatory works for a new project phase. The new strategy included the involvement of one international and two local consultants to support Ntava Yedzu and the community process, to carry out advocacy activities and to establish a network with the main stakeholders of Lubombo TFCA in Mozambique and Swaziland. The infrastructural component and the search for a private investor were postponed. For these activities, a timeframe from September until December was proposed.

For several reasons CESVI withdrew from the GIZ project in September 2014 (see 4.7). As a reaction, consultations were carried out between GIZ, Lubombo Conservancy and ANAC leading to the agreement that the Swazi side would temporarily manage the Goba part, too. LC plans to hire a consultant to do an assessment of the situation in Goba, and search for a new long-term partner. Depending on the progress and the situation analysis, they consider simultaneously carrying out confidence-building and preparatory activities with the community and reorganise and consolidate Ntava Yedzu.

In late August 2014, CESVI withdrew from the project, but started with activities in Goba in September 2014. This happened outside the GIZ pilot project, but

²¹ These activities/outputs are not directly connected to the GIZ project activities.

in cooperation with COSPE, funded by CEPF. They carried out certain activities that were initially planned to be part of the joint project within the ELP, but on a smaller scale of only five days of training exercises on participatory mapping.

4 Findings and Analysis

The presentation of findings concentrates on the enabling and constraining factors that explain the unequal project development in both countries and the problems in cooperation between the two implementing partners. We take the reviewed objectives, activities and timetables of the work plan as the background against which we evaluate the project.

4.1 Project Logic

Neither the proposal nor the work plan for the project describe a clear project logic. For the analysis, this logic first had to be construed from documents and statements of the implementers. The overall idea of the Eco Lubombo Program, of which the GIZ pilot project is part, is to generate income for the communities (by ecotourism and other activities) and thereby improving biodiversity conservation using a community-based approach. According to the work plan, the specific objective is: "*to establish a viable, eco-friendly and attractive community tourism product*" (work plan and budget, p. 2).

This includes the results outlined in the proposal (proposal, p. 4), that "*Ntava Yedzu/Mhlumeni will:*

- *increase income through revenue from newly established sustainable tourism activities (I);*
- *improve administrative and technical management capacities thanks to specific training of some of its members (II);*
- *establish an integrated cross border collaborative project planning and development process (III); and*
- *help create an important eco-tourism destination and improve biodiversity management of an internationally recognized area of biodiversity significance (IV)."*

Activities related to these results are the formulation of basic business plans for Mhlumeni and Goba, training in eco-tourism related capacities, the lodge construction, activities in conservation planning, zoning and trail development as well as marketing, product development and international facilitation. These may be important steps towards the establishment of a community eco-tourism product

as well as to attaining the results I, II and IV. We agree that part of the proposed activities will contribute to the objectives and some of the related results in a long-term perspective, yet no tangible outputs such as income or an established tourism product are viable within a time frame of nine months.

Not enough activities were included in the work plan for the achievement of result III. Transboundary cooperation needs more specific attention, the prior compilation of information and focussed relationship building measures. None of these can be found in the proposed activities. It remains unclear how the cross-border character of the project should be achieved including a cross-border community forum.

Some remarks on the strategy may support retracing the project logic. Concerning the overall objective of biodiversity conservation, this topic is approached from a business point of view, highlighting biodiversity as an important asset which can be used for income generation through eco-tourism. In this way, the implementers create awareness for the value of land in the community and convince the community of the importance of conservation. The strategy of achieving biodiversity conservation through alternative livelihoods including income generation through tourism is viable and the community-based approach makes sustainability more likely. Overall this is a feasible procedure to achieve the objective on a long-term.

For the implementation of the activities and the achievement of the objectives, a participatory approach has been chosen. This was a very reasonable decision against the background of the idea of having a self-sustaining community eco-tourism product in the end. Yet, in order to be successful, a participatory process as well as a cross border collaborative project (result III) would need more and different activities. If a completely new cooperation is started between a community and an implementing organisation, prior assessments concerning the local structures, the entry points for cooperation with the community, historical experiences and internal conflicts as well as trust building measures are needed. A community-based approach starts with confidence-building with the communities via local authorities, exchange visits, participatory mappings and baseline data collection with key informants. It proceeds with institution building of a community trust, infrastructure construction, management and tourism skills trainings accompanied by the implementation of associated livelihood activities. And it culminates in the drawing of a participatory eco-business plan including an eco-tourism product that is being marketed and produces tangible income for the community. According to LC staff, the result is meant to be a community-based

NRM system that improves the people's livelihoods and provides them with the tools to conserve biodiversity. The approach follows the idea of training community people and to empower them for taking informed decisions on conservation-based business opportunities in future. On the Swazi side this participatory process has started already before the project and paved the way for the concrete activities. However, the proposed project activities do not take into account that on the Mozambican side a different context was given and that the implementing NGO did not have any knowledge on and experience with the community of Goba. Time and resources for these preparatory steps for the Mozambican counterpart are missing in the proposal and work plan. Therefore on this side, the achievement of the objectives was not realistic.

The time-frame of nine months for such a comprehensive project with a community-based approach from the very beginning and the objective of tangible outputs are illusive and to achieve this is even ambitious within the 24 months' time-frame of the ELP. We assess the approach as not appropriate to achieve the aimed objectives in the given time-frame. The only way to achieve tangible results would have been via an approach with less political participation from the beginning and therefore a lower potential for ownership and an autonomous sustainable community development on the longer run.

4.2 Effectiveness

The specific objective of the project is *"to establish a viable, eco-friendly and attractive community tourism product with associated sustainable livelihood activities, spanning the areas of Mhlumeni in Swaziland and Goba in Mozambique"* (work plan and budget, p. 2). First outputs foreseen are eco-business plans for the two communities and a cross-border forum. These outputs have not been attained yet, but the activities are ongoing (see 3.3).

In Goba, the objective has not been achieved as none of the activities have been carried out so far. One reason for the withdrawal of CESVI was the perception that measurable effects and outputs for Goba were not possible anymore within the remaining project time. The expectations of developing a community-based tourism project within nine months in Goba were too high. In the current situation, no statement estimating future effectiveness in Goba can be made, as the future involvement of the community in the project is completely unclear.

In Mhlumeni, preparatory activities have been carried out in order to develop a community-based ecotourism product and first achievements have been made, e.g. awareness concerning conservation has been raised and the CBO Mhlumeni

Trust was founded. The tourism product itself is under development. Some ideas on the camp-site, lodge and trails have been defined, the site of the lodge has been identified, but the construction has not started as planned. The obligatory environmental impact assessment has been requested by the Lubombo Conservancy from the Swaziland Environmental Authority but is still outstanding. Tourism and management related skills trainings have not been carried out yet. Due to the delay, no touristic infrastructures exist and accordingly, no income is generated. It is not possible, to estimate future income effects properly, as the final tourism product and the business plan are not defined yet.

Since the beginning of the Eco Lubombo Program (ELP) preparing for the GIZ funded activities more than one year has passed. The implementer LC plans to spend the GIZ funds on activities until April 2015. Like this the project can be better seen as an 18-months approach. By itself, as a 9-months project without the broader context, the GIZ support would not be very likely to effectuate in building up a tourism infrastructure, the management skills and the marketing within a participatory approach.

4.3 Impact

The overall goal of the project is biodiversity conservation. This shall be reached through income generation for the local communities through tourism, what implies poverty alleviation.

The project has just recently started, and no early impacts are seen yet. Nonetheless, there are some effects of the project that could result in positive impacts on the longer run. We will estimate these in the following and name the requirements for the project to produce the desired impacts in the future.

Consciousness on **biodiversity conservation** rose in the community through the participatory exercises on mapping of ecosystem services and sensitisation trainings with key informants. In combination with information on conservation and tourism aspects shared in general community meetings, these project activities notably changed the community's overall perception of and attitude towards conservation. The planned sharing of the mapping and inventory exercises results with the community and the debates on it may indicate a next important step towards a community eco-business plan. Simultaneously the idea of turning a part of Mhlumeni territory into a community conservation and recreation area is growing. As the inner council enjoys a high authority status and trust from the community as well as the Ka-Langa chief, its support is the key.

Yet the awareness raised on conservation still has to be translated into a shift in behaviour to effectuate improved conservation. However, the community does not yet dispose of enough alternatives and instruments for sustainable NRM to make a substantial change in the use of natural resources. The main threat to conservation in Mhlumeni is over-grazing by cattle, but a general willingness to reduce cattle cannot be perceived yet. Currently, it does not look like the project has the right tools at hand to achieve this cultural shift which, apart from that, takes a long time.

Even if the expected income effects will be achieved, we cannot assess the impact on poverty alleviation yet, but just highlight potentials. Especially the community-based approach provides the opportunity of a broad participation in the benefits by the community. Apart from that, tourism is a sector that traditionally stimulates a particular high involvement of the youth and female population (BMZ 2011, p. 9).

As a side-effect of the project's activities, the conflict with the neighbouring Mlawula NR was calmed, relationship has significantly improved and communication is possible now. (cf. 2.3) The project facilitated joint activities and exchange of opinions as well as a direct support from Mlawula NR for the activities. The GPS-mapping improves the knowledge of the community and gives them more security over the boundaries of their territory. Yet Mhlumeni community still wishes to get a formal assurance on their territory. This might be a requirement to stabilize the relationship.

4.4 Sustainability

Sustainability has to be revised in two ways. The first is to check if the project is sustainable. Is it likely to continue after the GIZ funding ends?

The project in Mhlumeni has a high probability to continue after the GIZ support ends as it is part of the broader ELP, which is well-positioned to raise more funds. Already there are several promising efforts to acquire new support, e.g. from GEF, GIZ and the Dutch government.²² Currently, a follow-up funding proposal for the ELP is being drafted, stating a preliminary amount of needed funds of over 3.7 million USD for the implementation of a five years plan. This covers, amongst others, the development of the eco-business plan with several communi-

²² The Lubombo Conservancy with support of GIZ furthermore made endeavours to negotiate with MITUR in Mozambique about the option of supporting Goba in the context of the Mozbio programme, as well.

ties in the Swaziland Lubombo Mountain Ecosystem as well as their incorporation into the Lubombo eco trails initiative (LC, 2014). On this background, the GIZ pilot project fund can only be seen as a first stimulus for a bigger project.

As well, the institutional structures of ELP are going to be strengthened soon by another staff member for administrative tasks and the involvement of a GIS expert. Dedication is high on the Swazi side and Mhlumeni will be supported further as it is expected to be one of the first examples of communities along the Lubombo eco-trail, stimulating more communities to join the initiative.

The second perspective on sustainability is on the project's effects and impacts. Are they likely to continue after the project runs out and the activities end? As the project is dedicated to income generation via tourism, it should create own revenues one day. This makes financial sustainability of the project likely, but this point has yet to be reached. The project implementers themselves plan Mhlumeni to become independent from LC financial and technical support within five years. In the worst case with no further support up from mid-2015, Mhlumeni community would probably have an accomplished camp-site to start tourism activities on their own, but the basis for a sustainable development would not be very stable as capacity-building and experience will still be lacking.

With the building of institutional structures within the community the process of empowerment has started and a sense of own responsibility of the community has been created. This provides a better basis for a sustainable project. The ELP supported the foundation of the CBO Mhlumeni Trust, trains the members and prepares them to make their own informed decisions in the future. Equally, the participatory spatial planning is likely to create commitment within the community for the project. It is yet too early to prove the sustainability of these empowerment effects, as a stronger sense of ownership still has to be created and independence from external support to be built up.

Nothing can be stated concerning the ecological and economic sustainability of the planned touristic product. It is planned to be an eco-tourism product, adapted to the environment and including hiking, mountain-biking, 4x4-drives and camping/lodge offers. However, trails and tourism products still need to be precisely defined. The ecological impacts of 4x4-activities have to be revised carefully.

Another aspect of sustainability is the documentation of learning experiences, and the development of methodologies with up-scaling potential. Currently, ELP prepares a guidance manual for the development of community-based eco-business plans. Mhlumeni is meant to be a first experiment and practice example.

If Mhlumeni succeeds as a community-based enterprise based on an eco-business plan combining tourism and conservation, this could become an incentive for other communities to join the tourism and conservation initiative of the Lubombo eco-trail and follow the good example. The manual should serve to up-scale the Mhlumeni experience and replicate the methods in further communities.

4.5 Relevance

Are the objectives and the conception of the project in harmony with relevant policies and do they cover the main problems of the target group?

The overall objectives of **poverty alleviation** and **biodiversity conservation** cover the Millennium Development Goals 1, eradicate extreme poverty and 7, environmental sustainability, thus are recognized as highly relevant in a global development context. On the background of the socio-economic situation described in detail in the chapters 2.3 and 2.4, the relevance of poverty alleviation through employment and income generation is highly relevant on the community level of Mhlumeni and Goba. Equally, the rich biodiversity being the basis of livelihoods is under threat through unsustainable natural resource use practices. Therefore incentives for conservation measures are crucial. The approach of connecting biodiversity conservation with community development also goes hand in hand with the new GEF project "Strengthening the National Protected Areas System in Swaziland" focusing on income generation activities that aim at reducing the reliance of local communities on natural resources and protecting biodiversity (UNDP, 2014, p. 18). The Swazi's tourism policy names the specific goal of environmental sustainability of touristic initiatives (MTEA, 2010). The constitution of LC describes the objectives of developing nature-based tourism, employment and conservation-based community development opportunities for improving the quality of life of the local communities in the Lubombo region (LC, 1999, p. 1).

The national tourism strategy of Mozambique from 2004–2013 included the goals for **tourism** to contribute to employment creation and poverty alleviation, to develop sustainable and responsible tourism and to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity (Tourism Policy and Strategy, 2003, p. 5). A new strategy is under development and it is expected to foster the focus on tourism in protected areas (UNWTO, 2014).

The IDP LCG-UTF foresees that "*economic returns from tourism and associated activities*" (LTFCA Commission, 2014, p. 3) and in "*conservation-based sectors such as conservation agriculture and eco-tourism*" (IDP, p. 6) have to be provided for the

local communities to create employment, improve their livelihoods and by this ensure opportunities for conservation.

There is no specific legislation or policy for **CBNRM** neither in Swaziland nor in Mozambique (Roe, Nelson & Sandbrook, 2009, p. 161). However Swaziland national biodiversity strategy and action plan from 2001 names the strategy of establishing CBNRM and the respective legislation (SEA, 2001, p. 60, 67) and a UNDP (GEF) study from 2014 repeats this recommendation to develop CBNRM in Swaziland through the respective national policy (UNDP, 2014, p. 16). In Mozambique, a broad policy framework allows for community participation and to benefit from sustainable natural resource management (Nhantumbo et al, 2003, pp.3–4) through e.g. communal land titles (Lei de Terras, 1997), access and rights over forestry resources (Lei das Florestas e a Vida Silvestre, 1999) and further specification on participation and benefits of communities (Decreto nº 12/2002, 2002).

Apart from that, the community-based strategy of the project is in line with the Lubombo General TFCA Protocol, which seeks to create a framework that facilitates the *"involvement of communities in and adjacent to TFCA's through consultation, representation and participation in TFCA management"* (Lubombo General TFCA Protocol, 2000, p. 3). In fact, the IDP LCG-UTF draft requests for an establishment of community forums and *"a TFCA wide community-based tourism corporate structure to underpin the sustainability of TFCA tourism products"* (LTFCA Commission, 2014, p. 19) what covers exactly the strategy of the ELP.

4.6 Efficiency

The project implementers have not yet spent the GIZ funds, but have only received the first instalment in July 2014 and have not made any financial statement so far. For this reason, it is impossible to assess the efficiency of the projects investments but only to give a brief overview.

Resources on the Swazi side have been used mainly for participatory community exercises and the contracting of consultants. Funds are kept back for investing in infrastructure for the camp-site and lodge. In general, LC reported positive experience concerning the cooperation with GIZ as they were very responsive to the project and made two visits. GIZ was flexible about the continuous adjustments of objectives, time tables and budgets. According to the LC representatives, administrative costs and efforts have not been very high so far, but LC is in the process of recruiting an administrative officer to face the growing administrative expenditures of the program.

On the Mozambican side, GIZ funds have not been spent, as no official agreement was signed and no money disbursed. Nonetheless, CESVI reported high costs for preparatory measures, such as transports to community meetings, the three month's salary of a field officer in Goba and work time of CESVI staff. They calculated an estimate of 10,000 EUR for these activities without producing significant results.

A new agreement on the investment of the 50,000 EUR within the new framework, currently without a Mozambican implementing partner, has to be found.

4.7 Cooperation

The aspect of cooperation is central for a cross-border project. In the project in LCG the cross-border character could not be achieved as cooperation failed and the Mozambican partner withdrew from the project. In the following, the aspect of cooperation is divided into the relationship between three different types of stakeholders, the implementing partners, other stakeholders and the communities.

4.7.1 Cooperation among Implementing Partners

The idea and initiative for the project came from the project manager of LC who asked CESVI for cooperation. Negotiations on cooperation began in September 2013. Both organisations had not cooperated before and had no comprehensive information about each other. The proposal was developed jointly by the LC project manager and the country director of CESVI who had a good personal relationship and communication. Both organisations follow the ideal of a community-based approach. Yet several complications emerged during the cooperation. And in later stages of the cooperation it seemed that the ideas over the participatory approach and the applied methods had not been sufficiently aligned during the planning of the project.

The partnership between CESVI and LC was never formalised. A draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) sent by CESVI in February 2014 was never discussed nor signed and no agreement on the joint project procedure was made. For LC to develop a MoU was not a priority, while for CESVI a formalised agreement was indispensable to start any activities. The lack of a MoU is the reason why no implementation activities started in Goba.

Communication was not very smooth, especially after the first change of management personnel in February 2014. At the same time, the LC was not very active in the cooperation, and the process with CESVI got on hold. According to infor-

mation from CESVI, they only got informed about the approval of the project through the partner in April 2014.

The several changes in CESVI staff further complicated the cooperation with LC. Due to a short hand-over period between the country directors, information got lost and the new directors had very limited knowledge about the project and the situation in Goba.

The relationship between LC and CESVI was unequal. LC was seen as the main applicant having the power over the GIZ funds, and CESVI as the partner. The proposed project is to be recognised as an element of the larger ELP conducted by LC with the focus on Swaziland. Rules for cooperation and decision-making were never fixed and CESVI had the impression that decisions (e.g. on investing joint funds in consultants) were taken unilaterally by LC without real involvement of CESVI. Concerning the work in the community, they felt being pushed into applying the predetermined LC approach.

In May 2014, after visiting the community for the first time, the new country director of CESVI assessed the approach and objectives of the project as not viable. Hence the implementers decided to submit a changed proposal to GIZ with adjusted objectives for Goba. No agreement could be found between the implementing partners until August, when CESVI withdrew.

The different contexts and time-scales for the two partners have to be taken into account. For LC, the GIZ project is one element in a bigger programme, while for CESVI the GIZ project was a stand-alone activity without a secure long-term plan. In fact, the ELP had already started when the call for proposal was launched. LC saw the opportunity of broadening the programme with a cross-border component and had to find a cooperation partner quickly.

The other partner named in the proposal is Ntava Yedzu, the CBO from Goba. It remained unclear how Ntava Yedzu had been identified as partner for the project. According to statements of Ntava Yedzu members, they were not consulted before the submission of the proposal to GIZ and they had not been well informed about the project. They expected quick wins through the tourism project, but not a time consuming participatory approach. Cooperation with Ntava Yedzu was not an equal relationship between implementers, but remained on a donor-recipient basis.

4.7.2 Cooperation of Implementing Partners with Other Stakeholders

COSPE, the main partner of LC, entered the project after the proposal was accepted by GIZ. They did not take part in the planning process and are not a formal

partner within the pilot project. COSPE is supporting LC in the implementation of ELP with financial and technical assistance, based on a MoU. Both organisations exchange knowledge on community-based approaches and on natural resource management. COSPE was never officially introduced to CESVI as a partner within the project, but at some point became the main communication partner for CESVI. The amalgamation of LC and COSPE was confusing for CESVI. After the withdrawal from the GIZ project, CESVI still cooperates with COSPE, contracting them for the introduction of the participatory planning process in Goba.

Furthermore, in the work with Mhlumeni, Mlawula NR (SNTC) is often directly involved. Mboni Masilela, the Community Outreach Officer accompanies many project activities and SNTC supports with logistics (transport, meeting rooms).

Concerning tourism promotion, LC has initiated informal cooperation and negotiations with several stakeholders as the Kingsley Holgate Foundation, tour operators as All Out and Swazi Trails, the University of Texas, international mountain bikers and newspapers. Besides that, they get free support from an architect experienced in building lodges and they hired a consultant for the identification of the trails.

It is notable that both initial project partners were supported by CEPF funds, too. CEPF does not incorporate the cross-border component, but promotes also the objective of biodiversity conservation. Both CESVI and LC aimed to combine GIZ and CEPF funds for similar activities.

4.7.3 Community Participation

Before issuing the proposal, there was a lack of information on both sides. The implementers did not know the project area and had never worked with the project communities. No assessments had been done to identify needs or potentials of the communities. For the Mozambican side, the implementer assumed that Ntava Yedzu was representing the community, that the 9,701ha had a legal status as community conservation area, and that the external investor could easily be evicted from the selected site for the lodge. All of these assumptions proved to be wrong, which led to the failure of the project on this side.

In general, little time and commitment were dedicated to planning. One reason was the hurry in which the project proposal had to be drawn. According to the implementers, the timeframe did not allow for a proper assessment and planning process. Due to this time constraints, the local communities respective the CBO have not been involved in the planning, even though Ntava Yedzu was mentioned in the proposal as one of the focal points and implementer of the project. When

the project was presented to them, they were not happy with the idea of having a community-run touristic infrastructure about 12km away from the village centre of Goba. They preferred to have small cabins in the village centre because they would be easier to access and maintain, but this idea was not taken up by the implementers.

On the Swazi side, the common knowledge and experience of the implementer were sufficient to initiate a successful process with the community of Mhlumeni, although even this process took longer than initially expected. Concerning the community-based project approach, the Swazi side represents an interesting example. The LC constitution states the objective of promoting a cooperative approach to community conservation including the employment creation and conservation-based community development (LC, 1999, pp. 2, 7).

When the project idea was presented to **Mhlumeni** community, the people were hostile towards the project. Based on land disputes in the past, they feared domination from Mlawula NR as a stakeholder of the implementer LC, and that they would be deprived of their land. The process to dispel these doubts and get consent for the project needed patience and dedication to convince the community of the motivation of LC to develop a joint project with them. The project took several measures to ensure community participation and address empowerment:

- Preparatory steps, e.g.: Securing the support of the relevant authority, the Langa chief; study tours of community members to Shewula (see Box 1) and Madjedjane (Maputo Special Reserve) to get an idea of good and bad practice community-based tourism projects; identification of the future lodge site together with community representatives; and livelihood activities with community groups by COSPE.
- Setting up the CBO Mhlumeni Trust as institutional and independent structure within the community to promote tourism development and to supervise the eco-business activities. It consists of elected members and traditional representatives which is important for its acceptance in the community. The CBO is supported with trainings and technical assistance. This process continues and the CBO is currently awaiting its official registration.²³

²³ The constitution of the Mhlumeni Trust is drafted but needs confirmation from the Langa chieftancy before the CBO may be registered.

Box 1: Good practice: "Shewula Mountain Camp"

Having started in 1997 and about 15km in direct distance from Mhlumeni, the **Shewula Mountain Camp** demonstrates impressively, how communities can benefit from their natural resources and culture through tourism. The community succeeded in establishing a rustic yet atmospheric and authentic community lodge and won the **UNDP Equator Price in 2014** for outstanding local achievement in advancing sustainable development solutions for people and nature. Although the planned nature reserve is still in the process of proclamation, **Shewula can be seen as a good practice example:**

- Tourism **provides** a total **income** of 700 EUR) per month for seven employees from the community, and the camp **buys products for consumption from local farmers.**
- Being a reliable partner for various donors, the Board of Trustees, which had been founded for implementing the camp in the first place, became the hub of a dynamic leading to an abundance of jointly implemented projects. These improved the situation for people living with **HIV/AIDS** and of **child-headed households**, the **educational situation** for early school leavers, and the economic situation of **women**. Equally, **nature conservation** has improved, e.g. through conservation agriculture.
- In the first years, the project was **run solely on a voluntary basis**. However, the number of tourists has grown constantly since 2000, so that the camp was able to pay salaries to the staff from 2005 onwards. The board continues to work voluntarily and also without the technical assistance of the NGO COSPE, which left in 2006.
- At its inception, the project was **highly relevant**: the community was poor, the ecosystem under pressure and the neighbour Mbuluzi Game Reserve had an interest in improving the situation of the community to reduce poaching incidents.
- The project followed a **broad approach covering many aspects**, ensuring widespread support and benefits not only for a few, but the larger community.
- The community set up a **clear steering structure**, which they continue to uphold.
- **Community participation**: The idea was introduced by the chief and endorsed by the inner council, which ensured credibility and authority. This was a key for convincing the community and ensured **high ownership** from the onset.
- Shewula received a **lot of support from outside**. Mbuluzi Game Reserve applied for funds from DFID on behalf of the community, stimulating the founding of the board. COSPE provided technical assistance in the first years. Today, they are part of Lubombo Conservancy, which has become their major source of funding.

Shewula is a good example to other communities but also to donors, what CBNRM can achieve. Yet, it also demonstrates what is needed most: enthusiasm, ownership and targeted external support. And above all: **patience and time!**

- Participatory mapping exercises to strengthen the involvement and commitment of the broader community and to foster awareness for conservation and preparing future community decisions over land uses.

Another success factor proved to be the continuous community work and contact through LC. The LC's community and eco-tourism expert is a person from the region, speaking the local languages and having personal experiences with the popular community project in Shewula (see Box 1), what increased the credibility of the implementer. This was crucial for building a good relationship to community members and representatives and enjoying the confidence of the people.

According to the typology of political participation (after Pretty (1995) in Cornwall (2008, p. 270–272)), participation of the project can be classified as “functional”, with an increasing tendency towards “interactive”. The formation of groups, the training and the decisions are induced and conducted by external facilitators. The overall idea of a trail and lodge project was predetermined and the project planning was done by externals without involving the community. However, they are incorporated in the participatory process of identifying natural resources and ecosystem values on their land, what empowers them for future independent decisions. The community is being accompanied, informed, trained and organised with the objective to take over the project. Today, decisions are taken by the community (representatives) but based on advice by the implementer. LC foresees a phase of about five years of accompanying Mhlumeni before they will be able to run the project independently.

Concerning economic participation we can state little for now as the tourism product is still only a vision. The community expects to be the owner of the project and to benefit from it directly as a whole community. Major decisions such as the use of revenues shall be taken collectively within community meetings. The Mhlumeni Trust will manage the lodge, deciding over employment for instance, and promote associated activities. Yet, capacity building in management skills and hospitality to run the lodge still needs to be done. The associated activities shall spread the opportunity of economic participation to the wider community.

On the other side in Goba, community participation has not been achieved. The approach of CESVI towards Goba was imprudently and preparatory steps were not successful for several reasons:

- Without secure knowledge, the local political dynamics were ignored when approaching the community. The CBO Ntava Yedzu was addressed directly, bypassing the local administration and council. The community representatives were displeased for not being fully involved and informed and the imple-

menters did not notice for a long time that Ntava Yedzu did not represent the community anymore.

- Although the existing CBO was mentioned in the proposal as one of the implementing parties, Ntava Yedzu apparently has not been involved in planning. They did not agree completely with the project's approach.
- Information was not given to the whole community. CESVI could not explain the project procedure to Ntava Yedzu and the community representatives in a comprehensible way. They did not understand the purpose of the trainings and mapping exercises, but just expected investment into a touristic infrastructure.
- Based on the experiences from FAO intervention times, Ntava Yedzu and the representatives of Goba expect quick wins from projects. Yet after the initial introduction, no activities took place for several months except for some visits and the selection of the lodge site. The people waited with raised expectations.

CESVI employed a field officer from May until July 2014. However, he only stayed temporarily in Goba and did not provide them with deep insights nor was he able to establish a relationship with the community. The project only foresaw a seven months period, not as in Mhlumeni a long term community participation and development process.

The attempted project and the way of approaching the community might have fostered internal tensions within the community of Goba and might have complicated future cooperation with external actors. Against this background CESVI continues, outside the pilot project, to work with representatives from Ntava Yedzu and the community council, trying to bring these two parties together and building up a certain relationship.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Several factors influenced the varying success of the project in LCG. Wrong assumptions of the implementers concerning Goba community and the lack of preparation of the community to take part in the participatory process made the project bound to fail. The relative success of the approach in Mhlumeni is due to the fact that it is embedded in the larger Eco Lubombo Program. Several preparatory steps with the community had been taken prior to the actual GIZ funded measures and the timeframe is extended to two years.

The experience of this project shows that community-based approaches have to adapt to every single case. Community-based means a flexible method includ-

ing an incremental process adapted to the community's stage and progress. It includes building up trust and relationship as well as training and empowering the community for taking their own decisions. It is very unlikely for an inexperienced community to successfully go through the whole participatory process and produce tangible results within this short time scale provided by the GIZ pilot project frame. For short-term projects, community and implementer should already have cooperated before and know each other well. However, a comprehensive and sustainable community-based approach from scratch needs a much longer time frame. Many of the recommendations are consistent with research and prior experiences with community-based approaches.

5.1 Recommendations to Lubombo Conservancy, concerning Mhlumeni

Apart from some delays, the process in Mhlumeni is going into the right direction. The participatory approach is showing first results of increasing awareness for conservation. The community is motivated for the eco-tourism project. This dynamic should be maintained by continuing the community-based approach and start further activities, as the camp-site construction and hospitality trainings as soon as possible, yet in coordination with the other processes of marketing, trail development, associated livelihood activities and the drawing of the eco-business plan.

The Mhlumeni Trust is a key institution for the future process. To fill their assigned role, it is important to further strengthen their capacities and sense of responsibility. The planned trainings, especially in management skills, are crucial for the empowerment of the CBO. Also an increase of participation in decision-making could promote ownership of the Trust and the wider community. For the whole community a formal assurance of the tenure rights over their territory including the details concerning the border to Mlawula NR would be helpful to give them security. This security over land tenure rights is supportive for a community to develop a sense of responsibility and start a planning process as they can be sure to not be deprived of the land they invest time and resources in, e.g. through building up a lodge.

Awareness on biodiversity and conservation has risen through the project. Still the wide-spread tradition of holding cattle as a symbol of status poses the main obstacle for translating awareness into a behavioural shift of reducing cattle. We believe that, in order to reduce cattle in Mhlumeni, it is necessary to develop a

strategy to replace this asset including its cultural signification. Research on similar cases may yield inspiration how to achieve this.

5.2 Recommendations Concerning Goba

Before further intervening in Goba, the involved implementing organisations LC, COSPE and CESVI have to clarify their roles. Transparency and clarity for all involved stakeholders concerning cooperation structures as well as future activities in Goba is necessary. The parties should coordinate any future intervention in Goba to prevent jeopardising the attainment of the project objectives and the common goal of supporting Goba in developing community-based NRM. As well, the role, rights and plans of the investors on the territory managed by Ntava Yedzu and especially the person preparing for touristic infrastructure have to be investigated further.

Lack of a proper prior assessment of the situation in Goba as well as shortcomings in the cooperation between the implementers were central for the failure of the project on this side. Not all implementing partners were sufficiently involved in the planning and proposal development, for example the CBO Ntava Yedzu. In case the project decides to continue working with this community, several recommendations should be taken into consideration, based on the recent experiences and our findings:

- Lubombo Conservancy should not take over the lead of the project implementation on the Goba side on its own, as they do not have the institutional standing and expertise in Mozambique.
- Identify a new partner for Goba/Mozambique, with the following criteria:
 - Having local expertise/experience, including language skills, knowledge on administrative structures in Mozambique, experience with community-based work in Mozambique
 - Ability to negotiate on multiple levels, including government authorities
 - Ability and willingness to engage in a longer-term commitment/project with the community
- Both implementing partners have to invest time and resources into coordination and cooperation and into aligning their principles and objectives concerning the work with the community.
- A proper assessment is necessary to understand the situation. In this context, information has to be collected to answer the questions of what land is actually

leased to whom and to which conditions, how is it possible to convince the community of its relevance and participation in the project and in Ntava Yedzu and how is the conservation status of the “reserve” area. As well the institutional and power structures and the legal aspects as how does the cooperation with the Provincial Department for Agriculture (DPA) work and what are the concrete rights and requirements of Ntava Yedzu concerning land leases remain to be investigated further.

- When approaching Goba, all relevant parties should be incorporated, including traditional and government representatives and the CBO Ntava Yedzu.
- To have better insights, to gain trust, and to support the community process, a person on the ground in Goba will be necessary in the longer run.
- Based on the assessment, a new strategy/approach for Goba should be developed, defining with whom to work and how. Yet, keeping in mind:
 - Structures remaining from FAO intervention, such as key actors, formalised rules, and rights and duties should be built on. It is necessary to acknowledge the role of Ntava Yedzu, yet, a process of re-organisation and capacity building will be necessary to re-vitalise the organisation and to regain its representative character.
 - A dialogue with all relevant stakeholders should be started to promote transparency. The broader community should be included soon.
 - Concrete project activities, e.g. tourism development, should only be started if all stakeholders agree.
 - Good practice examples of CBNRM and tourism in Mozambique should be identified. Field visits to these examples could inspire and motivate the members of Goba community.
 - Direct exchange between Mhlumeni and Goba should be promoted to foster cooperation and mutual inspiration. Knowing better the partner could lead to a strengthened sense of ownership for the joint tourism project in the future.
 - A project focussing solely on tourism infrastructure is not viable for Goba. Any project in Goba should be embedded in a long-term, holistic approach, similar to the one in Mhlumeni.
 - Under the premise of “do no harm!” within development cooperation, no organisation should engage in Goba without prior assessment of the situation and risks and proper preparations with the community. Interventions

should be based on a long-term commitment and strategy; no quick wins should be promised, but the community has to be prepared for a longer intervention.

We believe that it is viable to undertake these preparatory steps including the assessment of the situation and options in Goba as well as the identification of a new partner for Mozambique and the subsequent strategy development within the first project phase until May 2015. Yet, the implementation of the new strategy and the project can only be envisaged within a new project phase and a longer-term approach.

5.3 Recommendations to GIZ/SADC

There is no conservation area within the Mozambican part of the Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA, and therefore, no protected area management structures on the local level can be found. To promote TFCA development in this case, any type of protected area or resource management has to be created, first. For that reason, a multi-level approach is necessary including not only the local level, but also the responsible ministries and governmental authorities in Mozambique, as ANAC, MITUR, MINAG and DPA. GIZ/SADC should engage in political dialogue to secure support for LCG by the Mozambican government. This is the basis for any TFCA implementation including joint management structures.

Both, LC and CESVI, receive co-funding from CEPF for their project activities. GIZ should proactively engage in coordination of donors to improve synergy opportunities.

Bad experiences with unfulfilled expectations through poorly implemented projects in the past, as with the FAO intervention, should not be repeated. Therefore a long-term process for Goba has to be supported without pushing for tangible outputs in the short-term. An installation of a permanent field officer in Goba, taking into account the recommendations formulated above, could be very helpful for the process. GIZ might support the financing of this person.