

Activity Commencement Report

INITIATIVE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE GAZA-KRUGER-GONAREZHOU (GKG) TRANSBOUNDARY NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AREA



United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
Regional Center of Southern Africa (RCSA)
Contract No. PCE-I-00-99-00002-00, Task Order No. 811

Development Alternatives, Inc.

In association with:

IMPACTO

Ebony Consulting International (Pty) Ltd.

Management Systems International

Abt Associates, Inc.



Development *Alternatives*, Inc.

2750 Woodmont Ave., Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814 USA

(301) 718-8699 • (301) 718-7968 • info@dai.com • <http://www.dai.com>

Preface

Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) was contracted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Regional Center of Southern Africa (RCSA) to implement Task Order No. 811 under the Raising Agricultural Income with a Sustainable Environment (RAISE) Indefinite Quantity Contract (USAID PCE-I-00-99-00002-00). Task Order #811 engages DAI to assist USAID/RCSA in implementing the activity entitled Initiative for the Management of the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou (GKG) Transboundary Natural Resources Management Area, and hereafter referred to as the GKG Transboundary activity. USAID/RCSA and DAI signed the Task Order contract on March 28, 2001 with effective dates of April 1, 2001 through September 30, 2003.

DAI is required under the RAISE IQC and this Task Order to submit a Commencement Report to USAID/RCSA within 30 days of commencement of the Task Order contract. The Commencement Report details the Contractor's "findings regarding the initial situation on the ground and opportunities for early engagement." This document is the DAI Commencement Report for the Initiative for the Management of the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou (GKG) Transboundary Natural Resources Management Area, or simply GKG Transboundary activity.

The report consists of three sections. The first is an introduction to the GKG Transboundary activity, including brief background information that will become standard for all reports emanating from the activity. This will be done for the benefit of any readers of one report document who may not be familiar with the activity, nor have seen previous reports.

The second section of the Commencement Report covers DAI's initial findings as described above. It details the DAI team's understanding of the context within which the GKG Transboundary activity will operate on the ground. These are the result of preliminary discussions with potential project partners and collaborators, review of the literature and relevant background documents, and consultations with USAID/RCSA and members of the team itself. The section is organized by Intermediate Result, which will also provide the framework for activities conducted by the team.

The third section provides a summary of tasks accomplished during the period April 26-May 31, 2001 and a listing of ongoing tasks to be completed in the near future (next 30 days).

Todd R. Johnson
Land-Based NRM Specialist and
Interim Chief of Party
Development Alternatives, Inc.

May 31, 2001

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Acronyms

CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (USAID)
CBO	Community-based Organization
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DNFFB	National Directorate of Forests and Wildlife (Government of Mozambique)
ELMS	Environmental and Land Management Systems – one of SADC’s technical units
GKG	Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou – complex of three national parks comprising the Transfrontier Park
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
ITCC	International Technical Coordinating Committee – oversees development and operation of the GKG TFCA; subordinate to the Trilateral Ministerial Committee
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NRM	Natural Resources Management
PPF	Peace Parks Foundation
RAISE	Raising Agricultural Income with a Sustainable Environment
RCSA	Regional Center of Southern Africa (USAID)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TBNRMA	Transboundary Natural Resources Management Area
TCU	Technical Coordinating Unit (SADC)
TFCA	Transfrontier Conservation Area – essentially synonymous with TBNRMA
TFP	Transfrontier Park – composed of Coutada 16 hunting concession (Mozambique), Kruger National Park (South Africa), and Gonarezhou National Park (Zimbabwe)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Activity Commencement Report

Initiative for the Management of the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou (GKG) Transboundary Natural Resources Management Area

Section I – Background and Context

Introduction

The purpose of the Initiative for the Management of the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou (GKG) Transboundary Natural Resources Management Area (TBNRMA) is to provide technical assistance for the initiation and implementation of activities resulting in increased collaboration among the three constituent countries in the sustainable management of the shared resources in the TBNRMA for the social and economic development of the communities in the GKG area.

The GKG Transboundary activity supports Strategic Objective 012 of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Regional Center of Southern Africa (RCSA) entitled “Increased Regional Cooperation in the Management of Shared Natural Resources.” This strategic objective “recognizes the need for southern African nations and communities to collaborate to manage the unique biodiversity the region possesses that underpins the economic and social development prospects of the region.” A special focus by the USAID/RCSA on resources that cross international boundaries further recognizes the potential to create synergies among individual country activities.

Fieldwork by the team from Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI) and its partners is not intended to be used to create a GKG Transboundary area, rather, to assist ongoing efforts by a tri-national committee established for that purpose. An international agreement establishing the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park (GKG TFP) and Transfrontier Conservation Area (GKG TFCA) was formalized on 10 November 2000, between the governments of Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Please see the map of the GKG TFCA on the cover of this report.

The GKG TFCA seeks to reduce the effect of political boundaries on the ecological requirements of wildlife for unimpeded movement throughout their natural ecosystem. The GKG TFCA Trilateral Ministerial Committee oversees establishment, development, and management, with day-to-day operations handled by the International Technical Coordinating Committee (ITCC). The ITCC is the primary agency with which the DAI team coordinates for fieldwork necessary to implement the GKG Transboundary activity of USAID/RCSA.

This document is the Commencement Report covering initial activities undertaken toward implementing the GKG Transboundary project.

Overview of the GKG TBNRMA

The GKG TBNRMA encompasses 99,800 km² in southwestern Mozambique, northeastern South Africa, and southeastern Zimbabwe. The Mozambican component includes the Coutada 16 hunting concession that adjoins Kruger National Park, Banhine and Zinave National Parks, and Mapulanguene Ecotourism Development Area, plus interstitial area, for a total of approximately 66,987 km². In South Africa, the Kruger National Park and adjoining Provincial or private game reserves are included, covering about 22,147 km². Zimbabwean areas include Gonarezhou National Park, the Sengwe Communal Lands, and commercial wildlife conservancies along the western border of the Park, totaling 10,645 km².

Ecologically, the GKG TBNRMA is mostly flat savanna, bisected by the Lebombo Mountains running north to south. Five major rivers drain west to east, the Save, Changuane, Limpopo, Olifants,

and Komati. Climate is generally warm temperate to subtropical, with low rainfall (avg. 550 mm annually). Four ecosystem types make up the landscape: lowland plains in the eastern areas, a granitic plateau 500-750 m asl in the west, the Lebombo mountains, and the riverine plains crossing the savanna. Vegetation consists of mopane woodlands and shrubveld in the northern half of the TBNRMA, mixed bushveld in the southern half, sandveld areas scattered in the eastern portions, riverine woodlands along water courses, and edaphic grasslands near Banhine.

The edaphic grasslands are important habitat for flocks of waterfowl during rainy season, and for the migration of game between the Save and Limpopo rivers. The mixed bushveld is best for game viewing, being home to large herds of zebra, wildebeest, buffalo, giraffe, impala, and associated species, plus rhino and elephant. The riverine woodlands also provide a range of protective habitat for many mammals. The sandveld areas have high conservation value for their diversity of plant species.

Current land uses in the GKG TBNRMA vary by country. In South Africa, almost all areas are covered by formal conservation status, or are private reserves. Tourism to the renowned Kruger National Park and surrounding areas helps to support high standards of park maintenance and conservation practices. The situation in Zimbabwe is similar, having benefited both from official National Park status (Gonarezhou) and from community conservation efforts such as CAMPFIRE. Park maintenance standards may not be as high as those in South Africa, but are noteworthy. Isolation limits community economic opportunities in the Sengwe Communal Lands as well as tourism in the public or private reserves.

Mozambique is still recovering from its civil war, so parks to be incorporated into the TBNRMA are starting from a lower baseline. Much of the interstitial areas are sparsely populated with communities practicing subsistence agriculture and livestock raising. Some extractive resource uses – timber and firewood, for example – occur, as do fishing, hunting, and charcoal making. It is the under-developed parks within Mozambique, and the interstitial areas between parks, where the GKG Transboundary activity will initially focus its efforts.

Summary of GKG Transboundary Project Activities

The Task Order defines the scope of work for the DAI team in implementing the GKG Transboundary activity. In order to have project implementation contribute toward the USAID/RCSA Strategic Objective, four Intermediate Results are used to guide fieldwork. These are the following:

1. *Viable practices for sustainable management of shared natural resources adopted* – providing technical assistance for the development of approaches to establishing TBNRMA, and for documentation and dissemination of these approaches (including community-based enterprises, joint venture partnerships, investment opportunities for increased incomes, and management planning and monitoring systems);
2. *Policies, protocols and agreements enacted* – providing technical assistance toward identifying policy impediments to TBNRMA development, and suggesting specific policy instruments to remove these impediments;
3. *Organizations and institutions capable of effective regional intervention* – strengthening regional and local capacity to effectively manage the TBNRMA on a sustainable basis; and
4. *Ecological monitoring systems for decision-making improved* – providing technical assistance to identify and improve upon current systems for monitoring the ecological, social, and economic performance of the GKG TBNRMA, and to institutionalize the monitoring systems at local, sub-regional, national, and regional levels.

The desired “end state” of the GKG TBNRMA activity is community groups interacting effectively with public and private sector entities and realizing economic and social benefits from resource use and management. This should be supported by a policy foundation for collaborative natural resources management and business development, and institutions capable of implementing program activities.

Section II – Initial Findings

This section of the Commencement Report details the DAI team’s understanding of the context within which the GKG Transboundary activity will operate. The initial findings detailed here are the result of preliminary discussions with potential project partners and collaborators, review of the literature and relevant background documents, and consultations with USAID/RCSA and members of the team itself. The section is organized by Intermediate Result, which will also provide the framework for activities conducted by the team.

Viable NRM Approaches/Practices

Each of the individual national or provincial parks and private reserves that are included in the GKG TBNRMA has its own level of existing management capacity. For clarity, initial findings about the component parks and reserves will be described according to their respective country location.

South Africa: While Kruger National Park is often called one of the most intensively managed national parks in the world, there are a few disturbing signals that may indicate a gradual decline in the quality of that management. Ongoing staff retrenchment could be a sign of a declining revenue stream from tourism. Occupancy rates are reported to be lower than in the past, and facilities maintenance is reported to have been neglected for a decade or more. These initial reports still require verification in the field. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Kruger is the best managed of the constituent national parks in the GKG TBNRMA. According to background documents and conversation with the African Wildlife Foundation, the communities surrounding Kruger have not benefited as much as they had hoped from the tourism successes of Kruger.

Zimbabwe: The Gonarezhou National Park benefits from a comparatively good management plan and an adequate level of implementation of the plan. Many of the private game ranches or conservancies contribute to generally successful wildlife management. The USAID-supported CAMPFIRE program has been moderately successful in some of the Sengwe Communal lands. Game farming (and tourism to a lesser extent) provides the economic engine for management of the areas. Political instability, however, threatens to undermine these tentative successes. The government is reported to be encouraging – or at least not discouraging – landless farmers to move into both the Sengwe Communal Land and the Park itself. Again, these reports require confirmation on the ground.

Mozambique: Coutada 16, not a national park but a Hunting Concession, shares an international border with Kruger National Park. It is currently receiving substantial assistance (R40 M) from the Peace Parks Foundation with funding support from Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), the German Development Bank. These efforts will result in raising the area’s status to a Protected Area, developing a comprehensive management plan, and training local institutions and staff to operate the area. Banhine and Zinave National Parks are presently “paper parks” which lack management plans, trained personnel, or institutional capacity for long-term operation. The large interstitial areas, home to perhaps 140,000 people, are still recovering from the civil war. Land mines in scattered pockets, widespread poverty, grossly insufficient infrastructure, and scant opportunities for viable income generation are a few of the more challenging characteristics found in these areas.

Based on these initial findings, all subject to field verification and updating, the DAI team recommends an initial concentration of efforts on the Mozambican portion of the GKG TBNRMA. Specifically, the technical assistance team will begin work immediately toward initiation of a park management planning process in Banhine. Concurrently, baseline data collection will identify specific constraints and potential opportunities for community enterprise development efforts in the interstitial areas. These community efforts may be focused on either the Mapalanguene area south of Coutada 16 (and also adjoining Kruger), or in the areas between Coutada 16 and Banhine.

The recommended approach for initiating community efforts is best described as “let a thousand flowers bloom.” That is, rather than developing a package of community assistance that is then taken

to the field in search of communities willing to implement the package, every possible idea for community-based conservation enterprise will be given serious consideration. Those ideas that come from community members themselves –based on either consumptive or non-consumptive resource use –may prove to be the most viable. Once several dozen “experiments” are tested in communities, an evaluation will be done to identify those that demonstrate the greatest viability for possible replication in other areas. The most important aspect will be the participatory manner of selecting which conservation enterprises are attempted. The technical assistance team will then provide appropriate guidance to establishment, development, and operation of these enterprises. Initially, technical guidance in production, processing, marketing, and financial management are foreseen as among the types of assistance required by communities.

The parks management planning process will be conducted in an equally participatory manner. In addition to personnel from the DNFFB, the team will involve local NGOs and communities living inside the Park in the development of management plans. As noted above, the DAI team recommends that the first of these processes be conducted in Banhine. A management plan for Zinave would follow, but not perhaps until the second half of 2002.

The ITCC recently requested that the GKG Transboundary project assist them by integrating the individual park management plans into a comprehensive management plan for the GKG Transfrontier Park. This must be completed by November 2001, for official release by the Tri-Nation Ministerial Committee at a ceremonial opening of the fence between Kruger NP and Coutada 16.

Finally, although tourism is often described as the key economic opportunity presented by the development of shared natural resources, initial findings by the DAI team have not been positive. While Kruger National Park continues to enjoy some success with attracting international tourists, the most South African citizens cannot afford to visit this world-class Park. Isolation and current political instability in Zimbabwe place serious doubts on the near-term potential for tourism in the Gonarezhou National Park. Coutada 16, Banhine, and Zinave all suffer from not only isolation and inadequate infrastructure, but also an international perception of Mozambique as a troubled country with high crime rates. All of these factors work against near-term efforts to establish tourism as a basis for economic growth.

In addition to doubts about the volume of tourism potentially to be attracted to the TBNRMA areas outside of Kruger, initial findings by the DAI team also show limited near-term prospects for effective and substantial distribution of benefits from tourism to local communities. Similarly poor results have been found when game hunting, not tourism, provides the economic underpinning of conservation. The struggle to identify conservation-based enterprises that will produce real financial gains for the average community member within the TBNRMA is perhaps the greatest single challenge to be faced. To fail in this aspect will mean merely postponing, not preventing, the eventual degradation of the resources to the point of possible collapse.

Policies, Protocols, and Agreements

The international agreement formally establishing the Gaza-Kruger-Gonarezhou Transfrontier Park (GKG TFP) and Transfrontier Conservation Area (GKG TFCA) was signed on 10 November 2000, between the governments of Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. These governments were represented by Agriculture & Rural Development Minister Helder Muteia, Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister Valli Moosa, and Parks and Wildlife Minister Francis Nhema, respectively. GKG TBNRMA is the USAID / RCSA terminology for the GKG TFCA. The Transfrontier Park encompasses Coutada 16 hunting concession, and Kruger and Gonarezhou National Parks. It includes an area larger than Portugal.

Furthermore, several Technical Coordinating Units (TCUs) of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have developed international agreements relevant to TBNRMA. The Wildlife TCU has completed recently a Wildlife Protocol to complement an existing Water Protocol developed by the Water TCU. The Water Protocol is also under review for possible revision by SADC. Work is

progressing toward an Environment Charter, led by the Environmental and Land Management Systems (ELMS) TCU.

With the signing of this agreement, the hard work of putting operational details to this momentous concept begins. Key partners of the DAI team in developing the policy framework for operations of the TBNRMA will include the SADC Wildlife TCU and perhaps ELMS TCU, the International Technical Coordinating Committee (ITCC) of the GKG TFCA Trilateral Ministerial Committee, and especially the respective national agencies involved. In addition, the team will coordinate with the following Working Groups of the TFCA:

1. Community Interests;
2. Joint Management Plan;
3. Group Legislation;
4. Wildlife Diseases;
5. Tourism;
6. Security; and
7. Customs and Immigration.

The approach to be taken for developing policy interventions to encourage an enabling environment for viable conservation enterprises is both regional and national. After conducting a thorough review in the three constituent countries of the specific policy frameworks germane to improved management of shared natural resources, areas of similarity will be highlighted. Differences that are bound by law or constitution will also be noted. Following this analysis, a broad consultation process will be used to identify specific policies or regulations that act as impediments to conservation enterprises and/or improved management of natural resources. Participants in this process will include community groups, civil society organizations, private sector entities, and government agencies.

Technical assistance by DAI team members will focus on conducting the analyses necessary to identify the impediments, as well as recommending to the concerned agencies specific interventions that might remove the impediments or alleviate their impact on developing enterprises. This will include promoting the use of memoranda of understanding to solidify collaboration in management of shared natural resources.

Capable Organizations and Institutions

A wide range of organizations and institutions will be involved directly and indirectly in improved collaboration for management of the TBNRMA. Besides the relevant national agencies of the three constituent countries, many local, regional, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are or will become involved. Community-based organizations (CBOs) of varied types may also be formed to operate conservation enterprises in the interstitial areas between component parks.

A thorough review and analysis of the key organizations is to be conducted in the coming months. Initial findings from document review and interviews have shown the obvious: the wide variety of organizations involved has an equally wide level of internal capacity for participating in TBNRMA development and operation. Some are fully prepared to participate actively in their respective role. Others may require years of institutional strengthening before they can competently and confidently assume their assigned role. As part of the review and analyses of institutions and organizations with a significant role in operational activities related to the TBNRMA, the DAI team will also highlight specific areas of capacity building that might be undertaken. Identification of service providers to conduct the institutional strengthening will be done once specific training needs have been assessed.

Ecological Monitoring Systems

Initial findings related to ecological monitoring show that each constituent country has a unique type and/or level of monitoring systems within its protected areas. Generally, the quality of ongoing

monitoring parallels the quality of management. Kruger National Park has a well-developed system for tracking individual elephants, for example, as well as detailed ecological information on habitat quality and its dynamics. Zimbabwe uses differing techniques of collecting elephant census data, a system that renders it incompatible with that of South Africa. Neither country would be willing to replace their legacy systems, which would involve loss of historical data. In Mozambique, there is rudimentary monitoring at best. Their system is not fully developed and poses the best opportunity for GKG Transboundary technical assistance to contribute to upgrading existing operations. Replicating the South African system in Mozambique, however, would be untenable due to its cost.

The DAI team will focus its initial efforts on technical assistance to Mozambican agencies toward developing, in consultation with other relevant stakeholders, an appropriate monitoring system that both meets their specific needs and is affordable within available resources. It is expected that significant institutional capacity building will be necessary to make the system operational.

Efforts will also be made to identify areas where the GKG Transboundary activity could contribute to joint monitoring efforts among the constituent countries as part of their collaborative efforts toward management of shared natural resources. These efforts may be directed toward establishment of an ITCC Working Group on joint monitoring. Ideally, such a joint system would incorporate not only ecological information, but social and economic data as well.

Section III – Summary of Start-up Activities

The Development Alternatives, Inc (DAI) Team engaged in the following activities during the initial start-up period of the GKG Transboundary project:

Contractual Matters

1. Contacted all parties composing the DAI Team concerning the acquisition of the GKG Transboundary contract with USAID.
2. Held Contract Kickoff Meeting with principal subcontractors at the DAI Home Office in Bethesda, Maryland. Topics discussed include teaming arrangements, organization of short-term technical assistance, paths of communication, contractual terms, procurement of non-expendable property, financial tracking systems, mobilization of Chief of Party, and pertinent startup logistics.
3. Attended the USAID project kickoff meeting in Gaborone, Botswana. The project representatives were Jerry Martin (DAI), Jeremy Anderson (DAI), and Mario Rassul (IMPACTO). *Please see attached document for summary of meeting.*
4. Issued Authorization to Incur Costs letter to IMPACTO to begin work while subcontract negotiations were being finalized. Finalized sub-task order agreements with Management Systems International and Abt Associates, Inc. Completed subcontract with IMPACTO. Drafted subcontract with Ebony Consulting International (Pty) Ltd.

Personnel Matters

5. Mobilized the approved Chief of Party in San Francisco, California. Immediately following the award notice, mobilization arrangements were put into motion to transport the COP to Bethesda and on Nelspruit, South Africa. Specific activities include packing and storage of personal effects, completion of current position in San Francisco, location of suitable housing in South Africa, purchase of appropriate airline tickets to Washington DC and Johannesburg, and acquisition of the required South Africa work permit for COP.
6. Facilitated the corporate orientation of the approved Chief of Party in Washington, DC. The COP was brought to DAI Home Office for one week and familiarized with corporate policies and procedures. Specific agenda items included contractual procedures, financial tracking mechanisms, project work plan, procurement, and the project management database.
7. Responded to USAID/RCSA urgent request for replacement of the approved Chief of Party. Identified a qualified alternate candidate and proposed using an initial TDY assignment for work plan preparation as an opportunity for the RCSA to assess the candidate's qualifications for the long-term position as Chief of Party.
8. Placed advertisements for office support staff in local (Nelspruit) publications. Based on responses to the advertisement, personnel in South Africa selected the most qualified candidates for screening interviews, then recommended who to hire. Final selection interviews of top three candidates conducted upon interim COP's arrival in Nelspruit. Staff hired.
9. Interim COP received all medical examinations and updates to vaccinations required of contractor personnel. Applied and received a multiple entry visa for Mozambique. Applied and received a business visa for South Africa. Arrived in Nelspruit, South Africa within 10 days of USAID approval as interim COP.

Office Establishment

10. Made preparations for the establishment of the project office in Nelspruit, South Africa. Project personnel in South Africa identified potential office space, negotiated a lease agreement, contacted local phone provider, established post office box, and opened a project bank account.

11. Initiated procurement of non-expendable property. Personnel in South Africa and Bethesda identified equipment needs and obtained the required quotations from computer, vehicle, and furniture vendors.
12. Began work plan preparation in Bethesda, including literature review, compilation and review of background documents, and preliminary task scheduling and work sequencing. Organized tasks by Intermediate Result within the Strategic Objective framework.
13. Purchased and accepted delivery of basic office furnishings. Initiated identification of ISP, courier, and other required support services.
14. Submitted request for vehicle waiver to Contracting Officer for local procurement of two non-US manufactured Toyota Hi-Lux 4x4 vehicles for official project use.