Ecotourism, rural development and local government: a combination for sustainability?

An investigation into the sustainability of ecotourism as a form of rural development, with reference to a case study at Cathedral Peak in the Natal Drakensberg Park.

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science, University of Cape Town.

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<td>CBDO</td>
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Chapter 1

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to this study

This study arises from a preliminary environmental impact assessment of a proposal by the Natal Parks Board to develop a 200 bed ecotourism facility at Cathedral Peak in the Natal Drakensberg Park. The author of this study was one of a team of five postgraduate students¹ from the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science at the University of Cape Town, hereafter referred to as the Masters Group, commissioned to undertake this assessment by the Natal Parks Board (NPB) in January 1995.

The preliminary environmental assessment included a scoping exercise to identify all Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs), as well as a socio-economic survey to identify potential positive and negative impacts of the proposed development on neighbouring communities. In addition, this social investigation served to identify opportunities for community² involvement in the project, both in the construction and post-construction phases. The complete terms of reference for this preliminary environmental assessment are contained in Attachment 1.

A period of seven weeks spent in the Cathedral Peak area was followed by the compilation of a three volume report, for submission to the NPB, who in turn are currently in the process of submitting the report both for public comment, and to a review panel. This preliminary environmental impact assessment report, hereafter referred to as the Baseline Report, provides baseline data for this study. The product of the group work undertaken from January to April 1995 by the Masters Group was a consolidated environmental impact assessment report, which contained both assessment and evaluation, thus going beyond the normal requirements of the MPhil programme. This resulted in a degree of flexibility in the choice of subject matter for the subsequent individual dissertations of the five members of the Masters Group, of which the present work is one.

Consequently, the approach taken in this study involves an exploration of the concepts central to the preliminary environmental assessment, namely development, sustainability and ecotourism. This exploration results in the generation of criteria against which the Cathedral Peak development proposal is measured. Finally, a topical form of local institutional reform, namely local government restructuring, is examined towards an understanding of mechanisms whereby local government could, or should, maximise the sustainability of such development proposals. Section 1.2.3 contains a more detailed explanation of the approach adopted in, and rationale for, this work.

¹ M Phil programme
² In this dissertation, it is accepted that the term community does not apply to a homogenous group, but rather to a combination of a number of disaggregated units. Divisions of class, race, gender, ethnicity, age, and ideology are to be found in 'communities' (Cock, 1995).
1.2 Approach to this dissertation

1.2.1 Adoption of a broad definition of the term ‘environment’

As for the preliminary environmental impact assessment which forms the basis of this study, a broad definition of the term ‘environment’ is adopted. This is in line with the principles of Integrated Environmental Management, which are discussed below. A broad definition of the term environment is necessary to ensure an holistic consideration of the implications of a development proposal, through which the goal of sustainability is approached.

There can be no broader definition of “environment” than that specified in the Environment Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989): “the aggregate of surrounding objects, conditions and influences that influence the life and habits of man or any other organism or collection of organisms”. This definition has been quite rightly criticised for being so all-embracing that it precludes the study of environmental issues as a separate branch of knowledge (Rabie, 1992). Consequently, the broad definition of environment that informs the principles of Integrated Environmental Management, which includes biophysical, social, economic, cultural, historical and political aspects (Fuggle and Rabie, 1992), is here adopted.

1.2.2 The principles of Integrated Environmental Management

Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) is a common tool used to assess the environmental impacts of developments in South Africa. Specifically designed to ensure that the “environmental consequences of development proposals are understood and adequately considered in the planning process” (Department of Environment Affairs, 1992), IEM is intended to be an iterative process, the purpose of which is to resolve or mitigate any negative impacts and to enhance any positive aspects of development proposals. The preliminary environmental assessment which forms the basis of this study followed a process which was guided by the principles underpinning Integrated Environmental Management.

\[ \text{Section 1(1) of Act 73 of 1989.} \]
Chapter 1. Introduction

These principles include:

- an open, participatory approach in the planning of proposals;
- regard for democratic individual rights and obligations;
- an attempt to ensure that social benefits outweigh social costs;
- the inclusion of all stages of the development process, \textit{i.e.} planning, implementation and decommissioning;
- proactive and positive planning; and
- accountability for decisions and for the information on which they are based.

Although not specifically structured around the process of IEM, the approach adopted in this study is guided by, and compatible with, the principles of IEM.

1.2.3 Rationale for this study

The environmental manager is required to be a trained generalist, who must conduct investigations and assess information across a broad range of issues. Proof for this assertion is evident in the broad scope of the preliminary environmental assessment which forms the basis for this study (Baseline Report). Indeed, this broad scope of environmental assessment is necessitated by the adoption of the broad definition of environment. The far-ranging nature of issues and concerns which must be encompassed in the field of environmental management means that environmental managers must work with and draw conclusions about complex concepts such as development, not necessarily with any clear understanding of their meanings. Future enactment of draft legislation, which will make statutory provision for the conduction of environmental impact assessments (EIAs) under specified conditions, indicates a probable increase in this aspect of environmental management.

Although environmental managers work in consultation with specialists in various fields, the synthesis of specialist reports into a ‘consolidated’ environmental impact report is the task of the environmental professional. Clearly, the professionalism of environmental management can only benefit from an examination of the meaning of some of the concepts central to the field. Much of the “simplistic positivist” nature of some EIAs may be traced to a lack of understanding of the central concepts which underlie them (Quinlan, 1993:106), and of the sociopolitical situation in which the environmental assessment is embedded.

This dissertation has consequently been regarded as an opportunity to examine some important concepts, namely development, sustainability and ecotourism, which underlie the Cathedral Peak case study investigated during the course of the preliminary
environmental assessment. All three of these concepts are particularly relevant in South Africa today, as will be shown in this study. The concept of development is always central to environmental management, the purpose of which is to guide, rather than impede, the development process (Preston et al., 1992). In addition, development must be sustainable - that is, capable of long-term maintenance. The notion of “sustainable development” is widely utilised and accepted, despite the fact that the principles and logic of this concept are problematic, and are still being explored (Adams, 1990; Quinlan, 1993). This concept is consequently examined to uncover some of the inconsistencies it includes. ‘Ecotourism’, which is also widely used and variously interpreted, is a central component of the Cathedral Peak hutted camp proposal.

The central question of this dissertation concerns the role of ecotourism as an agency to ensure development that is sustainable. This is a topic which is currently receiving much attention, as discussion in Chapter 3 shows. Furthermore, there is growing consensus around the need to concentrate on development initiatives at the local level, as the only level at which meaningful action to ensure sustainability is possible (Adams, 1990; Esteva and Prakash, 1994). This increasing shift in developmental focus towards the local level, together with the imminent local government elections in South Africa, is considered to justify a brief examination of the role which local government could play in maximising the sustainability of development proposals. As the Cathedral Peak case study on which this dissertation is based is situated in a rural area, the focus here is on rural local government.

1.2.4 Scope of this study

Based on an analysis of relevant literature, this dissertation examines the concepts of development, sustainable development and sustainability. Additional literature, as well as pertinent policies, are used to explore the concept of ecotourism, as a subset of tourism. Exploration of these concepts is the means through which a core list of criteria for sustainability of ecotourism development, particularly in rural areas such as the Cathedral Peak area, is generated. Assessment of the Cathedral Peak ecotourism development proposal, the case study on which this dissertation is based, is then conducted in terms of these criteria.

The institution of local government is then examined, by means of literature and policy survey, to examine the role of this topical subject in South Africa today. In particular, the role of local government in maximising local participation, and, ultimately, sustainability of development (as defined by the core criteria generated in this study) is explored. Finally, conclusions are drawn and recommendations made, in terms of the scope of this dissertation. A more detailed explanation of the structure of this study is provided in section 1.8.

The following two sections of this introductory chapter provide information concerning the national and regional context of the Cathedral Peak case study on which this dissertation is grounded. Section 1.5 describes aspects of the local context in which the development proposal of the Natal Parks Board is grounded. Both biophysical and
socio-economic factors are considered, as well as relevant historical details. The following section expands briefly on the NPB's development proposal, in terms of which the preliminary environmental assessment was conducted. Links between tourism, environment and development are considered in section 1.7, as well as the intersection between the subject matter of this study and the current 'people and parks' debate. Finally, the structure of this dissertation is explained, to provide an overview of the sections of this study, and the links between them.

1.3 National context of this study

South Africa is currently a society in transition. National elections in April 1994 have marked the transition to democracy, and resulted in the election of representative government for the first time in the history of this country. The constitutional transition is still to be finalised, however, through the election of local government, scheduled to occur on 1 November 1995.

Despite the extent of political transformation in this country, millions of South Africans are living below the Minimum Living Level (ANC, 1994). Moreover, the divide between rich and poor in South Africa is clearly differentiated in racial terms. This is apparent from a comparison of the Human Development Index\(^4\) (HDI), a composite, relative index based on measures of life expectancy, literacy and income, of the different race groups. The HDI can assume a maximum value of 1, indicating a high level of human development, and a minimum value of 0. Current HDI value for whites is 0.897, as opposed to a figure of 0.5 for Africans (Whiteford et al, 1995).

1.3.1 The Reconstruction and Development Programme

There is consequently an urgent need in South Africa to ensure that people are able to meet their basic needs, and to redress past injustices which have their roots in the systems of colonialism and apartheid. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which has been adopted in South Africa is an overarching framework for socio-economic development in this country. The central aims of the RDP are to attack poverty and deprivation, and to redress “massive divisions and inequalities left behind by apartheid” (ANC, 1994:5). There is thus a strong emphasis on equity and justice issues in the RDP.

\(^4\) As calculated by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), based on data from the 1993 Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development (PSLSD) of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (Saldru), as well as the 1991 census data.
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The six basic principles of the RDP are repeated in condensed form below:

- an integrated and sustainable programme;
- a people-driven process;
- peace and security for all;
- nation-building;
- link reconstruction and development; and the
- democratisation of South Africa.

As an integrated, overarching policy framework for the reconstruction and development of South Africa, the aims and objectives of the RDP constitute a thread which runs throughout this dissertation. The RDP should be seen as a broad commitment to social goals, rather than a detailed blueprint (Friedman, 1994). It therefore allows for, even necessitates, a flexible strategy which seeks to unleash the creativity of the citizenry and aims for social consensus, at least on the local scale, around development goals.

The South African National Civics Organisation (Sanco) has identified two major problems in the implementation of the RDP (Dor, 1995). The first major constraint is that the massive task of restructuring the state machinery has entailed a relative neglect of the important concept of people-driven development. Secondly, when communities are engaged by government, they are encouraged to form and participate in a whole plethora of structures, such as RDP committees, water committees, local development forums, and local economic development forums. This leads to confusion on the part of communities, as well as those who would engage communities (ibid.). In addition, the line between community empowerment and community exhaustion is sometimes very fine (Eberhard, 1992). It is clear that “These issues need to be addressed urgently, or else the concept people-driven will be reduced to no more than politically correct terminology” (Dor, 1995). Other constraints to the implementation of the RDP centre around finance and possible tension between the demands of macroeconomic stability on the one hand, and the need for large-scale redistribution on the other (Turok, 1995).

Notwithstanding these constraints, the adoption of the RDP as the guiding programme for the transition of South African society serves to promote the participation of individuals and civil society organisations in government. This interface between the state and society should be at its broadest at the local level - indeed, local government is considered to be of “critical importance” to the RDP (ANC, 1994:129). Furthermore, the emphasis on ‘people-driven development’ of the RDP means that the growing worldwide shift in developmental focus is a national policy requirement for South Africa.
1.3.2 Tourism and inequality in South Africa

The problems of inequality and deprivation which the RDP seeks to redress are clearly evident in, and characteristic of, tourism in South Africa. Thus:

“...the nature of the apartheid system, under which the majority of South Africans were excluded from economic and political activity, has meant that most South Africans have neither been potential tourists, nor have they been involved in developing their communities as potential tourist destinations.” (Dor, 1995).

Increasingly, tourism is being proposed as a major growth area of the South African economy (Fabricius, 1995; De Villiers, 1995). It is therefore critical that this growth in tourism serves to redress, and not reinforce, the evident inequitable and exclusionary nature of the tourism industry, as inherited from the apartheid era. The need is to move away from the this legacy of elitism and Eurocentrism, so that tourism can contribute both to job creation and to community empowerment (Gentle, 1995).

The ecotourism proposal on which this study is predicated is situated in the province of KwaZulu/Natal, which has a distinct identity in terms of its political context. The following section thus examines the regional context within which the NPB’s development proposal occurs.

1.4 Regional context

The population of KwaZulu/Natal is currently just over six and a half million, with Africans, most of whom live in areas that were designated KwaZulu, comprising over 70% of the region’s population (De Haas and Zulu, 1994). As elsewhere in South Africa, previous bantustan structures did not achieve any legitimacy, and traditional leaders in many rural areas functioned as “cogs in the bureaucratic bantustan machinery” (ibid., p. 435).

Together with the Eastern Cape and the Northern Province, KwaZulu/Natal is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa. In terms of the poverty gap, which is considered to be a reliable measure of poverty, KwaZulu/Natal comprises 21.5% of the total poverty gap in South Africa (Whiteford et al., 1995). In addition, severe regional disparities exist within this province. While the overall Human Development Index (HDI) for KwaZulu/Natal is calculated to be 0.602, that of the areas of the former KwaZulu homeland is far lower. For instance, the HDI of the mostly African

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5 Calculated by summing the differences between the income of each poor household and the poverty line. The poverty gap provides an indication of both the incidence and depth of poverty (Whiteford et al., 1995).
6 Refer to footnote 3.
7 Discussed in section 1.3 and footnote 3.
8 On a scale of 0 (minimum) to 1 (maximum). See footnote 7.
inhabitants of the Okhahlamba district, into which the Cathedral Peak area falls, is as low as 0.36 (Whiteford et al, 1995).

The distinct political nature of the province of KwaZulu/Natal may be detected in the fact that, since the time of the pre-Union Convention, it has been from this province that the most insistent calls for the adoption of a federal constitution have emanated (De Haas and Zulu, 1994). Such demands are continuing today, with the ruling party of the province, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), intent on achieving maximum independence from the central government.

KwaZulu/Natal is also considered to be the ‘realm’ of the Zulu kingdom, although the social and political divide between Africans living to the north and south of the Tugela River, historically the southern boundary of the Zulu kingdom, has been recognised for some time (De Haas and Zulu, 1994). The IFP is considered by many to be virtually synonymous with ‘Zulu’; however, recent work by revisionist historians has dispelled myths about social and cultural homogeneity within the Zulu kingdom itself (ibid.).

Since the mid 1980s, violence has racked the KwaZulu/Natal region, and still continues today. De Haas and Zulu (1994) point to the largely political nature of the violence, although ethnic overtones have been present from the beginning. Much of the violence has centred around attempts to enforce support for the IFP within the ranks of traditional leaders. Apart from the extreme social dislocation caused by this violence, there are obvious implications for the success of the tourism industry in this province.

The link between traditional leaders and the IFP has had, and still will have, important consequences for the development of rural local government in KwaZulu/Natal. This is discussed in section 5.8.1. The above has constituted a brief introduction to the national and regional contexts of the Cathedral Peak case study. This introductory chapter now focuses on the local context of the NPB’s development proposal.

1.5 Local context

The proposal by the Natal Parks Board, which formed the subject of the preliminary environmental impact assessment⁹, was for the establishment of a 200 bed ecotourism facility at Cathedral Peak in the Natal Drakensberg Park (Refer to Map 1). Although this Park is not yet proclaimed under any one piece of legislation, the Natal Parks Board, as controlling body for this protected area, intends this to occur in the future (Baseline Report). The area surrounding the Cathedral Peak node of this Park is part of the Okhahlamba district, which was previously part of KwaZulu. Immediately bordering on the Natal Drakensberg Park is the rural settlement of the eMhlwazini ward, which constituted the focus of the socio-economic survey carried out during the preliminary environmental impact assessment (Refer to Map 2).

⁹ Also referred to as the ‘Baseline Study’.
1.5.1 Natural environment

The area of the case study lies in the northern section of the Drakensberg Mountains, which extend the full length of the border between KwaZulu/Natal and Lesotho, which lies to the west. The Drakensberg is an area of great scenic beauty, as well as cultural significance. Below the spectacular basalt cliffs of the High Berg, the sandstone cliffs, waterfalls and indigenous forests of the Little Berg contribute to the varied nature of the landscape (Plate 1). Currently, the NPB is drawing up an application by the NPB to have the Natal Drakensberg Park declared a World Heritage Site. 10

The steep slopes and shallow soils of the Drakensberg, together with the high rainfall, 11 means that most of the area within the Natal Drakensberg Park is highly erodible and sensitive to disturbance. Several unique ecosystems and a high proportion of endemic species are to be found in the Drakensberg. In addition, the Cathedral Peak State Forest 12 is one of the richest and best known rock art areas in South Africa (Mazel, 1981). 13

1.5.2 Socio-economic environment

As is the case for the rest of the former KwaZulu, the rural settlements surrounding the Natal Drakensberg Park at Cathedral Peak are typified by extreme poverty and underdevelopment (Wilson and Ramphele, 1989). These rural settlements are divided into wards, each of which is controlled by an induna, or headman. Together the wards form a district, which falls under a chief or nkosi, Nkosi Hlongwane. It is estimated that 2 700 people live in the eMhlwazini ward, which neighbours the Park. 14 The population density is extremely high - at almost 338 people per square kilometre, this is two and a half times the average density of the former KwaZulu areas (Brijlal and Hadebe, 1994).

The socio-economic survey conducted during the Baseline Study indicated that, even by comparison with the extreme underdevelopment of all the former KwaZulu areas, poverty and deprivation are severe in eMhlwazini. For instance, investigation in the eMhlwazini ward indicates a per capita annual income of R432, while 1990 estimates for the former KwaZulu districts range between R400 and R1000 per person per year (CSS, 1991).

The residents of the eMhlwazini ward rely on subsistence agriculture, as well as on income from migrant labour and pensions. 76% of the potentially economically active
population is unemployed - this is 22% higher than the average unemployment rate in rural areas of South Africa (Brijlal and Hadebe, 1994). In addition, dependency ratios are high, educational and primary health care facilities lacking, and no services in the form of electricity supply or piped water are provided.

The above provides merely an indication of the severe poverty of the neighbours of the Natal Drakensberg Park. Chapter 3 of the second volume of the Baseline Report provides a detailed community profile for the eMhlwazini ward. Clearly, there is a critical need to address the priorities of these people, so that basic needs can be met and community empowerment approached.

### 1.5.2a A brief note on land dispossession

Land surrounding the Park is communally owned by the amaNgwane tribe, which is the predominant tribe in eMhlwazini. There is a complex history of land invasion and dispossession in the Cathedral Peak area over the past two centuries, during which time the amaNgwane have been both victim and perpetrator (Pearce, 1975). Currently, a land claim exists for, among other areas, the Cathedral Peak section of the Park. The claim is on behalf of the amaNgwane tribe, but is being driven by a local politician of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). At the time of printing of this report, the land claim was in the process of being lodged with the Land Claims Court (G. Smythe, NPB, Warden: Cathedral Peak; pers. comm.).

The social investigation in the eMhlwazini ward revealed that 64% of the sample group believed that all the land inside the Park belonged to the amaNgwane tribe. A further 7% saw the land as jointly owned between the NPB and the amaNgwane. Reasons given for tribal ownership of the Park land included the fact that ancestral land and burial sites were part of the Park, as well as the historical dispossession, by whites, of this land of the amaNgwane.

As the claim for land predates the 1913 cut-off date, this land claim is not expected to be successful (T. Marcus, KwaZulu/Natal Pilot Land Reform Project; pers. comm.). Prior to this claim, the NPB and the amaNgwane Tribal Authority had negotiated a land swap for the areas shown in Map 3. The proposal was for the exchange of high altitude tribal land (Area 1 on Map 3) of substantial conservation value for a portion of land at the entrance to the Cathedral Peak State Forest, within the Mfiffiyela Nature Reserve\(^{16}\) (Area 2 on Map 3). Currently, procedures necessary to de-proclaim this land\(^{17}\) are delaying official transfer to the amaNgwane. However, in the interim period, a lease agreement has been signed between the NPB and the amaNgwane Tribal Authority, and cattle from the eMhlwazini ward are currently being grazed in this area (G. Smythe, NPB, Warden: Cathedral Peak; pers. comm.).

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\(^{15}\) Approximately 6:1.

\(^{16}\) A component of the Cathedral Peak State Forest.

\(^{17}\) In terms of the Forest Act 122 of 1984.
Chapter 1. Introduction

The land swap is likely to alleviate, if only temporarily, both land pressure in the eMhlwazini ward, and negative perceptions of the eMhlwazini residents towards the NPB. However, although the abovementioned land claim is not likely to succeed, enduring negative perceptions of the NPB on the part of their neighbours could have negative implications for the successful management of the Natal Drakensberg Park in this area. This is explored in Chapter 4.

1.6 NPB's development proposal

The NPB has proposed to develop a 200 bed luxury hutted camp at Cathedral Peak, within the Natal Drakensberg Park. An environmental impact assessment of this proposed development, conducted by the Masters Group, forms the basis for this study. Although only in the planning stage, the hutted camp is proposed to be similar to the NPB's award-winning Hilltop Camp in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park, which targets both domestic and international visitors (Plate 2). Based on this comparison, a minimum tariff of R96 per person per night is likely.

The image of the hutted camp at Cathedral Peak is to be that of a “unique mountain environment on the threshold of a wilderness”. To this end, this ecotourism facility should be harmonious with the surrounding environment, and should maximise the opportunities offered by the natural setting. In addition, visitor facilities for the proposed development would be resource-based. Apart from accommodation units, infrastructure would include a restaurant, a reception and curio area, and conference facilities for 30 to 35 people.

Additional information concerning this development proposal is provided in Chapter 4. This brief section is included in order to provide a context for the discussion on development and sustainability. The resultant core list of criteria for sustainability are to be used to assess the above development proposal. A central question should be borne in mind: “Who exactly would benefit from the 200 bed hutted camp?”

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19 Information in this section is drawn from the draft project brief, the statement of intent and the concept layout, as well as verbal interaction with members of the Planning Division of the NPB. No formal development proposal has been formulated by the NPB.
Plate 1: The sandstone cliffs of the Little Berg, behind the upper Tryme shelf portion of the proposed development site.

Plate 2: The restaurant at Hilltop Camp in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park. The proposed Cathedral Peak hutted camp will have similar facilities.
1.7 **Links between tourism, environment and development**

The above development proposal of the NPB can be seen to lie on the intersection between environment, development and tourism. The link between environment and development is central for issues of sustainability, and is discussed in Chapter 2. The NPB's development proposal concerns development within a protected area, which is surrounded by rural communities living in extreme poverty. Tension already exists between the NPB and their neighbours. These are all ingredients of the ongoing debate around "People and Parks" issues (Wells and Brandon, 1992; GEM, 1993). However, this is not the emphasis of this study, which holds, rather, that there is a need to move away from the emphasis on 'people and parks', to seeing ecotourism as part of an integrated rural development strategy. By placing a project under the 'people and parks' label, there would appear to be excessive emphasis on the role of the conservation agency in promoting development. This is problematic, as will be discussed in Chapter 4. In addition, ecotourism must be seen as part of the whole process of moving towards sustainability in development. Thus the first central question of this study may be formulated: **Is rural development based on ecotourism truly sustainable development?** Or, phrased differently: How can the sustainability of rural ecotourism development be maximised? A second central question of this study then follows: **How can local government maximise the sustainability of such ecotourism development?**

1.8 **Structure of this dissertation**

As noted above, the body of this dissertation begins with an examination of the concept of development, which includes a brief historical view of externally imposed forms of development that have not succeeded in approaching sustainability. These inappropriate forms of development have often been associated with international aid, and multilateral development organisations such as the World Bank. As noted in section 1.2.3, a shortcoming of environmental impact assessments has often been the failure to take cognisance of the sociopolitical situation in which the environmental assessment is embedded. Thus, political and economic power relations in the field of development are explored, as well as various international environmental initiatives which have had differing success in achieving this recognition. The concept of 'sustainable development' forms part of this discussion.

Moving to the national level, **Chapter 2 continues with an overview of the possibility of 'sustainable development' in South Africa today, and implications for the Reconstruction and Development Programme of international donor aid are noted. Particularly, the marginalisation of the rural areas is described. Various strategies to ensure sustainability, which take cognisance of the political nature of both the development process, as well as the issue of access to resources, are then presented. These include the notion of ecodevelopment, as well as that of sustainable rural livelihoods. In addition, the concept of an integrated rural development strategy is briefly examined. Chapter 2 concludes with a synthesis of the components of sustainability, as revealed in the course of the chapter, into ten core criteria for**
sustainability. These criteria will be used in Chapter 4, to assess the sustainability of the NPB’s Cathedral Peak development proposal.

Prior to this assessment, Chapter 3 explores the concept of ecotourism in particular, and tourism in general, towards an understanding of the role these forms of development might play, particularly in rural areas. In correspondence with the structure of Chapter 2, the global political economy of tourism is briefly investigated. Following this, various effects and impacts of tourism, which could detract from the sustainability of tourism development, are examined. Shifting to a South African focus, several policies which promote ecotourism are discussed. Key points from these policies are then synthesised with details from the foregoing investigation on tourism characteristics, to provide a summary of the major characteristics of tourism. These characteristics are then used to ensure that the list of criteria generated at the end of Chapter 2 is suitable for the assessment of rural ecotourism development proposals.

Chapter 4 consists of an assessment, in terms of the ten criteria for sustainability, of the proposal by the Natal Parks Board to develop a 200 bed huttered camp at Cathedral Peak. To this end, the institutional structure, as well as the policies of the NPB, are first explored. Thereafter, a ten part assessment of the Cathedral Peak project is conducted. Throughout this assessment, recommendations are made to maximise the sustainability of this development proposal.

Sustainability of development, as expressed in the ten criteria generated in this study, depends to a great extent on public participation and on adopting a local-level focus. To this end, the role that soon-to-be-elected local government can play in ensuring development sustainability is explored in Chapter 5. This includes an inquiry into the provisions of the Constitution and the RDP concerning local government, as well as the present problems facing rural local government. Two models for ensuring community participation in local government are described, after which specific regional and local details of relevance for the Cathedral Peak case study are noted.

The final chapter of this dissertation, Chapter 6, draws together conclusions made throughout the course of this study, and overall concluding remarks are made. Recommendations which have arisen during this study are similarly extracted from the various sections of this document, to ensure that the proposals they contain are accessible, and thus may constitute a contribution to the iterative process which aims for the attainment of sustainability.

This concludes the introduction to this study. The following chapter begins with an exploration of the central concept of development.
Chapter 2

Development, sustainability, and rural areas

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2. Development, sustainability and rural areas

"Development is not about the delivery of goods to a passive citizenry. It is about active involvement and growing empowerment."
Reconstruction and Development Programme
(ANC, 1994:5)

"The conventional economic development, which is still dominant, is by its nature destructive to other cultures and favours homogenisation of people so that they can fit into standard development patterns."
(Dasmann, 1984:442)

2.1 Introduction

As part of their motivation for proposing the development of a 200 bed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak in the Natal Drakensberg Park, the Natal Parks Board has cited the existence of substantial opportunities both for building the economy of the region and for developing its human resources (Baseline Report). Clearly, then, the NPB sees a role for itself as an agency of development. To examine this role critically, as well as to approach the central question of this dissertation - the sustainability of ecotourism as a form of rural development - an understanding of the concepts of development and ecotourism are required. These concepts cannot meaningfully be applied without reference to the political and economic reality in which they are grounded.

This chapter begins with an examination of the all-embracing concept of development. The initial focus is at a general and global scale, with an overview of the form of development that has been promoted, largely by multilateral aid agencies, since the Second World War. The often disastrous social and ecological consequences of this form of development have fuelled a search for alternative forms of development, of which the enigmatic concept of 'sustainable development' is one. Criticisms of this concept have centred around its failure to address economic and political realities. Consequently, the discussion of this concept occurs together with a discussion of the links between politics, environment and development.

Various international initiatives founded on 'sustainable development' are described briefly, and some comments are made on the inherent contradiction between economic growth and sustainability. Further remarks on the concept of 'sustainable development' in general are made, before a shift in focus to the South African level. This shift allows for a brief discussion of the possibility of 'sustainable development' in South Africa. Implications for South Africa in terms of foreign aid provide a link with the earlier section of this chapter dealing with international aid agencies.

Maintaining the South African focus, the need for rural development in this country is described, towards increased understanding of the Cathedral Peak ecotourism facility
development proposal. This proposal would have implications for the communities in the surrounding rural settlements. In the light of the failure of ‘sustainable development’ to (yet) adequately provide for the economic and political transformation that its implementation would necessitate, two alternative strategies for sustainability are discussed - namely, ecodevelopment and the concept of sustainable rural livelihoods.

In concluding this chapter, the necessary components of truly sustainable development are discussed, in the light of the foregoing sections. Finally, a list of ten core criteria to maximise the sustainability of development is generated, ultimately for use in the assessment of the sustainability of the NPB’s development proposal.

One of the central concepts of environmental management, namely development, is discussed in the following section, as starting point of the search for the constituents of truly sustainable development.

2.2 Development

Development implies a change that leads to some sort of improvement. A narrow economic definition of development is “the process whereby the real capita income of a country increases over a long period of time” (McCarthy, 1990). The point has been made by many authors that the aim of development should be not to develop things, but to develop people (Dasmann, 1984; Schumacher, 1973; De Wet, 1990). It is instructive to step briefly outside the bounds of economics and even sociology, and to consider a historical definition of the word. In 1836, ‘development’ was taken quite simply to mean “growth from within” (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 1964).

2.2.1 Development by multilateral aid agencies

The above historical definition of development is in stark contrast to the dominant conception by the institutions (such as the World Bank, the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation and USAID) that have spearheaded development since World War II. Development under the auspices of these institutions has focused on quantitative changes, such as growth of GNP, achieved through structural adjustment programmes (Goldsmith and Hildyard, 1992; Stoneman, 1994).

Such structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and its sister organisation, the International Monetary Fund1 (IMF), have aimed at reducing expenditures on food, health, education and social services which benefit the poor (Roberts, 1995). Through the dominance of these organisations in the past five decades, “development” of the poorer nations has become inextricably linked with aid, and thus with exogenous decision-making. Conditionalities imposed by these multilateral development organisations for development aid, such as the reduction in social spending and an

1 The IMF supplies bridging finance to countries with short-term balance of payments difficulties, while the World Bank provides capital for long-term investments (Goldsmith and Hildyard, 1992).
emphasis on generating foreign exchange in order to meet debt repayments, have negatively affected the quality of millions of lives (Bello and Cunningham, 1994). Another result has been the large-scale environmental destruction as developing countries exploit their natural resources to generate foreign exchange (Goldsmith and Hildyard, 1992).

Apart from structural adjustment programmes, Rich (1994) states that the World Bank has increased its influence over the political economies of developing countries by other measures which include:

- promoting the creation of autonomous agencies within governments which would be continual World Bank borrowers; and
- mobilising other aid agencies into country consortia, often chaired by the World Bank, whose purpose is to coordinate and programme all foreign assistance to a given country.

The political nature of the activities of the World Bank is underlined by the following quote:

"Thus, by the 1970s, the Bank had established unique and unprecedented mechanisms for continual intervention in the internal affairs of borrowing countries. It would be hard to find a more succinct definition of politics."

(Rich, 1994)

Lest this sound like unsubstantiated polemic, Rich points out that many of the most damning indictments of the Bank's activities emanate from its own Operations Evaluation Department - a situation which expresses the impotence of that department (Rich, 1994). Significantly, the Environment Department of the Bank suffers from similar marginalisation (ibid.).

Development aid projects have in the past often involved completely inappropriate, capital intensive forms of development for Third world countries, requiring extensive technology transfer from the more developed countries (Dasmann, 1984). This imposition of Western ideas of development has been seen as a form of neocolonialism (Schumacher, 1973; Goldsmith and Hildyard, 1992), which has led to the increasing dependence and indebtedness of the "developing" countries. There is much evidence for this in the literature, and the effect of structural adjustment in the 1980s and early 1990s is starting to be referred to by some analysts as "recolonisation" (Stoneman, 1994:30). Even within organisations such as the World Bank, there is extreme uncertainty as to the effectiveness of structural adjustment programmes (ibid.).

Apart from providing a recent historical background to development, the issues dealt with in this section are of current concern for South Africa, which, some have suggested, is on the brink of an aid deluge (Walmsley, 1994). The necessity for increased social expenditure by the state to meet the goals of the RDP may not be
compatible with conditionalities of foreign aid. Further discussion of this issue is to be found in section 2.4.1.

Thus development has come to mean the process of moving from a pre-industrial society to an industrialised one (Ponting, 1991), ruled by the philosophy of: “What is best for the rich must be best for the poor” (Schumacher, 1973:139). In other words, development policy has been carried out under the paradigm which assumes that Third World populations should adapt to the conditions of production and consumption imposed by capitalism (Arnould, 1989). This has resulted in, amongst other things, growing socio-economic differentials both within Third World states and between countries (Adams, 1990). This phenomenon is well established in South Africa, where extreme differences in living conditions exist both between Whites and the until recently disenfranchised Black population, and between the urban and the rural areas. The extreme underdevelopment of the rural area surrounding Cathedral Peak is testimony to this fact, and will be discussed below. It is these inequities which the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) seeks to redress.

2.2.2 Towards a new form of development

As Schumacher (1973) has pointed out, the roots of economic development lie outside the economic sphere, and thus development should be people-centred.

"Economic development is something much wider and deeper than economics..... Its roots lie .... in education, organisation, discipline and, beyond that, in political independence and a national consciousness of self-reliance."

(Schumacher, 1973:171)

The importance of self-reliance as a goal of development is echoed by the ideas of Robert Chambers, who stresses that development is about meeting basic needs and ensuring sustainable livelihoods for people (Chambers, 1988). Most importantly, true development is related to increasing autonomy of a community or country. This would lead to improved “life-chances” and circumstances, as well as a wider range of options, for people (De Wet, 1990). Thus, to ensure development, emphasis should be placed on “political independence and a national consciousness of self-reliance” (Schumacher, 1973:171). The philosophy of development adopted by the RDP, to ensure the central objective of improving the quality of life of all South Africans, accords with this emphasis on regaining control:

"The RDP reflects a commitment to grassroots, bottom-up development which is owned and driven by communities and their representative organisations."

(ANC, 1994:15)
A growing realisation of the link between environment and development, as well as the disastrous environmental impacts of many of the capital-intensive and technocratic development schemes, has fueled the drive towards an alternative form of development, which might respect the finite nature of the natural resources of the earth, and address the inequity of access to those resources. It is important to realise that it is not only development and environment that are interrelated - politics, which is largely about the control of access to resources (De Wet, 1990), is a central and ever-present component of the equation.

2.3 The enigma of sustainable development

The concept of sustainable development, one of the most widely known and divergently used signposts on the path to sustainability, is examined in this section. Rather than merely qualifying the noun, the adjective “sustainable” goes a long way towards defining the essence of development. Clearly, most of the top-down, technocratic and capital-intensive development initiatives often promoted by multilateral organisations cannot be called sustainable, in the sense of capability for long-term maintenance and preservation of the resource base. In order to be sustainable, development must mean something else. Debates around the meaning of “sustainable development” are legion. In the words of O’Riordan (1989), “The refuge of the environmentally perplexed is sustainable development...”.

2.3.1 The origins and meaning of sustainable development

In an admirably and appropriately restrained treatise on the problems of “western” economics, Schumacher (1973) pointed out that it is inherent in the methodology of economics to ignore “man’s dependence on the natural world” (1973:36). He proceeded to formulate a mode of development which is firmly grounded in the recognition of this dependence, and which has been seen as the original expression of ‘sustainable development’. Schumacher’s conception of development centres around “intermediate technology”, which is comparable to the concept of appropriate technology (Dasmann, 1984). The essential elements of this conception of development are self-reliance, local initiative and local control, which must occur within a regional approach to development.

The first mainstream formulation of sustainable development is to be found within the 1980 World Conservation Strategy, which was prepared by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with finance provided by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

4Such as the construction of large dams, massive irrigation schemes and the development of heavy industry. Note that such schemes, which have dominated the development agenda of organisations such as the World Bank, have often failed to achieve the required economic efficiency (Rich, 1994).
5This lack of sustainability is now recognised by proponents of this type of development, including the World Bank (Goldsmith and Hildyard, 1992).
2.3.2 The World Conservation Strategy

The culmination of more than 20 years of thinking by conservationists about ways to promote nature conservation on a global scale, the World Conservation Strategy (IUCN, 1980) has been criticized for being “just conservation dressed up in different clothes” (Adams, 1990:49). In addition, the term “sustainable development” is not defined anywhere in the World Conservation Strategy (WCS). Of relevance for the Cathedral Peak ecotourism development proposal is the emphasis of the WCS on the interrelatedness of natural resources and tourism. The purpose of this emphasis was to illustrate the necessity of safeguarding nature as a critically important asset, for the generation of economic benefits (Boo, 1990).

Redclift (1984) points out that the WCS fails even to attempt an investigation of the political and social changes that would be required to meet its conservation goals. Perhaps the most important implication for the Cathedral Peak ecotourism development, which is seen by the NPB as an “integrated conservation/development” project6, is the apparently seamless way in which the WCS deals with the potentially conflicting aims of conservation and development. This it achieves by ignoring, as Adams (1990) has pointed out, the essentially political nature of the development process. This central aspect of development is explored in the following section.

2.3.3 Politics, development and environment

“...all ecological projects (and arguments) are simultaneously political-economic projects (and arguments) and vice versa. Ecological arguments are never socially neutral any more than socio-political arguments are ecologically neutral. Looking more closely at the way ecology and politics interrelate, then becomes imperative if we are to get a better handle on how to approach environmental/ecological questions.”

(Harvey, 1993:22)

As politics is essentially about the control of access to resources, as well as access to power, political issues are a central component of the environment/development equation (De Wet, 1990). In other words, “All relations between environment and people are political, just as all development is ideological” (Adams, 1990:83).

Moreover, the cyclical linkage between poverty and environmental degradation creates a situation from which extrication is extremely difficult. In the words of W.M. Adams:

“This linkage between poverty and environmental degradation provides perhaps the clearest demonstration of the centrality of social, political and economic issues in questions of environment and development.”

(Adams, 1990:87)

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6 Refer to sections 3.4.2, 3.4.3, and 4.3.3.
Despite the fact that many developing countries are well-endowed with natural resources such as minerals, timber and the many products of their biodiversity, the relations of power, as expressed by the balance of financial transfer between developing and developed nations, are hugely skewed towards the industrialised world. Debt repayment and trade relations are both symptoms and causes, to a large degree, of the political subordination of the developing countries (Tietenberg, 1994), the roots of which can be traced back to the colonial past (Schumacher, 1973). In 1988, the third world countries sent US$43 billion more to the industrialised nations in interest and principal repayment than they received in new capital (Tietenberg, 1994). Global inequalities such as this are extremely difficult to redress, based as they are on complex and well-established global power relations.

Still in search of an understanding of the concept of ‘sustainable development’, the following section examines an international initiative which, in contrast to the WCS, provided a definition of that elusive concept.

2.3.4 The World Commission on Environment and Development

The most widely used definition of sustainable development is that of the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, Our Common Future:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

(World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987:43)

Both inter- and intragenerational equity are critical components of sustainable development as perceived by the Brundtland Report. Critics have pointed out that these are frequently conflicting aims (O’Riordan, 1989). However, the emphasis on equity is seen as the most significant feature of this report, which distinguishes it from the rehashed conservationism of the WCS (Adams, 1990).

The Brundtland Report thus does indeed recognise the political nature of the international development process, and it calls for radical reform of global political and economic systems. However, it fails short of suggesting a mechanism to achieve this radical reform, and thus it is that this definition of sustainable development has been embraced by both conservatives and radicals (Cole, 1994). The current dominant world economic system is most emphatically capitalism, in which, considering the finite nature of the natural resource base, equitable distribution of resources does not accord with the overriding emphasis on accumulation of profits.

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7 As Our Common Future has come to be known.
In the words of Gopi Upreti:

"The prevailing dominant social paradigm has ignored the following problems: the present level of resource consumption in the developed industrialised countries, the acute poverty and inequitable development pattern in the Third World, the massive capital flight from 'global' South to 'global' North, and the massive population growth-rates in poor Third World countries, for political or ideological reasons."

(Upreti, 1994:28)

The paradigm in which sustainable development could occur would need to be "deeply rooted in the principle of cooperation, social synergism, equity and the understanding of ecological and social sustainability of resource uses" (ibid.).

This implies nothing less than a transformation of the dominant political and economic systems of the world, with an emphasis on the reduction in currently unsustainable high levels of consumption in Western countries. As Atkinson (1991:17) indicated, such a "new society" would involve "radical decentralisation" of social and economic organisation so as to rely on local and regional self-sufficiency. No such paradigm shift, which can be seen to be comparable to Capra's (1982) "turning point", has (yet) occurred, and thus it is that, despite the almost universal adoption of 'sustainable development', there has been no meaningful 'greening' of development (Adams, 1990).

O'Riordan (1989) pointed out that a shift towards sustainable development would necessitate not just a far-reaching shift in power, but also sweeping changes in institutional alignments - a topic which the Brundtland Report (1987) failed to address. O'Riordan further suggested, in 1989, that no serious attempts at institutional reform were yet in progress (ibid.). Broad consensus holds that this situation has not been changed by the deliberations of the Rio Earth Summit (Wynberg, 1993) - see below. The necessity for institutional reform, in order to approach 'sustainable development', together with the growing realisation that it is at the local level that meaningful change is perhaps more possible, may be linked to current institutional restructuring in South Africa. In particular, the current restructuring of local government, discussed in Chapter 5, has implications for sustainability, in terms of its closeness to the people and consequent ability to provide area-specific development solutions (Heymans, 1994).

In addition to the need for institutional reform, the Brundtland Report assumes a standpoint on the compatibility of economic growth and 'sustainable development', which is now discussed.

2.3.5 Sustainable development and economic growth

"Development based on the concept of economic growth has turned out to be a blunder of planetary proportions."

Jimoh Omo-Fadaka (1993:226)
Much of the debate around sustainable development concerns whether economic growth is compatible with this concept. In *Our Common Future* (Brundtland, 1987), economic growth is seen as the only way to tackle poverty and thus to achieve environment/development goals. This form of growth should, however, be sustainable, environmentally aware and egalitarian. As Adams (1990) points out, the Brundtland Report does not elaborate on how to walk this tightrope. Massive increments of economic growth are proposed as necessary to address the current inequitable global situation\(^6\), as well as to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing world population. According to Jim Mac Neill, former director of the World Commission on Environment and Development:

> “If current forms of development were employed, a five- to tenfold increase in economic activity would be required over the next 50 years to meet the needs and aspirations of a population twice the size of today’s 5,2 billion, as well as to begin to reduce mass poverty.”

(Tietenberg, 1994:278)

On a global scale, the possibility of achieving such growth without considerable environmental damage appears slim. Proponents of the steady-state economy, such as Daly, deny that economic growth is possible without environmental degradation (Daly, 1973). The dynamic between economic growth and sustainability will be returned to when considering sustainable development in South Africa.\(^9\)

Another international initiative which embraces the concept of ‘sustainable development’, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, stressed the need for new and equitable global relationships in order to achieve ‘sustainable development’. The extent to which this aim has been operationalised is highlighted briefly below.

### 2.3.6 The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was a largely governmental gathering, attracting the largest ever assembly of world leaders and country delegations.\(^9\) The UNCED attempted to grapple with the environmental crisis facing the earth (Strauss, 1994).

One of the products of UNCED was the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (United Nations General Assembly, 1992a), a set of principles on environment and development, which sought to build upon the Stockholm Declaration of 1972 (UNGA, 1992a). These principles stress the need to create a “new and equitable global partnership”, with particular emphasis on the special needs of the **

\(^{6}\) Indicated in section 2.3.3.

\(^{9}\) Refer to section 2.4.

\(^{9}\) Concurrently, the non-governmental Global Forum, the largest ever gathering of independent sectors, took place.

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developing countries and the need to "eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption" (UNGA, 1992a).

**Agenda 21: Programme of Action for Sustainable Development** forms the core of UNCED, and is a comprehensive (115 programme areas) action plan for the implementation of the principles of the Rio Declaration. Agenda 21 seeks to integrate environmental and developmental issues, and is intended to serve as a blueprint for sustainable development into the 21st century (UNGA, 1992b). Although specifically calling for changes in the economic activity of all peoples, "there is broad consensus that Agenda 21 and UNCED have failed on virtually every account to reform economic structures, regulate transnational corporations (TNCs), tackle the debt crisis and the South's falling terms of trade, and address the environmental impacts of free trade" (Wynberg, 1993: 15). In addition, in accordance with the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland, 1987), economic growth is regarded as essential for, rather than contradictory to, the concept of sustainable development.

Agenda 21 stresses the necessity for broad public participation and decentralised decision-making in the successful implementation of Agenda 21 programmes. Thus, the need for institutional reform to achieve 'sustainable development' is highlighted. The role for local authorities in achieving sustainable development is emphasised, and to this end, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) was created to promote "Local Agenda 21" (ICLEI, 1995). The Local Agenda 21 Model Communities Programme, proposed by this Council, provides guidelines for the restructuring of local authorities, which are explored in section 5.6.2.

### 2.3.7 Towards a unitary definition of sustainable development?

"Sustainable development is a statement of ideals, still in search of a strategy for implementation."

(Lumby, 1994).

The concept of sustainable development as presented in the World Commission on Environment and Development, the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, constructed as it is within the fabric of continued capitalist growth, is a reformist approach which is contrasted with the more radical ideas of "green development" by Adams (1990).\(^{11}\)

Cole (1994) draws attention to the implicit assumptions which underlie and determine the different interpretations of sustainable development, emphasising the value-laden nature of the "sustainable development" concept.\(^{12}\) Thus it is that the sufficiently general definition of 'sustainable development', proposed by the Brundtland Report, has come to be embraced by so many organisations and people with such diverse ideologies. Indeed, the importance of the integral components of this definition, namely

\(^{11}\) "Green" thinking about development attempts to comprehend political economy, and to create action plans which transcend the "limited reformism of sustainable development thinking" (Adams, 1990: 83).

\(^{12}\) It may be more accurate to view 'sustainable development' as a range of concepts.
intra- and intergenerational equity, is seldom questioned. Rather, the controversy centres around mechanisms to ensure these broad ideals, as well as mechanisms to resolve the tension between these potentially conflicting aims. Although none of the ‘sustainable development’ initiatives discussed above are successful in providing mechanisms for the global transformation they envisage, local level initiatives such as ICLEI’s Local Agenda 21 Model Communities Programme, by providing concrete implementation strategies, may achieve the required restructuring at local scale.

The transformation envisaged would place increasing importance on self-reliance, local initiative and local control. Although these are ideas espoused by sustainable development thinking, this form of “reformist thinking” (Adams, 1990) does not address the inherently political nature of environment/development relations (as discussed above). To do so would necessitate the demand for fundamental change in political economic structures - an essentially radical approach. Thus sustainable development is essentially a contradiction in terms for a modern capitalist culture (O’Riordan, 1989).

In the words of Adams:

“Ultimately, green development has to be about political economy, about the distribution of power, and not about environmental quality.”

(Adams, 1990:10)

These ideas about ‘sustainable development’ are now related to the situation in South Africa today, as a further step towards the identification of the components of truly sustainable development. Particular emphasis is placed on the need for development in the rural areas, as this is the locus of the Cathedral Peak case study of this dissertation.

2.4 The possibility for sustainable development in South Africa

“Development that does not destabilise environmental gyroscopes cannot produce real improvements in standard of living for a growing population without massive redistribution of wealth and power.”

(O’Riordan, 1989:93)

As discussed in Chapter 1, South Africa currently is a society in transformation. The completion of the political transformation process with the local government elections on 1 November 1995 should be a key step on the path to sustainability and equity. Purely political considerations aside, however, socio-economic transformation, always far more difficult to achieve, remains a distant goal. The main objective of the Reconstruction and Development Programme is to attain this type of transformation.

13 Refer to section 5.6.2.

14 As espoused by the concepts of ecodevelopment and sustainable rural livelihoods - refer to sections 2.5.4 and 2.5.5.
"The RDP is committed to a programme of sustainable development which addresses the needs of our people without compromising the interests of future generations."

(ANC, 1994:15)

The above quote clearly echoes the concept of sustainable development as espoused by the Brundtland Report. Unfortunately, the RDP suffers from the same limitation as the World Conservation Strategy, in that “sustainable development” is not defined in either the Base Document (1994) or the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (1994). In fact, in the latter document, the environment receives hardly a mention - certainly, there is no development of the intentions expressed in the RDP Base Document (ANC, 1994):

“Environmental considerations must be built into every decision.”

and

“Development strategies must incorporate environmental consequences in the course of planning.”

(ANC, 1994:39)

In the light of the socio-political constraints of the 40 years of apartheid, sustainable development in South Africa is predominantly an issue of justice (Abugre, 1994). Bonile Jack, in a speech entitled “What does it mean to be Green in South Africa?” has highlighted the fact that justice to bring about sustainability necessitates “changing the system which exploits, redirecting resources and incentives and redistributing wealth and opportunities and helping the hitherto oppressed to build self-esteem and confidence” (from a speech made in August, 1992, quoted in Abugre, 1994:127). Inasmuch as apartheid and particularly the system of migrant labour has disrupted social functioning and community life, ‘sustainable development’ in South Africa also strongly requires a focus on rebuilding viable, self-reliant communities - which would reinforce the need for a local level developmental focus.

It is recognised that growth on its own will not be sufficient to meet the basic needs of the majority of South Africans, but must be accompanied by redistribution. Thus:

“The interdependence between growth, reconstruction and development is a crucial concept in the White Paper. The Government is committed to redistributing resources to address inherited inequalities.....Equally, the Government is committed to economic growth.”


As embodied by the above quote, the underlying economic policy which will guide South Africa’s reconstruction does not rest purely on open market measures to alleviate poverty and inequality. Although the free market system is retained in South Africa’s
reconstruction and development, a strong role is seen for government intervention, including measures such as redistribution. As the RDP recognises that local government is of "critical importance" (ANC, 1994:129), will often be involved in the allocation of resources (ibid.), and "constitutes the most concrete level of planning" (RDP White Paper, 1994), it seems clear that much of the proposed government intervention to ensure reconstruction and development should be at the level of local government. Whether measures to achieve redistribution will in any way solve what many perceive as the apparent contradiction between increased economic growth on the one hand, and environmental protection and sustainability on the other, is a matter for speculation at this stage. The necessity for government intervention and redistributive measures is underlined by the following quote:

"Even with significant state intervention to realign spending in South Africa in favour of black education, health, housing, and to some extent job creation, most black people will remain miserably poor for the foreseeable future under orthodox economic policies. This can be stated with confidence - unless a sustained growth rate of the order of 10 per cent can be achieved - a very unlikely possibility."

(Stoneman, 1994:28).

By "orthodox economic policies" Stoneman is referring to the market-based economic system advocated by the IMF and the World Bank, and particularly to those organisations' structural adjustment policies. He suggests that imaginative and radical solutions will be required to attack South Africa's economic problems. Ideas which could be of some assistance are, he suggests, to be found in the period of Zimbabwe's history, between 1984 (when that country rejected IMF policies) and 1990, when GDP growth averaged more than 4 per cent a year and social spending was maintained.

It could thus be argued that the germ for the economic transformation that is a prerequisite for sustainable development is firmly entrenched in the comprehensive socio-political framework that will guide the attack on poverty and deprivation in South Africa. In addition, it is commonly stated that this socio-political framework has been accepted and embraced by all sectors of the population. Whether the intention for economic transformation expressed in the RDP will survive the gauntlet of business interests is uncertain. It has been suggested, however, that South Africa's current economic policy, as espoused by the Minister of Finance, is still strongly focused on economic growth, and, in this sense, lagging behind current international thinking (Turok, 1995). The latter, as discussed at the recent World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, holds that economic growth and social development are mutually reinforcing. Indeed,

"Social spending which is carefully directed into capacity building actually speeds economic growth, while economic growth produces the surplus which can be invested in social spending."

(Turok, 1995)
This is the economic policy which in theory underlies the RDP; in practice, Turok (1995) suggests this is not happening. As Jacklyn Cock points out, the assumption that the free enterprise system is the only valid one to solve South Africa's environmental problems (Huntley et al, 1989) is just that - an assumption, which needs to be opened up and subjected to critical scrutiny and debate (Cock, 1991).

2.4.1 South Africa and foreign aid

This section should be seen in the light of the NPB's application to the World Bank and GEF for funding for the Cathedral Peak development - to be discussed in Chapter 4.

As mentioned in section 2.2.1, issues concerning foreign aid, discussed in that section, are of current interest for South Africa, which, it has been suggested, is on the brink of an aid deluge (Walmsley, 1994). In 1993 the World Bank offered to lend South Africa R3 billion, with the IMF offering an equally large sum to lessen the balance of payments strain caused by the 1992 drought (ibid.). Padayachee (1994) has suggested one of the key factors affecting success or failure of the RDP will be the IMF. It is crucially important that South Africa develops a coherent approach to negotiating with these institutions, to prevent IMF or similar policy from closing off many of the RDP's more interventionist policy options that target the poor and disadvantaged (Padayachee, 1994). Padayachee's view concerning the IMF and the RDP is reinforced by Adebayo Olukoshi of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, writing of Western donor agencies, in particular the IMF and the World Bank:

"...donor intervention will be key in determining the extent to which the RDP achieves its objectives. Indeed, the entire economic management process (and the extent to which it remains open, popular and democratic) will be severely tested by donor intervention."

(Olukoshi, 1994:97)

Clearly, in terms of international development aid, which may also entail World Bank and IMF obligations, South Africa's needs and priorities must be carefully assessed (Wynberg, 1993).

The following section focuses on the need for development in rural areas such as the Okhahlamba district, where the Cathedral Peak case study is located.

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For instance, the IMF requires the budget-deficit-to-GDP ratio to be 6% or less, which may not allow for the achievement of the RDP's commitment to social spending in areas such as housing, education and health (Padayachee, 1994).
Chapter 2. Development and sustainability

2.5 The need for rural development in South Africa

Of the estimated 17 million people surviving below the Minimum Living Level in South Africa, at least 11 million live in rural areas (ANC, 1994). The statistics for the rural areas are sobering:

- 53% of rural people do not have access to clean water;
- 60% of rural people have no access to electricity; and
- only 14% of rural people have adequate sanitation.

(Khan, 1993)

In addition, access to land, education and training, health, community and recreation facilities is sorely lacking in rural areas. Indeed, the RDP recognises rural dwellers, together with women, the youth and disabled people, as the most marginalised people in South African society (White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, 1994). It follows that special attention should be paid to the situation of rural women, youth and disabled people. In addition to their disadvantaged status, rural women are the primary managers for resources such as water, fuelwood and crops, as well as often having the sole responsibility for waste management and sanitation issues (Roberts, 1995).

Due to apartheid policies which resulted in people being crowded into homelands, largely lacking in both infrastructure and development opportunities, social services are almost nonexistent in the rural areas. The extent of the overcrowding is illustrated by the fact that in 1980, population density of the white farms of Natal was 22 persons per square km, whilst in the rural areas of KwaZulu it averaged 76 (Wilson and Ramphele, 1989). This highlights the need for land in these rural areas. This lack of access to land in rural areas is a crucial factor in structural poverty, especially when there is a shortage of opportunities for wage labour16 (Crehan, 1992). In addition, rural women in the third world generally have weaker rights to land than men, thus exacerbating their situation, in terms of both poverty and power.

Apart from land, a severe problem facing South African rural areas is the extreme unemployment - currently averaging 54% (Brijjal and Hadebe, 1994), compared to the national unemployment figure of 32% (ibid.). Statistics from the Baseline Report suggest that the unemployment figure for the eMhlwazini ward which neighbours Cathedral Peak is 76% - ie 22% higher than the average rural figure for South Africa. Rural unemployment is one of the major causes of rural to urban migration (May, 1990), although Nattrass (1976, in May, 1990) argued for several other causes.

2.5.1 The RDP and rural development

Rural people are a priority target group of the RDP, both to redress historical inequities and to ensure future democracy (September, 1995). At a national level, interdepartmental RDP task teams have been established to promote and coordinate

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16 Both of these conditions are met in the eMhlwazini ward, surrounding Cathedral Peak.
rural, as well as urban development. In addition, the critical link between rural and urban areas is identified by the RDP. Evidence of this link is found in the following:

"The RDP’s principles recognise the mutually reinforcing nature of urban and rural development strategies through, for example, the benefits of improved agriculture to the urban economy."

(ANC, 1994:82)

This seems to be an unfortunate example of this linkage to use, as it emphasises what the rural areas can do for urban dwellers - in other words, the RDP falls victim to what Chambers (1988) terms the “normal professionalism” of viewing the resource-poor peripheries from the resource-rich cores (see section 2.5.5 below). In South Africa, resources are very unequally distributed in favour of urban areas (Wilson and Ramphele, 1989), and thus the example smacks of urban colonialism. This is not to deny the dependence of the entire country on rural food production. In addition, the complex links between urban and rural areas must be considered when discussing the need for development in rural areas. Concerning such links, a reduction in poverty and environmental degradation through rural development could result in a similar reduction in urban poverty and pressure on the urban resource base, by decreasing rural to urban migration.

Historically, influx control policies have resulted in a predominance of the system of migrant labour. May (1990) suggests that previous rural/urban linkages have been redefined, from predominantly oscillating migrant labour, to more frequent relocation of at least part of the rural household to the urban fringe. This redefinition, he suggests, results from the interaction between increasing poverty and deteriorating agricultural production in the homelands, and a decline in the social and economic costs of living permanently in the urban areas, with the growth of vast shack areas (ibid.).

Various policy approaches to the question of migration are described in the current Green Paper on Population Policy (South Africa, 1995), one of which is the promotion of economic development in rural areas so that people are not forced to migrate for economic reasons. This is the approach which underpins this study.

Land is the most basic need for people in rural areas (ANC, 1994). Inasmuch as development is about meeting basic needs, “a national land reform programme is the central and driving force of a programme of rural development” (ANC, 1994:20), and attention is to be paid to encouraging farming in a “more sustainable agricultural system” (ANC, 1994:84). In addition, rural development should entail access to affordable services and the promotion of non-agricultural activities.

According to the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (South Africa, 1994:41), “the Government will formulate an integrated and sustainable rural development policy in consultation with rural people, their organisations and stakeholders.” Although not specifically stated here, it seems clear that this sort of consultation would be a role for rural local government. Particular mention is made of
the need to broaden access to services and to increase support to small-scale agricultural producers. In addition, the serious lack of capacity to implement development programmes in rural areas is recognised, and “will be addressed as a priority” (ibid.). If rural local government is to be an important factor in rural development, as required by the RDP, then capacity building for rural development should already have begun to target this area. The current situation regarding rural local government in South Africa, as discussed in Chapter 5, is a clear indication that this has not happened.

The RDP Lead Projects include five major rural development programmes:

- rural water provision;
- land reform pilot projects;
- land restitution;
- land redistribution; and
- small-scale farmer development.

The aim of the land reform pilot projects is “to develop and support integrated sustainable rural development and rural local government models” through the various land reform processes. The Cathedral Peak area does not form part of the pilot land reform district of KwaZulu/Natal (Hartley, 1995).

2.5.2 Agenda 21 and rural development

On the subject of rural development, Agenda 21 states the following:

“To keep poor rural populations from using marginal lands, off-farm work such as cottage industries, wildlife utilization, village-based light industries and tourism should be developed.”

(Keating, 1993:25)

Apart from resonating with ideas of control over the resource of others, which Harvey (1993) suggests is never too far from the surface of many western proposals for global environmental management, the above quotation highlights the need for diversity in rural development strategies. In addition, according to Agenda 21, sustainable agriculture and rural development will require “major adjustments in agricultural, environmental and economic policies in all countries, and at the international level” (Keating, 1993:24).

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17 See section 5.3.2 in Chapter 5.
2.5.3 Integrated rural development strategies

The above two sections indicate that both global initiatives, such as Agenda 21, and national reconstruction and development frameworks, such as the RDP, recognise the need for rural development to occur within an integrated development strategy. This section briefly examines what in fact is meant by the term ‘integrated rural development strategy’.

According to Nattrass (1982), the concept of integrated rural development involves a multi-pronged assault on the problems of rural poverty and underdevelopment, which necessitates a switch from purely agricultural development to broad-based multi-sectoral development. Such multi-sectoral development could include the service industry, craft industries, agricultural-based industry, other rural resource based industries, and non-rural resource based industry (ibid.). It is felt that there is a place for both the village industry approach, which has the aim of village self-sufficiency, and the modernisation approach, which promotes the development of small rural towns.

The village industry approach, like the concept of ecodevelopment discussed below, stresses the need for appropriate technology as opposed to complex western capital-intensive technology. This would promote village self-sufficiency. However, it is stressed that the village must be linked into the broader network of the national economy, to avoid marginalisation. On the subject of appropriate technology, attention should be paid to the development of successful prototypes such as mud stoves, maize shelters, beehives, solar cookers, and wire mesh looms. Such objects have great development potential in terms of their usefulness, ease of construction, and use of local and inexpensive materials (ibid.). A recommendation made is the establishment of a South African equivalent of Botswana’s Rural Industries Innovation Centre. Carr (1988) is of the opinion that the small-scale industrial sector is a key form of development in terms of maximising employment opportunities and ensuring maximal, equitably distributed benefits. This sector, she feels, has often been overlooked by focusing on agricultural production at the one end of the spectrum, and large-scale urban industry at the other.

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18 For example, based on clay or thatch.
19 Which would usually result from decentralisation policies.
20 Which has tended to be capital-intensive, based on imported technologies and skills, and promoting goods beyond the economic reach of most members of the population - as discussed throughout section 2.2.
Integrated rural development comprises four main levels of integration (Nattrass, 1982):

- Firstly, integration between rural industry and agriculture;
- Secondly, integration between various goals and objectives, such as between social and economic aims;
- Thirdly, integration between the development plan and the specific needs and characteristics of the people and the land; and
- Fourthly, integration of rural development projects with national and regional strategies.

Moreover, integrated rural development clearly requires extensive coordination between sectors and levels, which should be the role of government (ibid.). Such coordination must include coordination of other stakeholders, ie communities, community-based organisations, civil society forums, NGOs and other development agencies, and conservation bodies. Thus the participation of all local institutions is critically important for integrated rural development. Chapter 5 explores this aspect further. The formulation of integrated rural development strategies through broad and meaningful participation will ensure that such strategies are informed by the “complex fragile nature of rural people’s lives and their efforts to secure their livelihood” (Thom, 1995).

As recognised above, land reform is the central component of a rural development programme in South Africa. Different land use options for each area should be evaluated according to that area’s unique ecological characteristics, as well as the needs of people (GEM, 1993). Integrated strategies to optimise benefits could involve using options such as industry and agriculture, particularly approaches such as permaculture and agroforestry, together with the sustainable utilisation of wildlife, where this is appropriate.

2.5.4 Ecodevelopment - the solution to rural unemployment and development needs?

In 1973, Schumacher recognised the vital importance of creating workplaces in rural areas, in order to stem rural to urban migration, at least partly. These workplaces should be cheap enough to allow for their creation in large numbers, without necessitating high levels of capital or imports. Production methods used should be relatively simple to reduce the need for skills not existing in the locality, and production should be primarily from local materials and mainly for local use (Schumacher, 1973). These conditions can only exist within a regional approach to development and a conscious effort to develop and apply intermediate technology (ibid.).
The approach to rural development outlined by Schumacher accords strongly with the concept of ecodevelopment, introduced by Maurice Strong in 1973 (Dasmann, 1984). The characteristics of ecodevelopment, largely spelled out by Ignacy Sachs, are:

- regionally-based development to meet basic needs of the population, while avoiding the overconsumption of developed countries;
- development towards the goal of human self-realisation;
- self-reliance as opposed to a dependence on (mainly) foreign aid;
- emphasis on appropriate or intermediate technology; and
- a participatory approach.

(Dasmann, 1984).

Concerning the 'appropriate technology' requirement of ecodevelopment, it should be noted that this is not intended to reject unthinkingly non-indigenous farm technology (for instance), as this is likely to prove as impractical as former development strategies which have ignored the importance of non-agricultural work in the rural livelihoods (Woodhouse, 1992). Ecodevelopment places great emphasis on cultural diversity and the need to avoid "universalist solutions and general-purpose formulas" (Sachs, 1974; in Dasmann, 1984). Adams (1990) details the ways in which ecodevelopment avoids a number of the shortcomings of the World Conservation Strategy (IUCN, 1980), by engaging the realms of economics and politics:

- emphasis is placed on the decentralisation of bureaucracy;
- the development focus is disaggregated by shifting it to the local level;
- self-reliance and self-sufficiency are stressed;
- priority is given to meeting basic human needs, while avoiding the overconsumption characteristic of the industrialised countries;
- public participation and equitable distribution are stressed; and
- horizontal, non-hierachical systems of organisation and government are advocated.

As Dasmann (1984:431) puts it, "Self-reliance refers to the need of people to search for and find solutions to their own problems, using their own knowledge, values and experiences in their own surroundings and circumstances ...". As such, self-reliance is an alternative to the form of development which leads to a greater dependence on external organisations.

21 Note that appropriate technologies can be highly sophisticated, but must be related to local ecological realities and cultural traditions. They must increase self-reliance, not create new dependencies (Dasmann, 1984).
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The engagement of ecodevelopment with the realms of economics and politics leads Dasmann to note:

“The self-reliance that would come with ecodevelopment is not likely, however, to be enthusiastically received by those who presently gain wealth from exploiting other bioregions.”

(Dasmann, 1984:440)

The emphasis on meeting basic needs, local participation, self-reliance and local initiatives characteristic of ecodevelopment have many correspondences with the ideas developed by Chambers concerning sustainable rural livelihoods, which are now examined.

2.5.5 Sustainable rural livelihoods

Improving the livelihoods of the rural poor is essential if pressures on the natural environment are to be reduced. Of equal importance in South Africa is the need to redress the injustices of apartheid and its ‘homeland’ system. The desperate need for development in the rural areas has been highlighted above. However, such development should avoid what Robert Chambers has termed the “First World biases of normal professionalism” (Chambers, 1988), which place emphasis on urban, industrial and central interests at the expense of rural, agricultural and peripheral interests.

Sustainable livelihood security has been proposed as the means to reverse this “normal professionalism”, and to ensure that analysis and policy begin with the needs and interests of the poor, and particularly the rural poor. This proposal emanates from the ‘sustainable development’ field, and can be seen as a central mechanism to integrate environment and development strategies. ‘Sustainable livelihood security’ was proposed by the report of the Advisory Panel on Food Security, Agriculture, Forestry and Environment to the World Commission on Environment and Development (Food 1000, 1987; discussed in Chambers, 1988). According to this report (p.3):

“Livelihood is defined as adequate stocks and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs. Security refers to secure ownership of, or access to, resources and income-earning activities, including reserves and assets to offset risk, ease shocks and meet contingencies. Sustainable refers to the maintenance or enhancement of resource productivity on a long-term basis.”

The strategy of sustainable rural livelihoods entails taking the view from the resource-poor peripheries, rather than the “normal” view of resource-poor peripheries as seen from the resource-rich cores. The goal of this strategy may be distilled as follows:

“A strategy for the resource-poor peripheries must aim to reduce the pressures and miseries of outmigration, to diminish debt and to enable people to build up self-reliance, self-respect and independent power.”

(Chambers, 1988:15)
Furthermore, resource-poor conditions necessitate a context-specific, sensitive approach to development, which avoids emphasis of inappropriate values and techniques of the resource-rich world. In a discussion of five case studies, ranging from an applied nutrition programme in Lampang, Thailand to an integrated rural development programme in Tin Aicha, Mali, Chambers (1988) details five major lessons which should be learned by development workers, to facilitate the attainment of sustainable livelihoods by the poor. These are described briefly below.

♦ It is necessary to follow a learning-process approach, which enables one to learn from error and failure, rather than adhering to blueprint solutions which are inevitably externally imposed.

♦ Sustainable livelihoods can only ensue from putting people’s priorities first.

♦ Secure rights and gains for the poor enable people to take a long-term view of resource use.

♦ Sustainability should be achieved through self-help - subsidies tend to encourage a perpetuation of dependence, but may be necessary with deeply impoverished communities. Self-help should still be pursued, as it enhances people’s capacity to innovate and adapt, and so to help themselves in the future.

♦ The calibre, commitment and continuity of staff are important to reinforce the ability to implement the other lessons. Continuity of staff will serve to prevent what Chambers (1983) terms the “rural development tourism23” of almost all development professionals.

2.6 The necessary components of truly sustainable development

Proceeding from the broad definition of environment adopted in Chapter 1, it is clear that, broadly speaking, the result of the development process should be environmental sustainability. This would involve sustainability in terms of biophysical, social, economic, historical, cultural and political aspects. The difficulty of achieving such all-embracing sustainability is increased when the multitude of stakeholders is factored in. This difficulty has led many commentators to the conclusion that sustainable development is not possible in practice (Adams, 1990).

It seems evident, however, even tautological, that true environmental sustainability must, in the long-term, be a win-win situation. Anything less than this would not be capable of maintenance. Viewed on a global scale, the move towards environmental sustainability is daunting. On a smaller, local scale, even given the heterogeneity of communities, the process is difficult, but seems possible, by using locally-based approaches to development such as ecodevelopment and sustainable rural livelihoods.

23 By this, Chambers means the brief rural visit by an outside professional, setting out from an urban centre, in order to provide rural development ‘expertise’ (Chambers, 1983).
Both globally and locally, it is helpful to view sustainable development as a process, which may well encompass many compromises, as well as shifts in attitude. It is through these shifts in attitude that a win-win situation may be approached. However, because of the shifting nature of human values, reflected in changing social, political and economic systems, the process has no end. Thus, it is not a particularly valid criticism of sustainable development to point out that what is sustainable now may not be so in the future - as Mannion (1992, in Cater, 1994) has done - this is a characteristic of the process.

2.6.1 The need for specific criteria to measure the sustainability of development

Although the broad definition of environment leads one to a correspondingly broad definition of environmental sustainability, this is not particularly helpful in practice. To this end, the fundamental points arising from the discussion of development and sustainability, informed by the main requirements for sustainable rural livelihoods and the principles of ecodevelopment, have been synthesised to arrive at workable and concrete criteria for assessing the sustainability of rural development. These criteria will be used to assess the proposal by Natal Parks Board to develop an ecotourism facility at Cathedral Peak, Natal Drakensberg Park, in Chapter 4.

As O’Riordan points out, “sustainable development is essentially about the provision of basic needs for all in a form that is ecologically and culturally acceptable” (O’Riordan, 1989:97). In other words, sustainable development could be achieved through linking the fundamental principles of the right to basic needs with locally based ecodevelopment (ibid.). Rather than the administrative burden of operating major interventionist measures from the centre, the emphasis should be on “collective self-reliance” (ibid.). This implies decentralised structures. O’Riordan (1989) visualises these structures as operating on the basis of creative experimentation and informed advice - the latter could be a function coordinated by local government.

The criteria proposed are focused primarily at the local level. It is believed that this focus is justified by the growing broad consensus on the need to concentrate on local initiatives, evident from the foregoing part of this chapter. In the words of O’Riordan:

“Widespread youth unemployment and vast regional disparities in social well-being in a number of countries and economic opportunity have concentrated even the more conservative economic minds on means of stimulating local economic initiatives.” (1989:90)

This emphasis on local initiatives and the self-reliant community as the ‘unit’ of development is a central tenet of ideas of communalism and communitarianism (O’Riordan, 1989; Adams, 1990; Harvey, 1993). Caution is needed to avoid the situation where community is defined as against others - a formulation which is

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24 Defined here as a characteristic of a process or state that can be maintained indefinitely.
25 Refer to section 5.3.
"exclusionary, chauvinistic and racist" (Harvey, 1993:40). In addition, the importance of links between local, regional and national levels should not be disregarded. To do so would be to exhibit both political and economic naivety. It would also be ecologically detrimental, as it is essential to plan land-use policies on scales large enough to maintain the health of regional ecosystems, such as watersheds.

The important point is to realise that, while it may be true that the local level is the only one at which "intelligent, sensible action" is possible (Esteva and Prakash, 1994:162), reality dictates the importance of connections between local, regional and provincial levels. These connections would need to take the form of power-sharing partnerships between the local, regional and national levels, as well as within levels. In addition, the emphasis on the local level adopted here fully accords with the central understanding of the RDP that development must be people-driven - which acknowledges the vital role that communities can play (Dor, 1995). Local level focus must be accompanied by a firm commitment on the part of national and regional levels of government to channeling resources to local governments and building capacity at the local level, as well as strengthening partnerships between all levels, so that 'localisation' does not simply entrench marginalisation. The need to build capacity of local institutions, in order to approach sustainability, is now widely acknowledged, and forms a key component of mainstream 'sustainable development' initiatives such as Agenda 21.

Apart from this local level focus, the criteria reflect a special emphasis which, it is felt, is appropriate for South Africa at this time. This emphasis is on the justice issues of redistributing wealth and opportunities, and rebuilding viable, self-reliant communities. Although this emphasis may be required to achieve sustainability in other countries as well, it is essential in South Africa to redress the injustices of apartheid, and in particular the ravages to the social fabric which have resulted from the homeland system and migrant labour. The eMhlwazini residents living adjacent to the Cathedral Peak State Forest have experienced the dislocatory effects of both migrant labour and the homeland system.

The technocratic, capital-intensive, inappropriate development promoted on a global scale for many years by multilateral development aid agencies, as discussed above, provides a clear scenario of the type of development to be avoided. The criteria for sustainability proposed in this chapter are positively stated. While not assuming to be the endpoint of the search for an implementation strategy for ‘sustainable development’, active promotion of these positively stated criteria should preclude inappropriate development which is not capable of long-term maintenance.

26 Refer to section 2.3.6.
2.6.2 Criteria to maximise the sustainability of development

In order to approach true environmental sustainability, development should:

1. **Address the priorities of local people** - this will ensure that a locally determined development pattern is followed, which grows from the realities of the prevailing socio-economic conditions. Thus this approach ensures context-specific development, in order to avoid the “homogenisation” of development which is implemented as a standard, blueprint solution.

2. **Promote, and preferably entrench, community participation and the formation of meaningful local-level partnerships** - as opposed to mere consultation. Participation implies that partnerships should be formed between stakeholders, to redress historical and inequitable power relations. Meaningful participation will ensure that communities have a sense of ownership over their development. Partnerships should not be restricted to the local level - see Criterion 4.

3. **Promote local control and management** - this criterion necessitates decentralised decision-making. People should have control over their own lives and their environments, to achieve true empowerment. This shifting of the development focus to the local level means that there should be local control over access to resources. Local control should be broad-based - in other words, not based on elite village factions or individuals. The empowerment and inclusion of rural women in decision-making is an important focus here. Formalised local structures, such as representative community development forums, would need to be established to achieve local control and management.

4. **Arise as a local initiative, with strong links to regional/national-scale planning** - thus, development should be planned and implemented at village level, within an integrated rural development strategy, and within power-sharing partnerships with the regional and national levels. This means that development will avoid exogenous decision-making, and will be guided by local values. Partnerships between all stakeholders are essential to redress historically inequitable power relations. Furthermore, local development should occur within a framework which links the local, regional and national levels, to prevent marginalisation of the rural areas.\(^27\)

5. **Promote self-sufficiency and self-reliance** - this includes using appropriate technology, and approaching self-sufficiency in food production, where possible. The emphasis here is on ensuring adequate stocks and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs. Development must be financially viable to ensure a sustainable flow of cash.

\(^{27}\) Chapter 5 examines the role of local government in achieving this.
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6. As far as possible, use existing local resources - in terms of local human skills, labour and materials. The use of local natural resources should not occur at the expense of ecological sustainability - see Criterion 7.

7. Ensure the maintenance or enhancement of the existing resource base - this criterion concerns ecological sustainability. Development should aim to reduce pressure on natural resources such as soil and biotic diversity ie should be within the capacity of the natural environment to adapt to change.

8. Promote capacity building - by ensuring the provision of skills training, self-reliance is promoted and ecodvelopment’s goal of human self-realisation is approached. Any possible educational opportunities should be promoted. This criterion is inherent in true partnerships (Criterion 4), but needs explicit statement - see below.

9. Provide tangible benefits to local communities - in terms of job creation, increased income etc. Although this is important for improving the quality of people’s lives, it must be accompanied by empowerment in the sense of local control and management (Criterion 3). In order to provide tangible benefits on a long-term basis, development must be financially viable. The proposed funding for a development is of importance here.

10. Promote local culture and social organisation - the emphasis here is on rebuilding viable communities and ensuring that cultural diversity is maintained. The latter requirement recognises the dynamic nature of culture and the paternalism inherent in the misconception that ‘traditional’ societies should be maintained at all costs (Owen-Smith and Jacobsohn, 1988). This criterion rather seeks to avoid both the homogenisation of cultures through the imposition of developmental ‘blueprints’, and the wholesale destruction of culture as a result of rapid developmental impacts of such great magnitude that they are unable to be assimilated.

It should be emphasised that the above criteria are intended for the assessment of sustainability of local-level development. More specifically, they focus on development at the community level. This does not necessarily imply only small-scale development, although the smaller scale may be more appropriate, depending on the objectives of the particular development (Jenkins, 1982). 28

An investigation of the ten criteria reveals overlap between the concerns they encapsulate. For instance, the development of skills through training (Criterion 8) would contribute to building self-reliant communities (Criterion 5). Also, as stated above, Criterion 8 is inherent in Criterion 4 (power-sharing partnerships both within and between different levels). The importance of skills training, and the fact that it represents a concrete criterion which allows for unambiguous assessment, justifies the

28 Refer to section 3.5.7.
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separation of Criterion 8 from Criterion 5. In addition, the overlap between criteria reflects the seamless nature of development issues, and serves to ensure balance between criteria. All ten criteria are fundamental for sustainability from a local perspective. While practical constraints and the complexity of developmental issues, given the varying interests and sociopolitical contexts, may render attainment of these criteria difficult, the goal of sustainability requires working towards the achievement of all.

This chapter has stressed the essentially political nature of the development process at all levels. One should thus pose the question:

Do the ten proposed criteria take into account the essentially political nature of the development process?

This question serves as a broad checking mechanism. It is felt that the proposed criteria do reflect the political nature of development by addressing issues such as:

+ control of access to resources (Criterion 1);
+ social and economic organisation (Criteria 5, 9 and 10);
+ control of local people over their own environments and development (Criteria 1, 3 and 4); and
+ promoting self-sufficiency and meeting basic needs, which would reduce dependency on exogenous sources and thus facilitate the independent power of local communities (Criterion 5).

In addition, it may be seen that, apart from the political component, the remaining components of the broad definition of the term ‘environment’ adopted in this study, viz. biophysical, social, economic, historical and cultural, are all reflected in the proposed criteria. Thus these components are both constituents of, and form the umbrella of, the ten proposed criteria for development sustainability.

From a consideration of development in general, the focus of this study now moves to the more specific consideration of a particular form of development which is currently the focus of considerable attention, both in South Africa and elsewhere in the world, namely ecotourism. This investigation of ecotourism, conducted in the next chapter, provides the background to understanding the implications of the NPB’s proposal to develop an ecotourism facility at Cathedral Peak. The criteria for sustainability generated in this chapter, fine-tuned by the effects and impacts of ecotourism as elucidated in Chapter 3, will be used to assess this ecotourism proposal in Chapter 4.
Chapter 3

Ecotourism as a sustainable form of rural development

3. Ecotourism as a sustainable form of rural development
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3. **Ecotourism as a sustainable form of rural development**

“Tourism as a vehicle for economic growth and redistribution necessitates a great deal of work on the economic impact of tourism, as well as the scope for different tourism growth paths.”

(Cassim, 1993:33)

“...the discovery of the environment by tourism marketers is no accident. Tourism is subject to broader shifts in societal values; however, the emergence of a conservation ethic in Western society has been commodified for the needs of the tourism industry.”

(Hall, 1994:137)

3.1 **Introduction**

Currently, the subset of tourism which has been labelled “ecotourism” is frequently and enthusiastically touted as the solution to rural development problems. This outlook is espoused by a diverse range of people and organisations, including international initiatives towards sustainable development such as the Brundtland Report, multilateral development agencies such as the World Bank, national tourism bodies (particularly those of developing countries), conservation bodies, and non-governmental development and conservation organisations. Perhaps it is not surprising, with this diversity of supporters, that ecotourism, rather like sustainable development, means many things to many different people. As Western (1993:7) points out, “Ecotourism is really an amalgam of interests arising out of environmental, economic and social concerns”.

The diversity of definitions is mirrored by the multitude of “meaningful and at times pious” labels (Prosser, 1994) for this subspecies of tourism: “soft, green, responsible, harmonious, quality, gentle, eco, progressive, sensitive, community, appropriate - all assembled under the generic title of ‘alternative tourism’ ” (Prosser, 1994:32). To this list can be added a current contribution from South Africa, “afrotourism” (De Villiers, 1995) which has already been the subject of an upmarket conference, held in Cape Town in May 1995. Despite this multiplicity of names and definitions, some commonality must exist to separate these “alternative” forms of tourism from their more prosaic parent.

This chapter examines some of the characteristics and effects of tourism that are of particular significance for its role as development agent, in order to arrive at criteria specific for evaluation of this complex form of development. As a starting point, the meaning of the term ‘ecotourism’ is examined and the global political economy of tourism in general is explored briefly. The linkage between ecotourism and protected
areas is discussed, together with the nature of Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs). Various characteristics and effects of the tourism industry, which have implications for the ability of ecotourism to serve as an agent of development, are then highlighted. These include social, ecological and economic effects.

Turning to a South African focus, several policies which promote ecotourism are discussed, as well as future proposals for tourism in South Africa. Several examples of South African ICDPs are provided, as this is the category into which the NPB's Cathedral Peak development proposal would fall. The current move towards community-based tourism projects is explored briefly, as a key area of intersection with the criteria for sustainability generated in Chapter 2. Key points from these policies are synthesised with details from the foregoing investigation on tourism characteristics and effects, and then used to further refine the list of criteria generated at the end of Chapter 2. The result of this synthesis is a set of core criteria for sustainable ecotourism development in rural areas, which will be used to conduct an assessment of the Cathedral Peak ecotourism facility development proposal, in Chapter 4.

### 3.2 Ecotourism - what does it really mean?

Tourism is a multi-faceted phenomenon which involves movement to and stay in destinations outside the normal place of residence (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). As a subset of tourism, the simplest definition of ecotourism is “nature tourism”, and indeed Elizabeth Boo, in a WWF study, uses the two terms interchangeably (Boo, 1990). This definition reflects the roots of ecotourism, which lie in nature or outdoor tourism (Western, 1993). Clearly, tourism per se is an “environmentally dependent industry”, and ecotourism then is only the latest expression of this relationship (Hall, 1994:153).

One of the commonest definitions of ecotourism, also used by Boo in the abovementioned study, is that of Hector Ceballos-Lascurain, Ecotourism Programme Coordinator for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN):

“travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas…”

(Ceballos-Lascurain, 1991)

A definition of sustainable tourism has been given as that which “seeks to sustain the quantity, quality and productivity of both human and natural resource systems over time, while respecting and accommodating the dynamics of such systems” (Prosser, 1994:31).
The Ecotourism Society puts the case more simply:

"Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people."

(in Western, 1993:8)

Thus ecotourism incorporates both a firm commitment to nature and a sense of social responsibility. ‘Environmentally friendly’ programmes initiated by hotel chains which include measures such as encouraging recycling and conservation by guests, and the use of materials and construction techniques which have low environmental impact, although desirable, do not equate with ecotourism (Andersen, 1993).

The emphasis on ‘sustainable’ tourism underlines the connectivity of ecology, society and economy - a profoundly political synthesis. Hall (1994) has suggested that ecotourism developments should be based on the values and culture of the host community, and not on those of tourists, developers, aid-givers or conservation groups. While it is indubitably true that local people should be making decisions about the developments which affect them, and these decisions would naturally reflect the value systems and culture of the local people, if these values and cultures have no appeal for tourists, there will be no industry to benefit the host community.

As an environmentally and socially responsible form of tourism, ecotourism seems to be admirably suited as a mechanism to address the issues of poverty, equity and overconsumption which were highlighted by the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) but for which concrete implementation measures are still lacking. This suitability is perhaps the reason for the appeal of ecotourism as a rural development agent for progressive development and conservation organisations. Supporters of ecotourism claim that it is “a mode of ecodevelopment which represents a practical and effective means of attaining social and economic improvement for all countries” (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1991).

Given the connotations of environmental and social responsibility, to speak of “sustainable ecotourism” should be to express a tautology. However, many projects which are touted as ecotourism developments do not exhibit this responsibility. As Virginia Hadsell of the US Centre for Responsible Tourism indicates, “many tour operators are simply putting ‘eco’ in front of what they’ve always been doing without changing at all” (quoted in Pleumarom, 1994). Even in national parks, ecotourism has sometimes led to substantial and detrimental changes to the natural environment. Nelson (1994) cites the case of the Banff National Park in Canada, where increasing pressure from tourism and recreational development have resulted in a series of land-use changes which have cumulatively transformed Banff over the last five decades.¹

¹ This is despite the management of the Park under conservation laws and policies intended to ensure that tourism development has minimal effects on the ecosystems of Banff (Nelson, 1994).
3.2.1 Use of the term ‘ecotourism’ in this dissertation

Clearly, the concept of ecotourism is a valuable one, stressing as it does the need for equity with regard to the benefits and costs of tourism, the need to reduce environmental impacts of tourism, and the need for low-intensity activities. However, as Nelson notes:

"Concepts such as ecotourism, green tourism, and sustainable tourism development, are general in their nature and have to be described, planned, and assessed, in detail on the ground in terms of the socio-economic and environmental conditions applying in different places."

(Nelson, 1994:255)

Nelson thus stresses that ecotourism is no different from other forms of tourism, in that all forms of tourism should be planned and managed on the basis of sustainability principles. In addition, it is clear that application of the term ‘ecotourism’ to a tourism project should be earned, and not assumed. There is a need to show a tourism development to be socially, culturally, and, broadly, environmentally responsible and sustainable before it can be called ‘ecotourism’. In the absence of such characteristics, the terms ‘nature tourism’ or ‘adventure tourism’ would be more accurate. As ‘ecotourism’ very often does not deliver the environmental responsibility which it claims, the more general term ‘tourism’ is often used in this dissertation to avoid the unthinking use of the former term. Where ‘ecotourism’ is used, this does not necessarily imply the presence of the necessary social and ecological responsibility, but rather that this is the ideal of the tourism development in question.

The tourism industry has generally perpetuated, rather than reversed, inequitable patterns of distribution of wealth and power:

"Anyone who has ever travelled in Africa will testify to the limited benefits of the tourist industry to the surrounding community. Most tourist industries pride themselves on the secondary spinoffs, yet the most one sees is a battling curio industry in the midst of poverty."

(Baskin, in GEM, 1993).

An examination of the political and economic reality of the global tourism industry casts light on why this is so.

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2 In the broad sense of the word, as adopted in this dissertation. Thus social, cultural and ecological impacts of tourism are included, as well as political and economic effects.

3 Note that such planning and management should be part of an overall environmental land-use strategy for the region - this accords with Criterion 4 of the ten criteria for sustainability generated in Chapter 2, and will be further discussed below.

4 There is a parallel here with the blanket application of the term ‘sustainable development’ to many development projects which do not address the concomitant need for political and economic transformation - see Chapter 2.
3.3 The political economy of tourism

"A government which decides to rely on money from tourism for its development is a government which has decided to be internationally compliant."

(Enloe, 1989; quoted in Pleumarom, 1994).

"Economics is the engine that powers the vehicle of eco-tourism."


Tourism has been viewed in a favourable light by many developing countries for a number of reasons. In addition to the obvious attraction of providing access to foreign currency, tourism development can bring access to potential foreign investment, planning, technology, infrastructure and improved prestige in return for readily available natural resources such as beautiful environments and wildlife. Ecotourism is a particularly relevant form of tourism for developing countries as these countries are often rich in the “relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas” (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1991) which are the central attraction of ecotourism. This attraction is greatly boosted by the amenable climates of many of the developing countries (Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

However, ecotourism as a form of development is plagued by the same global inequities that have beset development in general - as discussed in Chapter 1. Agencies such as the World Bank have promoted tourism as “a useful element in diversifying... sources of foreign exchange and for some, one of the few export opportunities available” (World Bank, 1972; in Pleumarom, 1994). This emphasis on the foreign exchange generating capacity of tourism is key - debt-ridden third world countries need to be “helped” to find ways to increase foreign exchange in order to be able to service their debts. Thus it has been suggested that “the international politics of debt and the international pursuit of pleasure have become tightly knotted together” (Enloe, 1989; in Pleumarom, 1994). This mirrors the inextricable linkage of “development” of the poorer nations (in general) with aid, and thus with exogenous decision-making. In addition, funding of ecotourism infrastructure by major financing agencies such as the World Bank usually means large-scale projects which require technological expertise (Andersen, 1993), which do not accord with the ecodevelopment requirement for small-scale, locally owned and managed facilities.

Because of the unequal global context of tourism in general and therefore ecotourism as well, and the necessary emphasis (for sustainable development) on intra-generational equity, third world tourism should not be equated with that of the first world, as it is rooted in the structural inequalities discussed in Chapter 2. As South Africa is considered to be a third world, or developing country, these comments are applicable. The basis of these structural inequalities is neither ecological or cultural, as Gonsalves

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5 See section 1.3.2.
points out, but political and economic. Gonsalves (in Boo, 1990) further states that 'responsible' or 'eco' tourism is therefore a technological intervention, and not a structural solution. This is similar to the point made by Adams (1990) and O'Riordan (1989), discussed in sections 2.3.4 and 2.3.7, concerning the reformist nature of the concept of 'sustainable development' as proposed by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987).

Gonsalves' viewpoint is backed up by the depiction of "eco" or "sustainable" tourism as playing a mitigatory role by attempting to reduce the negative effects of this industry on marginalised people (Pleumarom, 1994). Such a role, which does not consider the part that the tourism industry and its supporters play in perpetuating structures of domination, is guilty of neglecting the social and political realities of many ecotourism destinations. In this light, equity should be a key part of the concept of sustainable tourism (Nelson, 1994). In particular, the concept of equity should be central to the Cathedral Peak ecotourism development proposal, in order to ensure the sustainability of this future project. The emphasis on equity and justice issues of the ten criteria for sustainability generated in Chapter 2 thus points towards their suitability for assessment of this development proposal. This suitability will, however, be comprehensively tested towards the end of this chapter.

The following section of this study describes the cross-cutting nature of tourism, and examines the relationship between ecotourism and protected areas. In addition, the promotion of Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs) as a form of rural development is explored.

3.4 Characteristics of tourism and ecotourism

3.4.1 The cross-cutting nature of tourism

There is no discrete entity known as the tourism industry, analogous to industries as normally understood (De Kadt, 1979). Rather, tourists purchase goods and services from a variety of industries, including the areas of transportation, accommodation, infrastructure and supporting facilities. This multiplicity of supply elements means that the range of stakeholders in tourism in general and ecotourism in particular will be equally diverse.

Cater (1994) has suggested that the range of interests involved in ecotourism may be loosely grouped into the following four categories:

- tourist guests;
- tourism organisations;
- host population; and
- the natural environment.

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6 This is the point, made by a number of authors, discussed in sections 2.3.3 and 2.3.7.
7 Refer, in particular, to section 3.8.
To this list should be added government agencies, of which ministries dealing with the fields of tourism, environment, agriculture, forestry, planning, public works, budget and finance, and education would be involved (Boo, 1990). This is particularly important in light of the role envisaged for government at all levels in facilitating the development of tourism in South Africa.  

It has been suggested that the multitude of interests involved could mean that a sustainable outcome is likely to remain more an ideal than a reality (Cater, 1994). Temporal considerations further complicate the equation. Short-term benefits for one interest group are likely to be long-term losses for other groups, as well as for that group. The pursuit of short-term economic gain is particularly likely to result in conflict (Cater, 1994). This highlights the necessity for adopting long-term perspectives when dealing with complex developmental issues such as tourism development. Furthermore, this myriad of interests, operating across the dimensions of time and space, necessitates a holistic approach to ecotourism development (Cater, 1994). This holistic approach would be ensured, should attention be paid to meeting the umbrella criteria for sustainability which reside in the broad definition of environment.  

3.4.2 Ecotourism and Protected Areas

Although ecotourism developments very often occur either within or in close proximity to Protected Areas (PAs), this is not necessarily so. The two are very often congruent, however, as the attractions which are the goal of the ecotourism experience are frequently contained within protected areas (Boo, 1990). In addition, of course, these two components usually coincide with rural areas. Since tourism to protected areas tends to occur in peripheral and non-industrialised regions, it may stimulate economic activity and growth in isolated rural areas (Boo, 1990).  

Debate around the ‘People and Parks’ issue, which in South Africa is facilitated by an annual conference organised by the Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM), centres around the integration of conservation and rural development, or the role which protected areas and their associated developments can play in stimulating rural development. Projects which attempt to achieve such integration are termed ‘integrated conservation and development projects’, or ICDPs, which are further discussed in section 3.4.3 below.

Notwithstanding the primacy of the People and Parks debate, Ceballos-Lascurain (1991) emphasises that ecotourism should not be restricted to legally protected areas, as this would exacerbate pressure exerted on them. On the other hand, promoting ecotourism in areas which lack official protection could have the positive consequence of conservation of those areas by local populations out of self-interest, rather than exogenous constraints (ibid.). Boo (1990) notes the ongoing debate in some countries.
about the environmental impacts of locating tourist accommodation inside parks. She further suggests that locating facilities in the rural communities which surround parks would mean that communities receive greater benefits to offset losses arising from their inability to use the park and its resources freely. This is of interest for the Cathedral Peak ecotourism proposal, and will be further explored in Chapter 4.

### 3.4.3 ICDPs and rural development

“It can be expected that there will be a huge learning curve in developing and implementing ICDPs. It is not unwise to question whether they should even be attempted.”

(Brandon and Wells, 1992:567)

Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs) attempt to link the conservation of biological diversity in protected areas with local social and economic development. Very often, these projects are set up as an alternative to traditional law enforcement activities by conservation authorities, on the premise that it is both politically unfeasible and ethically unjustifiable to exclude people who live adjacent to protected areas from use of these resources, without providing them with alternatives (Brandon and Wells, 1992).

Although ICDPs are viewed as one of the major future directions envisaged for South Africa, numerous difficulties have hampered their performance worldwide (ibid.). In an analysis of 23 projects at 19 sites in 14 countries, Wells and Brandon (1992) concluded that many of the difficulties may arise from the fundamental conceptual issue of using development as a means to achieve conservation objectives. The end, they point out, is not development. This is backed up by the view of Adams:

“The primary objectives of conservationists are protected areas and species. Development, even if packaged as ‘sustainable development’ is attractive chiefly as a secondary strategy where it promotes their primary objective.”

(Adams, 1990:191)

This is of clear significance for the NPB’s envisaged role as a development agency, which is further discussed in Chapter 4. In fact, many of the ICDPs examined by Wells and Brandon were experiencing difficulty in meeting either their biodiversity conservation or their social and economic development objectives (Wells and Brandon, 1993). In addition, Lindberg and Huber (1993) note the circular relationship between conservation and ecotourism, where each supplements the other, and they are difficult to separate. This circularity has implications for attempts to fund conservation from the proceeds of ecotourism.

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11 See also Nelson, 1994.
12 As proposed by the RDP and Satour, see section 3.6 below.
International ICDPs which are considered to be amongst the most successful are the Annapurna Conservation Area Project in Nepal, and CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources) in Zimbabwe (Pleumarom, 1994). Neither of these initiatives are classical ICDPs, in that they are not driven by conservation bodies. Rather, they are rural development programmes which attempt to involve local people in conservation, ecotourism and sustainable utilisation of resources. CAMPFIRE is of particular significance for this dissertation, as local government in the form of district councils plays an important management role in this programme (Child and Peterson, 1991).

A number of effects of tourism which are shared by ecotourism are now examined to throw some light on the potential negative impacts of the industry. An examination of these characteristics in any great detail is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and it should be stressed that the following exposition of tourism effects cannot hope to represent these effects in their full scope and intricacy. Detailed investigations of the effects of tourism do exist in the literature - see, for example, Mathieson and Wall (1982), Boo (1990), De Kadt (1979) and Cater and Lowman (1994). However, an understanding of the broad range of issues which accompany tourism development, and an appreciation of their complexity, is essential in order to lay out the fundamental constituents of sustainable ecotourism. These basic principles will be used as a checking mechanism for the criteria for sustainable rural development generated in Chapter 2, to produce a consolidated list of criteria for sustainable rural ecotourism development.

3.5 Tourism effects and impacts

“We do not yet know the conservation and sustainable development value of ecotourism. Nor do we know to what extent its benefits can be maximised and its costs minimised. But, we do know that without planning and management, ecotourism will not succeed.”

Elizabeth Boo, Ecotourism Programme Officer, WWF (Boo, 1993:17).

Impacts of tourism which detract from its role as an agent of development can be broadly classified as being economic, social and biophysical. For the sake of structure, these broad categories are used in the following discussion. However, it must be emphasised that, in reality, no such discrete categories exist. For instance, economic impacts are almost always political as well, and both usually have social consequences. Social and cultural impacts are really part of a continuum of human issues. In addition, economic, social and political impacts occur within, are affected by, and in turn affect the ecological framework in which they are grounded. Impacts and effects of tourism which particularly defy classification into any of the three suggested categories, are considered individually, after the section on biophysical impacts.

Impacts may have very different effects on varying spatial scales - which may be classed as global, national, regional and local. Within the local scale, different communities or interest groups may perceive the results of tourism in very different
ways. The complexity of tourism impacts is compounded by the multi-sectoral nature of the tourism 'industry', mentioned above.

3.5.1 Economic impacts of tourism

Cassim (1993) points out that in economic terms, tourism can be important in income generation, linkages with other sectors of the economy and the creation of government revenue. The economic impacts of tourism may be discussed around three main issues:

- the foreign exchange effect;
- the multiplier effect; and
- the employment effect.

Additional comments concerning competition for land use, and economic aspects of tourism in protected areas, are made after discussion of the three major economic impacts of tourism identified above.

a. Tourism and foreign exchange

Tourism has been vigorously promoted in developing countries as an efficient way to relieve shortages of foreign exchange earnings which can slow economic development (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). This lobby is to be found in South Africa as well, as evidenced by the recognition in the RDP White Paper (South Africa, 1994a) of “the current significant level of foreign exchange earnings of tourism”, expected to be R700 million in 1995 (Cape Times, 1995a). Further growth of this foreign exchange is eagerly envisaged. Currently, the average foreign visitor to South Africa spends R7 800 (Business Report, 1995). Indeed, tourism frequently generates a sizeable portion of a country’s foreign exchange, and is very often a major pillar of the economy. In Rwanda in 1990, tourism to the Parc des Volcans (which protects the remaining mountain gorilla populations in that country) was the third largest source of foreign exchange for the country (Boo, 1990). On a national scale, and in macroeconomic terms, tourism is thus often regarded as a significant economic role player. The relative lack of protection of the global tourism market, compared to markets such as those for manufactured or primary goods, enhances the ability of tourism to generate foreign exchange and create jobs (Cassim, 1993). This lack of protection may have negative aspects as well, such as predominantly foreign ownership of certain areas of a country - this is discussed in section 3.5.1d below.

However, it appears that the nett economic benefits of tourism to developing countries may be overrated, because of “leakages” in the economy (Boo, 1990). The World Bank estimates that 55% of the gross tourism revenues to the developing world actually leaks back to the developed countries (Frueh, 1988; in Boo, 1990) - evidence for the structural inequality of tourism between First and Third World. Thus some commentators have described global tourism as “economic colonialism” (Prosser, 1994:28). Leakages from a host country occur because of repatriation of profits made by foreign investors, the need for promotional expenses abroad, substantial investments
for infrastructure and the import of costly items such as oil and consumer goods, as well as other reasons (Boo, 1990). This has led to the view, expressed by Elizabeth Boo, that: "Large scale international tourism development is far less beneficial to developing countries than has been claimed" (Boo, 1990:13). In the case of South Africa, Graham Matthews of the Economist Intelligence Unit maintains that the percentage expenditure on intermediate local inputs - such as locally owned hotels, locally assembled hire cars, local wines and spirits - is high, and thus foreign exchange leakage is likely to be lower than in many other tourist destinations (Matthews, 1995).

Apart from nett leakages out of a country as a whole, even less of the economic benefits of ecotourism remain in the host community, unless there is careful management (Oliver-Smith et al, 1989; Boo, 1990). A recent study by the Pietermaritzburg-based Institute for Natural Resources reveals that less than seven percent of the annual R80-million turnover (largely from ecotourism developments) of the Sabi Sabi Wildtuin, which is South Africa's richest game reserve, flows into the adjacent rural economy (Massyn and Steenkamp, 1995). This is why it is critical for local communities to gain as much control of the tourism product, and of the process of the product cycle, as possible (Prosser, 1994).

**International funding of tourism development**

Because developing countries often lack adequate internal financial resources, funding for tourism development is often obtained from international donors. Long-term effects of such external funding include capital and income leakage from the host area, as well as reduced autonomy (Odendal and Schoeman, 1990). As Elizabeth Boo cautions: "Large-scale tourism investments to attract people can be a risky use of foreign exchange" (1990:13). This can particularly have detrimental effects when the goal is community ownership and the promotion of self-reliance. The NPB has applied to the World Bank and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) for funding for the Cathedral Peak and other such projects (M. Haynes, NPB, Conservation Planner: Environmental Planning; pers. comm.), and thus these comments are of direct relevance for the Cathedral Peak ecotourism case study, as are the sections in Chapter 2 concerning multilateral aid agencies and development.  

**b. The multiplier effect**

This refers to a process whereby tourist spending filters throughout the economy and stimulates other sectors (Cassim, 1993) - in other words, the linkages of ecotourism developments to other sectors of the local economy. The multiplier effect is closely linked to the foreign exchange effect. For instance, import-intensive tourism development would result in a low multiplier effect due to high import leakages - as is often the case in developing countries (Cassim, 1993). An analysis of the multiplier effect of an ecotourism development can be useful in identifying sectors which can be
developed to increase linkages - for instance, the agricultural sector could be developed to provide the food requirements of an ecotourism facility\(^\text{15}\) (Lindberg and Huber, 1993).

Local economic development can be increased by improving linkages within the local economy, thereby increasing the amount of money retained by that local economy \(ie\) reducing leakages. Lindberg and Huber (1993) detail opportunities for reducing the leakage of tourism revenue:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Linkages within the tourism industry can be improved by training programmes so that local residents may fill skilled as well as unskilled positions, and financing programmes will enable local entrepreneurs to establish their own tourism operations.
  \item Improved linkages to the local transportation industry will encourage tourist use of local taxis, buses, horses and other modes of transport.
  \item To reduce the substantial tourism expenditures on food which is often imported from distant regions, local agriculture and fishing should be promoted to develop local sources of food.
  \item Linkages with local construction, equipment and maintenance sectors should be expanded.
  \item Local handicrafts and other souvenirs should be developed.
\end{itemize}

Although such linkages may develop spontaneously to meet immediate needs, proactive steps by community leaders, government officials and NGOs will ensure that maximum economic benefit is retained by the local people and their economy.

Apart from reducing leakages, local economies can be stimulated by the converse mechanism, which is increasing tourist spending (Lindberg and Huber, 1993). Additional revenues can be earned by developing infrastructure and services at or in proximity to ecotourism attractions. These could include accommodation, souvenir shops, handicraft stalls, cultural performances\(^\text{16}\), information centres, taxi ranks, produce markets and so on. Many opportunities were identified in the Baseline Report for such community-owned facilities, in order to ensure maximum retention of the revenue of the Cathedral Peak hutted camp in the local economy. Local cultural and economic traditions, as well as ecological considerations, should determine the form and location of these facilities.

c. Tourism and employment

Worldwide, the tourism industry currently accounts for one in fifteen jobs, while in South Africa, one in 25 people are employed in this sector of the economy (De Villiers, 1995). The disparity in these figures is held to be evidence for the potential in South Africa to greatly increase the number of jobs generated by tourism (\textit{ibid.}).

\(^{15}\) Discussed in Chapter 4 as a possibility for the proposed ecotourism facility at Cathedral Peak.

\(^{16}\) But see section 3.5.2 for negative cultural impacts of such performances.
Moreover, the appeal of the labour-intensive nature of tourism is both economic and political (Murphy, 1985), which further accounts for the fact that all key political players in South Africa have identified tourism as a means of stimulating economic growth (University of Cape Town, 1994).

However, the common assertion that tourism creates more jobs than any other sector should be treated with caution, bearing in mind the multi-sectoral nature of tourism itself\(^{17}\). According to the Reconstruction and Development Programme, agriculture is the sector which ultimately yields the largest number of job opportunities, with the exception of construction, for every additional unit of capital invested (ANC, 1994). Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that tourism is an important industry in terms of job creation. This is true both globally, and, on a national scale, in South Africa. The South African Tourism Board estimates that for every 30 additional visitors to the country, one extra job is created within the ecotourism industry itself, and, via the multiplier effect (of expenditure on locally sourced inputs), a further two employment opportunities are created in other sectors (Satour, 1994).\(^{18}\)

However, often local people are employed only in unskilled and menial positions in the tourism industry, which provide low wages (Odendal and Schoeman, 1990), while foreigners and other nationals fill lucrative positions which require specific skills.

d. Additional economic impacts

Tourism, economics and protected areas

At the national level, tourism can provide economic justification for the conservation of areas that might not otherwise be protected, through provision of a large percentage of the foreign exchange earnings of a country. An example of this is the case of Kenya, where strong management plans in parks such as the Serengeti National Park have helped to ensure sustainable volumes of tourism (Boo, 1990). Because of this sustainability, the Kenyan government is now able to obtain financing for game parks on the same basis as for any other economically viable development project (ibid.).\(^{19}\)

However, in a study by the WWF of ten protected areas in five Central American countries, none of the protected areas studied generated sufficient revenue to be self-sustaining, except Ecuador’s Galapagos Islands National Park (Boo, 1990).\(^{20}\) This highlights an important difficulty that conservation areas face: the need to generate money for conservation, particularly in the light of declining state subsidies, together with the need to ensure that communities living adjacent to the protected area receive

\(^{17}\) This means that it may often be difficult to assign jobs specifically to the tourism sector.

\(^{18}\) The proposed Cathedral Peak development would create a significant increase in the number of jobs available in the eMhlwazini ward - see discussion in Chapter 4.

\(^{19}\) Note that Kenya now receives more than 600 000 visitors annually, whose primary purpose is nature tourism (Boo, 1990).

\(^{20}\) This park now generates enough revenue to cover the park budget for all of Ecuador (Boo, 1990); however, there have been serious negative ecological and social consequences from the large volume of tourists to this small area (Wallace, 1993).
tangible benefits from that area. For conservation agencies to fill the role of development agent,\textsuperscript{21} money must flow out of the protected area to ensure a multiplier effect in the local economy.

**Inflation and land values**

A major negative impact affecting the social and economic well-being of host communities is the loss of control over local resources which often occurs with the development of tourism. Very often, this occurs through the inflationary consequences of tourism (Mathiesen and Wall, 1982). One such primary consequence is the increase in prices of goods in local outlets to levels beyond the reach of locals, in response to the ability of rich tourists to pay such prices. Another such consequence is the inflation of land prices as a result of competition for land from potential buyers in destination areas (Murphy, 1985; Mathiesen and Wall, 1982). In many coastal areas of Spain, local Spaniards have been effectively closed out of the land market as a result of such inflation of land prices (Oliver-Smith \textit{et al}, 1989). A similar situation is occurring throughout South Africa where areas of communal land are being sold by tribal authorities to developers without the consent of the community as a whole, effectively alienating such people from land (Cross, 1995).\textsuperscript{22}

Apart from the above factors which may limit the economic potential of tourism, most of the criticisms of tourism have been concerned with the its negative non-pecuniary effects (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). These are the largely unquantified social and biophysical costs, which will now be discussed. Critics have suggested that these costs may be of sufficient magnitude to support arguments against the further expansion of tourism (Bryden, 1973).

3.5.2 Social impacts of tourism

Social impacts refer to the changes in the quality of life of residents of tourist destinations, as a result of the tourism activity (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). Impacts on the cultural and historical environment are also included under this heading. Societies and cultures change all the time, but rapidly induced changes which result in a reduction in the effectiveness of a society may be seen as negative impacts. The negative social effects of tourism may range from disrespectful tourist behaviour to increased prostitution and the erosion of cultural and spiritual values (Pleumarom, 1994).

When tourism is introduced into rural areas, interaction between local communities and people from other cultures is increased. In this way, tourism can serve as a catalyst for social change. In an extensive review of literature on the social impacts of tourism in

\textsuperscript{21} Refer to section 4.3.4.

\textsuperscript{22} This could be a potential danger for the eMhlwazini residents, who live on communal land.
developing countries, Mathiesen and Wall (1982) state that, if beneficial effects are considered to be those which are conducive to the survival of the social systems of destination areas in an unchanged form, their review reveals very few positive effects of tourism. They summarise the negative effects of tourism, which collectively contribute to the homogenisation of societies, as the following:

- the overcrowding of infrastructures, accommodations, services and facilities which tourists have to share with the local population;

- the display of wealth in surroundings of poverty, which may reinforce locally unattainable socio-economic aspirations, leading to discontent, changing social roles for the host population, and, possibly, explosive situations;

- the employment of non-locals in positions of greater responsibility, with higher salaries, than those available to members of the host community;

- the increase in activities considered to be undesirable, such as prostitution, gambling and crime; and

- the gradual erosion of indigenous language and culture, as increasing numbers of the host society speak the language of their visitors.

The first summarised effect essentially refers to the irritation over the inconvenience tourism brings to local life, which can be reduced if local people see more individual and community benefits arising from the tourist-host interaction (Murphy, 1985). Local involvement can also ensure that the individual character, in terms of heritage and culture, of a destination is emphasised. In this way, tourism can become a “vital force against the world-wide homogenisation of culture” (Murphy, 1985: 151). Additional comments on the effects of tourism on local culture are presented in the following section.

Tourism and cultural change

Literature on tourism documents changes induced through contact between societies with different cultures (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). Most studies propose that cultural changes occur mainly to the indigenous society’s traditions, customs and values, rather than to the visiting group; and that there is a move towards a gradual homogenisation of culture (ibid.). However, often it is difficult to separate changes induced by tourism form those which are the result of other processes of modernisation. The dominant perspective is that tourism has negative consequences for culture (Turner and Ash, 1975; in Mathiesen and Wall, 1982). Much depends on the type of tourism, and nature and extent of contact between tourists and hosts. Clearly, true ecotourism would

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As for any form of local development, one must question what actually constitutes truly local involvement. As Cater (1994:13) points out: “The interests of a local elite may be as far removed from those of the community as those of foreign entrepreneurs".
minimise cultural impacts, as the ecotourist would accept and try to understand local customs. However, as stated earlier, the label ‘ecotourism’ must be earned, and thus one cannot assume the presence of the social responsibility that is implied by the term.

Very little evidence exists for the suggested positive effects of tourism on culture. Contemporary tourism seldom generates strong intercultural relationships, and misperceptions between cultures are often perpetuated rather than destroyed (Hassan, 1975; in Mathiesen and Wall, 1982). In addition, culture often becomes commoditised, particularly in developing countries, in the form of specially staged festivals, ceremonies and dances. Abundant examples exist in South Africa, of, for instance, ‘Zulu’ villages and gumboot dances. It is difficult to generalise about these phenomena - most are the “cultural mirages” of Boorstin (1961, in Mathiesen and Wall, 1982), but much depends on specific circumstances. Clearly, however, cultural forms may lose their traditional meanings when they are modified for tourism consumption (Mathiesen and Wall, 1982).

3.5.3 Biophysical impacts of tourism

Physical impacts of tourism are those impacts which affect the biophysical environment, i.e., land, air, water, fauna and flora. As has been stressed, tourism, and, by definition, ecotourism, are reliant on the natural resource base for their existence. Yet, very often, fragile ecosystems which are the key resource are threatened by tourism.

Tourism - a consumptive or non-consumptive industry?

The following comments may be seen to apply to social, as much as to biophysical, effects of tourism. Much has been made of the non-consumptive nature of the tourism industry, and particularly ecotourism (Borchert, 1995), which is put forward to validate its suitability as the ultimate form of sustainable development. In fact, “tourism destroys tourism” in certain areas, if the popularity of a region causes overcrowding and environmental degradation (Boo, 1990:8). It follows that ecotourism is particularly vulnerable to this self-destruction. Thus, far from being non-consumptive, tourism should be seen as an exploitative process, comparable with the extraction of a primary resource such as iron ore or timber (Prosser, 1994). Trekking tourists in the Nepalese Himalayas consider themselves to be ‘eco-conscious’ and ‘green’ - but the demands they place on resources of fuel wood and their output of refuse, which greatly exceed those of the native population, are far from sustainable (Gurung and De Coursey, 1994).

As Rees (1990) notes, the consumptive use of ecological resources of ecotourism means that it can only be sustained indefinitely if the resources are treated as capital stock, and not cut into. In addition, the scale of ecotourism development is an important consideration with respect to ecological integrity. Thus, for ecotourism developments,

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24 PheZulu in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, KwaZulu/Natal is one such example.
small scale implies low numbers of tourists and minimal facilities, which means less ecological intrusion (Cater, 1994b).

In addition, ecotourists, like all other tourists, have to reach their destinations, which they do via the consumption of more fossil fuel and the emission of more exhaust gases (Prosser, 1994) - a situation incompatible with ecological sentiments. Thus promoting ecotourism development in far-off lands can be viewed as paradoxical (Hall and Kinnaird, 1994).

**Considerations of carrying capacity**

Carrying capacity is closely linked to the consumptive nature of tourism. For recreational sites, carrying capacity has been defined as "the maximum level of visitor use an area can accommodate with high levels of satisfaction for visitors and few negative impacts on resources" (Boo, 1990:xv). In ecological terms, carrying capacity has been defined as the capacity of an ecosystem to support healthy organisms while maintaining its productivity, adaptability, and capability of renewal (IUCN, 1991).

In the interests of environmental sustainability, many planners have switched from maximum use estimates to using “tolerable levels” of visitation, which can be sustained over time (*ibid.*). Carrying capacity or tolerance levels have ecological, social and aesthetic components. Measures of tolerance levels are difficult to obtain, as basic statistical tools and information on visitor numbers and activity patterns are often lacking. However, indications of carrying capacity are important for protected areas in that they must be used to develop management guidelines and visitor limits, as well as the design and expansion of tourist activities in a park (Boo, 1990). Ecological degradation as a result of tourism activities in protected areas may result in irreversible alteration of the ecosystems which a particular protected area seeks to preserve.

Wallace (1993) points out that, rather than setting a number which indicates the carrying capacity for a park, good zoning with site-specific regulations may be far more useful in reducing negative impacts on soil, vegetation, wildlife, or other people’s experiences. Note that zonation is the approach adopted by the Natal Parks Board for the management of the Natal Drakensberg Park.

**3.5.4 The fickle nature of tourism - the tourism product cycle**

Tourism has been characterised as a “fashion industry” (Prosser, 1994:23), and certainly the demand-supply relationships in tourism are peculiarly dynamic. Prosser outlines the typical product cycle for tourism\(^\text{25}\), which begins with the “discovery” of a destination by “explorers”, and progresses through various stages of increasing numbers of tourists until mass package tourism is reached (Prosser, 1994). The

\(^{25}\) Note that all the phases of this product cycle do not necessarily occur in all destinations, and the time scale of the cycle may vary widely (Prosser, 1994).
important features of this cycle are decreasing control by local people as tourist numbers increase, together with increasing impacts, increasing control by industry and decreasing contact with local people. Mass tourism is also usually accompanied by social disruption, which has been explained as entailing “increased community displacement, societal translocation and cultural transformation” (ibid.).

The moving on of the product cycle may result in collapse of the local economy of a no-longer fashionable area which has relied solely on ecotourism. In addition, success can spoil if a region’s popularity causes overcrowding and environmental degradation (Boo, 1990). This highlights the necessity for tourism to form part of an integrated development strategy for a region, where the planning framework is designed to accommodate cyclical changes (Odendal and Schoeman, 1990). It is important to realise that ecotourism developments in protected areas should likewise be integrated into the larger development plans for a region (Durbin and Ralambo, 1994; Boo, 1990). Careful planning with links between levels can ensure that maximum benefits are achieved at local and regional levels, and allows for mitigation of detrimental sociocultural and ecological impacts (ibid.).

Despite the fact that globally, and certainly in South Africa at the moment, tourism is a growth industry, not all destinations will share that growth. Apart from loss of “fashion” status, tourism is generally an unstable source of income, as it is greatly influenced by uncontrollable factors such as:

- political instability
- weather
- international currency fluctuations

Clearly, international tourism would exhibit greater instability than domestic tourism, with respect to political instability and currency fluctuations. Although ecotourism is often characterised as low-impact tourism, it is true that greater differentiation (in the form of ecotourism) of the increased tourist demand may be even more penetrative than existing mainstream enclave tourism (Prosser, 1994). Much depends upon the attitudes of tourists, the responses of the destination areas, and the sense of responsibility of the tourism industry.

The fluctuations in tourism exert their negative effect particularly at the local level. Local economies may become very closely tied to these fluctuations, while national economies are generally more diversified and thus less likely to be significantly affected by tourism’s vagaries. Exceptions to this general rule are countries such as Belize, where tourism contributes almost 90% of the GDP (Boo, 1990). People at the local and regional level may have very few other options. In addition, traditional rural activities such as agriculture, logging and hunting, may be limited precisely because of a park or protected area (Boo, 1990) - this is the other side of the argument often employed by conservationists that ecotourism development in protected areas must provide benefits to surrounding people, in order to reduce pressure on parks.
3.5.5 Seasonal nature of tourism

Many destinations are only seasonally popular for ecotourism. Apart from the fact that it is inefficient and costly to have capital equipment and labour idle during parts of the year (Boo, 1990), this implies possible hardship for rural people if there are no jobs available during the off-season. Such problems could be compounded if the peak tourism season coincides with periods when the demand for agricultural labour is high.

3.5.6 Mass ecotourism - a contradiction in terms

There have been criticisms that sustainable forms of tourism, such as ecotourism, which can prove effective as small-scale, locally controlled projects, cannot contend with continued growth of tourist numbers (Prosser, 1994). Because tourism is driven in part at least by the forces of fashion, image and status, tourism operators actively seek out new destinations and experiences for a competitive edge. This is what Wheeler (1992) sees as “the diametrically opposed and widening divergence that exists between the slow, steady, selfless, cosy, back to nature, sustainable, eco-friendly, controlled small-scale solution to tourism problems and the realities of globally, a capitalist society with inbuilt growth dynamics”.

A converse opinion holds that mass ecotourism is not necessarily contradictory. It is the assertion of Western (1993) that the co-option of the ecotourist label by almost any group remotely connected with nature or culture travel is dictating a new focus for ecotourism. Thus Western (1993) feels that ecotourism is shifting from a definition of small-scale nature tourism to a set of principles applicable to any nature-related tourism. Writing in the same publication of the Ecotourism Society, Andersen (1993) disagrees, stressing the need for limits to the growth in ecotourism:

“If ecotourism is to live up to its potential for contributing to environmental quality, it must necessarily remain a small niche in the huge global tourism industry. It must remain a grass roots effort firmly based in local economies. It cannot become purely a vehicle for profit. It must be a source of local pride and involvement.”

(Andersen, 1993:148)

The latter approach is more compatible with the focus on local-level community-based development in order to maximise sustainability, adopted in this dissertation.

The converse situation to mass ecotourism, ie the targeting of niche markets - ideally high spending groups with minimal adverse impacts - has been suggested as a means to avoid the damaging effects of mass ecotourism (Hall and Kinnaird, 1994). This has the unfortunate connotations of elitism and social inequity. In addition, if this targeting is restricted to ecotourism developments, and not to destinations as a whole, there is no guarantee that a destination will escape the momentum of the tourism product cycle, which, it has been postulated (Prosser, 1994), leads to mass tourism. Once again, this
highlights the necessity of well-planned local tourism strategies, which form an integral part of a regional development strategy.

“Governments, and local communities must have the wisdom, foresight, and political courage to view ecotourism as a limited-growth opportunity and not as unbridled development that strangles the environment.”

(Andersen, 1993:117)

To this end, a community should not rely solely on ecotourism for economic support.

“Although ecotourism may be seen by some as a saviour for economically depressed areas, it must be part of a balanced long-term economic plan involving other sustainable industries.”

(Andersen, 1993:117)

3.5.7 Some implications of the scale of ecotourism facilities

The issue of appropriate scale of an ecotourism facility has been touched on in the above discussion. A few additional comments are made in this section concerning this topic.

As Jenkins (1982) has pointed out in a much quoted paper, the most appropriate scale for a tourism development depends upon the objectives of that development. If the objective is to promote the international tourism sector and economic development, then the most efficient route\textsuperscript{26} is to develop large, exclusive, upmarket facilities. In this case, tourism would be primarily oriented towards satisfaction of the expectations of international tourists. However, if environmental compatibility and the maximisation of community control and minimisation of socio-cultural impacts are the objectives\textsuperscript{27}, then small-scale, low intensity developments may be more appropriate. For example, small-scale developments usually present lower barriers to entry of indigenous capital and management (\textit{ibid.}). Not all objectives are compatible, Jenkins suggests. These comments have implications for the Cathedral Peak ecotourism development proposal, which constitutes a large (200 bed), upmarket facility, and is intended to target international, as well as domestic, visitors.\textsuperscript{28} In addition, it is the stated intention of the Natal Parks Board to meet RDP objectives of community empowerment through integrated conservation and development projects such as this. Questions can be raised about the ability of this development to meet what Jenkins (1982) terms the incompatible objectives described above.

\textsuperscript{26} In terms of infrastructure and operational efficiency, as well as marketing impact.

\textsuperscript{27} Note that objectives may differ at local, regional and national levels, highlighting the importance of linkages between these levels, as expressed in Criterion 4 of the ten criteria for sustainability.

\textsuperscript{28} See Chapter 1 for a description of the Cathedral Peak project proposal.
Thus the scale of an ecotourism project, together with the particular socio-economic and cultural characteristics, as well as the natural resources of an area will determine what levels of local involvement are most appropriate (Brandon, 1993).

In general, the scale of an ecotourism facility should be appropriate for two major factors (Andersen, 1993):

♦ the present ability of the local community to operate and maintain it; and
♦ the capacity of the environment to support the facility.

As Murphy (1985) points out, small-scale tourism facilities that match local resources and institutional capacities serve to minimise leakage of tourism revenue and the loss of local control. South African rural areas such as the area surrounding the Cathedral Peak State Forest often have limited institutional capacity and there is often great pressure on resources, pointing towards the suitability of small-scale ecotourism facilities to ensure the maximisation of local control.

3.5.8 Capital-intensive or not?

Although inappropriate development has become virtually synonymous with capital-intensive development, the key factor really lies in the previously identified criterion for sustainability which emphasises that development should arise out of local priorities and needs. A rural community may well identify capital-intensive development as the preferred form, if economic benefits through job creation are viewed as of a higher priority than community management and control. Where communities are well supported by developmental agencies such as rural development NGOs, and funding can be found for intensive skills building, community management and control can be progressively achieved. Thus capital-intensive ecotourism development cannot be viewed as inappropriate per se - much depends on the local context.

The above sections have highlighted some of the major effects and impacts of tourism in general, and, in some cases, of ecotourism, which may have implications for the sustainability of tourism development. Sisman (1994) has suggested that, to ensure ecotourism development avoids these negative effects, countries need to set unambiguous policies which are consistently interpreted (Sisman, 1994). The following section explores current South African policies concerning ecotourism.

3.6 Tourism in South Africa - context, policies and shift towards community-based tourism development

3.6.1 Historical context of tourism in South Africa

The inequitable and exclusionary nature of tourism in South Africa has meant that most of the country's citizens have never been tourists, nor hosts of tourists (Dor, 1995). Thus, as noted in section 1.3.3, it is critically important that the envisaged future growth in this industry serves to redress past inequalities. The promotion of
Community-based tourism is seen as one of the mechanisms to achieve this goal - see section 3.6.6 below. However, the past structure South Africa’s tourism industry has contributed to a lack of community interest and involvement in tourism, in that it has focused on promoting international tourism and foreign visitors (Gentle, 1995). Communities have often suffered, rather than benefited from tourism, through:

- destruction of the environment through various tourist activities and developments;
- relocation of people to make way for tourist development; and
- separation of communities from their land and source of livelihood by fences demarcating land solely for tourist activities (Dor, 1995).

In addition, the encouragement of domestic tourism has mainly been confined to wealthier, mostly white, South Africans. These shortcomings of tourism in South Africa have been compounded by government, which has tended to marginalise tourism - even today, the national Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) has a staff of only two people in the tourism division (Dor, 1995).

The historical nature of tourism in South Africa has a converse as well. The fact that many people were prevented from pursuing a broad range of leisure and cultural activities in the past, means that tourism has an important nation-building role to play (Gentle, 1995). In addition, there is an important educational role for tourism in spreading a more appropriate account of the past, and as well as in promoting South Africa’s cultural diversity. The following section examines the role envisaged for tourism within the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

3.6.2 The RDP and tourism

Although the RDP Base Document points to an increase in both the domestic market and in international tourism, great emphasis is placed on the ability of tourism to generate foreign exchange, and to ease the balance of payments. It is recognised, however, that resources should be locally sourced, to reduce leakage. To this end, tourism should be “carefully integrated into provincial and local-level programmes” (ANC, 1994:107). In addition, ecotourism and the promotion of South Africa’s unique cultural and political heritage are to be prioritised, and community involvement in tourism projects encouraged. The latter action should involve formation of partnerships with other organisations, and community initiation and ownership of enterprises. The importance of community skills training, access to finance, and connections with marketing infrastructure, to ensure the success of community-based tourism ventures, is recognised.

This emphasis on community involvement in tourism links up with the strategy presented earlier in the Base Document which stresses the need for:

“participation of communities in management and decision-making in wildlife conservation and the related tourism benefits”

(ANC, 1994:40).
The involvement of communities in tourism projects is part of a process of reconstruction and development which "must take place in tourism in view of the distortions created by apartheid" (ANC, 1994:106).

The treatment accorded to tourism in the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (Notice 1954 of 1994) is limited to one paragraph. The necessity for the foreign exchange earnings from tourism to grow is underlined. The role that tourism can play in rural development is noted as follows: "Ecologically sound development practices with improved economic opportunities for local communities offer important models for rural development" (South Africa, 1994a:28). Furthermore, it is stated that the government should consult with public and private sector interests, as well as community stakeholders, to establish the "most productive patterns of development in the industry" (ibid.).

Clearly, the growth of international tourism is considered desirable for the RDP, to boost foreign exchange earnings. Thus, a cautious and well-planned path should be followed to prevent or reduce the associated negative impacts and effects of such tourism, outlined above.

3.6.3 The ecotourism policy of Satour

The South African Tourism Board (Satour), established as a marketing body for tourism in South Africa, has recently been actively formulating policy on tourism, and in particular, much work has been done towards developing ecotourism policy (Satour, 1994; Fabricius, 1995).

Satour's National Ecotourism Policy Framework

Central to the 1994 "Policy Framework: Tourism and the Environment" (Satour, 1994) of the South African Tourism Board (Satour) is the belief that, by employing "the principles of community participation", ecotourism can provide tangible benefits to disadvantaged people, particularly in the rural areas where they are most needed. Many of the principles of the RDP are reflected in Satour's policy framework. Particularly, ecotourism development should provide:

- equitable access to resources;
- sustainable yield; and
- community benefits.

The key to maximising the benefits of tourism and long-term sustainability is seen to be effective involvement of all stakeholders, namely tourists, local communities and the tourism industry (Satour, 1994).
Stakeholder involvement should be based on three pillars, which are:

- joint decision-making by stakeholders;
- joint responsibility and accountability of stakeholders; and
- joint sharing in benefits derived.

More recent ecotourism policy published by Satour has stressed that, in South Africa, the main goal of ecotourism should be the general upliftment and improvement in the quality of life of all people (Satour, 1995). Local communities should be actively encouraged to participate in ecotourism ventures as true partners and shareholders, and partners and shareholders in a particular area, such as conservation authorities, private tourism operators and the local community, should make joint decisions, take joint responsibility and share in the benefits of that particular area (ibid.).

In addition to its ecotourism policy framework, Satour has recently drafted a preliminary tourism policy framework within the context of the RDP, based on the premise that tourism can contribute significantly to the goals of the RDP through stimulating the economy and generating jobs (Fabricius, 1995). This preliminary tourism RDP framework outlines targets for specific challenges which fall within the five key RDP programmes.

The stated vision within this policy framework is that tourism will grow so "substantially and appropriately" that it will become "the major economic force in the country", while contributing significantly to improving the quality of life of all South Africans (Fabricius, 1995). This major growth of tourism will take the form of a "new wave of tourism", which is sensitive, sustainable, and generates major socio-economic benefits to both the country as a whole, and all its people (ibid.). One should bear in mind the cautionary note sounded by Jenkins (1982) - not all these objectives may be compatible.

3.6.4 Future developments in tourism on the national policy level

A new White Paper on Tourism, intended to set out tourism policy and structures for the development of a sustainable industry, is due to be published in September 1995 (Holomisa, 1995). This policy document will be followed by the necessary legislative framework (ibid.). In addition, a set of national guidelines for sustainable development of ecotourism facilities within official protected areas, as well as on private land, is to be generated. A clear role is seen for ecotourism in the stabilisation and promotion of an even flow of jobs and prosperity between rural and urban areas, and between expanding and declining regions (ibid.).

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29 In the form of a brochure entitled “Ecotourism - Principles and Practice” (Satour, 1995).
30 Which are: meeting basic needs, development of human resources, building the economy, democratising the State and society, and implementing the policy framework.
Furthermore, the restructuring of the board of Satour is about to begin. It is uncertain whether this restructuring will satisfy present calls for the establishment of a new National Tourism Council, in which all stakeholders should address tourism policy - see below.

Stakeholder involvement in shaping tourism policy at the national level.

An Interim Tourism Task Team has been mandated by a plenary of stakeholders in the tourism industry, set up by the Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, to draft a new vision, principles and structure for tourism. Issues such as the development of tourism in a way which is acceptable to communities, job creation in communities and a greater focus on domestic tourism have been on the agenda of this task team (Dor, 1995). In addition, the task team has suggested the establishment of a South African Tourism Council, structured along the lines of NEDLAC and with the relevant linkages to NEDLAC, to assure the participation of all stakeholders, and in particular people representing communities, in order to redress the current underrepresentation of communities in debates on tourism (ibid.). It is proposed that this National Tourism Council should comprise, initially at least, delegates from organised business, organised labour, the State, and from communities, in the form of Sanco, NGOs, and rural groups (Gentle, 1995).

The following section examines some elements of Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs) as they appear in South Africa.

3.6.5 ICDPs in South Africa - elements and examples

A number of private sector and state conservation agencies have introduced several innovative Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD) initiatives, based on the provision of tangible benefits to neighboring communities. Box 1 describes some of the elements to be found in ICDPs in South Africa. The emphasis of these integrated initiatives is on negotiated solutions, and, to this end, partnerships are formed between a variety of organisations. Partnerships have been formed between varying combinations of state or provincial conservation bodies, the private sector, NGOs, CBOs, and communities. Three possible forms for these partnerships are now briefly discussed.

An example of an ecotourism partnership between a national conservation body and rural communities is the Richtersveld National Park, which is a contractual park

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31 The policy-making role of Satour has been criticised as leading to a conflation of marketing with strategy, of which it is only a component (Gentle, 1995).
32 The National Economic Development and Labour Council, established as a mechanism of consultation, coordination and negotiation, to build consensus on economic and development policy and promote the implementation of the RDP (South Africa, 1994a).
33 The South African National Civics Organisation.
34 See section 3.4.3 for a general introduction to Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs).
established in 1991 (Robinson, 1992). The land in the Park is communally owned, with management being achieved by means of a joint management committee comprising staff of the National Parks Board and members of the Richtersveld communities. Currently, these communities are planning the development ecotourism lodges. In this Park, local nomadic pastoralists remain in the reserve. Encouragingly, the need for conservation initiatives to become part of wider, regional integrated development strategies, in order to approach long-term sustainability is recognised by the National Parks Board (ibid.). In addition, the need for site-specific models to be developed for each project which attempts to link conservation with rural development is identified, in line with the local emphasis of the ten criteria for sustainability of this study. Thus it is stated that: “the habitat, culture of the people, their aspirations and perceptions will influence a model finally developed for a particular area” (ibid.).

**BOX 1 Some elements of ICDPs in South Africa**

The following are elements to be found in ICDPs in South Africa:

- paying a percentage of entrance revenues to local communities
- where profits from conserved areas are small, channeling funds earmarked for development into needy neighbouring areas
- community harvesting of resources, such as fish, thatch, reed, grass, wood, and traditional medicine inside the conservation area
- establishing community reserves
- establishing a range of ecodevelopment projects and attractions such as cultural villages, in tribal areas surrounding conservation areas
- allowing local pastoralists to remain in conservation area under a “contract” system
- forming joint management committees between local communities, conservation authorities, and private operators
- channeling funds generated by tourism into social development programmes, such as building schools and clinics
- conservationists, private operators and NGOs making expertise and other resources available to neighbouring communities

(Synthesised from Satour, 1995a)

Concerning partnerships between the private sector and rural communities, the upmarket tourism facilities of Mala-Mala, Sabi-Sabi and Londolozi in the Sabi Sands Game Reserve all strive to involve local communities in some form of participation in management and decision-making. These organisations attempt, with varying degrees of success, to generate entrepreneurship in rural settlements nearby (Satour, 1995a).

35 Clearly, for maximum local involvement, empowerment and control, more than just the ‘influence’ of local people is required. This is an unfortunate choice of word, which does not accurately reflect the strong position developed by the local communities during the extensive negotiation which led up to the proclamation of this contractual park.
Chapter 3. Ecotourism and Sustainability

The Conservation Corporation (Conscorp) has perhaps been the most successful of the three in engaging local communities in the integration of conservation and development. Around its Londolozi reserve and the Phinda Resource Reserve\(^{36}\), clinics, classrooms and water provision have been facilitated through the establishment of the Rural Investment Fund. The purpose of this fund is to facilitate the development of self-generating economies around the core industry of ecotourism, in the areas of skills training, regional infrastructure, social services and small business development\(^{37}\) (Geach, 1995). In addition, the fund channels international investment and the donation of capital into sustainable rural development projects (ibid.). Community utilisation of resources such as wood, thatch and medicinal plant harvesting are encouraged.

Trilateral ecotourism partnerships between conservation agencies, the private sector, and local communities are another possible form for ICDPs in South Africa. This variation is the one favoured by the KwaZulu/Natal Department of Nature Conservation (KDNC), which is described in Chapter 4.\(^{38}\)

Whatever the particular form of the ecotourism partnership formed, community benefits range from the mere provision of jobs and access to resources to the more innovative promotion of other economic benefits, such as the development of vegetable gardens, charcoal production, service centres, the operation of transport and community laundry centres. These initiatives, together with the establishment of formal channels of communication with local communities by state conservation organisations\(^{39}\), are slowly resulting in an improved perception of conservation by the neighbouring communities.\(^{40}\) However, few of these partnerships approach community control and management in any meaningful way. The following section focuses on partnerships centering around community-based ecotourism development, where this criterion for sustainability may be achieved.

3.6.6 The shift towards community-based ecotourism

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, community-based tourism projects would be a key area of intersection with the criteria for sustainability generated in Chapter 2. There has been a relative lack of meaningful community participation in tourism in this country to date. This is in line with the global paucity of examples of community managed ecotourism (Brandon, 1993).

Concerning the international community-based tourism initiatives which do exist, there is consensus that the Tourism for Discovery project documented by Saglio (1979, in

\(^{36}\) A 17 000ha reserve opened in 1991.

\(^{37}\) Including brick-making, carpentry, sewing, transport and charcoal manufacturing.

\(^{38}\) Refer to Box 2.

\(^{39}\) Such as the Neighbour Liaison Forums of the Natal Parks Board, in areas where these exist - see Chapter 4.

\(^{40}\) Evidence for this is a recent survey conducted in the area surrounding the Pilanesberg National Park, where a number of initiatives linking conservation and rural development have been instituted, indicating that over 70 per cent of local people supported the continued existence of the park (Satour, 1995).
Boo, 1990) in Lower Casomance, Senegal, has been one of the most promising and successful community-based ventures to date (Boo, 1990; Horwich et al, 1993). This project illustrates the effectiveness of what Cater (1994b) has suggested is perhaps the most vital general principle of sustainable tourism - the need to increase truly local involvement. In brief, this West African project essentially consisted of simple accommodation, built of local materials and in local style, managed by local people (Boo, 1990). The venture was established initially at the local, village level, and has proved to be acceptable to both hosts and (international) guests in Senegal (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Horwich et al, 1993). Little capital investment was required, and the project also attempted to include the local economy in all tourism activities, such as the provision of canoes for transport and the preparation of meals planned around local products and traditional cuisine (Boo, 1990). Fourteen years after the establishment of this facility, it still remains one of the few examples, world-wide, of a successful community-based tourism venture (Horwich et al, 1993), indicating that there are valuable lessons to be learned here. In addition to the important principles of local control and management, this project indicates the important of context-specificity for developmental sustainability. As Boo (1990:18) stresses:

“Tourism best aids the economic development of a region through the use of as many local materials, products and people as possible.”

The success of this project further vindicates the emphasis placed on communities at the local level for sustainability of development. As Murphy (1985:165) notes, in a work detailing a community approach to tourism:

“The growing emphasis on a community responsibility should continue, since this industry uses the community as a resource, sells it as a product, and in the process affects the lives of everyone.”

The development of community-driven tourism projects in South Africa is mainly in the experimental stage, with initiative for projects tending to come from NGOs and CBOs (Saunders, 1995). South African examples of community-based ecotourism facilities include the development of a community-run rustic tented camp at Kosi Bay in Maputaland. In this project, a group of local communities is being assisted by an NGO, the Community Resource Optimisation Programme (CROP), to run this tented camp. Other community-run ecotourism facilities are being planned, of which the Lebatlane game farm, owned by the Bakgatla people, is an example (Satour, 1995).

Some land claimants for areas of land within national parks are seriously considering the option of utilising the land to be regained for developing tourism facilities (Satour, 1995a) - one example of this concerns communities living adjacent to the Kruger

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41 Regrettably, information about this venture is from secondary sources. However, it is felt that the rarity of successful and well-established community-based tourism ventures justifies inclusion of this example.
42 North-eastern KwaZulu/Natal.
National Park in the Northern Province (R. Wynberg, Consultant, Environmental Evaluation Unit, UCT; pers. comm.). To this end, a skills training programme is being developed in the office of the Minister of Land Affairs, financed by the German aid agency GTZ, to enable such communities to develop the skills needed for running ecotourism facilities (*ibid.*).

**Financing community tourism development projects**

The necessity for communities to enter into joint ventures with NGOs, the private sector, or both, in order to develop community-based ecotourism facilities is based on the need for community skills training in tourism and administration, as well as the difficulty communities experience obtaining finance (Saunders, 1995). Pending legislation, to be promulgated by the national Ministry of Land Affairs, aims to secure the land rights of rural dwellers in the former homelands (*Cape Times*, 1995b). Secure land tenure means that rural dwellers would possess collateral with which to obtain funds (Saunders, 1995). Legislation has also been submitted on a new type of land holding institution, a communal property association, which would hold land on behalf of community members, who would control the land (*Cape Times*, 1995b). This promises a future distinct legal entity for community cooperatives, which could serve to facilitate funding of community-based tourism ventures.

Concerning funding for rural community tourism projects, CROP suggests the following structure:

\[\begin{align*}
\pm 40\% & \text{ community ownership;} \\
\pm 40\% & \text{ a consortium of carefully selected private investors; and} \\
\pm 20\% & \text{ NGO.}
\end{align*}\]

(Saunders, 1995)

CROP envisages that such an entity could approach financial institutions specialising in SMMEs, or other institutions, for loan funding. The institution would need to put up the collateral for 40% of the loan, as the NGO and private investors would put up the remainder of the collateral (Saunders, 1995). There is a role for the tourism development branch of the relevant local government as well, possibly in allocating subsidised loans, which could be available from Satour, as part of their RDP tourism development strategy (Fabricius, 1995). Without a government role, or NGO or donor role, there is little chance that community development projects will get off the ground at the moment. Thus, government has a critical role in facilitating access to funds for such projects (Saunders, 1995; September, 1994).

Although there have been many calls for a national Tourism Development bank to be set up, to channel funds into tourism industry developments, both the banking community and the government are not favourably disposed to this proposal (Saunders, 1995). Such a bank could be a channel for government funds, as well as overseas aid and funds. As such, standard operating mechanisms could be built in to ensure that any
conditions attached to funding, and in particular to overseas aid, would not result in the negative social and environmental consequences discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

### 3.7 Summary of the main characteristics of ecotourism which may affect its function as an agent of development

Drawing from the foregoing discussion in this chapter, the main characteristics which affect the ability of ecotourism to serve as an agent of development may be summarised as follows:

- Although there are many interests which operate in all forms of development, the **multi-sectoral nature** of the tourism industry means that the **number of stakeholders** involved will be greater than for other forms of development. This highlights the necessity for forming partnerships of stakeholders for a tourism development. Ecotourism, through its close linkage with protected areas, will often involve conservation agencies. Ecotourism development initiatives which fail to achieve power-sharing partnerships with all relevant role-players will not be sustainable, and will fail to achieve the idea of social responsibility which partly defines ecotourism.

- The propensity for leakage from the local economy of the revenue of tourism, and especially where there is a strong dependence on international tourism, means that the host community might suffer social inconvenience and yet receive very few benefits from tourism. To reduce this leakiness, local input into tourism should be maximised, together with local control of tourism. Linkages within the local economy should be maximised. The local community should control both the product and the process of the product cycle of tourism, particularly in the light of the international organisation of tourism.

- Tourism can cause **negative social effects** on communities ranging from inconvenience to social disruption. There is very little evidence for the potential positive social impacts of tourism. The reliance of ecotourism on the cultural resource base, as well as its penetrative nature, means that ecotourism might result in even greater social disruption than mainstream enclave tourism. The socially responsible component of ecotourism cannot be taken for granted. This further highlights the need for local control over tourism by the host community/communities, so that the values and culture of local people may influence tourism development, and not vice versa.

- Because of the **strong reliance of ecotourism on the natural resource base**, growth in ecotourism such as that envisaged for South Africa can result in overcrowding and environmental degradation. The linkage of ecotourism to protected areas means that the potential exists for the degradation of what is intended to be conserved. Sound environmental management is the baseline for successful tourism operations. If this occurs, there is a corresponding positive potential for the
improvement of the natural resource base, particularly where ecotourism facilities are developed by communities in legally unprotected areas.

◊ The inherent fickleness of the tourism industry, which applies to ecotourism destinations as well, means that local economies which rely heavily or solely on tourism could be significantly affected negatively, should the destination lose its attractiveness for tourists. Thus paradoxical situation arises where ecotourism (in particular) appears to be eminently suited as a development agent for remote rural areas where no resources or infrastructure to support other forms of development seem to exist. Yet ecotourism itself is a risky sole basis on which to found a local economy. To reduce instability in the local economy and the associated negative social impacts, including increased migration, ecotourism should form part of an integrated regional and local rural development strategy which aims for diversity. In addition, promotion of the domestic tourism market may help to smooth out some of the cyclical effects associated with international tourism.

◊ The scale of ecotourism developments affects both the nature and degree of local participation possible. Generally, large-scale, capital intensive tourism facilities which target the international market and require substantial, often international loans for their funding may preclude any meaningful local control. Where development is a priority in an area, as it is in the rural districts of the former homelands of South Africa, small-scale ecotourism developments which do not require large amounts of external capital can maximise local control and ownership, thereby facilitating both the empowerment of people and an improvement in the quality of their lives.

◊ Unless there is a firm commitment to the contrary, tourism has tended to perpetuate rather than reverse inequitable patterns of wealth and power, with local communities receiving very little in the way of secondary spinoffs, and with employment for local people often being restricted to menial jobs which serve to entrench rather than challenge the status quo. Thus, to redress historic inequalities and promote empowerment of disadvantaged communities, ecotourism development in rural areas must be approached with an understanding of the socio-political context, and a strong commitment to reversing both economic and power relations.

◊ Integrated conservation and development projects (ICDPs) offer potentially mutual benefits for both local communities and conservation. However, these benefits are not often achieved, for a number of reasons. Primary reasons include the fact that development is a secondary objective for the conservation agencies which drive these projects; these agencies are often cash strapped, especially in the light of falling state conservation subsidies; and staff suitably qualified in developmental issues are in short supply.

◊ The struggle for control over resources between internal and external interests is a dynamic and continual aspect of tourism development. When external interests predominate, local people may become alienated from their land and effectively
closed out of the land market by the inflation of land prices resulting from foreign investment in tourism. In rural areas of South Africa, including former KwaZulu areas, pressure for development has resulted in the sale of communally owned land by tribal authorities, without broader consultation, for tourism development, resulting in the permanent loss of that land for the members of the community (Cross, 1995).

Inherent in the nature of ecotourism is a focus on the importance of the educational aspect, both in terms of the natural and cultural resource base. Thus ecotourism developments can play an important role in the dissemination of information and the provision of skills training.

The above are some of the most pertinent peculiarities of tourism in general, and ecotourism in particular, which have implications for the sustainability of ecotourism developments. Although representative of the main issues, the tourism industry is highly complex and thus the above summary should be seen as a tool to facilitate comparison with the criteria for sustainability. In order to ascertain whether the ten proposed criteria are indeed suitable for the assessment of the sustainability of ecotourism development, the intersection between tourism's characteristics and the criteria for sustainability is now examined - a mental overlay, as it were. It will be seen that the characteristics generally serve to reinforce the criteria for sustainability proposed in Chapter 2. In addition, the above characteristics also serve to modify those criteria, to some degree.

3.8 Intersection between the core criteria for sustainability and the characteristics of ecotourism

As Nelson (1994) has stressed, equity is the key component of sustainable tourism development. This is clearly so in the light of tourism's past track record of perpetuating inequitable patterns of distribution of wealth and power, the role of external interests in tourism, the socio-economic context of the rural areas where ecotourism may be used to promote development, and the role of conservation bodies as agents of development, as discussed above. Thus the necessity for the overarching emphasis on the justice issues of redistributing wealth and opportunities, and rebuilding viable, self-reliant communities, which is inherent in the core criteria for sustainability, is reinforced by the characteristics of tourism.

In addition, the negative social impacts of ecotourism necessitate the emphasis on local control and management (Criterion 3), and the need for development to occur within partnerships where local people have real power (Criterion 4). Where these criteria for sustainability are present, and the use of local resources is maximised (Criterion 6), leakages from the local economy of the revenue from tourism can be minimised. All development is embedded in the ecological framework; however, the strong reliance of ecotourism on the natural resource base, together with the frequent linkage of ecotourism to protected areas, means that particular attention should be paid to the
maintenance of the existing resource base (Criterion 7). Failure to achieve this may result in the self-destruction of an ecotourism destination.

The question concerning the ability of ecotourism to address the priorities of local people (Criterion 1) is a context-specific concern, which can only be addressed in a specific locality and situation. Disadvantaged communities may or may not see a role for ecotourism facilities in their socio-economic development. However, avoiding the “homogenisation” of development which is implemented as a standard, blueprint solution, would serve, along with the requirement of Criterion 4 that development should occur within meaningful local-level partnerships, to reduce the negative social and cultural impacts of tourism. The propensity of tourism to cause negative social and cultural changes in host communities highlights the necessity for Criterion 10 - in order to be sustainable, development should promote local culture and social organisation.

These negative social and cultural impacts can be further reduced through the promotion or entrenchment of public participation (Criterion 2). The multitude of stakeholders in the tourism industry, together with the historical power relations, on both global and local scales, means that the formation of meaningful partnerships of roleplayers is both challenging and essential. Only through the formation of power-sharing partnerships with other stakeholders, particularly developers and conservationists, can local communities gain a sense of ownership over their development. The effect of the scale of ecotourism developments on the extent and nature of public participation means that small-scale developments may be the most appropriate for maximising community participation, and, preferably, ownership and control. In addition, small-scale ecotourism developments increase self-reliance (Criterion 5), in that they may lend themselves more to the use of technology that is appropriate for both construction and maintenance, than may larger scale developments that are more capital intensive. Small scale developments may also promote self-sufficiency in food production (Criterion 5), in that less land is removed from the agricultural sector. Also, the additional food requirements of a limited number of guests are far more likely to be within the agricultural productivity of an area, thus promoting sustainable use of local resources (Criterion 6) and reducing economic leakage from the area. Thus, in assessing the sustainability of ecotourism development, attention should be paid to the implications of the scale of the ecotourism facility.

The emphasis in ecotourism on educational aspects, when present, reinforces Criterion 9, which emphasises the necessity for capacity building through skills building and training for developmental sustainability. This emphasis, however, requires a proactive effort to translate into action. As far as Criterion 9 is concerned, on the lowest level, ecotourism facilities which provide employment for local people will provide tangible benefits to local communities. This must, however, be accompanied by increased local control and management.

Essentially, the characteristics of ecotourism of relevance for its role as an agent of development serve to reinforce the core criteria for sustainability. Moreover, the effects and impacts of ecotourism which can reduce the sustainability of development on the
local level fall, to a large degree, within the ambit of the ten core criteria. However, an examination of the characteristics of tourism highlights the importance of adopting a holistic and integrated approach to development. Tourism, arguably more than any other form of development, necessitates a holistic approach capable of integrating the myriad of interests of the various stakeholders and sectors across the dimensions of space and time (Boo, 1990; Cater, 1994a).

The core criteria are intended to be applied within the umbrella of broad environmental sustainability – that is, an holistic, integrated approach. It is necessary, however, to stress the need for integration on a more specific scale. Much evidence exists for the fickle nature of tourism as a ‘fashion’ industry, and the need for ecotourism to be only one component of an integrated and diverse local and regional economy. This is covered by Criterion 4, but needs to be stressed for ecotourism development. As Prosser (1994) points out, the crucial issue for ecotourism is controlling any development within the “adaptation thresholds” of the local environment. Once key social and ecological thresholds are crossed, positive feedback takes over and environmental (in the broadest sense of the word) degradation accelerates. Thus tourism should be only one element in a local economy, and possibly not even a dominant element (Andersen, 1993). The sustainability of an ecotourism development in a rural area should thus also be assessed in terms of the presence or absence of links to an integrated local development strategy. Prosser (1994) suggests that tourism should perhaps only be used in the earlier stages of the development of an area, and phased out later as income gained from it is invested to improve agriculture and to diversify the local economy. Then, if a destination is no longer fashionable or the local population no longer wants tourists, “There will be life after tourism” (Prosser, 1994:36). Much depends on the specific socio-economic context of an area and the priorities of the local inhabitants, as well as what constitutes the most suitable forms of land-use for that area.

3.9 Conclusion of this chapter and restatement of criteria for sustainability

The ten core criteria for sustainability proposed in Chapter 2 have been shown to be suitable for the assessment of the sustainability of rural ecotourism development, within the overall context of the broad definition of environmental sustainability. A factor to be stressed is the necessity for ecotourism to form part of an integrated and diverse local economy, wherever possible. The ten core criteria are re-stated in point form below.
Chapter 3. Ecotourism and Sustainability

In order to approach true environmental sustainability, rural ecotourism development should:

1. Address the priorities of local people;
2. Promote, and preferably entrench, community participation;
3. Promote local control and management;
4. Occur within a meaningful local-level partnership, with strong links to regional/national-scale planning;
5. Promote self-sufficiency and self-reliance;
6. As far as possible, use existing local resources;
7. Ensure the maintenance or enhancement of the existing resource base;
8. Promote capacity building;
9. Provide tangible benefits to local communities; and
10. Promote local culture and social organisation.

Moving to a specific case study, the following chapter assesses the sustainability of the proposal by the Natal Parks Board to develop a 200 bed ecotourism facility in the Natal Drakensberg Park, in the light of the above proposed criteria for sustainability of ecotourism development in rural areas.
# Chapter 4

**Ecotourism and rural development - a case study in the Natal Drakensberg Park**

## 4. Ecotourism and rural development - a case study in the Natal Drakensberg Park

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4. Ecotourism and rural development - a case study in the Natal Drakensberg Park

"The courage and imagination of the ecotourism facility developer can become the cornerstone of a new awareness."

(Andersen, 1993:133)

4.1 Introduction

Although ecotourism is seen to be a “powerful tool for rural development” (Satour, 1995), the majority of the people living around the Cathedral Peak section of the Natal Drakensberg Park have yet to receive any tangible benefits from this form of development. Indeed, the area is characterised by extreme underdevelopment, with very few opportunities for formal employment, extremely low per capita income levels and a reliance on income from migrant labour (75% of the formal jobs in the eMhlwazini ward) and pensions. Reliance on income from migrant labour is associated with a corresponding disruption of the social fabric, which does not augur well for the existence of viable, self-reliant communities - a special focus of the criteria for sustainability generated in this study.

The development proposal to be assessed in this chapter, introduced briefly in Chapter 1, is the proposal by the Natal Parks Board (NPB) to develop a 200 bed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak in the Natal Drakensberg Park. Prior to considering this proposal in more detail, it is necessary to examine the institutional structure of the NPB, as well as their envisaged role as an agent of development. To this end, relevant aspects of NPB policy are presented, and possible shortcomings of the NPB as a developmental body are highlighted. This is followed by a discussion of the proposed hutted camp development, largely in terms of its form and scale, as documented in the Draft Project Brief (NPB, Appendix 2, Baseline Report). Assessment of the proposed development in terms of the criteria for sustainability generated and refined in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively is then carried out. During the course of this assessment, various recommendations are made which could maximise the sustainability of this ecotourism development. Conclusions are then drawn from this assessment, which identify several alternatives to the development proposed by the NPB.

4.2 The institutional structure of the Natal Parks Board

Founded in 1947, the Natal Parks Board is a statutory conservation body which administers protected natural areas in the KwaZulu/Natal province. The NPB is managed by an Executive Board, the members of which are appointed for a three year term by the Provincial Government of, formerly, Natal, and now KwaZulu/Natal (Parris and Grobler, 1994). The NPB is currently merging with the two other provincial nature conservation bodies of KwaZulu/Natal, namely the KwaZulu
Department of Nature Conservation (KDNC) and the former Natal Provincial Administration Department of Nature Conservation. The result of this merger will be a new conservation body, which will have a new mission statement and will operate under a new provincial ordinance (Ron Physick, NPB, Deputy-Director: Northern Parks; pers. comm.). There is much current debate concerning the exact nature of the new entity to be formed - *ie* statutory body or provincial department. However, reputable sources involved in the merger indicate the strong likelihood that the new agency will be a statutory body (R. Davion, Institute of Natural Resources, researcher; pers. comm.). This is likely to please the NPB, who believe that a statutory body has several advantages over a government department in respect of financing, decision-making, coordination and public relations (Parris and Grobler, 1994).

### 4.3 The Natal Parks Board as an agent of development

The NPB’s motivation for the development of a hutted camp at Cathedral Peak has included the existence of substantial opportunities for building both the local and regional economies, and for developing its human resources (Baseline Report). It is clear that the Natal Parks Board sees a role for itself as an agent of development. A brief overview of relevant policies\(^1\) of the NPB serves to cast some light on the main objectives and vision of this organisation, which have implications for the proposed ecotourism development at Cathedral Peak. As the latter development is still in the planning stage, an understanding of the NPB’s policy will assist the process of assessment to be conducted, by indicating the approach to development which the NPB has adopted.

#### 4.3.1 Mission statement of the Natal Parks Board and Policy File excerpts

The Natal Parks Board’s mission is:

> “To conserve the wildlife resources of Natal and the ecosystems and processes on which they depend, and to assist all other public groups in ensuring the wise use of the biosphere.”

(NPB, 1993)

For the NPB, to conserve means to ensure the survival of indigenous fauna, flora and natural ecosystems; the promotion of public environmental awareness; and the provision of nature-orientated outdoor recreation. Wise use signifies that which will maintain biological diversity and ensure sustainable utilisation of all resources.

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\(^1\) The Baseline Report contains a section on the policy of the NPB, which should be referred to for additional detail. It is not the author’s intention to duplicate this work, but rather to highlight relevant policy aspects which will inform the assessment to be conducted. To achieve this, some policies are discussed in more detail in this section than occurs in the Baseline Report.
An important element of the Board’s mission is to provide public access to protected areas. Further, the Board should:

“support Natal’s ecotourism industry by providing, on a self-funding basis, visitor facilities and experiences which are compatible with the Board’s mission”

Thus, it is part of the NPB’s mission to develop ecotourism facilities, usually in the form of hutted camps, which should be self-funding. Furthermore, on the subject of hutted camps, the relevant section in the Board’s Policy File\(^2\) states that the Board undertakes, amongst other things, to:

- include self-catering accommodation units in all new hutted camp developments;
- offer a range of accommodation from basic rest huts to luxury units wherever possible; and to
- incorporate the full cost of associated infrastructure into viability studies.

The mission statement of the NPB should be read in conjunction with the four core strategies identified by the Board in order to enact its mission (Hughes, 1993). These strategies may be summarised as follows:

1. to achieve universal acceptance among the people of KwaZulu/Natal and South Africa of the economic and aesthetic values of conservation;

2. to further increase the Board’s contribution to social stability through economic development in the region (this strategy stresses the need to promote and develop ecotourism and improve the use of protected areas as catalysts for rural development);

3. to ensure that the Board’s activities continue to receive adequate funding; and

4. to broaden support for NPB as the appropriate conservation authority for KwaZulu/Natal.

The second core strategy listed is of particular relevance for the assessment of the NPB’s development proposal, as it illuminates the NPB’s objectives in the realm of ecotourism. Clearly, ecotourism development and the use of protected areas to kickstart development in rural areas are seen as mechanisms to contribute to social stability, by stimulating regional economic development. Specific actions to be taken by the Board in order to achieve the desired economic stimulation through ecotourism are spelled out, as part of this core strategy.

\(^2\) The NPB Policy File has been compiled by the NPB in order to provide a ready reference to policy decisions taken by the Board.
To this end, the Board has identified the need to:

- optimise employment opportunities;
- stimulate local entrepreneurship;
- initiate and support community projects;
- empower adjacent communities through training and the transfer of skills; and, in so doing, it must
- actively seek funds to create projects to meet community needs (Hughes, 1993).

4.3.2 The Neighbour Relations Policy of the NPB

“The NPB’s neighbour relations programme encompasses a suite of development initiatives to ensure that the benefits of protected areas are passed to neighbouring communities.”

(NPB, 1994)

Formally launched in September 1992, the objective of the NPB’s Neighbour Relations Policy (NRP) is to guide and develop interaction with neighbouring communities. The fundamental concept of the NRP is that neighbours may “validly lay claim to more attention than the public at large” in terms of the right to benefit from protected areas (NPB, 1992). The introduction to the NRP indicates two major sources of motivation for this programme: firstly, to counter the increasing pressure being placed on protected areas, as experienced throughout the world, because of increasing populations of poor people; and, secondly, to address the criticism, which is accepted as fair, of the Board’s “past management style (which) has been the lack of respect for local black communities” (NPB, 1992).

The NRP has a five-pronged approach, which involves concurrent activities to be undertaken with communities around protected areas:

1. Creating trust;
2. Developing environmental awareness;
3. Facilitating access to material and spiritual benefits of protected areas;
4. Fostering the economic and social development of neighbouring communities; and
5. Training NPB staff for effective participation in neighbour-related activities.
Three main programmes have been launched to make conservation and protected areas more relevant to poor communities. These are:

1. To encourage participation in “relevant” protected area management and planning by creating Neighbour’s Forums;
2. To foster economic and social development to contribute to an improved quality of life; and
3. To enhance environmental awareness.

Detailed action plans, which specify responsibilities for initiating these steps, are provided for each of the main programmes. The following action plans are set out for the fostering of economic and social development:

- Address basic social needs of neighbouring communities;
- Encourage preferential employment for local people;
- Involve local entrepreneurs in areas such as the granting of tenders for the supply of materials and services, the provision of catering and tour guide services, and the provision of accommodation outside reserves;
- Develop peripheral wildlife resource areas, within neighbours’ territory, which are suitable for “extractive utilisation of wildlife resources”; and
- Undertake staff training in skills required for neighbour relations programmes.

4.3.3 Furthering the aims of the RDP through Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs)

The NPB believes that integrated nature conservation and development (ICD) will make an important contribution to the process guided by the RDP. This it will do by:

- realising the economic role of regional conservation initiatives; and
- effecting fundamental changes to the NPB’s institutional structure and capacity.

“In the context of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, it is the NPB’s belief that conservation which incorporates community participation, provides substantial and sustainable development opportunities, particularly in impoverished rural areas.”

(NPB, 1994:8)

A clear rural development role is thus seen for ICDPs managed by the NPB. Specifically, these projects must incorporate community participation for development

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3 Refer also to section 3.4.3 for some background on ICDPs.
4 No clear indication is given of the direction in which this restructuring is to proceed. Note that the restructuring of parastatal organisations such as the NPB is, however, a requirement of the RDP. It is to be expected that restructuring will occur during the merger with the KDNC.
to be sustainable. The definition of sustainable development adopted by the NPB is that of the Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). In addition to recognising the importance of participation, the NPB realises that the ability to influence decisions concerning resource allocation is necessary for the long-term success of development activities. Interestingly, the document containing the NPB’s proposal for funding to meet the needs of the RDP has some resonance with the ideas of sustainable rural livelihoods (Chambers, 1988) discussed in Chapter 2, and which inform the criteria for sustainability adopted in this dissertation. This is clear from one of the basic principles underpinning NPB’s model for integrated conservation and development in KwaZulu/Natal, given as:

“Rural-based conservation and development must enable the poorest people to meet their basic rights and needs and sustain their livelihoods, while protecting the resource base.”

(NPB, 1994:11)

The NPB’s proposal for funding to meet the needs of the Reconstruction and Development Programme clearly echoes the major themes of the Neighbour Relations Policy, by proposing a “model for rural development which encompasses protection of the natural environment integrated with nature-based tourism, the sustainable use of wildlife resources, and contributions to the economic and social development of communities outside of protected areas” (NPB, 1994:1). A particular role is seen for the NPB in providing the “critical institutional support to complement, facilitate and coordinate processes” (NPB, 1994:1). Furthermore, funding is seen as the catalyst, which in the hands of the “conservation development agency” (NPB, 1994:9), can remove constraints to development. Finally:

“The development and empowerment of people is fundamental to the NPB’s integrated conservation and development programme. This provides social and economic benefits while safeguarding the environment and its resources so that options are not foreclosed.” (NPB, 1994:10)

In the light of the current merging of the NPB with the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation (KDNC), it is important to examine the policy of the latter organisation regarding ecotourism development and local community involvement. This is contained in Box 2. A stronger emphasis than that of the NPB, on ensuring a meaningful role for neighbouring communities in ecotourism partnerships, may be discerned in the KDNC’s ecotourism policy. This is particularly so in the encouragement of a shareholder role for local communities by the KDNC. In addition, the provision by the KDNC of tangible benefits to neighbouring communities in monetary form represents an area of divergence from the policy of the NPB concerning neighbour relations.

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5 Refer to section 2.5.5.
6 As described in Box 2.
BOX 2 KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation Policy

Previously known as the KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources (KBNR), the KDNC has been operating for the past thirteen years, largely in Northern KwaZulu/Natal and Maputaland, which they term as “one of the poorest areas of the sub-continent” (KDNC, 1994a). It is the belief of the KDNC that conservation can only be pursued through the joint management of the environment with affected communities, and to this end, the KDNC has developed a “Policy of Sharing” (KDNC, 1994b). The implementation of this policy results in the return of 25% of the revenue received from protected areas to the adjacent communities. Payment of the 25% of revenue from tourism is made to the local tribal authorities - a system which has resulted in much criticism. For instance, it was reported that few of the local communities of KwaDapha, adjacent to the KDNC-administered Kosi Bay Nature Reserve in Maputaland, had seen the benefits of this money (Green, 1992). In 1986, the KDNC included elected representatives of the adjacent communities, known as Community Liaison Officers, at management meetings. In addition, the KDNC has set up several community conservation areas (CCAs), which are areas of special resource importance to the community, managed, with the assistance of the KDNC, by the community.

Joint venture companies, in the form of tripartite alliances between private operator, host community and conservation authority, are being created to develop and operate tourism facilities within KDNC-managed protected areas. In Maputaland, the KDNC advocates the development of a number of small, low impact tourism facilities in the area, to create a “meaningful economic base”. KDNC identifies tourism sites, and specifies the nature of development. Developers are encouraged to include various representatives of the host community as shareholders in their business. It is the belief of the KDNC that the budget and expertise of private enterprise place it in a prime position to develop competitive tourism facilities.

The KDNC believes that ecotourism development should create secondary entrepreneurial opportunities, in areas such as laundry, catering, field guiding, and the tendering out of curio sales, to stimulate local business. Ecotourism development should be compatible with the primary objective of the protected area and should not be at the expense of the environment. In addition, ecotourism facilities must be sensitive to the culture of the host community. The sustainable harvesting, within protected areas, of natural resources such as reeds, timber, thatching grass, medicinal plants, fish and intertidal organisms by neighbouring communities is encouraged by the KDNC.

An important element of the KDNC’s ecotourism policy is the harnessing of local skills, as well as the training and transference of skills. Importing of staff and leakage of salaries and wages out of an area should be avoided, according to the KDNC. Local communities must be involved in decision-making processes, and should be jointly accountable, with the other ecotourism partners. Furthermore, ecotourism development activities should supplement the environmental budget. The KDNC has recently called for a newly structured, far-reaching environmental authority in KwaZulu/Natal, which should derive its mandate from community support.

It is the belief of the KDNC that there are two areas in KwaZulu/Natal where conservation is the only viable land-use option. One of these areas is the Drakensberg, which supplies 24% of the province’s water and 9% of the country’s water, and is of outstanding scenic and recreational value. The other such area is the northern tip of KwaZulu/Natal, which encompasses Ndumo Game Reserve and the Tembe Elephant Park, as well as land immediately across the border in Mozambique.

Information in this box has been obtained from KDNC (1994a) and KDNC (1994b).
4.3.4 Multiple roles for the NPB?

The previous chapter briefly examined the various different stakeholders or role-players in ecotourism development. In this case study, the NPB is assuming the roles of authority, as the conservation body in charge of the ecotourism area, as well as the tourism operator. It does this in keeping with the aims expressed in its mission statement, discussed above. This is also in line with the 1992 White Paper on Tourism (South Africa, 1992), in which conservation authorities are seen to have an important role to play in tourism development. The publication of a new White Paper on Tourism is expected in September 1995 (Holomisa, 1995), which will outline current policy in this regard. The emphasis on creating partnerships with local communities for tourism development, which is clearly expressed in Satour’s most current publication on ecotourism (Satour, 1995), is present in the NPB’s Neighbour Relations Programme. One of the action plans of the NRP, which is the responsibility of the Officer-in-Charge (OIC) is to devise and implement programmes to encourage local entrepreneurs to develop accommodation facilities outside reserves (NPB, 1992).

A number of factors serve to severely constrain the capability of the NPB to promote development in neighbouring areas. These centre around lack of funding and resources, and a shortage of suitably qualified staff to facilitate development (Davion, 1995). Much of the responsibility for implementing the NRP falls to the Officers-in-Charge, who mostly lack both the developmental skills and the time required. In the case of Cathedral Peak, the previous (until May 1995) warden had not yet set up a Neighbour Liaison Forum, although he had been in that position for 2 years. The NPB has a corps of Environmental Awareness Officers (EAOs) and Environmental Awareness Assistants (EAAs) whose role is to facilitate environmental awareness and generally promote community liaison. In addition, “NPB environmental awareness staff act as facilitators for the development process in rural areas” (NPB, 1994:66). However, there are only two EAAs for the entire Drakensberg (R. Molefe, NPB, EAO: Northern Drakensberg; pers. comm.) - and the NPB manages 18 protected areas in the Drakensberg! Despite this, the NPB estimates that it could manage rural development projects with an annual value of approximately R30 million (NPB, 1994).

Apart from the extension work of the environmental awareness staff, the NPB sees an important role for itself in the facilitation of funding for development projects (R. Physick, NPB, Deputy Director: Northern Parks; pers. comm.). Both seed funding development projects directly and motivating for funding from outside aid agencies have been carried out by the NPB. An example of the latter motivation for funding is the procurement by the NPB of Swiss funding to build two schools in the Drakensberg (ibid.). The NPB believes that international donor funding is the most suitable option for projects which extend beyond its state-subsidised conservation function. This is...
believed to be so, given the inadequacy of local and national funding sources, and "the perception that priorities lie with national housing, health and education" (NPB, 1994:69). In this regard, it should be noted that Satour has recently made proposals for an extensive governmental role in the channelling of funding for ecotourism development, as part of its contribution towards furthering the goals of the RDP (Fabricius, 1995).¹⁰

Apart from the NPB's lack of capacity to serve as a development agent, there are many who question the suitability of conservation agencies serving as development agencies. As Adams (1990) has pointed out, the primary objectives of conservation authorities are "protected areas and species" (Adams, 1990:191). Development is desirable as a secondary strategy only, to promote their primary objective. At a recent seminar organised by the Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM), the topic of which was "Conservation institutions in the new South Africa", much discussion centred around the lack of clarity on the role of conservation agencies. The usurpation of the role of community development agencies by conservation agencies was felt to be mainly the result of a vacuum that was not being filled, and it was stated that this usurpation was being challenged from all quarters (D. Grossman, Chair of the seminar, GEM, 1994). In addition, the opinion has been expressed that conservation agencies are attempting to take on the role of local government, for which they lack both the resources and the skills. In the words of Eddie Koch:

"Conservation authorities may be tempted to take on the role of the municipalities, which is more than they have the capacity to do, and which could have dangerous results."

(Eddie Koch, speaking at a People and Parks seminar, GEM, 1994)

This is a subject which will be returned to in Chapter 5, when the role of local government, and the interface between communities and conservation bodies, will be discussed.

The structure and policies of the NPB have been highlighted briefly, to illustrate the stated objectives which should guide the NPB's approach to development. This provides the context for the assessment of the NPB's proposal for an ecotourism development at Cathedral Peak - which will be conducted in section 4.5. Prior to this assessment, further details of the NPB's project proposal, introduced in Chapter 1, are now presented.

4.4  The proposal by Natal Parks Board to develop an ecotourism facility at Cathedral Peak

The case study to be assessed in section 4.5 of this chapter centres around the proposal by Natal Parks Board to develop a 200 bed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak in the Natal

¹⁰ Refer to section 5.7.
Chapter 4. Cathedral Peak Case Study

Drakensberg Park\textsuperscript{11}. This section provides additional detail to that contained within Chapter 1 concerning this development proposal.\textsuperscript{12}

The proposed hutted camp facility would increase the spectrum of accommodation facilities offered to visitors in the area, in keeping with the Board's mission to provide nature-based visitor facilities in the protected areas under its jurisdiction. Existing accommodation at Cathedral Peak comprises the Cathedral Peak Hotel, which is a privately owned resort, and the NPB campsite. The proposal to develop a hutted camp at Cathedral Peak occurs within the context of the proposed upgrading of the existing campsite, day-visitor facilities, entrance gate and craft market\textsuperscript{13}.

The proposed hutted camp would consist of two development sites, the lower-lying Park headquarters site and the upper Tryme shelf site (Plate x), which would be linked by an access road. A total of 63 accommodation units are planned, of which 30\% would be two-bed units, 60\% four-bed units and 10\% six-bed units. It is envisaged that the bulk of the infrastructure would be situated on the lower site, and would consist of a restaurant, a reception and curio area, conference facilities and approximately half the accommodation units. The remaining half of the accommodation units would be located on the upper site. The accommodation units would consist of self-catering and non self-catering units, with the latter in close proximity to the proposed restaurant.

To ensure harmony with the surroundings, the accommodation units and other buildings would be thatch roofed and their architectural character would blend in with the colours and hues of the natural landscape. Visitor activities for the proposed development would be resource-based, and would include hiking, nature trails, vehicle tours up the adjacent Mike's Pass, and trout fishing. No plans for the building of recreational facilities have been formulated - the draft project brief states that the intention is not to provide "resort type" facilities, but that those types of facilities compatible with "the image and ethics of a protected mountain environment" should be considered.

A total of 81 jobs will be provided by the proposed hutted camp, of which 70 jobs could be expected to be drawn from the neighbouring community (Baseline Report, Volume 1). As stated above, the preferential employment of local people is a component of the NPB's Neighbour Relations Policy.

\textsuperscript{11} No formal development proposal has been formulated by NPB. Thus, as for the Baseline Report, information concerning the project proposal has been drawn from the draft project brief, the statement of intent and concept layout (see Appendices, Baseline Report), as well as verbal interaction with the Planning Division of NPB.

\textsuperscript{12} Therefore, see also section 1.6. Volume 1 of the Baseline Report contains full details of the Cathedral Peak development proposal.

\textsuperscript{13} Interaction between the NPB, the craft-makers (a group of some 8 to 10 women), and an anthropology student has resulted in the facilitation by the NPB of the building of a traditional Zulu hut at the entrance gate to the park, to provide shelter for the women and attract tourists (Oosthuizen, 1994). Now the NPB plans to upgrade this existing facility.
As stated in the NPB draft project brief, the aim of the Cathedral Peak camp would be “to provide a standard of excellence”, and the market profile for the proposed development would be considered as both domestic and international. Members of the NPB Planning Division believe that the minimum standard necessary to appeal to international visitors is that of camps such as Hilltop, Itala, Tendele and Giant’s Castle (M. Haynes, NPB, Conservation Planner; pers. comm.). According to NPB’s experience, a 200 bed camp is the optimal size in terms of financial viability and management efficiency (J. Parker, NPB, Head: Administration; pers. comm.). As well as economic viability, the following quote, from the NPB’s proposal for funding to meet the needs of the RDP, suggests other beneficial effects of a 200 bed ecotourism facility:

“...the major opportunity to generate employment, attract foreign ecotourists, generate rural livelihoods, and achieve sustainable use of natural resources, are (sic) ecotourism facilities which achieve a critical size of approximately 200 beds.”

(NPB, 1994:60)

Whether the suggestion that a large-scale, luxury huted camp presents the optimal development form for sustainable rural livelihoods is valid is highly debatable, in the light of Chambers’ major lessons for sustainable rural livelihoods (see section 2.5.5). Furthermore, in as far as the principles underlying the notion of sustainable rural livelihoods inform the criteria for sustainability generated in this study, this suggestion forms the subject of the assessment to be carried out below. 14

Since the NPB no longer receives a state subsidy for ecotourism development, there is a necessity for any new development to be an economically viable entity. The NPB do, however, accept that a degree of cross-subsidisation between ecotourism facilities is unavoidable for a conservation authority responsible for ensuring public access to protected areas (J. Parker, NPB, Head: Administration; pers. comm.).

A brief look at the NPB’s proposal for funding

The proposed huted camp development at Cathedral Peak is expected to cost between R20 million and R35 million 15 (J. Parker, NPB, Head: Administration; pers. comm.). The NPB has applied to the World Bank for funding “in general”, for this and other proposals (ibid.). However, prospects for obtaining this funding do not appear to be good (ibid.). Should World Bank funding be obtained, great care should be taken to ensure that attached conditionalities do not interfere with the achievement of social objectives, as contained within the policies of the NPB. 16 Another possible funding

14 See also section 3.5.7 concerning questions of scale and objectives of ecotourism developments.
15 Note, however, that no financial viability study, although requested by the Masters Group, was completed at the time of the preliminary environmental assessment.
16 Refer to sections 2.2.1, 2.4 and 2.4.1 for comments on World Bank funding.
source is the IDC\textsuperscript{17} - however, at 15.5\% interest, this will mean the payment of R5 million in interest by the NPB (ibid.). Clearly, the cost of finance plays an integral part in the cost of development. Ecotourism developments such as the Cathedral Peak facility require a period of five years to cover costs and become profitable, according to the NPB (ibid.). However, according to John Parker, NPB’s Head of Administration, Hilltop Camp\textsuperscript{18}, in the Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park, is becoming viable after only 18 months of operation. This success is partly attributed to the fact that Hilltop is seen as an attractive destination for foreign tourists. It is important to bear in mind that it is essential for the NPB to strive for financial viability at present, in the light of substantial government subsidy cuts over the past two years (J. Parker, NPB, Head: Administration; pers. comm.).

\section*{4.5 Assessment of the NPB’s proposed ecotourism development at Cathedral Peak}

\subsection*{4.5.1 Introduction}

At the end of Chapter 3, a list of core criteria for ensuring the sustainability of ecotourism development in rural areas was generated. These consolidated criteria place emphasis on equity issues necessary to redress the injustices of apartheid, which have resulted in the extreme socio-economic differentials characteristic of South African society today.

A socio-economic profile of the people living around the Cathedral Peak State Forest\textsuperscript{19} has been presented in Chapter 1, highlighting the extreme impoverishment of most of the inhabitants of the eMhlwazini ward which neighbours this section of the Natal Drakensberg Park (also referred to in this chapter as ‘the park’) (Plate 3). The high dependence on the income from migrant labour (27\% of the total monthly income of the sample population - Baseline Report), and correspondingly high proportion of migrant workers (18\% of the adults of the sample population - Baseline Report), is evidence of apartheid-induced social dislocation, and is a common predicament for the inhabitants of the former homelands. In addition, the \textit{per capita} income of the people of the eMhlwazini ward, as revealed by the social investigation conducted by the Masters Group, means that the eMhlwazini residents are poorer than the “very poor”, as defined by a 1993 worldwide survey on poverty\textsuperscript{20} (World Bank, 1993). Not unexpectedly, there is financial inequality between sexes, with female-headed

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{ie} the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa. In May 1992, the IDC set aside an amount of R600 million for the development of ecotourism facilities. By October 1994, only R57 million of this had been allocated, due to the high cost of borrowing this money. Hilltop Camp was funded through this scheme (NPB, 1994).

\textsuperscript{18}On which the proposed facility at Cathedral Peak is to be modelled, in terms of target market and facilities.

\textsuperscript{19}The portion of the Natal Drakensberg Park within which the proposed development would occur.

\textsuperscript{20}This survey defines the “very poor” as those families which can only spend up to R6 per person per day. Calculations based on information obtained during the social investigation conducted for the Baseline Report reveal that the average daily amount available per person in the eMhlwazini ward is R1,20.
households in the sample group earning on average R340 per month, compared to R443 for male-headed households (Baseline Report).

In the light of all of the above indicators of deprivation, the emphasis on equity issues implicit within the assessment criteria is felt to be of unquestionable importance for this case study.

The case study assessed here does not represent an operational development, but rather a proposal for development which is still in the planning stage. Furthermore, some important information needed for assessment under several of the criteria is lacking. For instance, the form of management of the proposed ecotourism development has not been spelled out by the Natal Parks Board, and thus assessment under Criterion 5 cannot be as comprehensive as would be desired.

The positive side to this lack of information and the early stage of this assessment is that many changes can still be incorporated to maximise the sustainability of the proposed development, should the current proponent so desire. In addition, the emphasis on participation and negotiation within partnerships of development stakeholders means that the form of the development can never be predetermined - it must evolve throughout the planning process, and indeed throughout the life cycle of the development. Thus it is the approach to development which will be assessed in this exercise, rather than the finished product.

To this end, the status quo of both community and NPB interests and actions will be discussed under each criterion, as well as salient aspects of the NPB's policy, as highlighted above, where the latter serves to illustrate the stated vision and intention of the NPB. Issues raised by the people of the eMhlwazini ward and documented in the Baseline Report provide an indication of the needs, priorities, interests and hopes of this neighbouring community. Where appropriate, distinction is made between three stages of the development process, namely planning, construction and operation. In addition, recommendations to maximise the sustainability of the proposed development are made throughout the course of the assessment.

The assessment process carried out in this chapter should be seen as complementary to the assessment documented in the Baseline Report. It constitutes a more conceptualised form of assessment, based on criteria which are specifically focused at the local level. Thus this assessment is intended to provide an alternative view on the Cathedral Peak development proposal - the view from the resource-poor periphery (Chambers, 1988). 21

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21 Refer to section 2.5.5 for a discussion of Chambers' ideas of sustainable rural livelihoods.
4.5.2 Assessment in terms of the criteria for sustainability

Criterion 1

Does the proposed development address the priorities of local people?

Discussion

Development that addresses the priorities of local people will ensure that a locally determined development pattern, which arises from the realities of the prevailing socio-economic conditions, is followed. Prior to answering the question formulated above, two basic questions need to be addressed:

- Has the NPB, as proponent of this development, ascertained the priorities of local people?
- What are the priorities of the neighbouring communities?

In answer to the first question, the NPB had not formally consulted the neighbouring communities prior to the commissioning of the Masters Group in January 1995 to conduct a preliminary environmental assessment of the proposal to develop a hutted camp at Cathedral Peak. As noted above, no Neighbour Liaison Forum had yet been established at Cathedral Peak. One of the stated steps in the creation of Neighbour Liaison Forums is to convene an inaugural meeting at which assembled interest groups define priorities for action at a local level (NPB, 1992). It cannot, however, be stated that the NPB was in ignorance of the needs of the neighbouring communities, for the following reasons:

1. The NPB was aware of the communities' need for land, which culminated in a march on the gate of the park on 28 January 1995 to demand the return of the traditional land of the amaNgwane tribe.
2. The NPB had facilitated the establishment of a community vegetable garden alongside the eMhlwazini River, 5 km from the park headquarters.
3. Controlled harvesting of fuelwood, from a stand of alien poplar trees, had been permitted for some time, as had controlled harvesting of thatching grass.
4. The NPB was aware of the overcrowded conditions at the nearest school, the Didima Primary School, and had donated some fencing wire to fence off an area where another classroom was being constructed.

Thus, although the NPB was aware of the living conditions of the neighbouring communities, no formal attempt, in line with the Board’s NRP, was made to ascertain the priorities of the local people.

22 Compiled from personal observation and discussions with various members of NPB staff at Cathedral Peak, as well communications with community members and teachers at Didima Primary School.
23 The land being claimed comprises the entire Cathedral Peak State Forest, up to the Lesotho border. All this land is currently state-owned, and managed by the NPB. Refer to section 1.5.2a.
In answer to the second question, the results of the social investigation conducted by the Masters Group do reveal, to a large extent, the priorities of the local people. This was not an explicit requirement of the Group’s terms of reference (TOR), and thus the questionnaire used was not structured specifically to reveal these priorities. However, interaction with people from the eMhlwazini ward, both formally and informally for six weeks, left a clear indication of these priorities. In addition, certain questions, such as those exploring the nature of the relationship between the community and the NPB, inevitably resulted in an identification of priority and need, as the community members expressed ways in which they felt the NPB could help them. It is necessary to sound a note of caution here, as the priorities indicated by the socio-economic survey were given as a reaction to a specific proposed development. The extent to which these identified priorities would have been different had no specific development proposal been cited, is uncertain.

Bearing this in mind, as well as the impossibility of ranking all the priorities expressed due to the non-rigorous nature of their identification, the overwhelming response of people when questioned about their attitude to the proposed development concerned jobs. 82% of the respondents in the eMhlwazini ward identified job opportunities and the associated income as the major positive impact of NPB’s proposed development. With 76% of the potentially economically active population lacking formal employment, the prevalence of employment as a priority amongst community members cannot be questioned. Apart from jobs and income, other priorities identified were:

- schools, particularly a secondary school;
- land for grazing;
- a technicon or university;
- environmental education for black schoolchildren - the NPB was perceived as only assisting white schoolchildren in this way;
- greater access to resources such as wood, grass and herbs;
- creches; and
- adult education facilities.

Conclusion

In terms of providing employment opportunities and increased income, the proposed development could be seen to be addressing the priorities of the local people. However, it would be important for the NPB to formally assess, through consultation, these priorities. Negotiation around these priorities, and the fitting of the development proposal to the needs of the people, would then allow for context-specific development. Unlike the imposition of ‘blueprint’ forms of development, this type of development would be more successful in avoiding the negative social and cultural impacts often associated with tourist development, and explored in section 3.5.2. The traditional approach of conservation authorities has been: “Here is a conservation area. How does the community respond to it?” This should read: “Here is a community. What are their needs? Can conservation provide an answer?” (GEM, 1994).

24 Refer to Baseline Report, Vol. 2.
Plate 3: Aerial view of part of the eMhlwazini ward, showing intensive land cultivation.

Figure 4: The Park boundary and choice grazing on the other side of the fence.
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**Criterion 2**

Would the proposed development promote, or preferably entrench, community participation and the formation of power-sharing local-level partnerships?

**Discussion**

Discussion under this criterion can be structured around two main issues: firstly, the extent to which participation, as opposed to mere consultation, has occurred; and, secondly, the formation of meaningful local-level partnerships.

**Community participation or consultation?**

Community participation involves an inevitable sharing, and then transfer, of power as social groups attempt to control their own lives and improve their living conditions (Moser, 1989). On the continuum of possible approaches, public involvement begins with notification and reaches its acme in joint planning (FEARO, 1988). This is not to suggest that the process of notification contains any element of true participation, but rather to indicate that notification is the minimum form of public involvement. Yet, prior to the commissioning of the Masters Group by the NPB in January 1995, no notification of the neighbouring community of the NPB’s intention to develop a hutted camp at Cathedral Peak had occurred. This is despite the fact that planning for the development had been in progress for at least two years, and a concept layout for the hutted camp at the proposed camp had been generated.

As noted above, a central programme of the NPB’s Neighbour Relations Policy is to encourage participation in “relevant” protected area management and planning by creating Neighbour’s Forums. At the time of the preliminary environmental impact assessment (January - April 1995), no Neighbour’s Forum had yet been created, although ad hoc, informal community consultation was occurring (S. Roberts, NPB, Environmental Awareness Officer: Drakensberg; pers. comm.). According to Steve Roberts, NPB Environmental Awareness Officer, the Neighbour Relations Programme is not yet up to standard in the Cathedral Peak area.

In the sense that community participation necessitates sharing and then transfer of power (Moser, 1989), no true participation can be said to have occurred during the six weeks of the socio-economic survey conducted by the Masters Group. Rather, the limited time spent in the community, due to the time constraints of the academic programme of the Masters Group, has unfortunately meant that the Masters Group are

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25 This is based on the 1993 date of the NPB Planning Division document which investigated three alternative sites at Cathedral Peak for the 200 bed hutted camp (Haynes and Stainbridge, 1993). Prior to this, a geomorphological investigation of the same three sites, under the same project brief, was conducted in February 1993. Thus the draft project brief was formulated prior to this date.

26 It is not intended to suggest that a concept layout implies any finality about the size and form of a development. It does, however, indicate the advancement in plan formulation which had occurred since the formulation of the draft project brief.
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guilty of what Chambers (1983) terms ‘rural development tourism’ (see section 2.5.5). However, during this period, extensive consultation with the neighbouring communities occurred, with the subsequent communication of the needs, hopes and perceptions of their neighbours to the NPB in the form of the Baseline Report - see particularly Volume 2: Public Participation Report. The extent to which the NPB takes into account the views of the people of the neighbouring settlements, and to which the NPB is bound by the outcome of the review process, will determine the extent to which the full title of Volume 2 is appropriate.

It has been submitted that active participation will only be achieved if affected communities are involved from the inception of plan formulation (Sowman and Gawith, 1993). In addition, according to Moser, most experience in the field shows that community participation at the outset, in decision-making, is a prerequisite if the goal is empowerment (Moser, 1989). In the words of the NPB, “the empowerment of local communities is necessary if any rural development process is to be sustained” (NPB, 1994:64). By not involving local communities at the inception of the planning process, the NPB are losing a valuable opportunity to promote community empowerment.

The formation of power-sharing local-level partnerships

As stated in the formulation of this criterion in Chapter 2, participation implies that meaningful partnerships should be formed between stakeholders. For partnerships to be meaningful, they must be characterised by power-sharing between stakeholders, so that inequitable historical power relations can be redressed. The historical power relations between First and Third World countries, as discussed in Chapter 2, are mirrored by the historical relations between state or parastatal conservation authorities and neighbouring communities in South Africa. The latter relations have been characterised by an authoritarian, one-sided imposition of the will and regulations of the conservation agency upon the host communities. Frequently, there is a history of forced resettlement of inhabitants when a protected area is created. The amaNgwane people of the Cathedral Peak area have experienced similar relations with the NPB. There are three constituents to the relationship of inequity existing between the NPB and the amaNgwane people living in the neighbouring settlements:

♦ land dispossession;
♦ the elitism of tourism; and
♦ the exclusionary nature of the Park.

Concerning land dispossession, the amaNgwane were dispossessed of their historical tribal land within the present Cathedral Peak State Forest during the late 1800’s by whites. 27 Although in this case the conservation authority was not responsible for the loss of land by the amaNgwane 28, this makes little difference to the fact that 68% of the

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27 Baseline Report, Vol.1, section 5.9.6).
28 Pearce (1975) indicates that this dispossession was carried out by white farmers.
sample group of the socio-economic survey\textsuperscript{29} believe that the land in the Park belongs to the amaNgwane people. In addition, the fact that the claim for this historical land is not expected to succeed\textsuperscript{30} does not counter the perception of community ownership, nor does it serve to ameliorate the relationship between neighbouring communities and the Park.

The socio-economic realities of the people living in the neighbouring settlements mean that any tourism would be seen as elitist. In the eMhlwazini ward, the average monthly income per household was calculated to be R431. Compared to this, a rate of R96 per person per night\textsuperscript{31} means that the 200 bed huttered camp proposed by the NPB would perpetuate the elitist perceptions surrounding tourism.

In reality, for reasons of conservation, cattle owned by the neighbouring people are not permitted in the Park. However, the exclusionary nature of the Park for the local communities goes further than the exclusion of cattle from the apparently choice grazing on the other side of the fence (Plate 4). 25\% of the sample group of the socio-economic survey believed that community residents were not allowed to enter the Park for recreation, with many of these 25\% stating that recreational use of the Park was restricted to white people only. In addition, 30\% of the sample group believed that NPB's job was exclusively to prevent people and animals from entering the Park.\textsuperscript{32} The issue of exclusion of local communities from the Park has negative implications for the relationship between the local people and the NPB.

In terms of the above three components, it is critically important for the NPB, as proponent of the development proposal, to ensure that partnerships are formed with the neighbouring communities to redress historical inequities, and to promote the sustainability of the proposed development. Also in terms of the inequitable historical connotations of conservation in South Africa, and in the light of the current criticism of a developmental role for conservation agencies, partnerships of stakeholders in rural ecotourism ventures need to include groups such as NGOs with rural development expertise - for example, CROP\textsuperscript{33}. The critical step required is to shift the focus away from liaison between conservation authority/proponent on the one hand, and the ‘affected’ community, on the other. Inherent in the adjective ‘affected’ is the notion of passivity, or a group of people that are acted upon but do not act themselves. The role of the conservation authority then becomes one of ameliorating, through consultation (as opposed to power-sharing), the living conditions of their neighbours. What is needed instead, for people-driven development, is a shift towards dynamic and power-sharing partnerships which do not reflect the old and inequitable power base of conservation.

\textsuperscript{29} Baseline Report, Vol. 2.
\textsuperscript{30} Section 1.5.2a.
\textsuperscript{31} Refer to section 1.6.
\textsuperscript{32} Baseline Report, Vol.2.
\textsuperscript{33} Refer to section 3.6.6.
There is a possible counter-side to the historical land dispossession which could be seen as a plus factor for the neighbouring communities. Effectively, if one accepts the historical claim to ownership of the Cathedral Peak State Forest despite its non-legalised status, the amaNgwane people could be seen as putting up part of the capital for the proposed development, and indeed for the entire Cathedral Peak State Forest. It then follows that the amaNgwane would not be entering into a partnership with the NPB from a position of weakness, as perceived by the NPB and even some community members, but from a strong position as an equal partner, with possibly the moral high ground. In this light, even though the land claim is not expected to succeed, the NPB would be well-advised to pay it serious attention.

**Conclusion**

Although community participation is an integral component of the NPB’s policies (section 4.3), very little true participation, if any at all, has occurred in the context of the Cathedral Peak development proposal. In addition, no power-sharing partnerships have been formed with the neighbouring communities. The NPB’s Neighbour Liaison Forum provides one such vehicle to initiate such a partnership, and should be instituted without delay. However, it is important that community representatives on such a forum are independent of parks authorities, and are not employed by the park (GEM, 1993). This is of relevance for Cathedral Peak, where the induna of the eMhlwazini ward is also the NPB ‘sergeant’ in charge of the workers employed in the Cathedral Peak State Forest. Another possibility would be an independent community development forum\(^{34}\), with which the NPB should liaise. The latter option is perhaps better suited to ensuring a powerful position for neighbouring communities, and could evolve from existing informal local structures. Participation should begin as early as possible in plan formulation - communities cannot be expected to “participate” in projects imposed on them.

**Criterion 3**

**Would the proposed development promote local control and management?**

**Discussion**

Only when communities have control over their lives and environments can true empowerment be achieved. Moreover, the issue of local control and management has been seen to be vitally important for tourism ventures in general, as a way to ensure that the values and culture of local people influence tourism development and not vice versa. The emphasis here is on ensuring that the social and cultural impacts of tourism are minimised.

\(^{34}\) See section 5.6.1.
The accordance of the NPB’s proposed development with the criterion of local control and management will be discussed under the following headings:

- the decentralised/centralised nature of decision-making that has occurred to date;
- the presence/absence of local community control and management; and
- the need for formalised local structures to achieve local control.

**Decision-making to date: decentralised or centralised?**

Quite clearly, decisions taken so far concerning the proposed development of a 200 bed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak have been made at a centralised level by the Executive Board of the NPB, at the NPB’s Queen Elizabeth Park headquarters in Pietermaritzburg. This includes decisions about the proposed size and form of the hutted camp, as well as its location in the Cathedral Peak State Forest. Motivation concerning the need and desirability of developing a 200 bed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak has emanated from within the NPB, as indicated in Chapter 2 of the Baseline Report. No evidence for any public, or specifically local, input in the planning process prior to the preliminary EIA was found in any of the planning documents examined by the Masters Group. More specifically, the primary motivating factor for the particular (proposed) site of the hutted camp at Cathedral Peak has been the choice by the Executive Board of this site, despite the serious misgivings expressed by members of the Planning Division staff concerning the inclusion of the upper Tryme shelf component of the proposed site. The latter assertion has been made by most of the NPB Planning Division staff, with whom the Masters Group had many discussions.

It is equally clear that the NPB has laid all these decisions open to the public, by the commissioning of an independently conducted preliminary environmental impact assessment, as well as the submission of the EIA report to an independent review panel and for broad public comment. In this sense, then, there is an opening up of the decision-making process to a broader level. The extent to which the development focus will shift to a local level depends on the degree to which the NPB intends to be bound by the input of local communities, and other local stakeholders. Centralised decision-making can be seen to be inherent in the institutional structure of the NPB, where decisions ultimately rest with a central Executive Board. The considerable decision-making authority of an Executive Board is seen by the NPB as an advantage; in particular, the consideration of matters as a group at formal Board meetings is seen as “an important buffer against ad hoc decision-making, particularly emanating from persuasive pressure groups” (Parris and Grobler, 1994:24). It is the contention of this study that the insularity of the decision-making process within an Executive Board represents the entrenchment of top-down, centralised control, which mitigates against a move towards community control and management of local ecotourism developments. In line with the disempowered situation of adjacent communities, it appears that local staff have very little control over developments which occur within the area under their jurisdiction. This assertion is made tentatively, based as it is on limited experience of

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35 Refer to section 4.2.
the organisation. It does, however, seem to be backed up by the lack of involvement of the local warden in this proposed development, despite the fact that he was a member of the Steering Committee for this project.

An approach towards local community control and management?

Neither in any project documentation nor in any of the discussions with NPB staff was there any indication of an intention to move towards local community control or management of the proposed development at Cathedral Peak. Certainly, it could be argued that the proposed scale and form of the ecotourism development militate against meaningful community participation at this stage. Yet the NPB's Neighbour Relations Policy stresses the need to encourage participation in "relevant" protected area management and planning by creating Neighbour's Forums (NPB, 1992). Although it is not clear what the NPB considers to be 'relevant' management and planning, there is clearly a recognition of the necessity for community involvement in management of protected areas. The large gap between the NPB's stated policy intentions and its actions on the ground concerning the Cathedral Peak project proposal can be traced, amongst other things, to the fact that the latter has not originated as a local initiative, suited to the specific local socio-economic context, but rather as a top-down (to date) planning initiative from the centre, in which the type of tourist facility proposed has been determined by exogenous considerations. In the sense that the type of development proposed is believed to represent the minimum standard that would appeal to international tourists (M. Haynes, NPB, Conservation Planner; pers. comm.), the project proposal has been shaped by international demand, or the perception thereof.

Concerning local control over access to resources, it is not yet clear whether the proposed development would have any positive effect over this. If the Natal Drakensberg Park is seen as a resource, the section above indicates that local control will not be increased, under the current project proposal. Yet, in addition to recognising the importance of participation, the NPB realises that the ability to influence decisions about resource allocation is necessary for the long-term success of development activities (NPB, 1994). Resources found within the boundaries of the Park which were required by the community are land, wood, grass and herbs. The recent land swap, detailed in section 1.5.2a, has increased community access to grazing land. Given the intense pressure for grazing in the 750 ha eMhlwazini ward, the 377 ha area of land gained by the community as a result of the land swap is likely only to

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36 Jenkins (1982) has highlighted the lower barriers to entry of indigenous capital and management that apply to small scale developments - see section 3.5.7.
37 See Criterion 4 below.
38 Clearly, the NPB are only looking at a portion of the international market. Recent reports indicate that backpacking tourists may make a far more significant contribution to local economies than their upmarket compatriots, as they tend to stay in locally-owned accommodation, buy more goods from the local economy and spend more time in an area (Weekly Mail and Guardian, 1995).
39 Owing to the large number of variables which would require extrapolation to calculate density of livestock (cattle, sheep and goats) in the eMhlwazini ward, it was not considered feasible to calculate this figure. However, 64% of the sample group felt that there was insufficient grazing for animals, and this has been one of the driving forces behind the land claim.
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represent a temporary satisfaction of grazing needs. Currently, controlled harvesting of grass for thatching and craft-making by the Park’s neighbours is allowed, under the Neighbour Relations Policy. 70% of the sample group collected grass exclusively from within the Park, and the predominant perception was that the amount charged by the NPB for the grass - 50c for a bundle - was not expensive. At the time of the socio-economic survey, 87% of people interviewed in eMhlwazini collected wood from a stand of poplar trees within the land swap area - thus the neighbouring communities now have control over access to this source of wood (Plate 5).

The need for formalised local structures to achieve local control

The previous two sub-sections of the discussion under this criterion have focused on the actions and stated intentions of the NPB. As stated prior to the commencement of the assessment, this is due to the role of the NPB as proponent, and the fact that the development proposal under discussion, as it is understood so far, is not structured around joint management and control. However, specific actions on the part of the community can do much to ensure an increasing role for community control and management. In particular, there is a need for representative, formalised local structures to arise out of the neighbouring communities. These structures could engage the NPB in dialogue concerning the proposal to develop a hutted camp at Cathedral Peak. Currently, areas bordering on the Park are organised under tribal authority structures. The extent to which these are representative community structures, or represent the entrenchment of the power of local elites, is currently being hotly debated at all levels in South Africa, as local government elections are approached - see Chapter 5.

Representative, formalised local structures would provide an alternative, community-initiated mechanism for interaction to that provided by the NPB’s Neighbour Liaison Forum, which has yet to be constituted in this area. One model for such a formalised local structure is the South African National Civic Organisation’s (Sanco) proposed Community Development Forum. The role of such local structures, as well as their interaction with local government structures, is examined in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

The above discussion has highlighted that promotion of local community control and management is unlikely under the current development proposal of the NPB. Decision-making to date has been highly centralised and top-down, no clear intention to maximise community control and management in this particular development has been found, and the scale of the proposed development is likely to prevent the achievement of these goals. In sum, then, the Cathedral Peak development proposal does not meet this criterion. This lack of a clearly defined approach towards a managerial and controlling role for the local community is strongly linked to the absence of a local-level power-sharing partnership between the NPB and their neighbours at Cathedral Peak, discussed under Criterion 2. Such a partnership would only be able to facilitate
joint decision-making should the current institutional structure of the NPB undergo fundamental change, to allow for a greater degree of decentralised decision-making. This is a necessary requirement for the empowerment of local communities, which is seen by the NPB as fundamental for the successful implementation of its integrated conservation and development programmes (NPB, 1994).

**Criterion 4**

Does the proposed development arise as a local initiative, with strong links to regional/national-scale planning?

**Discussion**

Three basic components of this criterion are examined in this discussion:

- whether the development has been/will be planned and implemented at village level, *ie* arises as a local initiative;
- whether the development proposal occurs within the context of an integrated rural development strategy; and
- whether the development proposal is linked to power-sharing partnerships with the regional and national levels.

The 200 bed hutted camp as a local initiative?

Concerning the issue of village-level planning, discussion under Criterion 3 has highlighted the fact that the current development proposal can in no way be seen to have arisen as a local initiative. Motivation for the development has arisen as an initiative of members of the Planning Division of the NPB, as well as the Executive Board of the NPB. The latter has been responsible for decisions taken to date. This is greatly to the detriment of the potential sustainability of the hutted camp, as tourism development which arises as a local initiative is guided by local values, and thus the characteristic negative social and cultural impacts of tourism are reduced.  

As far as implementation at the local level is concerned, it is NPB policy to preferentially employ people from the neighbouring communities, “provided the candidates meet all prescribed requirements for the advertised post” (NPB, 1992:16). Many opportunities have been identified for ways to involve local people during construction and operation of the hutted camp. However, these measures, although commendable if implemented, fail to address the focus of the first component of this criterion, but rather concern the provision of tangible benefits to neighbouring communities (Criterion 9). Local involvement in an exogenously planned tourism development, even if this involvement is substantial, is no substitute, in terms of

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40 Refer to Chapter 3 for further details.
41 Refer to Baseline Report, Volumes 1 and 2, and specifically to the sections containing recommendations in both these volumes.
empowerment and sustainability, for the involvement of communities in forms of development which they themselves have initiated.

The development proposal within the context of an integrated rural development strategy
Currently, no integrated development strategy exists, either at the village level or at the level of the local authority under whose jurisdiction the Cathedral Peak area will fall. The formulation, through consultation, of such a strategy will be the responsibility of the newly created local authority after local government elections on 1 November 1995\textsuperscript{42} - see Chapter 5. Chapter 3 argues for the particular necessity of ecotourism development to occur within an integrated development strategy.

Linkage of the development proposal to power-sharing partnerships with the regional and national levels
Criterion 3 is concerned with the formation of meaningful partnerships at the local level to ensure development sustainability. However, partnerships between stakeholders at all levels are essential to redress historically inequitable power relations. Furthermore, local development should occur within a framework which links the local, regional and national levels. No linkages with an integrated regional development strategy are known, and indeed none are explicitly stated in any planning documentation examined by the Masters Group. Currently, regional planning appears to be fragmented, with no unified overall development strategy for the region as yet. At least three separate regional planning initiatives are of relevance for the Cathedral Peak development proposal. These are:

\begin{itemize}
  \item the KwaZulu/Natal provincial government planning responsibility - this in itself is fragmented;\textsuperscript{43}
  \item the ecotourism development plan for the Natal Drakensberg Park currently being prepared by the NPB; and
  \item the Drakensberg-Maloti regional development programme\textsuperscript{44}.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{42}There is currently much uncertainty as to whether local government elections will indeed be held in some areas of KwaZulu/Natal on this date - this is further discussed in Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{43}Town and regional planners from the former KwaZulu fall within the provincial Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism, whereas the former Natal Town and Regional Planning now lies within the Department of Home Affairs and Local Government.

\textsuperscript{44}This is an international initiative in which the NPB is playing a driving role. The Greater Drakensberg/Maloti Mountain Region Community Development and Conservation Programme aims to develop a comprehensive and integrated land use and development framework for the entire area covered by the Drakensberg and Maloti Mountains. This initiative, although still in the planning stage, represents the germ of an integrated regional development strategy, in which rural community development is assigned primary importance. In fact, rural community development and empowerment is seen as a parallel primary aim to the conservation of the unique ecological attributes of the region (Bainbridge, 1995).
Although the NPB is supposed to operate in close consultation with KwaZulu/Natal Town and Regional Planning (KNTRP), in reality this is not achieved (H. Epstein, KNTRP, Planner; pers. comm.). The formulation and implementation of an integrated regional development strategy by the provincial government is urgently required, and linkages with both local and national levels should be actively pursued. Strong linkages between local and regional government will help to redress current marginalisation of some rural local areas, and prevent future marginalisation. Chapter 5 examines this subject further.

Conclusion

The proposed development does not arise as a local initiative. To date, all decision-making which has occurred has been at a centralised level, and conducted in a top-down fashion. Furthermore, integrated rural development strategies are lacking at all levels. The failure of the NPB’s development proposal to meet any of the three components of this criterion means that a valuable opportunity to reduce negative social and cultural impacts of tourism, as well as to take into account in planning the fickle nature of the tourism industry, would be lost. This has negative implications for the sustainability of the proposed development.

Criterion 5

Would the proposed development promote self-sufficiency and self-reliance?

Discussion

Three components of this criterion have been identified, under which this discussion will be structured. These components are:

- use of appropriate technology;
- approaching self-sufficiency in food production; and
- ensuring adequate stocks of food and cash to meet basic needs - the financial viability of the proposed development is important here, to ensure a sustainable flow of cash.

The strong link between this criterion and Criterion 3, which concerns community control and management, should be borne in mind during this discussion. True self-sufficiency and self-reliance can only be achieved in conjunction with the achievement of Criterion 3.

Use of appropriate technology

This component refers to the need to use production methods which are relatively simple, in order to reduce the need for skills not existing in the locality. It follows that
appropriate technologies must be related to local ecological realities and cultural traditions. Thus they will increase self-reliance, rather than create new dependencies (Dasmann, 1984).

In a number of ways, the proposed design of the NPB’s hutted camp promotes the use of appropriate technology. Bricks to build the proposed development could be obtained from the local brickworks at Emmaus, and quality control measures should be instituted well in advance of the intended commencement of construction. A superior option, in terms of skills building in the eMhlwazini ward, would be to facilitate the establishment of a brickworks there. Thatching skills are present in the neighbouring communities, although local skills could be used even more should the NPB be prepared to move away from its standard westernised thatched cottage design. Several different designs of huts are to be observed within the adjacent settlements, with attractive paint finishes and textural designs in the mud plaster. The application of such techniques would serve to create a special local ambience, even more at harmony with the natural environment than the NPB’s somewhat blueprint designs. Educational centres could be constructed in the form of ‘traditional’ Zulu bee-hive huts or uguquathandaze.

The sensitive nature of the Drakensberg terrain, particularly on the higher lying Tryme shelf site of the proposed development, means that from an ecological as well as from a socio-economic perspective, the use of labour-intensive construction methods, as opposed to heavy machinery which would increase soil compaction, would be desirable. Thus a large number of relatively unskilled jobs would be created during construction of the hutted camp. Members of the neighbouring communities possess other skills which should be used during construction. An active search for people possessing relevant skills should be pursued by the NPB, should construction proceed. Skills such as electrical wiring of buildings and experience in plumbing have been identified by the Masters Group. The maximum utilisation of existing skills should not be at the expense of skills training for those who lack applicable skills - see Criterion 8.

During operation of the hutted camp, there will be increased prospects for entrepreneurial activity in areas in which local people already possess skills, such as craft-making, making linen, and selling homemade food at roadside stalls. Many other suggestions have been put forward in the Baseline Report. Prospects for formal employment will be discussed under Criterion 9. In the sense in which self-reliance refers to the need of people to “search for and find solutions to their own problems, using their own knowledge, values and experiences in their own surroundings and circumstances ...” (Dasmann, 1984:431), the provision of formal employment as waiters, cleaners or porters in NPB’s upmarket hutted camp might be seen as merely entrenching the status quo. Certainly, the provision of employment, however menial, provides people with an income, and thus with a means to buy basic necessities such as

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45 A precedent exists for this in the establishment of a brickworks adjacent to Conscorp’s Phinda rest camp, where Zibini Mazibuko, a former ‘poacher’, now supplies Phinda and other buyers with SABS approved bricks (Moloi, 1994).
food, clothing and fuel for cooking. This cannot, however, be seen to directly promote greater independence from external organisations.

Plate 5: Women of the eMhlwazini ward returning home with heavy loads of wood, collected in the Park.

Plate 6: Residents of the eMhlwazini ward at work in the communal vegetable garden.
Approaching self-sufficiency in food production

This component is a fundamental requirement for the attainment of sustainable rural livelihoods. Clearly, this is not possible in marginal areas where factors such as low soil fertility and unsuitable climatic conditions restrict agricultural production. However, land surrounding the Cathedral Peak State Forest is “pre-eminently suited to intensive agricultural utilization” (Van Den Eyk et al, 1969:43), as the dense patches of cultivated land indicate, although factors such as slope steepness, and, in places, thin soils, compounded by over-grazing, result in a high susceptibility to erosion when the natural vegetation cover is removed. The point being made is that, with careful land management practices, the potential does exist to approach self-sufficiency in food production. However, the proposed development does not directly promote the approach towards food self-sufficiency. Linking the development with the NPB-facilitated vegetable garden along the eMhlwazini River (Plate 6) is a step towards this goal, should sufficient vegetables be grown both for community consumption and for sale to the restaurant of the proposed hutted camp. The area of land gained by the community through the land swop presents further potential for increased production of food if, for instance, a second vegetable garden is established here. Promotion of appropriate techniques such as agroforestry and permaculture would accelerate the move towards self-sufficiency. These are measures which could form part of an integrated local development strategy, coordinated at local government level - see Chapter 5.

Ensuring adequate stocks of food and cash to meet basic needs

The previous component centred around community production of food for self-sufficiency. Should this not be feasible, or not be identified as a priority by the community (Criterion 1), adequate stocks of food to meet this basic need would need to be obtained by other means - usually, this would mean food must be bought. Money is necessary to meet other basic needs as well: for example, to pay for clothing, housing, services, energy, transport and health care. Salaries obtained by neighbouring people from employment in the proposed development, using minimum NPB salaries and assuming 70 people were employed from the local areas, would mean a 68.7% increase in the total annual household income of the eMhlwazini ward. This is a significant increase in income by any standards, and would certainly help to meet the basic needs of many eMhlwazini residents. The strong linkage between self-reliance and community control and management is of relevance here, however. Lack of community control in the NPB’s proposed development would mean that a substantial increase in income might not necessarily result in a correspondingly large increase in community self-reliance.

46 Refer to section 2.5.5.
47 As calculated by the Masters Group - see Baseline Report, Vol.1, section 5.9.6.
48 Particularly given the dependency ratio of approximately 6:1 - see Baseline Report, Volume 2, section 3.4.1.5.
Conclusion

The proposed development has the potential to promote an approach towards self-sufficiency and self-reliance in terms of the use of appropriate technology during construction, and in terms of the provision of adequate stocks of cash to meet basic needs for many of the inhabitants of the eMhlwazini ward. However, true self-reliance depends to a large extent on the attainment of community control and management – that is, the degree of power and independence that local communities could achieve as a result of this ecotourism development. As discussion under Criterion 3 has indicated, this is unlikely to be promoted by means of the NPB’s current development proposal.

Criterion 6

Would the proposed development, as far as possible, make use of existing local resources?

Discussion

Discussion in Chapter 3 has clearly indicated that maximising the use of local resources serves to minimise the leakages from the local economy of the revenue from tourism. The proviso is, as always, that the use of local natural resources should not occur at the expense of ecological sustainability - see Criterion 7. Both the use of local human labour and skills, as well as the use of local materials, are of relevance here.

Local human skills and labour

As indicated above, skills and labour of the local communities have not been used to date in the planning of the proposed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak. Thus a valuable opportunity is lost by the NPB to ensure that the development is context-specific in social, cultural and economic terms, as well as the more frequently considered ecological suitability.

During construction and operation, it is NPB policy to preferentially employ local labour. As outlined above (Criterion 5), opportunities exist for the use of the thatching and building skills of the local communities, as well as many others, including the skills of the eMhlwazini residents in applying decorative finishes to their dwellings. Local craftwork could be extensively used in furnishing. As with the use of local building styles and finishes, such a step would increase the development of a particular local ambience. The management style of the proposed development is as yet unknown, and care should be taken to ensure that available local entrepreneurial skills are harnessed, although not just by promoting local elites. Thus the promotion of local managerial ability must occur in conjunction with Criterion 8 - the promotion of capacity building.
The use of local materials

The NPB propose a hutted camp in which units are thatch-roofed. This would make use of the existing natural resource of thatching grass, and provide a source of income for the cutters of the grass. However, the fact that 70% of the eMhlwazini residents collected grass exclusively from within the Park means that the NPB controls access to this resource. Thus although fitting the criterion of use of local materials, these are not community-controlled materials and thus the benefit to the community will not be maximised. As discussed in Criterion 5, bricks, made at a brickworks in Emmaus, could be used in construction, subject to quality control standards.

Given the required facilitation and support, vegetables can be supplied to the restaurant of the proposed hutted camp. The Baseline Report contains many other examples of ways to maximise the use of local resources, such as the facilitation of a community-run chicken farm and the establishment of a herbal chemist shop at the entrance to the Park. All of these would require funding assistance, and many would require capacity building programmes. It should be noted that none of these suggestions were specifically mentioned in any planning documentation - they are made as recommendations by the Masters Group.

Water is another local resource which exists in abundance, even to supply the needs of resource-greedy tourists (as opposed to the resource-frugal eMhlwazini residents) to a luxury hutted camp - as indicated by the specialist hydrological report.

Conclusion

Many opportunities exist to make use of local materials and labour. Thus, this criterion is met, to a large degree. Apart from the preferential use of local labour which is NPB policy, other specific options mentioned are made as recommendations. Contained within the action plan to promote social and economic development of the NPB’s Neighbour Relations Policy is the injunction to involve local entrepreneurs in areas such as the granting of tenders for the supply of materials and services, the provision of catering and tour guide services, and the provision of accommodation outside reserves. The latter step will be discussed in section 4.6.

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Criterion 7

Would the proposed development ensure the maintenance or enhancement of the existing resource base?

Discussion

This criterion concerns ecological sustainability. Important contextual information for assessment in terms of this criterion concerns the primary management objectives of the Natal Drakensberg Park, which are the conservation of the mountain catchments to maintain a "sustained yield of high quality water"; the protection of ecological systems; and the protection of the aesthetic quality of the "largely unspoiled" State Forests.

Issues around this criterion have formed the focus of much debate amongst conservation-oriented NGOs, during public involvement processes of the preliminary environmental assessment. Two components of this criterion will be discussed in this section:

• whether the proposed development would be within the ecological carrying capacity of the natural environment within the Cathedral Peak State Forest; and
• whether the proposed development would serve to reduce pressure on existing natural resources outside of the Park.

Although distinction is made here between possible effect on the natural environment within the Park, and possible effect on the natural environment outside the Park, it must be stressed that this is an artificial division, applied only to allow discussion in terms of the differing land management objectives on either side of the Park fence. In reality, changes in ecological quality outside the Park affect the natural environment within the Park, and vice versa.

Ecological carrying capacity of the natural environment within the Park

As noted in section 3.5.3, ecological carrying capacity is a complex issue which requires site-specific monitoring to determine its presence or absence. The focus of this component is primarily on the carrying capacity of the Cathedral Peak State Forest (CPSF), i.e. the protected area, as opposed to the environment of the neighbouring settlements. This is so because the proposed hutted camp would be within the CPSF, and because the natural resources of the CPSF would provide the base for the recreational facilities of visitors to the hutted camp.

51 As guided by the policy statement for the Drakensberg State Forests (Department of Environment Affairs and Forestry, 1986).
52 Some of these NGOs would possibly resist being labelled as conservation-oriented, such as the Wildlife Society. However, in practice, input from these organisations has mostly concerned conservation, rather than development.
53 See Baseline Report, Volume 2, section 2.5, and Attachment 4.
This reliance of the proposed development on nature-based recreation means that increased pressure would be placed on the natural environment, in the form of increased use of hiking and walking trails, leading to increased erosion\textsuperscript{54}; and a possible impact on the sense of wilderness of the area\textsuperscript{55}, although the latter is strictly speaking not concerned with ecological carrying capacity, but with social carrying capacity. However, the increased visitor numbers associated with the hutted camp,\textsuperscript{56} compounded by the proposed enlargement of the campsite and day-visitor facilities, would mean further pressure on the natural resource base. Ultimately, if not checked, this could lead to a decrease in the ability to meet the management objectives of the Natal Drakensberg Park as outlined above\textsuperscript{57}. In addition, increased discharge of effluent into the surrounding rivers from the proposed hutted camp could result in cumulative effects which could further reduce the water quality of the uMhlambonja River\textsuperscript{58}. It is not possible, given the limited information available at this time, to determine the exact extent of possible negative effects on the natural environment of the CPSF, but attention should be paid by the NPB to the drafting of a management plan for the CPSF, to ensure that planned activities occur within the ecological (and indeed social) carrying capacity of the area.

**Reduction in pressure on the existing natural resources outside the Park**

In reality, changes in ecological quality outside the Park affect the natural environment within the Park, as stated above. This is a major driving force behind the move by conservation agencies to ensure provision of benefits to neighbouring communities, which, it is hoped, would serve to reduce pressure on protected areas\textsuperscript{59}. This component of Criterion 7 thus serves to ascertain whether this objective of conservation bodies, which is shared by the NPB,\textsuperscript{60} would be met by the proposed hutted camp development.

The greatest pressure on existing natural resources outside the Park was indicated by the socio-economic survey\textsuperscript{61} to be the pressure for land. Although land for subsistence agriculture was certainly of crucial importance for the eMhlwazini residents,\textsuperscript{62} the primary motivation for additional land was for grazing for cattle. Although overgrazing by cattle frequently causes erosion, particularly on steep slopes, and compaction of soil by large numbers of cattle compounds this problem by reducing soil permeability, in the context of the critically low income levels in the eMhlwazini ward, cattle very much constitute the rural economy in this, and many other similar areas in South

\textsuperscript{54} See section 5.6.10, Baseline Report, Volume 1.
\textsuperscript{55} See section 5.4.2 of the Baseline Report, Volume 1.
\textsuperscript{56} An increase, at full capacity, of 100\%, in terms of bed numbers in the Cathedral Peak area.
\textsuperscript{57} See section 5.4.2 of the Baseline Report, Volume 1.
\textsuperscript{58} See section 5.6.3 of the Baseline Report, Volume 1.
\textsuperscript{59} See discussion of ICDPs in section 3.4.3.
\textsuperscript{60} See section 4.3.2 concerning motivation for NPB’s Neighbour Relations Policy.
\textsuperscript{61} See Baseline Report, Volume 2, sections 3.4.1.8 and 3.4.1.9.
\textsuperscript{62} All persons interviewed grew crops, with only 7\% of the sample group producing any surplus for sale.
Africa. It could be suggested that the increase in cash flow which would result from local employment in the proposed hutted camp would enable people to enter the cash economy more rapidly, thereby reducing the need for cattle as the walking bank accounts of rural subsistence farmers, which in turn would reduce the environmental degradation caused by cattle. However, the situation is likely to be more complex than this, concerned as it is with long-held value systems of people.

The current land swap has resulted in the gain of land which would serve to reduce pressure for grazing to some extent. However, with a population density of 338 people per square kilometre, there are likely to be many demands on this land, so that an overall reduction in pressure for grazing may not be attained. By providing alternative forms of employment to traditional activities which are reliant on natural resources, some reduction in the consumption of these natural resources may be attained. However, many traditional activities, such as the harvesting of grass for thatching and craft-making, are well-suited to the sustainable use of natural resources, given a minimum of management. Thus the ecological sustainability of this project may well depend more on the negative effect of increased visitor numbers to the protected area of the Cathedral Peak State Forest, than on the positive effect of decreased pressure on resources outside the Park as a result of increased income of the Park’s neighbours.

**Conclusion**

Detailed investigation and careful management would be necessary to ensure that the activities of the proposed development do not exceed the ecological carrying capacity of the CPSF. An increase in income resulting from employment in the proposed hutted camp may serve to reduce pressure on natural resources outside the protected area, by enabling the purchase of goods to satisfy basic needs. The overall answer to the question posed at the beginning of this section, ie whether the proposed development would ensure maintenance or enhancement of the existing resource base, will depend on the balance between reduction in pressure on natural resources through increased income for rural dwellers on the one hand, and possible negative environmental degradation of the CPSF through failure to adequately manage increased numbers of visitors.

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63 The concept of cattle as the walking bank accounts of rural people is, Chatwin suggests, as old as herding itself. Indeed, “almost all our monetary expressions, such as capital, stock, pecuniary, chattel, sterling - perhaps even the idea of growth itself - have their origins in the pastoral world.” (Chatwin, 1988:206).
64 Owen-Smith and Jacobsohn (1988) describe the changes to a traditional economy resulting from an injection of cash from tourism in Koakoland, Namibia.
65 See section 1.5.2a.
Criterion 8

Would the proposed development promote capacity building?

Discussion

Capacity building is a crucial criterion for ensuring a sustainable approach to development, underly as it does many of the other criteria for sustainability. For example, capacity building is crucial for the promotion of local control and management (Criterion 3), and critical for the attainment of self-sufficiency and self-reliance (Criterion 5). It is also a necessary prerequisite for establishing power-sharing local partnerships, and for ensuring that local initiatives are broad-based (Criterion 4). The discussion under this criterion centres around proposals or potential for skills training, as well as the existence of educational opportunities. It should be noted that, for sustainability, there is a need for capacity building of both the people of the neighbouring communities, as well as the staff of the NPB.

Possibilities for skills training

The project brief for the proposed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak does not contain any proposals for skills training as an integral part of the planning, construction or operation of the proposed development. However, an action step under one of the core strategies to achieve the NPB's mission highlights the necessity to empower adjacent communities through training and the transfer of skills. Achieving sustainability in terms of community skills training for the proposed project would depend on the implementation of this action step. In turn, implementation of this action step would require capacity building of the NPB’s staff entrusted with carrying out the Neighbour Relations Policy. This is critically important for the Cathedral Peak development proposal, as the Neighbour Relations Programme is below standard in the Cathedral Peak area (S. Roberts, NPB, Environmental Awareness Officer: pers. comm.). Should the NPB decide to pursue the role of development agency, an aggressive programme of staff training, in which all relevant staff are taught skills necessary for promoting community development, should be instituted. It is indeed a requirement of the NPB’s Neighbour Relations Policy that staff training in skills required for neighbour relations programmes should be undertaken. The envisaged “neighbour relations awareness courses” (NPB, 1992:20) should be structured around the decentralised, people-centred approach to community development required by the RDP, and integral to the criteria for sustainability in terms of which the assessment of the Cathedral Peak case study is structured. The necessity for decentralisation of the development focus highlights the need for institutional restructuring of the NPB, so

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67 Refer to section 4.3.1 above.
68 See section 4.3.4 above for a discussion of the shortcomings of this programme in the Cathedral Peak area.
69 Institutional restructuring of parastatals such as the NPB is an RDP requirement for democratising the State and society - see section 5.11 of the RDP Base Document (ANC, 1994).
that the ecotourism developments which the Board promotes can be specific to local context.

An examination of the NPB’s documented proposal for funding to meet the needs of the RDP (NPB, 1994) indicates quite clearly that empowerment of local communities through capacity building is necessary for the sustainability of development interventions by the NPB. Examples of areas in which the NPB could provide skills training, as identified by the eMhlwazini residents interviewed during the course of the socio-economic survey, are to be found in the Baseline Report,\(^{70}\) and include skills training for the running of a chicken farm which could supply the restaurant of the hatted camp, as well as the establishment of adult education classes teaching English.\(^{71}\)

**Existence of educational opportunities**

As for skills training, no specific proposals for maximising educational opportunities are to be found in the draft project brief. Educational opportunities comprise both opportunities for environmental education, as well as education in a more general sense. The provision of environmental education is an integral part of the NPB’s mission, and strategies to enhance environmental awareness are listed in the NPB’s Neighbour Relations Policy (NPB, 1992). The NPB has initiated environmental awareness programmes in the schools of the neighbouring communities of the Cathedral Peak State Forest, which have focused on issues such as water quality and pollution. Teachers’ workshops held in the area have not achieved good results - this has been attributed to the perception by principals that environmental awareness does not constitute part of the school syllabus (S. Roberts, NPB, Environmental Awareness Officer: Drakensberg; pers. comm.).

Investigations in the ward revealed that environmental awareness is an area which requires dedicated effort, which would be difficult to achieve with the limited human resources of the NPB. Certainly it would be to the NPB’s advantage to redress the current situation, where 25% of the sample population had no idea of the role of the NPB in the area, or the reason for the existence of the Park, while a further 30% believed that the NPB’s job was exclusively to prevent cattle and people from entering the Park.\(^{72}\)

Concerning education generally, examples have been given above to highlight the role the NPB has played already in facilitating funding for the building of schools in the Drakensberg. Considering that educational facilities were identified as one of the priorities of the eMhlwazini residents, this would be a priority area for sustainable

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\(^{70}\) Volume 2: Public Participation Report.

\(^{71}\) Note that the RDP Base Document (ANC, 1994) requires all reconstruction projects to include adult basic education as a central component.

\(^{72}\) This should not be taken to indicate that awareness of the NPB’s role in protecting the environment was totally lacking. 20% of respondents identified the NPB’s role as conserving nature by protecting the mountains and the soil, and looking after the animals so that people did not shoot them.
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NPB-facilitated development initiatives. In particular, attention should be paid to the establishment of tertiary institutions such as technicons. 73

Conclusion

Although not specifically proposed as an integral component of the Cathedral Peak project, the provision of skills training for neighbouring communities is stated NPB policy, and ample opportunities exist in terms of the proposed development to maximise this criterion for sustainability. Thus the proposed hutted camp development has the potential to meet this criterion of capacity building, provided a proactive stance is adopted. By ensuring the provision of skills training, self-reliance is promoted and ecodevelopment’s goal of human self-realisation is approached. Generally, education has been identified as a local priority. Thus, should the Cathedral Peak development proposal ensure the meeting of this need, 74 this would greatly enhance sustainability.

Criterion 9

Would the proposed development provide tangible benefits to local communities?

Discussion

This is the criterion very often stressed in Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs) as a means to reduce pressure on protected areas exerted by neighbouring communities. Although this is important for improving the quality of people’s lives, it must be accompanied by empowerment in the sense of local control and management (Criterion 3). Failure to achieve this link will mean that sustainability will be decreased. Tangible benefits unaccompanied by community involvement in decision-making constitutes what Brandon (1993) has termed the “beneficiary” approach, while sustainability requires the “participatory” approach.

This criterion will be discussed in terms of job creation and increased income. While resource utilisation from the Park does occur 75, it is not expected that this component will be changed by the construction of the hutted camp. In addition, in order to provide tangible benefits on a long-term basis, development must be financially viable. Thus the proposed funding for the Cathedral Peak development will also be discussed here.

Job creation and increased income

The proposed development would create opportunities for both short-term employment of neighbouring communities during construction, and long-term employment during operation. A substantial, although temporary, boost to household incomes in neighbouring communities would result from temporary employment during the

73 See Baseline Report, Volume 2, section 3.4.1.7, as well as section 5.9.2 of this report.
74 For example, by linking funding for development with funding for schools and other educational institutions.
75 See discussion under Criterion 6, as well as Baseline Report, Vol. 2, Chapter 3.
envisaged 17 month construction period. This benefit to neighbouring communities can be maximised by using labour-intensive construction methods. The NPB policy of preferential employment of people from the adjacent communities has already been stressed above. As regards permanent employment, it has been calculated, based on a figure of 70 jobs, that the Cathedral Peak hutted camp has the potential to increase employment in the eMhlwazini ward from the current figure of 24% to 31.6%. In addition, calculations indicate that, using minimum NPB salaries and assuming 70 people were employed from the local areas, a 68.7% increase in the total annual household income of the eMhlwazini ward would result from employment in the proposed hutted camp. Discussion of the impacts of tourism has highlighted, however, the need to look critically at the quality of the jobs filled by local people in ecotourism facilities. Job creation must be accompanied by skills training to ensure an equitable distribution of benefits - ie people from neighbouring communities must not only fill lowly positions in the proposed hutted camp, with managerial positions occupied by outsiders. Nor must the distribution of benefits be restricted to local elites.

A brief note on the KDNC’s Policy of Sharing

As outlined above (Box 2), it is KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation (KDNC) policy to return 25% of the revenue received from protected areas to adjacent communities. In the light of the current merging of the KDNC with the NPB, uncertainty exists as to whether the provision of this tangible benefit will persist in the new organisation. The extent to which this measure results in benefit to communities, as opposed to benefit to the tribal authorities to whom the money is paid, has been the subject of debate (see Box 2). Should the measure be continued, payment should be made to accountable community organisations, such as community development forums, to ensure that the revenue received is used in local development initiatives which distribute the benefits equitably.

Proposed funding for the hutted camp development

In section 4.4, proposed options for funding of the Cathedral Peak ecotourism facility were outlined. Estimated total cost for the hutted camp is between R20 million and R35 million - indicating that no specific financial feasibility had yet been undertaken by the NPB. In the light of the above uncertainties, it is difficult to comment on the financial viability of the proposed development. It should be noted, however, that the NPB’s Hilltop Camp, with which the future Cathedral Peak facility has been compared, cost just over R19 million to develop (NPB, 1994). Should the worst-case scenario of a R35 million total cost for the Cathedral Peak hutted camp be realised, it is highly unlikely that the latter development will achieve the profitability of Hilltop within a similar

76 Baseline Report, Volume 1, section 5.9.2. It should be noted, however, that not all 70 jobs would necessarily be filled by eMhlwazini residents only.
77 See Baseline Report, Volume 1, section 5.9.6.
78 Refer to section 5.6.
79 In terms of standard of accommodation and facilities provided, and of size.
short time period. Clearly, funding at a very much lower interest rate will be necessitated. In addition, the Cathedral Peak hutted camp would have to operate at an extremely high occupancy rate to break even. Given the vagaries of the tourism industry, these comments point to negative implications for the financial viability of the Cathedral Peak hutted camp. The author of this dissertation would be entering deep waters should any further financial assertions be made, and no documentation that is not confidential exists on this matter. Suffice it to say that severe misgivings exist within the ranks of the NPB economics division concerning the financial viability of the proposed development at Cathedral Peak. Far from generating funds to support conservation activities, it is believed that the present plans would be likely to create a serious liability for nature conservation, if all costs are quantified.

Moreover, it may be noted that the high cost of the proposed development would not promote self-reliance and self-sufficiency (Criterion 4). This is so because total costs of R20 million to R35 million would inarguably require external capital, and management of a development of this financial magnitude is currently beyond the capacity of the neighbouring communities.

Conclusion

As stated above, increased employment and the resultant increase in household income do result in an improvement in the quality of people’s lives. At the very least, there would be an increase in the ability of the eMhlwazini residents to meet basic needs, resultant from employment in the proposed hutted camp. However, attention should be paid to the nature of the jobs filled by eMhlwazini residents. Participation and the promotion of local community control and management must accompany any provision of tangible benefits. In addition, proactive measures should be instituted to ensure gender equality in employment opportunities. With respect to long-term provision of tangible benefits, serious doubts exist within the ranks of the NPB concerning the financial viability of the proposed development. It is felt that smaller-scale, less capital-intensive ecotourism developments are more efficient from an economic and financial point of view.

In sum, then, the proposed hutted camp would result in the provision of tangible benefits to local communities, in terms of increased employment and income. Long-term provision of these benefits would depend on financial viability of the development.

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80 Given that the same interest rates apply to the Cathedral Peak camp - *ie* 15.5% for an IDC loan.
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Criterion 10

Would the proposed development promote local culture and social organisation?

Discussion

The emphasis of this criterion is on rebuilding viable communities and ensuring that cultural diversity and integrity are maintained. The latter component is directed at reducing the negative social and cultural changes which often occur in host communities as a result of tourism.

Rebuilding viable communities

As indicated by the high dependence on income from migrant labour and pensions, as well as the relative poverty of female-headed households as opposed to those headed by males, the rural communities living around the Cathedral Peak section of the Natal Drakensberg Park have suffered social dislocation as a result of apartheid homeland policies. By approximately doubling the number of formal jobs available to neighbouring communities, as well as increasing opportunities for entrepreneurial activities, the proposed hutted camp would result in a significant increase in local employment opportunities for residents of the eMhlwazini ward. As well as providing jobs for currently unemployed permanent residents, it is possible that the proposed hutted camp could serve to decrease the prevalence of migrant labour, and thus to reduce social dislocation and allow for the rebuilding of family life. This argument, however, presupposes the sole reason for migrancy to be lack of local employment opportunities, when in reality the situation is likely to be far more complex, with a range of factors contributing to migrancy. In addition, should numbers of the predominantly-male migrant workers return to take up formal employment at Cathedral Peak, the possible resultant social benefits in terms of family structure and security could be offset by the concomitant loss of opportunities for formal employment of women, who currently have to resort to informal activities to generate some income. This highlights the need for gender affirmative action, to empower rural women.

Ensuring the maintenance of cultural diversity and integrity

As stated in Chapter 2, this requirement recognises the dynamic nature of culture and the paternalism inherent in the misconception that ‘traditional’ societies should be maintained at all costs (Owen-Smith and Jacobsohn, 1988). Rather, this criterion seeks to prevent both the homogenisation of cultures through the imposition of developmental ‘blueprints’, and the wholesale destruction of culture as a result of rapid developmental

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81 Refer to Chapter 3, Volume 2, Baseline Report for a detailed explanation of social and economic conditions within the eMhlwazini ward.
82 Evidence does exist to support the primacy of lack of rural employment opportunities as a driving force behind rural to urban migration - see May (1990), and section 2.5.1.
83 See section 4.5.4 of the Baseline Report, Volume 1, for a discussion of gender, income and employment in eMhlwazini.
impacts. Discussion under previous criteria has indicated that the proposed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak does not rise as a local initiative, and thus does not reflect local values and culture. Although it is not possible to predict exact social and cultural impacts which would be caused by NPB’s hutted camp, Discussion in Chapter 3 has shown that these impacts are best avoided when development is firmly grounded in the socio-economic and cultural realities of the host community, and when local values guide development.

Conclusion

In terms of promoting local culture and organisation, the NPB would be well advised to review their “blueprint” 200 bed hutted camp proposal to more fully reflect the social and cultural values of the host community - ie the eMhlwazini residents. Many other creative and context-specific development options are possible, and can be identified through true participation with neighbouring communities, within power-sharing partnerships. Without this fundamental shift in approach to development, the Cathedral Peak hutted camp development will not meet the criterion of promoting local culture and social organisation.

4.6 Summary of the assessment of the Cathedral Peak development proposal in terms of the criteria for sustainability

The above assessment of the NPB’s proposal to develop a 200 bed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak has not resulted in the ability to rate the proposal as meeting, for instance, four criteria out of ten. In the light of the interlinking nature of criteria, and the many necessary conditionalities expressed in the above assessment, this would be simplistic. The above discussion has indicated the complexity of sustainability, in that, within a criterion for sustainability, some constituents may be approached while others may not be addressed at all. In addition, the stage at which this assessment is performed, ie during planning, prior to construction, has necessitated the need to assess the approach to development to be adopted by the NPB, as indicated by the relevant policies of the organisation. Clearly, however, it cannot be assumed that the goals of policies would unfailingly be translated into actions on the ground. Currently existing discrepancies between the stated ideals of the NPB and the situation in reality serve to caution against this assumption. On a more positive note, the ongoing public involvement process, which was initiated by the preliminary environmental assessment, could serve to modify the NPB’s development proposal and thereby have implications for its sustainability. This would depend on the degree to which the NPB adopts a true participatory approach, which implies commitment to the outcome of the participation process (Sowman, 1994). Recently, however, the NPB has stated repeatedly that, as a statutory body, it is not bound by the findings of the review body of the preliminary

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84 See, for example, the vast difference between the goals of the Neighbour Relations Policy and the status quo in terms of this programme at Cathedral Peak, discussed in section 4.3.4.
EIA. It is, however, "committed to being guided" by the results of the IEM process (S. McClintock, NPB, Conservation Planner: IEM; pers. comm.).

However, the assessment conducted above is that of the initial proposal as presented by the NPB to the Masters Group during the first four months of 1995, and it is necessary to draw out some of the main points of the ten sections of the above assessment, to facilitate summary of the sustainability of this proposal. To this end, the following conclusions concerning the sustainability, in terms of the ten criteria generated in this study, of the NPB's proposal to develop a 200 bed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak are drawn:

⇒ The proposed development does not arise as a local initiative. To date, all planning and decision-making concerning the proposed hutted camp have occurred at a centralised level, and in a top-down fashion.

⇒ Although community participation is an integral component of the NPB's policies, very little true participation, if any at all, has occurred in the context of the Cathedral Peak development proposal. In addition, no power-sharing partnerships have been formed with the neighbouring communities.

⇒ Promotion of local community control and management is unlikely under the current development proposal of the NPB. The lack of a clearly defined approach towards a managerial and controlling role for the local community is strongly linked to the absence of a local-level power-sharing partnership between the NPB and their neighbours at Cathedral Peak.

⇒ In terms of providing employment opportunities and increased income, the proposed development could be seen to be addressing the priorities of the local people. Consultation between the NPB and neighbouring communities would be necessary to determine whether this is in fact so.

⇒ The proposed development has the potential to promote an approach towards self-sufficiency and self-reliance in terms of the use of appropriate technology during construction, and in terms of the provision of adequate stocks of cash to meet basic needs for many of the inhabitants of the eMhlwazini ward. However, true self-reliance is contingent upon the promotion of community management and control, as well as the need for development to arise as a local initiative.

⇒ Many opportunities exist to make use of local materials and labour, in construction and operation of the hutted camp. This would, however, require a proactive approach to maximise all opportunities.

85 Note, however, that should impending legislation concerning EIA be passed, the NPB will indeed be bound by such findings. The legislation referred to is Notice 171 of 1994 - draft regulations under section 26 of the Environment Conservation Act (73 of 1989), and Notice 172 of 1994 - Identification of Activities under section 21 of Act 73 of 1989.
The proposed hutted camp would result in the provision of tangible benefits to local communities, in terms of increased employment and the resultant increase in household income. However, this should be seen in the context of the quality of jobs provided to neighbouring residents. The implementation of skills training programmes would be necessary to ensure the equitable distribution of these benefits. In addition, doubt exists as to the hutted camp’s financial viability, which is a necessary prerequisite for the long-term provision of tangible benefits.

Ample opportunities exist in terms of the proposed development to maximise capacity building through the provision of skills training and the active promotion of educational opportunities. Although not a specific component of the NPB’s development proposal, provision of skills training is an integral component of NPB policy.

The ecological sustainability of the proposed development would depend on the balance between reduction in pressure on natural resources through increased income for rural dwellers on the one hand, and possible negative environmental degradation of the CPSF through failure to adequately manage increased numbers of visitors, on the other hand.

The proposed development does not occur within the context of an integrated rural development strategy at the local level. This has negative implications for sustainability, in terms of the need for planning to take into account the fickle nature of tourism.

Similarly, links between regional and national planning, to prevent marginalisation of local development initiatives, are yet to be developed.

The ‘blueprint’ nature of NPB’s 200 bed hutted camp proposal, which has not been shaped by the values of the host community ie the eMhlwazini residents, has negative implications for the promotion of local culture and social organisation, and for the minimisation of the negative social and cultural effects of tourism on host communities.

In the interests of comprehension, the above summary should be read in conjunction with the entire assessment in terms of the ten criteria for sustainability. The summary does, however, indicate the areas in which the NPB’s development proposal approaches sustainability. These areas are:

- provides tangible benefits to local communities, providing that the development is financially viable;
- makes use of local labour and materials.
In other areas, the development proposal has the potential to approach sustainability. These areas are:

- potential to promote capacity building;
- potential to ensure maintenance of enhancement of the existing resource base; and
- potential to approach self-sufficiency and self-reliance, in terms of use of appropriate technology and provision of adequate stocks of cash.

As indicated in the above discussion, these are all contingent on the occurrence of other factors, and thus cannot be treated as indicators of positive performance of the development proposal. In particular, self-sufficiency and self-reliance depend strongly on the co-occurrence of community control and management, as well as local initiation of development.

Areas in which the development proposal fails to approach sustainability are also indicated by the above summary. Essentially, these are:

- failure to arise as a local initiative;
- lack of local control and management;
- no power-sharing local partnerships;
- not specifically tailored to address the priorities of local people;
- failure to adopt a true participatory approach;
- does not occur as part of an integrated rural development strategy; and
- does not promote local culture and social organisation.

Proposal of alternative forms of development

No decision has yet been made whether to proceed with the planning of the proposed hutted camp (S. McClintock, NPB, Conservation Planner: IEM; pers. comm.). In the light of the current sociopolitical situation, and NPB’s desire to be “broadly supported” by the people of KwaZulu/Natal, as well as to contribute meaningfully to reconstruction and development in South Africa, the Cathedral Peak hutted camp proposal, as assessed above, may not represent the most appropriate vehicle to achieve these aims. A TRUE joint venture between the NPB and their neighbouring communities, even if on a smaller scale, which meets or approaches all the criteria for sustainability, and particularly addresses the shortcomings of the hutted camp proposal as highlighted in the bullet list above, may in fact be more suitable as an initial project for a newly restructured provincial conservation body.

To this end, partnerships should be initiated immediately to examine the possibility of the establishment, with NPB facilitation, of a community owned and managed tourism

\[86\] A decision is expected to be taken by the Board on whether and how to proceed with detailed planning by the end of July, 1995.
\[87\] In terms of the current merger with the KDNC.
facility. The area recently gained by the neighbouring communities as a result of the
land swop is an ideal location for such a facility. This kind of development would serve
to address a number of the criteria for sustainability not attained by the NPB 200 bed
hutted camp proposal. The following list highlights several advantages, in terms of
approaching sustainability, of such a community-owned tourism facility:

- Such a development would necessitate a far stronger role for the local communities
  in a partnership with the NPB than is likely to occur under NPB’s development
  proposal.
- The criterion of community ownership and management is more likely to be met at
  an earlier stage in a smaller-scale, less capital-intensive tourism development.
- Such a development could be specifically tailored to address the priorities of local
  people.
- NPB facilitation of a community-owned tourism development would necessitate the
  adoption of a truly participatory approach by the NPB.
- Development of a tourism facility outside the protected area of the Park would serve
  to reduce degradation within the CPSF as a result of an influx of visitors.
- A smaller scale development, situated outside the protected area, would remove the
  visual impact on the aesthetics of the natural environment within the Park.

Many other advantages, in terms of sustainability, can be identified for a small-scale,
community-owned and managed tourism facility. However, one should not pre-empt
the fundamental requirements for community-based development. Such a development
might not be identified as a way to meet priorities by local people. For sustainability,
development must arise as a local initiative, and be shaped by the needs and wishes of
the people with whom the development is concerned.

Furthermore, this proposal for an alternative form of ecotourism facility does not
address the failure for development to occur as part of an integrated rural development
strategy, also exhibited by the NPB development proposal. The following chapter
highlights the role for local government in ensuring that local development is integrated
and as diverse as possible. Both the assessment of the Cathedral Peak development
proposal, as well as the discussions of development and ecotourism have highlighted
the fundamental importance of participation and the need to form strong and
meaningful partnerships of stakeholders, in order to ensure the sustainability of
development. The election of representative and accountable local authorities, together
with the entrenchment of public participation in local structures, is scheduled to occur
towards the end of this year in South Africa. As Thomas-Slayter (1992:137) notes:

“Central to fostering sustainability is the creation of an institutional capacity to
organise and manage these resources and the processes of development and change.”

88 Possibilities for funding of community-based ecotourism developments are discussed in sections 3.6.6
and 5.7.
Chapter 5 examines the role of local government in maximising some of the fundamental requirements for truly sustainable development, embodied by the ten criteria for sustainability generated in this dissertation.
Chapter 5

Local government and sustainability

5. Local government and sustainability

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5. Local government and sustainability

"Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

(W.B. Yeats: The Second Coming)

"With local government elections, the most important barriers to programmes for transformation will fall away. Each and every community will be able to participate without restraint in the planning and development of projects in their localities."

President Nelson Mandela

5.1 Introduction

Globally, there is a growing shift in developmental focus towards the local level, as discussed in Chapter 2. This emphasis on local developmental initiatives is integral to concepts such as ecodevelopment and sustainable rural livelihoods, and indeed is stressed in international initiatives such as the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987) and Agenda 21 (UNGA, 1992). Nationally, this local-level developmental emphasis is reinforced by the requirement of the Reconstruction and Development Programme that development should be people-centred, or "owned and driven by communities and their representative organisations" (ANC, 1994:15).

The discussion of ecotourism as a form of development in Chapter 3 served to reinforce the need for tourism development to be firmly anchored in and specific to the local social, cultural, ecological and economic context. This focus on local developmental initiatives strongly informs the ten criteria for sustainability, in terms of which the assessment, in Chapter 4, of the proposal by the Natal Parks Board to develop a 200 bed hutted camp at Cathedral Peak in the Natal Drakensberg Park was carried out. Key components of the criteria for sustainability which were not met by the NPB’s hutted camp development proposal centred around issues such as the need for development to arise as a local initiative, community ownership and management, meaningful participation, the formation of power-sharing partnerships at local level, and ensuring development addresses the priorities of local people. The role envisaged for local government in maximising the participation of communities in the planning and development of projects in their localities, embodied by the above-cited words of Nelson Mandela, means that local government could, indeed should, further the meeting of the criteria for sustainability. In addition, and of special significance for tourism development, local government should have the responsibility for developing an integrated and diverse local development strategy. In formulating such a strategy, local government should operate with strong links to provincial and national government.
In this chapter, possible roles of local government, such as the facilitation of public participation in local planning and development, and promoting the formation of power-sharing partnerships between communities and other organisations, are examined as means to address some of the shortcomings of development proposals such as that of the NPB. In other words, the role of local government in maximising the sustainability of development is explored. Indeed, for many of the areas of South Africa, this is an exploration which will need to be undertaken as soon as possible after the imminent local government, or 'community' elections, as a crucial step in the reconstruction and development of South Africa.

On 1 November 1995, if all the deadlines of the Local Government Task Group have been met, South Africans will go to the polls once again in order to elect representatives to local government structures. Although the occasion will not share the historical and emotional import of the April 1994 general election, the consequences of these local government elections may be more significant, in terms of improvement of living conditions, for the average South African. As Connie September has pointed out,

"Ideally, the broadest interaction between state and society must take place locally, and the majority of public funds should be expended through local government. Thus local government represents the 'hands and feet' of the RDP."

(September, 1994:7).

Thus a major role has been postulated for local government in the reconstruction and development of South Africa. In addition, this discussion on the restructuring of local government in South Africa occurs within the context of the widely acknowledged need to build the capacity of local institutions, in order to approach sustainability. The critical need for development in the rural areas has been highlighted in Chapter 2, necessitating strong, efficient and participatory local government to assist in redressing these marginalised regions of the country. However, the current situation in rural areas as regards local government is far more chaotic than in the urban areas (Tandy and Mazower, 1994). And yet:

"Positions around rural local government were not being developed, let alone debated, at a time when the local government transition process was already in motion."

(McIntosh et al, 1995)

In addition, the present weak economic base and political position of rural people and their institutions pose questions concerning the ability of local structures to prevent

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1 As these elections are being marketed on many lamp posts and billboards throughout South Africa.
2 Current indications are that most areas of the country will hold local government elections on this date. Elections in areas lacking readiness will be held at later dates.
3 As recognised by global 'sustainable development' initiatives such as Agenda 21 - refer to section 2.3.6.
encroachment on their autonomy by regional and central government institutions (Byerley, 1993).

This chapter begins by exploring the role of local government with reference to the requirements of both the Constitution (Act 200 of 1993) and the RDP. Historical problems and current marginalisation of rural local government provide background to the present situation in South Africa, and in particular to the situation with respect to the Cathedral Peak case study.

Partnerships in rural areas such as the Okhahlamba district may often include traditional authorities, together with community-based organisations, NGOs and the soon-to-be elected local authorities. The contentious role of traditional authorities in local government, together with the recently developed model for rural local government, are briefly discussed. Implications of the Development Facilitation Bill for the structure and function of local government are then described, as are current proposals for the implementation of programmes, at local government level, to promote community-based tourism.

The present national context of the local government issue is further sketched out through an examination of ways in which communities would interface with local government and other institutions, in order to participate in and control their own development. To this end, models put forward by the South African National Civic Organisation (Sanco) and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) are examined. It is through power-sharing partnerships at the local level that many of the criteria for development sustainability will be met.

Shifting to the regional scale, various problems besetting the transitional process of rural local government in KwaZulu/Natal are noted, and the interface between traditional leaders and local government in this province is briefly explored. At a more localised level, current initiatives around local government and public participation therein in the Cathedral Peak area are described. Conclusions are then drawn about the possibility of a local government role in maximising development sustainability in rural areas.

5.2 The transition to democratically elected local government in South Africa

5.2.1 Problem statement

Local government is seen as key to unlocking the political and creative energies of the people of South Africa, and bringing the government closer to the people (White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, 1994). Past legacy means that an estimated 800 segregated local authorities need to be amalgamated into approximately 300 new local authorities with non-racial boundaries (ANC, 1994). The magnitude of this task is compounded by the fact that, for the first time in South Africa's history, newly

In which, as noted previously, the eMhlwazini ward is situated.
emerging democratic local authorities must engage in partnerships with community-based organisations and NGOs. The aim of these partnerships must be to found minimum conditions of good governance, as well as to implement effective development projects (White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, 1994).

In the rural areas, the task of transforming local authorities is compounded by the institutional vacuum in many localities (McIntosh, 1993). Apart from the small white towns and trading centres, most rural areas in South Africa have no history of local government (Adams, 1995). This institutional void in many areas occurs within the context of the weak political and economic position of many rural communities. Previously, a variety of organisations, institutions and different levels of government provided what few services are to be found in the rural areas. This multiplicity of responsibility for service delivery and development has precluded the collaboration and coordination necessary for integrated rural development, thus highlighting the necessity for integrated rural development strategies at local and regional levels.

In areas of the former homelands, such as the Okhahlamba district, government departments based in the homeland capitals were responsible for service provision. These structures were characterised by centralised decision-making, with local-level departmental field officers having little authority and few resources. The only statutory bodies in these areas were tribal authorities, similarly lacking in authority and resources for service provision (McIntosh, 1995). Many ‘tribal leaders’ were in fact appointed by the former apartheid regime, for the promotion of its own interests. This has resulted in a questionable legitimacy for some chiefs (Botha and Tandy, 1992). In addition, in some former homeland areas, the Department of Development Aid (DDA) was responsible for service provision (Tandy and Mazower, 1992). All of these local authority structures have displayed serious deficiencies in the past, ranging from inefficiency and ineffectiveness to corruption (Botha, 1992). The non-representative nature of many of these former local authorities highlights the necessity for the new local government structures to be perceived as legitimate by the communities they would represent. The possible postponement of primary level local government in some rural areas has negative implications in this regard - see section 5.5.

The above-mentioned lack of governance capacity in the rural areas is one of a number of problems mitigating against the attainment of the RDP goal of developmentally oriented rural local government. Further problems are discussed in section 5.4.

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5 See Chapter 2, section 2.5.
6 As emphasised by the ten criteria for sustainability of this study.
5.3 The role of local government

"The transitional local authority will gain access to increased resources only if it becomes developmental in its orientation, proactive in winning the trust of all local residents......"  
(White paper on Reconstruction and Development Notice No. 1954 of 1994, p.19)

Local government is fundamentally concerned with two main functional areas, namely the provision of services, and the promotion and control of local development. The responsibility of local government for the delivery of a wide range of essential services is usually well known, and highlights the close correlation between effective local government and improvement in the quality of people's lives. The second main area of concern for local government deals with the less well known, but primary functions of the promotion of local economic development, and of physical planning and development control (INLOGOV, 1995). To further local economic development, local government could play an important role in the coordination of advice for local entrepreneurs, as well as for community-based development organisations (CBDOs) - see section 5.6 below. The promotion of tourism and environment conservation are additional functions listed by the Local Government Transition Act (Act 209 of 1993).

The election of representative local government in South Africa is another step in the democratic transition of the country, and to this end, the sections in the interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993) and the Reconstruction and Development Programme which concern local government are briefly highlighted. These also serve to expand on the envisaged role for local authorities after the imminent elections.

5.3.1 The Constitution and local government

The interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993) makes provision for categories of metropolitan, urban and rural local governments with differentiated powers, functions and structures; according to “considerations of demography, economy, physical and environmental conditions and other factors which justify or necessitate such categories” (Act 200 of 1993, s174). The autonomy of local governments is stressed, and parliament or a provincial legislature are not to compromise the "fundamental status, purpose and character of local government (ibid.). Local government is constitutionally permitted to assign specified functions to local bodies or submunicipal entities within its area of jurisdiction, where this will facilitate good governance or the provision or administration of services (s175). The latter provision has particular relevance for local

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7 Such as water supply, sanitation, collection of waste, and the provision of electricity and primary health care facilities (INLOGOV, 1995).
8 Note that, according to Act 209 of 1993 (Schedule 2), these are listed as powers and duties of transitional metropolitan councils. No listing of the powers and duties of rural local government structures is to be found in this Act.
government and development promotion in the Cathedral Peak area, as discussed in section 5.9.

The Constitution (Act 200 of 1993, as amended by Act 2 of 1994) sets out the legislative competences of provinces, of which local government is one. Provincial control over local government is considered by many people active in the local government field to be problematic for the autonomy and efficiency of local authorities - see section 5.4.2 below.

The Constitution, local government and traditional leaders

Traditional leaders are entitled ex officio to be members of the local government under whose jurisdiction they fall, according to the Constitution (Act 200 of 1993, s182). This applies to traditional leaders of communities observing a system of indigenous law and residing on land within the area of jurisdiction of an elected local government. Such traditional leaders are also eligible to be elected to any office of that local government.

5.3.2 Local Government and the RDP - Base Document and White Paper

As noted, the RDP Base Document (ANC, 1994) stresses the need to encourage a developmental culture among local government administrations. As the level of representative democracy closest to the people, local government is seen to be of critical importance to the RDP. In particular:

"Local authority administrations should be structured in such a way as to ensure maximum participation of civil society and communities in decision-making and developmental initiatives of local authorities."

(ANC, 1994:131)

Possible mechanisms to facilitate interaction between community organisations, NGOs and local government, in order to establish the power-sharing partnerships required for sustainability, are discussed in section 5.6 below. Of importance for equity issues, the RDP Base Document postulates the establishment of a women's portfolio at local government level. The function of this portfolio would be to examine local authority programmes and budgets for gender sensitivity. This proposal has implications for environmental issues, apart from the obvious connection of equity as a central tenet of sustainability. These implications will be highlighted in Chapter 6.

10 Other constitutionally designated provincial responsibilities of relevance to this study include agriculture; environment; nature conservation, excluding national parks, national botanical gardens and marine resources; regional planning and development; tourism; traditional authorities; and urban and rural development.
11 See section 2.6.
Concerning rural local government, the RDP Base Document envisages a key role for rural district councils which incorporate a number of primary local councils. The RDP Base Document also stresses the need for considerable interaction and coordination between national, provincial and local structures, to ensure that appropriate powers and functions are allocated to these levels.

The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, published in November 1994, set out to translate the Base Document into a set of concrete implementation strategies. Of particular relevance for the focus of the criteria for sustainability generated in this study, the White Paper enjoins local authorities to make sufficient resources available for capacity-building to permit community-based structures to assist in local planning, and in the implementation of municipal services. The critical financial problems facing local government, and the need to find new financing strategies in conjunction with regional and national government, are recognised by the White Paper. Apropos additional funding for local authorities from the RDP Fund, this will be conditional upon the developmental and participatory nature of local authorities, as well as their efficiency.

The role of local government as expressed in the White Paper is encapsulated in the following quote:

"In general, local authorities are key institutions for delivering basic services, extending local control, managing local economic development, and redistributing public resources."

(Notice 1954 of 1994, s2.7.2)

The White Paper provides for the role of provincial government in initiating a process of building local government, in the rural areas where this third tier of government is largely non-existent. It is specified, however, that this process should be driven by local communities themselves. Section 5.2.5 includes an exploration of this role for provincial government.

5.3.3 Local Government functions for environmental management

The local government functions for environmental management, as approved by the Technical Committee of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in January 1995 (DEAT, 1995), serve to reinforce the developmental role of local government, as emphasised by the RDP. Of particular note is the executive function of local government in the promotion and establishment of protected areas and wildlife resources under communal ownership, in tribal and community areas. Thus the establishment of a protected area to surround a community-owned ecotourism

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12 The role of district councils is currently a contentious issue in rural local government debate, and is explored in section 5.5.

13 Established in terms of the RDP Fund Act of 1994, to facilitate the implementation of the RDP, mainly through institutional reform and the redirection of government spending, as well as to launch Presidential Projects.
development in the area of the landswoop at Cathedral Peak\textsuperscript{14} would be a local government responsibility. In addition, land-use zoning is an environmental management function of local government, in terms of both policy development and executive function.

5.4 The marginalisation of rural local government

For rural areas, which are often the most needy areas in South Africa, and which have suffered from a lack of governance capacity in the past, the lack of attention paid to their future administration (McIntosh, 1993) does not bode well for the facilitation of participation in planning and development. In the words of Alistair McIntosh, who has been intensively involved in the debate on rural local government policy:

"Rural people's concerns are unlikely to be addressed by rural structures which emerge out of processes which are residual to urban, regional and central government restructuring initiatives."

(McIntosh, 1993:8)

Two distinct concerns expressed by this quotation will be discussed, in order to explore marginalisation of the rural local government debate. These concerns are:

- The prominence of urban local government issues over rural ones; and
- The implications of the national prominence of the regional government debate over local government issues.

5.4.1 The prioritisation of urban local government issues

The emphasis on the development of urban local government is clearly visible in the contents of the Local Government Transition Act (Act 209 of 1993).

The Local Government Transition Act

The Local Government Transition Act (Act 209 of 1993), also referred to as LGTA, provides for the restructuring of local government by way of transitional local and metropolitan councils (TLCs and TMCs, respectively) until elections are held at local government level.\textsuperscript{15} However, for the rural areas, each province has had the authority to develop its own system of local government, according to local conditions (INLOGOV, 1995). In terms of rural local government, provision is made for the dis-establishment of Regional Services Councils (RSCs) and Joint Services Boards (JSBs)\textsuperscript{16} and the establishment of District Councils. However, the provisions for establishing

\textsuperscript{14} See sections 1.5.2a and 4.6.
\textsuperscript{15} Local government negotiating forums have appointed local transitional authorities on a 50/50 statutory/non-statutory basis.
\textsuperscript{16} As RSCs are known in KwaZulu/Natal.
rural local government of the LGTA are rudimentary compared to the comprehensive framework, contained in this Act, for the establishment of local government in urban and metropolitan areas (McIntosh, 1993).

In many rural areas, where local authorities have not previously existed, local government negotiating forums and Transitional Local Councils (TLCs) have not been formed (McIntosh, 1995). Thus transitional arrangements in many rural areas have come from decisions taken by the provincial governments, and not from locality-based consultation (ibid.). As Heymans (1994) cautioned during the run-up to political transition, there is a need to ensure that affected people are there to shape the development of a philosophy of local government. Failure to do so would result in “another top-down exercise (which) would go against the grain of the whole enterprise” (ibid.). It appears that in South Africa, approaches to transitional arrangements for rural local government are guilty of Chambers’ “normal view”, ie the view from the centre to the periphery (Chambers, 1988), rather than an approach grounded in the rural areas themselves17.

5.4.2 Provincial power over local governments

Local government requires both finance and authority in order to be an effective and autonomous decision-making body (McIntosh, 1995). As local government is a provincial responsibility, rural local governments can only succeed if they obtain both funding and support from provincial government. However, as urban interests have predominated over rural ones within the local government debate, so the provincial government debate has predominated over the local government one, in the course of the transition process (McIntosh, 1993).18 Thus the major focus of the regional debate (prior to transition in April 1994) was on the relationship between the “centre and the region, rather than the relationship between the region and the locality” (ibid., p11).19 International and local experience suggests that strong regional government might have negative consequences for local empowerment (ibid.), and indeed for the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme, as indicated by the following quotation.

“The general pattern in developing countries is for political parties at the regional tier to agglomerate power at the expense of localities, particularly where different political parties are represented at the local and regional tiers. Landed or other elites with supra-local networks and perspectives typically dominate these levels and often prevent popular national programmes from being implemented.”

(McIntosh, 1993:12)

17 See Chapter 2, section 2.5.5.
18 This prominence of provincial issues is connected to the desire for central power, at the regional level, of parties such as the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party (McIntosh, 1993).
19 Again, correspondences can be found with what Chambers (1988) has termed the ‘normal view’ - refer to section 2.5.5..
This is not to deny the need for an intermediate level of government, which should:

- facilitate liaison between the centre and localities;
- ensure the delivery of regional services and provide for regional scale planning; and
- possibly provide a mechanism for intra-regional resource transfers, for example to depressed sub-regions.

However, the focus of decentralisation should be at the local, rather than the provincial level. This will facilitate meeting the needs of rural communities, and will prevent the favouring of urban interests which tends to accompany centralised systems of government (Tandy and Mazower, 1992). A strong local government will provide for maximum promotion of local economic development, and is implicit in the requirement of the RDP that local government be the “hands and feet of the RDP”\(^{20}\) (ANC, 1994).

Another measure which would ensure meaningful decentralisation is the provision of adequate local government financing, as indicated above. Given the economic weakness of the rural areas, funding required for viable rural local government cannot be generated through local revenue alone. The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development\(^{21}\) makes provision for inter-governmental transfers of funding to areas in need. However, central financing of rural structures raises the undesirable possibility of political power being ceded to the centre.

5.4.3 The Development Facilitation Bill - providing teeth to the developmental role of local government

The aim of the Development Facilitation Bill (Notice 1112 of 1994) is to provide for a nationally uniform point of reference in terms of legislation relating to land development matters, until such time as provincial legislatures have been able to rationalise existing legislation into a unified whole. A specific focus of the Development Facilitation Bill is to redress certain features of much of the existing legislation which are not appropriate for application in the developmental context required by reconstruction and development programmes (Notice 1112 of 1994). Specifically:

"Some of these laws describe 'second class' procedures for certain areas, while others do not facilitate governmental accountability and transparency, do not facilitate public participation; and lack sufficient detail required to empower communities and community-based organisations participating in the land development process for the first time."

(Notice 1112 of 1994, Explanatory Memorandum:96)

\(^{20}\) The establishment of a strong Ministry of Local Government to ensure the effectiveness and autonomy of local government, although promoted prior to April 1994 (Tandy and Mazower, 1994), has not occurred. Currently, local government falls under the Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development - the name itself is indicative of bias towards provincial rather than local power.

\(^{21}\) Discussed in section 5.3.2.
To this end, the Development Facilitation Bill makes provision for the establishment of development tribunals\textsuperscript{22}, with the power to cut across all levels of government and departments of State in the context of land development projects. Their functions are two-fold, namely decision-making and conflict resolution. Decisions of development tribunals are to be executed as though they were decisions of a magistrate’s court (s 16). Further, decisions on the suitability of land development applications are to be consistent with performance criteria, to be set by the relevant local government body, in concurrence with the responsible provincial MEC\textsuperscript{23}.

Performance criteria for land development application are to relate to:

\begin{itemize}
  \item the objectives of the relevant authority in relation to service provision for land developments; including water, health and education facilities;
  \item specific objectives relating to urban and rural growth and form, including demographic circumstances and spatial patterns inherited from apartheid;
  \item development strategies of the responsible authority with respect to funding, the facilitation of the optimal involvement of sectors of the economy involved in land development, and other such matters; and
  \item the quantities of land development targets, with respect to number, form, and rate of delivery.
\end{itemize}

(Notice 1112 of 1994, s 23)

Specific objectives relating to urban and rural growth and form are to include such matters as preserving the environment, coordination with other authorities, and land use control objectives. Of note is the provision for the “responsible MEC” to obligate people or organisations to carry out environmental impact studies, where these may be deemed necessary. Thus the future Development Facilitation Act will make statutory provision, in certain circumstances, for the performance of environmental impact assessments - thereby achieving what draft legislation under the Environment Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989) has yet to attain.

Substantial modification to Notice 1112 of 1994 has occurred during negotiation, which serves to guarantee the autonomy of local authorities, given that there is no clash with macro-provincial planning (Larsen, 1995). A number of development tribunals are now to be established for each province, as opposed to the previously proposed single provincial tribunal. In addition, the selection of local government officials is to be considered a priority, as they are likely to have a closer understanding of conditions in an area to be developed (ibid.).

Thus the future Development Facilitation Act\textsuperscript{24} will serve both to ensure the autonomy of local government, and to give teeth to the required developmental orientation of

\textsuperscript{22} 50\% of individuals on a tribunal are to be drawn from public service, and 50\% from the private sector. Originally, public service officials from provincial government were to be emphasised on the tribunals, but this has been modified during negotiation, as discussed below.

\textsuperscript{23} Member of the Executive Committee of the provincial government.

\textsuperscript{24} Expected, under an optimistic projection, to be enacted by the end of 1995 (Larsen, 1995).
local government. The requirement for development applications to be considered in terms of performance criteria provides a mechanism whereby developments can be assessed in terms of criteria such as the ten criteria for sustainability proposed in this study. The specifically stated focus on facilitating public participation and community empowerment to participate in the development process, apparent in the above quotation, accords strongly with the focus of this study’s ten criteria for sustainability, in terms of which the Natal Parks Board’s proposal to develop a hutted camp at Cathedral Peak was assessed in Chapter 4.

Provisions of the Development Facilitation Bill would be applicable to any community-based tourism development proposed for the land swap area. The applicability of the Development Facilitation Bill to a development proposed by a statutory body such as the NPB, within a protected area under its jurisdiction, is uncertain. According to the NPB, and in terms of existing legislation, the Board is the sole decision-maker for such a development. In the light of growing public demands, clearly indicated throughout the course of the Cathedral Peak preliminary environmental impact assessment, for the NPB to be subject to the same controls on development as private developers, this should be treated as an area of flux.

5.5 Current model for rural local government in South Africa

Section 5.4 highlighted two of the issues central to the marginalisation of rural local government, namely the predominance of the urban over the rural, and the high degree of power which strong regional governments have over the localities. The current model for rural local government has been seen by many as not providing the desired mechanism to counter this marginalisation. Instead, it is felt that this model will serve to maintain the lack of local level power in many rural areas (N. Lupondwana, National Land Committee, pers. comm.; S. Simelani, Regional Consultative Forum on Rural Development, pers. comm.).

The current model for rural local government in South Africa consists of two tiers, as do the models for urban and metropolitan local government. The two tiers of rural local government consist of primary level local councils, and district councils at the secondary level. In terms of the current plan, each province will be divided into six to ten district councils, excluding metropolitan areas (Dlamini, 1995). Provisions were made for the establishment of district councils in the Local Government Transition Act, and this system is accepted by organisations such as the National Land Committee, who believe this two tier system is ensure coordination and integration of resources on a sub-regional level. However, the aspect of the rural local government proposals which is being contested is the fact that rural voters in many areas will not necessarily have local councils, but will elect representatives directly to the district council by way of proportional representation (N. Lupondwana, National Land Committee, pers.

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25 A network of organisations involved in rural development work, and currently a central stakeholder in the rural local government debate.
Thus in many areas there will be no primary level of local government. The lack of governance capacity in many rural areas is given, by the Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, as the reason for this (Dlamini, 1995). The Ministry has proposed that elections for primary local structures in the affected rural areas be held at a later date (N. Lupondwana, National Land Committee, pers. comm.). It is the belief of the National Land Committee that existing informal structures in the rural areas should be used to facilitate the establishment of primary level structures (Dlamini, 1995). 

In addition, according to the current model, traditional leaders will automatically be represented on district councils, thereby entrenching their power (S. Simelani, Regional Consultative Forum on Rural Development, pers. comm.). Existing, non-representative rural local councils would also be automatically represented on district councils. In the words of Tebogo Makgobola, rural local government coordinator of the National Land Committee:

“It seems the ministry’s main concern is to maintain the status quo. We would like to see traditional leaders subjected to due democratic practices, but that will not happen with this model.”

(Quoted in Dlamini, 1995)

The lack of primary level local structures in many rural areas means that rural people would not have adequate representation in local government, but would only be represented in the more distant district councils, which, it is felt, would be dominated by traditional leaders and former, largely white, local councils. In many rural areas, this could mean that the interests of white farmers take precedence over the interests of previously disenfranchised communities (N. Lupondwana, National Land Committee, pers. comm.), which clearly would not promote the overriding importance of equity, as represented by the ten criteria for sustainability generated earlier in this study. 

5.6 Community interface with local government - the nature of local-level partnerships

It is a commonly held belief that it will take some time before the state, at the local level, has the capacity to deliver development to rural areas (Friedman, 1994; Vergnani, 1994). The past record of tribal and homeland structures highlights the problems of rural local structures. Proposals concerning the nature of the most suitable

In the light of the linkage between inequality and disempowerment, postponement of primary level local government in some rural areas is a regressive step. To delay the establishment of primary level structures in such areas would only serve to prolong the establishment of democratic, accountable, effective and participatory local authorities.

This feeling is shared by the Land and Agricultural Policy Centre, who propose that primary level structures be elected in November, after which a massive capacity building programme of people and institutions should be undertaken (L. John, radio interview).

Section 5.8.1 discusses the interface between traditional leaders and rural local government in KwaZulu/Natal.
institutions to promote development have centred around the roles of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and of civil society organisations, such as development forums.

NGOs such as the Independent Development Trust (IDT) have suggested that priority should be given to existing delivery mechanisms that work, such as IDT’s rural community employment programme (Vergnani, 1994). Furthermore, in challenging the developmental role of local government, it has been suggested that development should remain in the hands of civil society organisations, such as community development forums (M. Holst, Secretary, Bergville Development Forum; pers. comm.). It is interesting to note that both of these suggestions come in the form of in-house suggestions, pointing to a certain degree of protection of one’s developmental territory. In fact, it seems clear that sustainability of development would best be served by partnerships between all of the relevant stakeholders, with special attention paid to the empowerment of communities so that they might take charge of their own development, as required by the RDP and reflected in the ten criteria for sustainability. Attempts to improve rural livelihoods through empowerment of people and transformation of institutions require collective and coherent action, even though establishing the basis of such action may be fraught with problems (Johnson, 1992).

A requirement of the ten criteria for sustainability of the study, which is reinforced by the RDP, is that local economic development should be pursued as a partnership between communities and other stakeholders, including local government, to improve the social and economic conditions for all people in the area. This should be done within an holistic approach to development, including the provision of infrastructure, transport, communications and social facilities. The development of tourism, through negotiation with all stakeholders, would be an important component of such local economic development.

Ensuring that development must be planned within partnerships between all stakeholders, at the local level, means that public participation should become an institutionalised part of local government (Heymans, 1994). Two models for the achievement of this end, namely the South African National Civic Organisation’s (Sanco) model for community development forums and the Model Communities Programme of the International Institute for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) are discussed below.

5.6.1 Community Development Forums

Broad-based Community Development Forums are a central proposition of the RDP (ANC, 1994; Notice 1954 of 1994), in order to ensure community participation in development planning. Many have been concerned that political conflicts and contradictory agendas of stakeholders in local forums could cause the developmental process to go astray (Heymans, 1994). These are real concerns, but it is important for such conflicts to surface, as these are the social realities of the area (ibid.). In addition, the alternative to participatory planning is top-down planning, which would not serve to ensure that development was context-specific and would not promote community
empowerment. Such development planning is clearly contradictory to the aims of the RDP, and would not serve to promote environmental sustainability, in the broad sense of the word.\(^{29}\)

The Community Development Forum model of Sanco\(^{30}\)

It is the opinion of the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) that communities\(^{31}\) should form a single development structure, to identify and prioritise the community’s development needs and activities, channel government funds, and serve as an interface between the community and other development stakeholders. As communities are never homogenous or unified, community development forums must be broadly representative, so as to represent the interests of all the diverse groups. A Community Development Forum would be the main contact group for local and regional government, and would speak for the community on development issues. The forum would be a policy-making body, while Community Based Development Organisations (CBDOs), established by the Community Development Forum, would be the bodies for implementation.

To ensure the effectiveness of people-driven development, Sanco proposes the establishment of a corps of Community Development Facilitators (CDFs), to assist communities in establishing representative forums. CDFs should also facilitate the linkages between the representative community structures and the new government structures responsible for funding development. Forums should register with, for example, a Registrar of Community Development Forums, and would then be eligible for government capacity building finance. Capacity building finance is needed for training in management, financial control and bookkeeping skills, amongst others. On the subject of community control of finance, often considered to be problematic, evidence given to Sanco’s Commission on Development Finance suggests that communities can use funds more efficiently and honestly than development agencies.\(^{32}\)

Capacity building finance would also assist the Community Development Forum to establish a Community Based Development Organisation (CBDO), for preferential access to development finance. Accountable CBDOs should be in a position to hold land, be given grants and sign contracts with builders, handle finance. Half the members should be women, as should those of the community development forums.

\(^{29}\) The proposal of this study is that such environmental sustainability would be approached by approaching the ten criteria for sustainability - see section 2.6.

\(^{30}\) Information presented concerning Sanco’s model for community development forums is drawn from Dor (1995).

\(^{31}\) ‘Community’ is here defined as “a grouping of people that can reasonably come together in a mass meeting (ie at a far more localised level than local government). It should comprise few enough people for direct democracy - this will be one or two urban neighbourhoods, a small town, or a few nearby villages (Dor, 1995).

\(^{32}\) The question of misappropriation of funds is topical in South Africa today, with neither government nor some NGOs proving to be innocent in this regard.
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The model described above is not proposed as a definitive model for Community Development Forums. Given the varied nature of communities, and the obvious need for such bodies to arise out of local initiatives, there can be no single model. The model does, however, take cognisance of the time, organisation and money required by communities to gain confidence, experience and the capacity to organise. In addition, concrete steps, such as the establishment of a corps of Community Development Facilitators (CDFs) and registration with a controlling body such as a Registrar of Community Development Forums, are proposed to ensure that people-driven development does not become mere rhetoric.

5.6.2 The Model Communities Programme of ICLEI

Sanco's model for Community Development Forums, described above, is focused on the view from the community to the local authority. The Model Communities Programme of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), on the other hand, focuses on the view from the local authority to the community. The goals of this programme are, however, in accordance with the goals of the Community Development Forum, concerning the need to support community initiative and to ensure that community priorities shape local development and service delivery.

As a component of the Local Agenda 21 programme\textsuperscript{33}, the Model Communities Programme is an environmental management initiative, which is based on "sustainable development". As such, comments made in Chapter 2 concerning the concept of sustainable development would be applicable. Note, however, that the Model Communities Programme, based as it is at local level, has greater potential for success in addressing political and economic power relations, than do global level programmes. This success would depend on the commitment to changing power relations of the local authority staff, as well as the efficacy of the mechanisms proposed by the Model Communities Programme. It is to be hoped that the former requirement will be met to a larger degree in post-election South Africa, guided as it is by multi-level programmes of reconstruction and development.

The ICLEI proposes that "sustainable development" at the local level requires "the equitable provision of basic services in a way that supports community initiative and protects local, regional, and global ecosystems" (ICLEI, 1995). The mechanism through which this would be achieved is termed "Strategic Services Planning", which emphasises a "democratic and participative process of reaching decisions and development solutions for a community or municipality" \textit{ibid.}).

\textsuperscript{33} See section 2.3.6.
Although no single ‘correct’ method for Strategic Services Planning (SSP) is suggested, as municipal planning frameworks should be designed to suit local conditions, ICLEI proposes the following important elements:

- **Formation of partnerships** to draw in all stakeholders;

- **Community Priority Setting**, which should be an iterative process, as priorities change over time;

- **Systems auditing** - to analyse service issues and allow for the production of integrated and non-symptomatic strategies;

- **Drawing up Strategic Services Plans**, which itself has four components: formulating a community vision; developing a strategy; setting targets; and drawing up action plans;

- **Implementation and monitoring**; and

- **Evaluation and feedback**.

Detailed guidelines are provided for each of the above components. In contrast to what is termed “conventional urban and environmental planning”, during which stakeholders are consulted with, and asked to comment on draft plans, Strategic Services Planning requires stakeholders to both participate in, and lead the planning process. As stated in the SSP handbook:

“What is typically missing in local planning are mechanisms for participation that create ownership of the process by affected citizens.”

(ICLEI, 1995:31)

In addition, the importance of including under-represented populations when identifying partnerships for SSP is stressed.

The guidelines for SSP provide concrete steps towards the formation of local level power-sharing partnerships which are required for sustainability. Although the initiation of these partnerships is seen as a role for the local authority, the process of Strategic Services Planning is intended to ensure that local planning and development are undertaken by partnerships of stakeholders, and are shaped by community priorities. The establishment of long-term strategies, with concrete targets, is a central concern of the SSP process. In addition, the process is iterative, to ensure flexibility - a correspondence with the Integrated Environmental Management process.

In the light of the above discussion, it is believed that the proposals of the Model Communities Programme constitute concrete implementation strategies to ensure the participatory character of local government, and as such, merit consideration. To date, three South African cities, namely Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town, are
beginning to implement the Strategic Services Planning framework of the Model Communities Programme. Although no rural local authorities in South Africa have yet participated in this programme, a number of international case studies have included rural areas, although none have constituted solely rural constituencies (J. Walker, ICLEI, Director: Membership and Information Services; written communication). It is not felt that the Programme is unsuitable for rural areas (ibid.). However, it is clear that most rural local authorities would require substantial capacity building, and if extant, institutional reorganisation, to implement this programme. The creation of institutional and financial local government capacity is an RDP programme of the Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, which should be pursued vigorously to achieve, specifically, the aims of the RDP, and, of overriding importance, sustainability as encapsulated within the ten criteria used in this study.

5.7 Ecotourism development and local government - the need for an integrated development strategy

“We need to look at tourism within the context of political change at the community and local government levels, i.e. tourism should become part of the reconstruction and development of communities, and tourism initiatives should be introduced within the context of the community and local level development structures that are starting to be established. This new tourism development needs to be supported by government at all levels.”

(Dor, 1995)

As stated in section 5.3, local government functions specifically include promotion of tourism and environment conservation, as well as the promotion of local economic development. Thus, it is the responsibility of local government to provide an environment conducive to the development of ecotourism in that area (McLaren, 1993). In addition, physical planning and development control are primary functions of local government.

Clearly, therefore, the appropriateness of an ecotourism facility should be judged in the context of an overall plan for the area, which should be a product of the interests of the citizens and the government of that area. This would occur when true partnerships between communities, local government and other stakeholders were formed, through mechanisms such as those discussed in section 5.6 above. Furthermore, an overall development plan should be firmly grounded in an understanding of the sensitivity of the region to developmental input. Zoning of areas in terms of their land-use suitability, will ensure that disturbance to ecosystems is minimised.

34 The South African Local Agenda 21 Model Communities Programme is currently facilitated by the Environmental Monitoring Group, an NGO in the environment/development field.
36 As stated in section 5.3.3, land-use zoning is an environmental management function of local government.
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In short:

"If ecotourism development is to be successful, developers and local government must look beyond the singular facility no matter how well-designed or intended it may be."

(Andersen, 1993:132)

Planning through partnerships is not proposed as a glib solution to the difficulties inherent in ensuring the sustainability of tourism development, but many advantages to this type of planning have been identified. 37

In South Africa, there is currently much support for the role of local government in the promotion of tourism development, in terms of partnership formation as well as capacity building for communities, to facilitate the establishment of community-driven tourism ventures (September, 1995; Dor, 1995; Gentle, 1995). It is also proposed that new local government structures should support recent initiatives by land claimants in areas involving some national parks to establish community-driven tourism projects (September, 1995).

Satour’s 1995 publication, Ecotourism: Principles and Practice, which was discussed in Chapter 3, contains a number of recommendations for the facilitation of ecotourism development which have relevance for local authorities. These are:

- to ensure that ecotourism is developed in a balanced and sustainable manner, along with other land uses;
- to create opportunities for local people to become partners in tourism ventures;
- to encourage the formation of tourism forums to discuss and develop opportunities for ecotourism around relevant areas;
- to ensure that private ecotourism operators have access to ecotourism areas in order to operate efficiently in these areas;
- to ensure that the regulatory framework is user-friendly to facilitate the granting of ecotourism operating permits and other official documentation; and
- to ensure that the natural environment under their jurisdiction receives adequate protection and is well-managed, by using procedures such as Integrated Environmental Management (IEM).

These are sound recommendations, but they should be supplemented with aspects that address more overtly the political nature of development and control. For instance, the ten criteria for sustainability stress the need for local control and ownership. This could be facilitated to some extent by the adoption of a proactive stance by local government which promotes local control over the resources upon which tourism is dependent. One particular way in which this could be facilitated is through the inclusion of the criterion

37 See, for example, Sowman (1993), Moser (1989), Dor (1995) and September (1995). Attachment 2 contains an alternative perspective on commonly held ‘truths’ concerning the difficulty of participatory planning.
of local control as one of the performance criteria by means of which Development Tribunals\textsuperscript{38} approve or reject land development applications. This suggestion is made in the light of the envisaged strength of local governments, as opposed to that of provincial governments, in the soon-to-be established Development Tribunals.\textsuperscript{39} Note that inclusion of the other nine criteria for sustainability of this dissertation, or similar provisos, could also be included as such performance criteria, with the ultimate goal of approaching sustainability in development.

Another suggestion which can be made is the establishment of an environmental portfolio at local government level, in line with the women’s portfolio proposed by the RDP (ANC, 1994). Such a portfolio could provide another concrete mechanism for ensuring that environmental considerations are taken into account in development planning, which should of course occur in the type of partnerships outlined in section 5.6. Care should be taken, however, to ensure that such ‘environmental considerations’ are in line with the broad definition of environment, and are in line with the principles of sustainability expressed in the ten sustainability criteria of this dissertation. Note that this environmental portfolio would operate at the primary level of local government. Thus this proposed portfolio would not merely be duplicating the assessment in terms of performance criteria to be carried out by the Development Tribunals, which are to operate at a more distant level.

Given the lack of capacity of most rural local governments, as discussed in this chapter, the facilitation of tourism development by local government cannot be achieved without support from both national and regional government. This concerns the need for partnerships between stakeholders not only at the local level, but also between local, regional and national levels.

The role of National and Provincial government in tourism development

Communities, local governments and local economic development must obtain meaningful support from the higher tiers of government in order to realise their potential contribution to the development of tourism (Dor, 1995). The role of the higher tiers is to provide an enabling legislative framework for the environmentally sustainable development of tourism. Furthermore, tourism policy should be integrated into the broader development approach, and linked with related activities such as roads, transport and communications (ibid.). In other words, “Tourism must be seen as an integral part of regional and rural development” (ibid.), as reflected in the ten criteria for sustainability generated and refined in Chapters 2 and 3.

In addition, there is a critical role for government in providing the appropriate incentives and investment for tourism development (Dor, 1995; Saunders, 1995). To this end, the recently drafted, RDP-oriented, preliminary tourism policy framework of

\textsuperscript{38} Established under the Development Facilitation Bill - see section 5.4.3.
\textsuperscript{39} Refer to section 5.4.3.
the South African Tourism Board (Satour), discussed in Chapter 3\textsuperscript{40}, contains proposals for targets to be set to ensure the funding of tourism development which meets the aims of the RDP (Fabricius, 1995). While funding roles are set out for both national and provincial government, specific details pertaining to the part to be played by local government are lacking. Ideally, however, the majority of state funds should be expended through local government (September, 1995). Careful attention should be paid to the role of local government in channeling funds for tourism development from both national and provincial levels. Satour’s policy framework envisages, by April 1996, the institution of a consolidated tourism development fund, which should act as a single channel for tourism funding available from government and external sources (Fabricius, 1995). This is a positive step, which could ensure that conditionalities of any foreign aid or investment would not result in the negative socio-economic impacts to which the tourism industry is prone.\textsuperscript{41} To ensure that funding is channeled to locally appropriate ecotourism development which is capable of approaching sustainability, the linkages between this fund and local government should be elucidated in detail.

In order to relate the above discussion on the role of local government in tourism development to the case study of Chapter 4, the following section focuses briefly on the regional background to the proposed Cathedral Peak ecotourism facility development.

5.8 A regional focus - rural local government in KwaZulu/Natal

The transitional processes of rural local government in KwaZulu/Natal have been plagued by the same problems for rural areas in South Africa in general, described in sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.5 above. For instance, the urban bias of the Local Government Transition Act has been reflected strongly in transitional rural local government processes in KwaZulu/Natal, where only a “tiny proportion” of the rural areas has been incorporated within TLC boundaries (McIntosh \textit{et al}, 1995:5). Work is currently underway towards the drafting of the KwaZulu/Natal provincial constitution (Hartley, 1995) - given that local government is a provincial competence\textsuperscript{42}, this piece of legislation may well serve to modify the provisions for rural local government in KwaZulu/Natal in some way.

\textsuperscript{40} Section 3.6.3.

\textsuperscript{41} In the light of the proposed international funding for the Cathedral Peak hütte camp facility, such a consolidated tourism fund could have implications for the NPB’s planning of this development.

\textsuperscript{42} Subject to the provisions of Chapter 10 of the interim Constitution of South Africa (Act 200 of 1993).
Some additional problems concerning rural local government are being experienced, which provide necessary context for the focus, in section 5.9, on issues surrounding local government in the Cathedral Peak area. These are listed briefly below.

- Two separate departments dealing with local government exist in KwaZulu/Natal. These are the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, and the Ministry of Traditional Affairs. The Ministry of Traditional Affairs is responsible for developing detailed proposals for the primary local government bodies within the former KwaZulu/Natal areas.
- In KwaZulu/Natal, local government elections have been linked to international mediation around the question of the Zulu Kingdom. This has overly politicised the rural local government question, leading to the withdrawal of most traditional leaders from the process until the mediation issue is resolved (McIntosh et al, 1995).
- The issue of adequate financing for local government is particularly important for the former KwaZulu areas, which in 1992 generated only a quarter of their income (Tandy and Mazower, 1992). This economic weakness undermines the retention of political power at the local level.
- The debate over the role of traditional leaders in local government in KwaZulu/Natal can be seen as a political struggle for control between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).
- In addition, the violence endemic in some areas of KwaZulu/Natal is likely to undermine the development of the newly constituted local government bodies (McIntosh et al, 1995).

The role of traditional leaders in local government, raised above, forms the subject of the next section.

5.8.1 Traditional leaders and rural local government in KwaZulu/Natal

Nationally, there is much debate over the role to be played by traditional authorities in rural local government. This debate had, however, assumed prime importance in KwaZulu/Natal, prior to the determination by the ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development of the current model for rural local government to be adopted in South Africa. The government of KwaZulu/Natal has continually insisted that traditional authorities are local government structures, and that separate elected local government structures should not be given local government responsibilities (McIntosh et al, 1995). However, from the perspective of the ANC, these objections to elected primary level local government are seen as attempts (by the IFP) to gain party-political control over traditional communities. Other organisations, such as youth groups, Sanco and certain women’s groups, also reject the principle that traditional authorities should become local government bodies (McIntosh et al, 1995). This

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43 See section 5.5.
44 The draft Remuneration of Traditional Leaders Bill, recently approved by Cabinet, has been seen by many as a counter-measure to ensure central government control over traditional leaders (Eveleth, 1995).
rejection is based on perceptions of lack of competence of traditional leaders, absence of true representation, and fear that patriarchal practices will be entrenched (ibid.). From the point of view of the amakhosi, there are fears that a system of local government which would co-exist with traditional authorities would cause them to lose an important leadership role in their communities (Eveleth, 1995; McIntosh, 1995).

However, the current model for rural local government in South Africa, which guarantees the position of the amakhosi in rural local structures, has been welcomed by KwaZulu/Natal Minister of Traditional Affairs and Environment, Chief Nyanga Ngubane, as a vindication of Inkatha Freedom Party proposals on the matter (Dlamini, 1995). This is clearly a politically motivated solution, which does nothing to allay doubts about the developmental ability of tribal authorities. In particular, the non-representative nature of the system of traditional authority, in which women may not participate, means that the entrenchment of traditional leaders in local government reduces the democratic nature of local institutions.

5.8.2 Problems with the proposed model for rural local government in KwaZulu/Natal

The entrenchment of power of traditional leaders and former local authorities within the new local government structures, as indicated by the current model for rural local government, means that doubts must be cast on the representativeness and developmental orientation of the district councils. This will necessitate a stronger developmental role for the growing number of civil society development forums (S. Simelani, Regional Consultative Forum on Rural Development; pers. comm.). However, for sustainability of development, a partnership is required between all stakeholders at the local level. Non-representative, non-developmental, and distant district councils would delay the establishment of power-sharing partnerships in localities.

5.8.3 Postponement of local government elections

A decision has recently been taken to stagger the local government elections in South Africa. Most areas of the country will go to the polls on 1 November 1995 to elect new local authorities. Areas in which readiness is felt to be lacking can apply to hold these elections at a later date. Delay in the completion of the process of constitutional transformation would be regrettable, particularly for the former KwaZulu areas of KwaZulu/Natal, of which the Okhahlamba district surrounding the Cathedral Peak State Forest is one. More important, however, is the effective postponement of primary level local government in many rural areas of KwaZulu/Natal, in terms of the current model for rural local government. As for the rest of South Africa, the situation concerning

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45 ie traditional leaders
46 See section 5.5.
47 Refer to section 5.5.
rural local government in KwaZulu/Natal remains fluid, with many crucial issues unresolved and the election date of 1 November 1995 fast approaching.

5.9  *The Cathedral Peak area and rural local government*

5.9.1 Bergville Municipality and TLC

The nearest Transitional Local Council to the Cathedral Peak area is that which has been formed by the Bergville Municipality. However, the rural areas which include the eMhlwazi.ni ward do not fall within the ambit of this TLC (L. Botha, Town Clerk, Bergville Municipality; pers. comm.). Thus it appears clear that the people living adjacent to the Cathedral Peak node of the Natal Drakensberg Park will not have primary level local structures after 1 November 1995, but will only be represented in the more distant, and less representative, district councils. No details have yet been finalised concerning the applicable district council (M. Holst, Secretary, Bergville Development Forum; pers. comm.).

5.9.2 The Bergville Development Forum

Established in January 1995, the Bergville Development Forum (BDF) is a broadly representative civil society organisation which aims to be the development arm of the local government of that area (M. Holst, Secretary, Bergville Development Forum; pers. comm.). The area encompassed by this forum includes the Okhahlamba district, as well as the former Bergville municipal area. A total of 87 different organisations are represented on this forum, indicating its widely representative nature. Membership includes NGOs, former local authorities, community-based organisations, and the Natal Parks Board as well. It is the intention of the BDF that it should be the conduit for all RDP funds into the area. According to the Secretary of the Forum, their involvement with a proposal such as the NPB’s hutted camp proposal at Cathedral Peak would be to ensure that the project corresponds with an integrated development plan for the area (*ibid.*). Towards the development of such a plan, the Forum is currently engaged in prioritising the needs of the constituent communities, albeit in a loose fashion.

Three priority programmes have been identified:

- An educational strategy, which will include teacher upgrading, adult literacy programmes, and the establishment of a technical college in the area;
- A tourism and marketing strategy, which is to focus on the long-term economic development of the area; and
- A water strategy, which includes both bulk and smaller scale schemes, with links to national programmes.

It is the contention of the BDF that local development is most efficient in the hands of civil society. Currently, district councils are still in flux in the area, and uncertainty

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48 Bergville is approximately 45 km from Cathedral Peak.
49 Refer to section 5.5.
exists over the future relationship between the BDF and local government. As noted in section 5.3.1, local government is constitutionally empowered to assign specified functions to local bodies or submunicipal entities within its area of jurisdiction, where this will facilitate good governance or the provision or administration of services. Thus, this constitutional provision allows for a future creative partnership between local authorities and the BDF, to maximise the efficiency of developmental processes in that area. Future local government should build on the groundwork of the BDF, concerning community prioritisation of needs and the establishment of priority programmes, and not attempt to duplicate an existing structure. Similarly, however, the BDF should be prepared to enter into a developmental partnership with new local authorities, to further broaden its support base.

5.10 Conclusions concerning the possibility for a local government role in maximising the sustainability of development proposals

The restructuring of local government in South Africa has been examined in the context of the need for capacity building of local institutions, in order to approach sustainability. Although the institution of local government has been the focus of this chapter, the interface between this structure and other local institutions such as community development forums and local arms of NGOs has been investigated. At all levels and in most areas of South Africa, confusion and uncertainty exist around the rural local government transition process. This chapter has identified both constraints to and opportunities for a strong developmental role for local government.

The major constraints identified are:

- Strong representative regional governments may accumulate power at the expense of the effectiveness and autonomy of local governments. This constraint is mitigated to some extent by the provisions of the Development Facilitation Bill.
- The critical lack of governance capacity in most rural areas, together with the subservience of rural local government issues to those concerning urban local government, means that no comprehensive framework exists to promote a strong developmental role for rural local government.
- The current model for rural local government, whereby most rural areas will not vote for primary level local councils, but to send representatives to the more distant district councils, reduces the possibility for local communities to have control over development within their own localities.
- Moreover, the fact that traditional leaders, some of whom are of questionable legitimacy, will be automatically represented on district councils, means an entrenchment of their power, which could serve to reduce the developmental ability of local government.

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50 Note, however, that the BDF would be operating at the secondary level of local government - i.e at the district council level.
51 Section 175 of Act 200 of 1993.
The critical lack of a financial base of most rural local governments serves to reduce the efficiency and autonomy of these structures.

Opportunities for a strong developmental role for local government include:

- Provisions within the Constitution and the RDP for strong and developmental local government, raising the possibility for referral to the Constitutional Court should the autonomy of a local government be encroached upon by the provincial powers.
- Further, possibly more concrete statutory provision, in the form of the future Development Facilitation Act, to ensure the autonomy and developmental orientation of local governments.
- The facilitation of public participation in, and local control over, local planning and development, through mechanisms such as Community Development Forums and local authority programmes like the Model Communities Programme of the ICLEI. This will promote sustainability of development.

More specifically, with respect to tourism development, there is a growing recognition of the important role to be played by local government in promoting sustainable forms of tourism which promote community empowerment. The emphasis placed upon the need for local government to engage in partnerships with all stakeholders in development points to a facilitatory role for local government in this respect. Concerning ecotourism development, local government could facilitate the formation of partnerships between communities, CBDOs, NGOs, and conservation bodies like the NPB, to ensure development efficiency, equity and, ultimately, sustainability. In addition, such partnerships could facilitate negotiation, with the purpose of clarifying the role of conservation bodies in development. In line with the emphasis on locally negotiated development solutions, there is likely to be some flexibility on this issue, depending on the local context.

This chapter has also been concerned with a fundamental inconsistency prevalent in South Africa at the moment. This inconsistency may be summarised as follows:

1. The vital role to be played by local government in ensuring developmental efficiency and maximising public participation\(^{52}\) in planning and development is recognised.
2. Local government is to be assigned, in policy at least, great power to implement this developmental role.
3. In practice, local government, and particularly rural local government, is marginalised and, although against constitutional insistence on the autonomy

\(^{52}\) The ultimate goal of public participation, in this sense, would be the transfer of decision-making power to the public (Kent, 1981), or, in terms of the focus of this dissertation, to the rural communities involved in development proposals.
of local government, provincial power over local government is (largely) assured.53

This chapter has indicated the vital role local government can, and must, play, to ensure that the sustainability of development in rural areas is maximised. There is a need to resolve the above inconsistency, in order to achieve this goal. Although crucially important to ensure the envisaged developmental role for local government, large-scale capacity building programmes for local structures would not be sufficient. What is needed is a committed shift away from the “normal” view, to use Chambers’ (1988) terminology, which places emphasis on the view from the centre outwards. This shift, which needs to occur at all levels of government and in all sectors of the economy, will place the interests of rural people first in their own localities. This shift can be facilitated by ensuring that proposals for development meet requirements such as those contained within the ten criteria for sustainability of this study. The performance criteria to be used in the assessment of development proposals by Development Tribunals, as required by the Development Facilitation Bill, provide one such mechanism for attaining this goal.

Concerning the Cathedral Peak case study, it is critical for the NPB to ensure that further planning for this ecotourism facility is conducted jointly with the BDF, and in particular with the tourism and marketing task group of the BDF, to ensure integrated and holistic development in this area. There is a strong likelihood, based both on the need to avoid duplication of existing structures, and the lack of primary level local government structures, that the BDF will indeed be the development wing of the future local government structure under whose jurisdiction the eMhlwazini ward will fall. Thus, such joint planning is crucial to ensure that whatever development is to proceed at Cathedral Peak occurs as a step towards sustainability, as defined by the ten criteria of this study.

53 Mostly through provincial control over funding from central government. Note that an ANC constitutional conference held from 29-30 July 1995 resolved that provincial control over local government should be removed (Cape Times, 1995).
Chapter 6

Conclusions and recommendations

6. Conclusions and recommendations
   6.1 Introduction
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6. Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This dissertation has been concerned with two central questions, which are:

1. Does ecotourism constitute a truly sustainable form of development for rural areas in South Africa? and

2. What kind of role could local government play in maximising the sustainability of such ecotourism development?

Towards answering these questions, a particular process has been followed. This process has involved the following basic steps:

- Exploration of the central concepts of development, sustainability, and ecotourism, with particular reference to their application in South Africa;

- Generation of a list of core criteria for sustainability of rural ecotourism development, focused at the local level;

- Assessment of the proposal by the Natal Parks Board to develop an ecotourism facility at Cathedral Peak, in terms of the ten core criteria for sustainability; and

- Exploration of the possible role to be played in South Africa by local government, and in particular rural local government, towards maximising the sustainability of such ecotourism development.

Simplification of the body of this dissertation into the above four steps may be deceptive, as it tends to mask the complexity, scope and political nature of the central concepts explored in this study; the problematic nature of assessing a development proposal in the early stages of planning; and the chaotic and dynamic current situation of rural local government in South Africa. Nevertheless, these steps do indicate the progressive stages of this dissertation. During each of these stages, conclusions have been drawn, towards answering the two central questions posed above. At the same time, recommendations have been made at various points in this dissertation, in an ad hoc manner.

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to draw together specific conclusions and recommendations to be found throughout this study, in the interests of coherence. In addition, general and overall concluding remarks will be made, and recommendations proposed, as concerns the central questions of this study.
6.2 General Conclusions

Discussion in this dissertation has shown that the form of development often promoted by multilateral aid agencies, which is capital-intensive, technocratic and externally imposed, has historically resulted in negative social, economic and ecological consequences. These negative consequences have been felt at both global and local scales, and indicate that this form of development is thus not capable of promoting sustainability. There is consequently a need to shift towards people-driven development at the local level, which focuses on the priorities of communities and promotes self-reliance and independent power. This will promote the move towards sustainability. Strategies for development which meet these criteria include ecodevelopment, and the concept of sustainable rural livelihoods.

'Sustainable development', proposed by numerous international initiatives as the mechanism to ensure sustainable integration of environment and development, has not yet succeeded in formulating an effective implementation strategy for its aims, on the global scale. Such a strategy would need to transform existing global political and economic systems. However, local-level 'sustainable development' initiatives, such as the Model Communities Programme of the ICLEI, may be more successful in approaching sustainability, as the institutional reform necessary for the implementation of 'sustainable development' is more easily attainable at the local level.

The current transformational process in South Africa provides an opportunity for the attainment of sustainability, as institutional reform at all levels is required. In particular, the present restructuring of local government occurs within the context of the widely acknowledged need for institutional reform at the local level, in order to approach sustainability. However, discussion with respect to the local government situation in South Africa reveals serious constraints to the achievement of a strong developmental and participatory role for this institution. These constraints are particularly severe in the rural areas, where development is most urgently needed, and centre around the lack of autonomy and finance of rural local structures, as well as the institutional vacuum in many areas. In addition, the current model for rural local government, whereby most rural areas will not vote for primary level local councils, but to send representatives to the more distant district councils, reduces the possibility for local communities to have control over development within their own localities which has been identified as an important component of sustainability.

Moreover, in the light of the effects and characteristics of ecotourism, as a subset of tourism, this widely touted option cannot be viewed as a panacea for the development problems of marginalised rural areas. Problematic effects which detract from the developmental role of ecotourism include leakages of the revenue of tourism from destination areas, and the socially and culturally disruptive effects of tourism activities. In addition, far from being a non-consumptive industry, the strong reliance of ecotourism on the natural resource base means that, unless carefully managed, “tourism destroys tourism” (Boo, 1990: 8). This is not to suggest that there is no role for ecotourism as a vehicle for rural development in marginalised areas. However, far
more caution is needed, to ensure that ecotourism constitutes a sustainable form of rural
development. In particular, ecotourism developments must occur within the context of
integrated local development strategies. Satour's contention that tourism is to grow so
substantially that it becomes "the major economic force" in South Africa, while at the
same time being sensitive, sustainable, and generating major socio-economic benefits to
"the country as a whole, and all its people" (Fabricius, 1995), must be seen as more
marketing hype than carefully thought-out policy.

Such carefully considered policy should be designed to ensure that ecotourism
developments approach sustainability, with respect to the broad definition of
environment adopted in this study. This, however, represents a broad umbrella of
sustainability, which is not particularly helpful in practice, if one attempts to assess
sustainability of a development. It is the contention of this author that the ten criteria
for sustainability generated in this study provide concrete and workable means to ensure
that ecotourism developments are capable of long-term maintenance. These criteria are
felt to be especially suitable for current use in South Africa, in terms of the emphasis
on issues of equity and justice inherent in the criteria. Moreover, these criteria take
cognisance of the political and economic power relations underlying development, and
thus provide a mechanism for the achievement of sustainable rural ecotourism
development.

Assessment of the proposal by the Natal Parks Board to develop a 200 bed huted camp
at Cathedral Peak in the Natal Drakensberg Park was carried out in terms of these
criteria. Conclusions of this assessment, under each of the ten criteria for sustainability,
are now presented.

The question asked in each case was: Does/would the proposed development:

1. **Address the priorities of local people** - this will ensure that a locally determined,
context-specific development pattern is followed, which avoids the "homogenisation"
of development which is implemented as a standard, blueprint solution. In terms of
providing employment opportunities and increased income, the proposed
development at Cathedral Peak could be seen to be addressing the priorities of the
local people. Consultation between the NPB and neighbouring communities would
be necessary to determine whether this is in fact so.

2. **Promote, and preferably entrench, community participation and the formation of meaningful local-level partnerships** - as opposed to mere consultation. The
emphasis here is on meaningful partnerships between stakeholders, to redress
historical and inequitable power relations. Although community participation is an
integral component of the NPB's policies, very little true participation, if any at all,
has occurred in the context of the Cathedral Peak development proposal. In addition,
no power-sharing partnerships have been formed with the neighbouring communities.
3. Promote local control and management - this criterion necessitates decentralised decision-making, as well as broad-based local control over access to resources. The establishment of formalised local structures to achieve local control and management is important. It was concluded that promotion of local community control and management is unlikely under the current development proposal of the NPB. In addition, the lack of a clearly defined approach towards a managerial and controlling role for the local community is strongly linked to the absence of a local-level power-sharing partnership between the NPB and their neighbours at Cathedral Peak.

4. Arise as a local initiative, with strong links to regional/national-scale planning - thus, development should be planned and implemented at village level, within an integrated rural development strategy, and within power-sharing partnerships with the regional and national levels, to ensure that development is guided by local values. The Cathedral Peak ecotourism development proposal does not arise as a local initiative. To date, all planning and decision-making concerning the proposed hutted camp have occurred at a centralised level, and in a top-down fashion. Nor does the proposed development occur within the context of an integrated rural development strategy at the local level. This has negative implications for sustainability, in terms of the need for planning to take into account the fickle nature of tourism. Similarly, links between regional and national planning are yet to be developed, to prevent marginalisation of local development initiatives.

5. Promote self-sufficiency and self-reliance - this includes using appropriate technology, and approaching self-sufficiency in food production, where possible. In addition, emphasis is placed on ensuring adequate stocks and flows of food and cash to meet basic needs. The proposed development has the potential to promote an approach towards self-sufficiency and self-reliance in terms of the use of appropriate technology during construction, and in terms of the provision of adequate stocks of cash to meet basic needs for many of the inhabitants of the eMhlwazini ward. However, true self-reliance is contingent upon the promotion of community management and control, as well as the need for development to arise as a local initiative.

6. As far as possible, use existing local resources - in terms of local human skills, labour and materials. Many opportunities exist to make use of local materials and labour, in construction and operation of the hutted camp. This would, however, require a proactive approach to maximise all opportunities.

7. Ensure the maintenance or enhancement of the existing resource base - this criterion concerns ecological sustainability, and the reduction in pressure on natural resources such as soil and biotic diversity. The ecological sustainability of the proposed development would depend on the balance between reduction in pressure on natural resources through increased income for rural dwellers on the one hand, and possible negative environmental degradation of the CPSF through failure to adequately manage increased numbers of visitors, on the other hand.
8. **Promote capacity building** - by ensuring the provision of skills training, and promoting any possible educational opportunities. Ample opportunities exist in terms of the proposed development to maximise capacity building through the provision of skills training and the active promotion of both environmental and general educational opportunities. Although not a specific component of the NPB’s development proposal, provision of skills training is an integral component of NPB policy.

9. **Provide tangible benefits to local communities** - in terms of job creation, increased income etc. This must be accompanied by empowerment in the sense of local control and management (Criterion 3). In addition, in order to provide tangible benefits on a long-term basis, development must be financially viable. The proposed hutted camp would result in the provision of significant tangible benefits to local communities, in terms of increased employment and the resultant increase in household income. However, this should be seen in the context of the quality of jobs provided to neighbouring residents. The implementation of skills training programmes would be necessary to ensure the equitable distribution of these benefits.

10. **Promote local culture and social organisation** - the emphasis here is on rebuilding viable communities and ensuring that cultural diversity is maintained. The ‘blueprint’ nature of NPB’s 200 bed hutted camp proposal, which has not been shaped by the values of the host community i.e. the eMhlwazini residents, has negative implications for the promotion of local culture and social organisation, and for the minimisation of the negative social and cultural effects of tourism on host communities.

From the above conclusions, it is apparent that the major areas in which the development proposal fails to approach sustainability are, essentially, the following:

- failure to arise as a local initiative;
- lack of local control and management;
- no power-sharing local partnerships;
- not specifically tailored to address the priorities of local people;
- failure to adopt a true participatory approach;
- does not occur as part of an integrated rural development strategy; and
- does not promote local culture and social organisation.

In the light of the current sociopolitical situation; and the NPB’s desire to be “broadly supported” by people of KwaZulu/Natal, as well as to contribute meaningfully to reconstruction and development in South Africa; the Cathedral Peak hutted camp proposal, as assessed above, may not represent the most appropriate vehicle to achieve these aims. An alternative form of development, which would entail the NPB facilitation of a community-based ecotourism development outside the boundaries of the Natal Drakensberg Park, is proposed as a more appropriate means of achieving the stated social goals of the NPB. In addition, development of such a facility would have
several advantages in terms of approaching sustainability, in that community control
and management would be facilitated in a smaller-scale, less capital-intensive tourism
development; a stronger community position in a partnership with the NPB would be
necessitated; and such a development could be specifically tailored to address the
priorities of the eMhlwazini residents.1

6.2.1 Conclusions concerning the possible role of local government in maximising
the sustainability of ecotourism development in South Africa

Conclusions drawn concerning the developmental role of local government, and
particularly rural local government in South Africa, centre around constraints and
opportunities identified during the course of the discussion on local government.

The major constraints identified include the relative power of provincial government as
opposed to local government, the critical lack of governance capacity in most rural
areas, and negative aspects of the current model for rural local government in South
Africa. These aspects include the entrenchment of power of traditional leaders, as well
as the lack of primary level local government structures. In addition, most rural local
government critically lack a financial base.

Opportunities for a strong developmental role for local government include provisions
within the Constitution and the RDP to ensure this, raising the possibility for referral to
the Constitutional Court should the autonomy of a local government be encroached
upon; and further statutory provision, in the form of the future Development
Facilitation Act, to ensure the autonomy and developmental orientation of local
governments. The facilitation, through mechanisms such as Community Development
Forums and local authority programmes such as the Model Communities Programme of
the ICLEI, of public participation in, and local control over, local planning and
development, will also serve to ensure sustainability of development.

In particular, concerning ecotourism development, it is concluded that local
government could facilitate the formation of partnerships between communities,
CBDOs, NGOs, and conservation bodies like the NPB, to ensure development
efficiency, equity and, ultimately, sustainability. The formation of such partnerships is
a key step in the approach towards sustainability.

1 Refer to section 4.6 for additional advantages.
6.2.2 Conclusions concerning the central questions of this study

In the light of the above conclusions, this section is concerned with providing answers to the central questions posed in this study. These questions are repeated as follows:

1. Does ecotourism constitute a truly sustainable form of development for rural areas in South Africa? and

2. What kind of role could local government play in maximising the sustainability of such ecotourism development?

The answer to Question 1 has been seen to be contingent on adopting an approach to ecotourism development which can ensure that the particular negative effects of tourism, as discussed in Chapter 3, are avoided. In this way, sustainability of ecotourism development will be maximised. Clearly, development in marginalised rural areas is necessary to improve the quality of people’s lives, and thereby meet the aims of the RDP. The current enthusiasm, which punts ecotourism as the panacea for rural development problems, points to the opportunities for development which ecotourism may provide. However, the attainment of sustainability in ecotourism development will only be achieved when the underlying political and economic power relations are recognised, and changed. The criteria for sustainability generated in this study take cognisance of these elements of sustainability, and thus provide a mechanism for the achievement of sustainable rural ecotourism development.

Concerning Question 2, opportunities do exist for a local government role in maximising the sustainability of rural ecotourism development. However, the presence of severe constraints to this role means that a definitive answer to this question is not possible at this stage. Much depends on the will of political parties to reach consensus on the local government issue, so that democratically elected local authorities may begin their weighty role of implementing the reconstruction and development of this country.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 General Recommendation

⇒ In the light of the above conclusions, it is the general recommendation of this study that all ecotourism development, whether proposed initially by bodies such as the NPB, or resulting from “bottom-up” initiatives, should be guided by criteria such as those proposed in this study, to ensure that such development is sustainable.
6.3.2 Recommendations concerning local government and sustainability of ecotourism development

⇒ To ensure that maximum economic benefit from tourism is retained by the local people and their economy, local governments, in partnership with community leaders and NGOs, should take active steps to increase linkages within the local economy. Concrete ways to achieve this are detailed in section 3.5.1b.

⇒ Ecotourism developments must occur within the context of integrated local development strategies. The formulation of such strategies is a role for local government, in consultation with all stakeholders in an area. Methods for the implementation of Strategic Services Planning, as proposed by the Model Communities Programme of the iCLEI, provide possible steps to achieve such ends.

⇒ The establishment of an environmental portfolio at primary local government level should be investigated. The role of such a portfolio would be to ensure that environmental criteria such as those generated in this study serve to guide decisions concerning future ecotourism (and other) developments. In particular, criteria such as the promotion of local control and management serve to recognise the political nature of the developmental process, as well as to redress past inequalities. In recognition of the critical lack of capacity and finance of most rural local governments, the recommendation to establish environmental portfolios should be seen as a goal to be approached.

⇒ Attention should be paid to the inclusion of criteria for developmental sustainability such as those of this study within the performance criteria to be used by Development Tribunals. Use of such criteria by these tribunals to assess land development applications will further promote sustainability. In addition, compatibility of such criteria with those to be used by the proposed primary-level environmental portfolios will ensure integration and coordination of development between primary and district levels.

⇒ Details of the particular role to be played by local government in channelling and allocating funding for community-based tourism facilities should be finalised by the appropriate body - *ie* Satour or the envisaged South African Tourism Council - to accelerate the development of such facilities.

Additional recommendations concerning the facilitation of ecotourism development by local government and other structures are to be found in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.
6.3.3 Specific recommendations concerning the Cathedral Peak ecotourism development case study

⇒ As a step towards the establishment of power-sharing partnerships between the NPB and residents of the neighbouring settlements, a broad-based Neighbour Liaison Forum should be constituted as a matter of urgency.

⇒ Steps should be taken by the NPB to ascertain the priorities of the neighbouring communities, so that the development proposal may be fitted to the local socio-economic context. Liaison with the Bergville Development Forum and negotiation through the future Cathedral Peak Neighbour Liaison Forum provide means to achieve this goal.

⇒ A firm commitment to the outcome of the public participation process initiated by the preliminary environmental impact assessment should be undertaken by the NPB, to ensure that this participation involves true power sharing.

⇒ Power-sharing partnerships between the NPB and neighbouring communities should include other stakeholders, such as NGOs with rural development expertise. In addition, links with existing representative development structures, such as the Bergville Development Forum, should be forged.

⇒ Current restructuring of the three conservation bodies of KwaZulu/Natal should allow for a greater degree of local input into decision-making, to avoid the “top down” imposition of blueprint forms of development on the localities.

⇒ Every effort should be made to ensure that the proposed development is linked with regional development planning. In the absence of a coherent approach to planning at this level, a strong link with the Bergville Development Forum will serve to facilitate this end.

⇒ Local skills should be fully harnessed to promote employment and stimulate the local economy. To this end, the NPB should proactively seek out people with appropriate skills. The use of local skills may also provide for a more context-specific ecotourism facility. For instance, the use of decorative local paint and plastering designs would increase the harmony between the huddled camp and the surrounding settlements.

⇒ A priority for the NPB should be to couple skills training programmes with the construction and operation of the proposed ecotourism facility. This would promote self-reliance and community control, and serve to ensure that local people would not be relegated to menial forms of employment. Skills training should target NPB employees as well. Such programmes
should begin as soon as possible during this planning phase, so that capacity is greatly increased when operation of the hutted camp commences.

⇒ The promotion of appropriate techniques such as agroforestry and permaculture is an important step towards self-sufficiency in food production. Thus linkages with NGOs and other organisations possessing expertise in these areas should be actively forged.

⇒ Attention should be paid to the possibility of an NPB-facilitated community-based ecotourism development outside the boundaries of the Park, as an alternative to the proposed hutted camp development within the CPSF. Many advantages for this alternative form of development have been identified. Not least, there is the possibility that this may serve to reduce pressure on the natural resources within the Park.

⇒ Environmental awareness programmes should be linked with the proposed ecotourism development at Cathedral Peak. In addition, every effort should be made to promote the establishment of educational facilities in the Cathedral Peak area. This could be achieved by linking funding for the proposed hutted camp with funding for educational facilities in the area.

⇒ As a general principle, participation and the promotion of community control and management should accompany any provision of tangible benefits.

Many other recommendations to ensure the sustainability of an ecotourism facility at Cathedral Peak are to be found both throughout this dissertation, as well as in the Baseline Report. Careful attention to these recommendations, conducted within meaningful partnerships with the people living adjacent to the Natal Drakensberg Park, will serve to ensure that “people-driven” development moves from rhetoric to reality in the Cathedral Peak area.
### List of References

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**List of Personal Communications**

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Roberts, S. Environmental Awareness Officer, Drakensberg, Natal Parks Board.


Smythe, G. Warden: Cathedral Peak, Natal Parks Board.

Walker, J. Director: Membership and Information Services, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives.
List of Maps

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<td>National and Regional Context of Cathedral Peak</td>
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<td>Map 2</td>
<td>The eMhlwazini Ward</td>
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<td>Map 3</td>
<td>The Landswop Area</td>
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Attachment 1

Terms of Reference of the Masters Group
We interpret the Terms of Reference as follows:

To undertake a preliminary environmental assessment of proposals to develop a tourist camp, located on the Tryme shelf and near the CSIR station, at Cathedral Peak. The preliminary assessment should:

* identify potentially significant positive and negative impacts on the biophysical and socio-economic environments of the proposed development, taking into account NPB's overall policy objectives as well as the regional and national context of the project, including the Reconstruction and Development Programme;

* identify and consult with all I&APs and obtain their views and concerns regarding the proposed development;

* assess the overall significance of the identified impacts.

* recommend mitigation for potentially significant negative impacts;

* suggest optimisation measures for potentially significant positive impacts.

We will undertake this between 13/1/95 and 1/4/95.

The product will be a preliminary environmental assessment report. This report will satisfy the requirements for a consolidated report referred to in your fax of 22 December 1994.

5 individual theses will be available to you as soon as possible after our submission deadline (23/6/95).
Detailed breakdown of terms of reference:

1. To identify gaps and to review the process that Natal Parks Board (NPB) has followed to this stage
   - Motivation for the development (need, aims and desirability and long term strategy)
   - Need for development at Cathedral Peak
   - Choice of type of accommodation, bed number densities
   - Consistency with developmental planning (NPB policies, local, regional, national policies)
   - Which I&APs have been identified and the process by which interested and affected parties (I&APs) have been involved
   - Identification and consideration of alternatives

2. To collate the available baseline data and identify where other/ additional information is required. We will need to draw on the expertise of the NPB specialists and/or consultants in areas that are not well researched.

3. To undertake a comprehensive scoping exercise including the identification of I&APs and documentation of issues/ concerns identified by I&APs. We will need to draw on the expertise of a social specialist.

4. - To identify potential positive and negative impacts of the development on neighbouring communities
   - To identify opportunities for community involvement in the project (construction and post-construction phase)
   - To evaluate and assess the various impacts on the biophysical and socio-economic environment using the base-line studies.

5. To make recommendations as to how issues and concerns can be incorporated into the development.
Attachment 2

Myths about consultation

From the Model Communities Programme of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)
### FIGURE 4.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MYTH</th>
<th>REALITY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation and participation will slow down the process.</td>
<td>Consultation and participation takes time. However, the time invested in the process up front will be an investment that will ultimately save time and resources. The key benefit to effective consultation and participation is the early evolution of a common vision and work plan to which the public and local government can both commit so that down-line conflicts are less likely to occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation and participation is completely ‘bottom-up’.</td>
<td>All stakeholders bring expertise to the planning process. The purpose of consultation and participation is not only to factor community knowledge and experience into decisions, but also to incorporate all experience, including the technical and other experience of local government, into the process. Consultation and participation is not ‘bottom-up’ but interactive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation and participation fosters unstructured planning.</td>
<td>Consultation and participation is a facilitated process which is structured with clearly stated goals, applied with tested methods, and executed through a set schedule of activities. Flexibility is however a key ingredient within the structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation and participation invites conflict.</td>
<td>Consultation and participation will clarify the values and conflicts which underlie possible decisions. By creating a facilitated process for discussing these issues, consultation and participation increases the chances that a mutually acceptable course of action can be identified. Consultation and participation builds cooperation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local governments often think they have consulted with the public through a process in which they go to the community to get a response. Public response in turn is often ignored or used to support pre-existing agendas.</td>
<td>There is no single method for consultation. What is typically missing in local planning are mechanisms for participation that create ownership of the process by affected citizens. Through such ownership people become involved and contribute their personal and community resources to both planning and implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problems facing municipalities are highly complex and can only be solved through expert study and methods. Common citizens do not understand these technical issues.</td>
<td>Many local problems can be solved through simple technologies and through organizational schemes which are well understood by local citizens. Highly technical solutions are often extremely burdensome to municipalities and frequently fail from lack of resources and staff to maintain and operate technical “fixes”. This being said, the sophistication of local residents is often underestimated. Consultative and participatory planning efforts in cities worldwide have shown that local, voluntary participants often have more wisdom than the best outside experts! Before spending money on expertise and costly technology it is well worth exploring what can be done with citizen participation.</td>
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