

**BMM WHS NOMINATION DOSSIER
APPENDIX T:
LESSONS LEARNT FROM VISITS TO EXISTING SOUTH
AFRICAN WORLD HERITAGE SITES**

BARBERTON – MAKHONJWA MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE SITE PROJECT

**Lessons Learned from Visits to Existing
South African World Heritage Sites**

by

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BARBERTON-MAKHONJWA MOUNTAINLAND WORLD HERITAGE SITE PROJECT (BMML WHS PROJECT)

COMPARATIVE SITE STUDY VISIT REPORT

iSimangaliso World Heritage Site Study Tour

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1. Introduction

This document summarises the discussions held during a second study visit of the BMML WHS planning team, this time to the iSimangaliso Wetland World Heritage Site in KZN. After several postponements the visit took place between 9-13 November 2009 with three and a half days spent on site.

The intention for the visit was to have maximum discussion time with the most appropriate and experienced staff, including if possible other stakeholders, not just state parties. An arrangement was made for Roger Porter from Pietermaritzburg to join the visit for his involvement in the planning process of both iSimangaliso and Drakensberg/Ukahlamba WHS but he was committed to the simultaneous SAWHCC meeting in Mapungubwe, and unavailable. Meetings with a variety of other stakeholders proved difficult to arrange. Physical touring of the site was stated as a low priority, although considerable time was spent in this activity due to the limited availability of key staff.

The generally intended outcomes included:

- reducing the learning curve for PSC members, especially those who had not benefitted from the previous site visits, such as the co-chairs;
- gathering specifically identified technical and procedural information not obtained by the planning consultants on the previous visits, to improve the authority and credibility of their deliverables.

Those attending all or part of the trip included¹:

1. Tony Ferrar---CCC
2. Dr Dion Brandt---CCC
3. Anthony Emery---Emross Consulting
4. Dr Aaron Gubudla Malindzisa---CCC
5. Marlies Liebenberg---CCC
6. Nkosazana Machete---SAHRA---PSC
7. Anna Gininda---Councilor ALM
8. Wanda Mkhwanazi---ALM---PSC
9. Sam Jele---ULM
10. John Allen---Landowner Rep---PSC
11. Nico Oosthuizen---BCT---PSC
12. Sanjay Singh---DCSR---PSC
13. Louis Looock---MTPA---PSC
14. Alison Bornman---Barberton Museum---PSC

2. Objectives of Comparative Site Study Visit

Comparative study visits to SA WHS projects were motivated within the BMML WHS Inception Report, as described in the previous Comparative Site Study Visit Report (Version 4.2, August 2009). The iSimangaliso Wetland WHS visit resulted from recommendations made after the previous study visits, to add value and context to their original objective, which was:

“To learn from the experience of planners, managers, landowners and other stakeholders at the two WHS, in order to make the BMML WHS Project more efficient in its planning and more effective in its outcome.”

Specific Focus Areas for the iSimangaliso Visit:

Aspects of WHS planning and operations that were not part of the Vredefort and CoH visit experience were identified in the summary report delivered after that study tour. Specific issues were identified for close attention at this KZN site, SA’s first and probably most successful WHS. These specific focus areas or questions included:

- **Matters of Governance and Management such as:** existing or new agency? - provincial or national level agency? - timing of establishment, now or after proclamation? - legislative and regulatory matters; - legal contractual arrangements with business and land owners; - relationship with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife for resource management functions, etc.
- **Matters to do with PDI community participation and empowerment such as:** development of tourism businesses and SMMEs; - mechanisms to deal with conflicts of interest between stakeholders; - comparative economic outcomes after 10 years, etc.

3. iSimangaliso World Heritage Site Study Tour Executive Summary

- a) The iSimangaliso Wetland WHS project (IWWHS) originated within the Lubombo Spatial Development Initiative (SDI). This is a tri-national development project intended to benefit Swaziland and Mozambique as well as South Africa, via economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation etc. The focus on northern KZN was chosen as it is a classic example of “poverty among plenty”.
- b) Key staff of the Lubombo SDI (AZ & BJ) moved from the parent structure to the WHS Management Agency when it was created in 2000. This continuity and their local expertise in developmental project management were key factors in attracting the right sort of political support, leadership, investment initiatives, and even key staff. Clean and very direct lines of communication and accountability were also a consequence of this history. Their most valuable operational asset is 9 years of unqualified audits; a huge and successful effort to maintain institutional efficiency, transparency and honesty.
- c) Therefore, the IWWHS needs to be seen as a developmental project not a tourism and/or conservation project. In essence the IWWHS is actually only the branded recognition given to a particular set of reserves which all form an integral part of and motivates/supports a larger regional developmental initiative. The BMML WHS project is identical in this respect. The iSimangaliso MA had the capacity to spend (and manage) large annual budgets (from the Extended Public Works Programme) efficiently and effectively, thereby generating high levels of employment (& capacity building) among the poor. This has been great for grass-roots credibility and political and institutional support.

- d) They have been very successful at attracting outside investment from state and developmental agencies and NGO's (as opposed to private sector investment). Two key feature projects were the huge GEF/Gates Foundation funded malaria control project and construction by BEE entrepreneurs of the 200 km Hluhluwe/Mbazwane/Kwangwanase tar road. Both of these initiatives were successful and created very solid credibility throughout the region and at all levels. This was the solid foundation from which less politically popular conservation and tourism development initiatives could be launched. ((It must be noted that St Lucia (the present WHS) and its successful international anti-dune-mining campaign of the 1990s, together with its 50 year history of developed state-run wildlife tourism, are important parts of the same foundation. The area had a prominent public profile, based on a mature local tourism market and a "half-million signature green" support base.))
- e) Three pre-conditions were associated with every development project initiated, viz:
- It contributes to biodiversity and ecosystem conservation.
 - It is integrated with Local Government planning and development procedures (IDP, LED etc).
 - It adds value and/or helps to consolidate the WHS.
- f) Implementation always remained flexible (opportunistic) and strategic in identifying priorities and adapting to the needs of development partners. Maintaining a track record of DELIVERY was always of highest importance.
- g) The site and its management have been tailored to comply with the World Heritage Convention Act and thereafter to integrate wherever possible with other legislation such as NEM Protected Areas Act and provincial legislation as well. There was a strong and deliberate effort to limit the area proclaimed as a WHS in order to reduce complexity.
- h) The Management Authority is an independent national body answerable via a Board, directly to Minister of Environment Affairs. It is small (30 staff) and facilitates and coordinates other agencies to work within its mandated area of operations. It is a developmental agency aimed at sustainable use of natural resources.
- i) The importance of high level political and institutional support was blatantly obvious in the success of IWWHS. Public participation is vital but so much more effective if supported by popular and powerful politicians. Stakeholder forums were not useful sources of coordination and support.
- j) Ongoing planning for specific developments is done in-house, they do not use consultants, the MA has its own planning and GIS capacity.
- k) Their skills development and empowerment programmes are all funded by donor funding. The coordinator acts as project developer, motivator and investment advisor. Once investment is committed she acts as coordinator and liaison person. The focus is on developing physical skills, productivity and business entrepreneurship.
- l) A specific strategy was developed to always do community participation under direction/leadership of own staff in an attempt to ensure accountability and due process. Experience showed that when outside agencies did community participation it could not be relied upon to talk to the right people and get the right message across. Problems from this level always "backfired" to the MA and hence the MA decision to do all participation otherwise they do not support a project (and because of its authority it can therefore actually not proceed.)

- m) Skilled judgment of artistic and production quality has been an important factor, both in selecting candidates for training and products for marketing. Matching markets to products and maintaining production standards and reliability has also been a key focus.
- n) Focus areas for training are tourism, arts and crafts, SMME development, entrepreneurship and guiding. Also performing arts that double as ambassadors for the WHS.
- o) Although we had little opportunity to access diverse views on the success of IWWHS, those we did access were very complimentary.
- p) The level of private sector investment that the project has been able to mobilize has not measured up to initial expectations. Reasons seem complicated and although delays are understandable in some cases, this remains a major challenge yet to be delivered upon. Some criticisms in this regard and to the approach taken to private investment were known from the early SDI days. The reasons for this failure may need to be investigated/obtained from elsewhere and in particular private investors who had investigated but not taken up IWWHS opportunities. Packaging of the opportunities and how they relate to market needs will have to be focused on.
- q) The land ownership model on IWWHS is very different from BMML and this needs to be taken into account.

GENERAL NOTE

Have all the questions and reasons for visiting IWWHS been answered?

SUMMARY OF ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING COMPARATIVE WHS STUDY VISITS TO VREDEFORT DOME, CRADLE OF HUMANKIND AND ISIMANGALISO WETLAND WHS.

This summary condenses the *Lessons Learned and Recommendations* of members of the BMML WHS Study Visit team. These were compiled after reflection on our study visits to three South African World Heritage Sites (Vredefort Dome, Cradle of Humankind and iSimangaliso Wetland). The team comprised members of the BMML WHS Project Steering Committee and the Planning Consultants.

No.	Summary of Issue	Observations	Questions for Discussion with BMML WHS PSC	Recommendations for BMML WHS Project
1.	Need for top level Political and Institutional support, “Project Champions”	This was strongly evident at iSimangaliso where it was very well supported politically (MPs & MECs) and institutionally (SDI). Top level support comes with huge benefits but can manifest itself as ‘parachute planning’ with attendant risks of ill-informed decisions (CoH). Benefits extend into all project components, in particular communications and participation and in increased leverage power within SA agencies and investors (IWP). Its absence leads to confusion, stagnation and non- delivery (VD). The ‘SteerCom’ problems at VD and CoH, including lack of land-owner participation, are evidence of higher level failures.	If the IWP example is instructive, what can be done to meet this apparent need? – both institutionally and politically.	
2	The project needs re-formatting into a “Developmental Initiative”	Emphasis should be on broad developmental criteria and direct community benefits (jobs) as opposed to purely conservation and tourism criteria with largely indirect PDI benefits. This emphasis has greater potential to attract the right support, political and institutional, and the operational skills needed, e.g high level PMU. IWP is a good example of this emphasis with its re-branding playing an important role in attracting developmental funding; CoH and VD had no PDI community involvement and hence did not have the need for this perspective. Issues around community benefits remain problematic for these two sites. Focusing support on a	PSC has spoken for some time about the need for a higher level PMU involvement but it has not materialized due to the political role players changing. What potential exists to renew this intention? It seems still to be a significant constraint.	

No.	Summary of Issue	Observations	Questions for Discussion with BMML WHS PSC	Recommendations for BMML WHS Project
2 cont		developmental agenda should also help in establishing the right MA structure with the required diverse skills needed to achieve deliverables.		
3	Importance, style and control of communication activities during implementation	A strategy to confine all communication & participation activities with local communities under direction of own staff was strictly enforced. Outsiders conducting community participation could not be relied upon to talk to the right people, convey the right message and get right results. Problems from before implementing this rule regularly “backfired” on the MA. Rule is now conditional on all projects, without agreement there is no contract.	Effective communication is our Achilles heel. Failures include access and credibility. What can be done to improve in these areas?	
4	Need for variety of investment opportunities to balance short-term job creation with sustainable business.	Private sector (business) investment has not measured up to expectations (IWP). Reasons are complicated and delays to be expected but it remains a major challenge. Some weaknesses seem to derive from the early SDI days and deserve to be analysed from an outsider perspective, including that of investors who ‘proposed but failed’. Need for a focus on packaging the opportunities and how they relate to market needs.	How to balance developmental job creation (State & Aid agency funded) with sustainable job creation that comes from private sector investment in business ventures?	
5	Options for Governance and Management Agency structures	Three options identified from the comparative site visits: a) Independent Management Authority (eg.IWP) b) Provincial Park Management Agency (MTPA); c) District Management Agency (Local Government.); The benefits of a). were very apparent at IWP. The situation in the BMML is not as clear cut as in northern KZN. The early creation of the right structure to drive both pre- and post-nomination processes should be investigated. The KZN example of the WHS MA morphing directly from the SDI had	Although governance is of pre-eminent importance we suggest further information be obtained and fully discussed to properly inform our recommendations. Is there an option to create an institutional structure that could handle both the pre- and post-Gazettement tasks?	

No.	Summary of Issue	Observations	Questions for Discussion with BMML WHS PSC	Recommendations for BMML WHS Project
5 cont		huge benefits. The quality of staff and decision making at IWP is remarkable and much of their success is due to the expertise in their MA and its connectedness to top decision makers.		
6	Issues to do with the Integrated Management Plan and how the WHS can be made operational.	IMPs were not developed as part of the Nomination Dossiers of VD & CoH. At IWP it was a slim and largely strategic document allowing considerable flexibility. This was useful in that it allowed a measure of “opportunistic implementation” and freedom to select high profile and ‘off site’ projects when their availability was identified. There is a direct relationship between the number of private land owners and complexity of the IMP. This suggests a need for minimal incorporation of diverse/private land ownership. A ‘cost – benefit analysis’ approach to incorporation vs exclusion is appropriate to this problem. IWP has no significant private titled land incorporated.	As the UNESCO/IUCN rules and guidelines have been significantly amended since the last <u>Natural</u> WHS from SA was proclaimed, we need to get an advisory/evaluation visit organized from IUCN to assist with particular problems, viz: - Plantations in WHS - Mining in WHS - Communal agriculture and geological site protection.	
NOTE: The following issues emerged during the discussion sessions on the study tour although they did not relate directly to particular lessons learned from any one the WHS’s visited.				
7	Integrity of Songimvelo NR in light of questionable land claims.	The land claim threat to Songimvelo NR was recently placed in the public domain by CEO of MTPA coinciding with a request for BMML WHS input (04/11/09). The un-procedural/ illegal nature of the claims was clearly articulated at the meeting. If not positively resolved, the issue will be potentially fatal to the WHS initiative as well as to the 4yr old TFCA and the large private sector investments in tourism in the Komati River valley. The planning team shares this view of its fatal potential. MTPA has initiated a plan to resolve the problem as part of a wider planning initiative in the area. This activity overlaps with BMML WHS planning and has the potential to confuse and interrupt the Nomination Dossier preparation.	Resulting from presentation on 4/11 to MTPA, they have expressed need to be more involved with the BMML project. Suspect this is in response to #1. above. What can the PSC do to contribute to resolving this issue, possibly in collaboration with MTPA or higher authority?	

No.	Summary of Issue	Observations	Questions for Discussion with BMML WHS PSC	Recommendations for BMML WHS Project		
8	SPEED is needed – there are TWENTY (20) Tentative Listed SA WHS!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BMML is recently listed and therefore near the back of the queue. • SA is only allowed to propose one natural WHS for Nomination each year. <p>Our position in the queue depends on our progress with the Nomination Dossier.</p>	<p>We need to get an idea where we are in the queue of SA WHS in preparation. What strategies are needed to improve our relative position in the queue?</p>			
<p>NOTE: There are many other issues listed in the summary reports of these study visits. Many are of relevance mainly in the implementation stage rather than the planning stage of a WHS Project. They all remain valid but have been omitted from this summary to avoid an over-stuffed list of lesser issues that contribute little to discussions relevant to BMML. All issues have been taken note of by the planning team and obvious responses will be incorporated into their deliverables. The issues listed above are of higher significance and as such deserve in-depth discussion with PSC members and possibly external stakeholders and experts.</p> <p>The study visit report from the IWP visit is still in circulation for participant’s inputs. The points above have been extracted from an early draft and integrated with the main points from the earlier report of the VD and CoH visit.</p>						
<p>ACRONYMS:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"> BMML WHS – Barberton-Makhonjwa Mountainland World Heritage Site CoH – Cradle of Humankind WHS IMP – Integrated Management Plan MA – WHS Management Authority MTPA – Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency PDI – Previously Disadvantaged Individuals </td> <td style="width: 50%;"> PMU – Project Management Unit PSC – Project Steering Committee SDI – Spatial Development Initiative TFCA – Trans Frontier Conservation Area VD – Vredefort Dome WHS </td> </tr> </table>					BMML WHS – Barberton-Makhonjwa Mountainland World Heritage Site CoH – Cradle of Humankind WHS IMP – Integrated Management Plan MA – WHS Management Authority MTPA – Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency PDI – Previously Disadvantaged Individuals	PMU – Project Management Unit PSC – Project Steering Committee SDI – Spatial Development Initiative TFCA – Trans Frontier Conservation Area VD – Vredefort Dome WHS
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