

PROPOSAL: THE EVENTUAL ESTABLISHMENT OF COUTADA 5, SOFALA PROVINCE, REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE, AS A VERIFIED CONSERVATION AREA

PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE VCA PROGRAMME AT
EARTHMIND, BY AFRICA FUTURA WILDLIFE RESTORATION
LDA. DECEMBER, 2013



1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- a. **The project area:** Of the 12 operational Coutadas, or officially protected wildlife management areas, in Mozambique, Coutada 5 is at 687 000 ha the largest and most complex. The responsibility to rehabilitate, conserve and develop Coutada 5 has in August 2012 been contractually delegated by the Government of Mozambique to a private company, *Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration Lda*, for a renewable period of 20 years.
- b. **Planning:** A comprehensive Biodiversity Management Plan has been compiled for Coutada 5. This plan may be viewed at www.africafutura-wr.com. The far-reaching BBP is currently being implemented.
- c. **Objectives:** A total of 17 project objectives, inclusive of biodiversity and social objectives, have been identified.
- d. **The biodiversity context:** During the protracted civil war of the 1980's and early 1990's, and in the immediate aftermath of the war, the erstwhile abundant wildlife of Coutada 5 was severely over utilized to the extent that most of the larger species became extirpated. A massive wildlife reintroduction project is thus planned.
- e. **The agricultural context:** The age-old agricultural practise of slash-and-burn cultivation, is still widely practised by subsistence farmers in the Coutada. This ecologically destructive and low-yield

practise will need to be replaced by environmentally friendly eco-agricultural techniques.

- f. **The ecosystem restoration context:** The great variety of habitats in Coutada 5 are relatively unscathed by human interferences. The only real restoration project will thus be the reintroduction of suitable wildlife species, and the concomitant resettlement of humans out of the envisaged core wildlife-wilderness area.
- g. **The social context:** The development of Coutada 5 will take heed of the needs and aspirations of the current inhabitants. Most of the estimated 50 000 plus people living in the Coutada reside in the major coastal towns or settlements along the Save River. The more remote regions, constituting some 85% of the Coutada, are only sparsely settled. The people are generally very poor and are mostly involved in subsistence agriculture. A comprehensive but sensitive and transparent Resettlement Action Plan, based on international requirements, has been prepared. Social surveys are currently being undertaken.
- h. **The economic context:** Early calculations indicate that the project's cumulative operational and developmental losses during the first six years will be considerable. More detailed calculations will be undertaken prior to the final VCA report being submitted for consideration. The company hopes to attract donor assistance to assist with paying the way to get the challenging but ultimately highly deserving project off the ground.
- i. **Zoning:** The Coutada 5 zone plan includes not only five biodiversity-based conservation zones, but also an additional four agricultural and one towns/settlements zone. The major zones are the core wildlife-wilderness zone of about 210 000 ha, the future cattle ranching blocks totalling 100 000 ha, and a multiple-use community zone of more than 300 000 ha.

2 AREA MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AND CONTRACTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Status of Official Coutada 5

Coutada 5 is one of 12 operational official Coutadas (similar to wildlife management areas elsewhere) in the Republic of Mozambique. As such it is an officially protected area, the other protected systems including Transfrontier Conservation Areas, National Parks and National Reserves.

b. Contractual responsibilities

All the Coutadas are managed on a leasehold basis by private companies. The leasehold contracts vary in duration, but are in the

case of Coutada 5 currently 20 years, renewable for further periods of five years. The contract essentially delegates full development, management and utilization authority to the company, but within the stipulations of the contract. The first obligated Five-year Development Plan for the venture is currently in the process of being approved by government.

c. Management structure

The management structure for Coutada 5 include a Steering Committee (consisting of the two project principals, both Swiss businessmen), a four-man Management Committee (responsible for the day-to-day management affairs) and a two-man specialist committee (the Conservation and Development Committee).

d. Area manager

Management of the Coutada has, for practical reasons, been split into two interlocking and interdependent entities: the Management Committee deals with all the daily management requirements, and is thus responsible for the hands-on implementation of policies and plans. In addition, a highly experienced two-man specialist committee, the Conservation and Development Committee, is inter alia responsible for corporate governance and management auditing, and should in an overarching manner ensure that theories become realities. The writer of this report, AvW (“Lampies”) Lambrechts, is the Chairman of the specialist Conservation and Development Committee. Lambrechts is a career conservationist with more than 45 years experience of the planning, development, management and utilization of African protected areas. He holds a Master’s degree in Nature Conservation. Prof Piet du Plessis is the second member of the committee, and has a PhD in Wildlife Economics. He is an internationally recognized wildlife ranching specialist with more than 35 years of applicable experience.

3 MISSION AND OBJECTIVES FOR COUTADA 5

The mission for Coutada 5 is as follows:

“To plan, develop, manage and utilise Coutada 5 in such a manner that the seriously depleted biodiversity resources will be rehabilitated over time, and in line with relevant Mozambican laws and policies, thus allowing sustained consumptive and non-consumptive use of these resources, whilst at the same time pursuing sustainable agricultural developments on certain sections of the Coutada, and simultaneously

acknowledging the need to involve the local communities in a positive, meaningful and mutually beneficial manner.”

The diversity of the project objectives is a reflection of the complexity of what needs to be done and of the magnitude of the venture. A total of five biodiversity-based conservation objectives, four sustainable use objectives, one each of tourism and social objectives, four fiscal and administrative objectives and two collaboration objectives were identified. These objectives are directly based on the corresponding national objectives for Mozambique, and will strive to achieve the mission that has been identified for the project.

4 AREA CHARACTERISTICS

a. Biodiversity Business Plan

A comprehensive biodiversity business plan has been compiled and is in the process of being implemented. The full plan, as well as a number of other links, may be viewed on the website of *Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration Lda*, at www.africafutura-wr.com.

b. Geographic coordinates

The coordinates for the Headquarters facility of the Coutada are S20.9017 and E034.2897

c. Size

The Coutada is 687 000 ha in extent, or almost the size of Scotland. It should be borne in mind, however, that certain areas are relatively densely settled by humans, and that a few formal towns/settlements are also situated within the Coutada. The envisaged core wildlife-wilderness area comprise 210 000 ha, which may in the interim thus be regarded as the size of the ‘real’ protected area. The company’s contract with the government nevertheless includes the full Coutada, and not only the more remote rural areas.

d. Ecoregions

Given the large size of Coutada 5, linked to a coastal length of more than 30 km, elements of no less than five ecoregions can be found. These include areas of:

- a marine ecoregion;
- tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests;
- tropical and subtropical grasslands, savannas and shrublands;

- mangroves, and finally
- a mosaic of small freshwater lakes and riverine systems

e. Natural resources and ecosystems/habitats

Coutada 5 boasts an impressive array of habitats. These include elements of a coastal mosaic (the Sofala Swamp Coast) with extensive intertidal flats and salt marshes, an equally extensive area of mangroves, elements of the Southern Miombo Woodlands, and a gradual transition towards the drier inland regions (to the west) of the extensive Zambezian and Mopane Woodlands. Small fresh water lakes are especially common in the eastern regions.

f. Current use of natural resources

The vast majority of the inhabitants of Coutada 5 rely heavily on the use of natural resources, on a subsistence basis, in order to survive. This usage include the ecologically destructive slash-and-burn crop production technique, fishing, palm wine production and unfortunately also (mostly illegal) hunting. In virtually all instances the use of natural resources has reached unsustainable levels. Some of the major objectives of the project would be to turn this situation around, and to establish sustainable production systems.

g. Infrastructure

With the exception of the infrastructure in the major towns and settlements and the humble abodes of the scattered small communities, *Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration Lda* inherited an area almost totally devoid of any development. Since August 2012 a tourist lodge and restaurant has been constructed near the main thoroughfare (the EN1), and a variety of management facilities and staff housing have been provided. (Please look at the photos in the Biodiversity Business Plan, www.africafutura-wr.com)

h. Human settlements

The major town and capital of the district, is the town of Machanga. Smaller towns and settlements include Divinhe, Maropanhe and Jovane. Isolated small settlements, mostly with no permanent structures, occur in the north, as well as scattered in the remote rural areas of the Coutada. Some of these settlements can only be reached on foot. It is estimated that more than 50 000 people live in the Coutada (the great majority of them living in the major towns). Social surveys which are currently underway will provide more detailed data.

5 ECOSYSTEM AND SOCIAL ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

a. Major stakeholders

The major stakeholders in Coutada 5 are:

- the national government as the ultimate custodian of the land;
- the local district government who are involved at virtually all the levels of development;
- *Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration Lda*;
- the local communities, and
- future donors and private investors.

b. Ecosystem assessment

A preliminary scientific ecosystem assessment, to be undertaken in two stages, is currently underway. However, the large size of the Coutada and the virtual inaccessibility of large areas due to an almost total absence of roads, make intensive surveys almost impossible and also prohibitively expensive. The current survey will therefore concentrate on the 210 000 ha area, that has been identified as the future core wildlife-wilderness area.

c. Past and current status of habitats

Virtually all of the great variety of inland habitats of Coutada 5 is in a good state of preservation, the only exception being the riverine forests and the floodplain system of the Save River which has been relatively densely settled, and unfortunately severely altered, by people. It is also likely that the scattered fresh water habitats, especially the small lakes, have been damaged by unsustainable use. Furthermore, uncontrolled annual burns over large areas impact negatively on the quality of the grazing.

d. Past and current status of wildlife

Although only very limited data on the past status of wildlife in Coutada 5 exist, and most of these being anecdotal, it is virtually a certainty that the area teemed with a great variety of wildlife until the mid-1970's. Severe overutilization since then led to most of the species of larger ungulates and predators becoming locally extinct.

e. Sustainable use of biodiversity resources

Once the denuded wildlife of the Coutada has been effectively restored, even if only with regards to some of the readily available

ungulate and predator species that are slated for re-introduction, the sustainable consumptive and non-consumptive use of these restored resources would follow as a matter of routine.

f. Sustainable use of land for agricultural practises

Continued use of the outdated and destructive low-yield system of slash-and-burn cultivation, will ensure that the current low-income smallholder farming enterprises are perpetuated. *Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration Lda* thus accepts the principle that higher-yield and higher income eco-agricultural practises will have to be implemented by the local smallholder farmers, with the accent being on the relocated households.

g. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

The following *internal* strengths and weaknesses, and *external* opportunities and threats are listed (without any discussion, and not ranked in a priority order):

Strengths:

- The overall dedication of *Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration Lda* to the cause of rehabilitating the Coutada.
- The support of government, especially the local government structures.
- The long-term renewable leasehold contract with the government.
- The presence of dedicated *Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration Lda* staff, including specialist support.
- The huge size of the area, allowing for multiple usages.
- The status of the Coutada as an official protected area
- The eminent suitability of the area for a diversity of wildlife
- The ability to plan and develop the Coutada from scratch, and in line with the best possible international guidelines
- The lure of a sizeable unspoilt wilderness area, stocked with wildlife, for tourists.
- The ability to dedicate a sizeable portion of the Coutada (an envisaged 210 000 ha) as a core wildlife-wilderness block.
- The possibility of resettling those households currently living in the core wildlife-wilderness block, to suitable localities elsewhere in the Coutada.
- The availability of uninhabited areas outside of the core wildlife-wilderness block for agricultural resettlement and the development of eco-agriculture ventures.

- The creation of more than 400 permanent employment opportunities in a district where jobs are currently almost non-existent.
- The possibility to establish representative community structures, to ensure that the local people benefit directly from the project.

Weaknesses:

- The extreme scarcity of wildlife in the Coutada
- The concomitant scarcity of founder wildlife populations elsewhere in Mozambique
- The current lack of a conservation ethic amongst the local people
- The apparent hesitation by law enforcement agencies to prosecute poachers
- The very expensive nature of the rehabilitation project
- The possible reluctance of donor agencies to become involved in Mozambique
- The inability of government to provide any direct assistance in the development of the area
- Financial constraints facing *Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration Lda*
- The lack of experience of the staff complement of *Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration Lda*
- The almost total lack of suitable infrastructure (inclusive of roads and game-proof fencing) to accommodate the planned wildlife re-introduction programme
- The huge extent of the planned wildlife re-introduction programme

Opportunities

- The opportunity to develop one of the largest effectively protected areas in Africa
- The opportunity, in the face of serious threats facing the wildlife of Africa, to create a large new area where a multitude of free ranging species can be re-introduced and protected
- The opportunity to assist the Government of Mozambique in realising their laudable biodiversity objectives
- The opportunity to establish an area where meaningful sustainable use of biodiversity resources will be possible, in a controlled environment with a full spectrum of free ranging wildlife
- The opportunity to involve donors in the venture

- The opportunity to educate local people into accepting wildlife conservation and utilization, as a viable alternative to the current non-viable livelihood practises
- The opportunity created by the magnitude of the core wildlife-wilderness block to attract investors
- The possibility to attract livestock ranching investors to the eastern regions of the Coutada (though this concept has not yet been finally approved by government)
- The possibility to embark on sustainable eco-agricultural ventures, benefiting the local smallholder farmers
- The opportunity to better the lives of the people living in the Coutada, especially those living in the resettlement areas
- The opportunity to create jobs in a district with an extreme paucity of employment opportunities
- The opportunity to train a large number of currently inexperienced local people to become gainfully employed
- The opportunity to infuse sizeable sums of money into the economy of a very poor district and region

Threats:

- The possibility that not all of the people living in the rural areas may buy into the project, and may continue with their environmentally destructive practises
- It is possible that the reluctance of law enforcement agencies to decisively act against poachers, as is happening elsewhere in Mozambique, may threaten the successful deployment of the biodiversity rehabilitation project
- It is possible that the local farmers may not favour a change-over from the current low yield systems to eco-agriculture
- The involuntary resettlement programme may meet with resistance, thus threatening the establishment of a core wildlife-wilderness zone
- The paucity of healthy wildlife populations elsewhere in Mozambique may threaten the supply of ungulates and predators for re-introduction
- Central government may not grant 'ownership' of the relocated wildlife to the company, thus necessitating hunting permits to be obtained and possible private investors probably losing interest
- The possible inability of the company to raise enough donor funds
- The possible inability of the company to employ enough experienced staff, thus causing a development and management shortfall
- The remoteness of the Coutada may inhibit the tourism potential of the area

- The remoteness of the Coutada may inhibit potential investors from investing in the local wildlife industry
- The remoteness of the Coutada and the total lack of supporting infrastructure may inhibit potential cattle ranchers from investing in the area
- The current political unrest in Sofala province may not be resolved speedily, thus threatening the very existence of the rehabilitation project

6 EXPECTED CONSERVATION AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

a. Ecosystem restoration:

Given the current very low grazing pressure on the land, the quality of the different habitats of Coutada 5 can generally be regarded as good to even excellent. However, uncontrolled and illegal logging still take place and the status of certain hardwood species may be precarious, particularly in readily accessible areas. Frequent uncontrolled fires impact negatively on the quality of especially the grass component, and will have to be curtailed. Hot burns may already have had a negative impact on the composition of the woody plant stratum. Controlled burns are nevertheless regarded as essential in maintaining healthy vegetation, and will be used as a management tool.

b. Wildlife rehabilitation

Most of the large mammal species disappeared altogether from the Coutada, due to unsustainable harvest over the past thirty-odd years. Only relic populations of larger ungulates such as kudu, nyala, impala and hippo survived. All the major predator species seemingly became extirpated. Species that became locally extinct include lion, African wild dog, cheetah, elephant, black rhino, eland, buffalo, waterbuck, plains zebra, sable antelope, blue wildebeest, and Lichtenstein's hartebeest. The company will embark on a massive wildlife re-introduction programme, the objective being to re-introduce, as far as is humanly possible, those species that disappeared due to anthropogenic disturbances. The wildlife reintroduction programme will involve close on 6 000 head of game, and will be one of the largest of such programmes ever undertaken in the world. A fully rehabilitated Coutada, and especially the core wildlife-wilderness block, will make a meaningful conservation contribution in a country where almost all of the protected areas are hamstrung by a severe lack of funds.

c. Social developments

i. Social impacts and realities

Notwithstanding the large size of the Coutada, and notwithstanding its official protected area status, social aspects will during especially the early set-up and restoration phases, of necessity receive more attention than virtually everything else. The local communities will need to play a crucial role in the development, failing which the realising of the biodiversity objectives would be impossible.

ii. Improving livelihoods

Notwithstanding sustained growth over the last two decades, Mozambique still ranks as one of the five poorest countries in the world. The districts of Machanga, Shibabava and Machaze, in which Coutada 5 is situated, are uniformly underdeveloped and very poor. One of the main objectives of the rehabilitation of Coutada 5 is to uplift the general standard of living of all the people living in the Coutada, but especially those on whose lives the project directly impacts.

iii. Social structures

In order for the diversity of objectives of the project to be realised, a direct involvement of the local people will be imperative. To achieve this, a number of community-based committees are currently being established. These democratic structures, reporting to an overarching Community Trust, will act as the voices of the communities, and will have to ensure that benefit sharing is achieved in an equitable manner.

d. Eco-agricultural developments

The current agricultural practises centre on outdated, ineffective and largely destructive methods being applied. The ultimate objective would be to introduce eco-agricultural techniques to each and every smallholder farmer operating in the Coutada. However, this will be a huge and costly undertaking; therefore the initial accent will fall on those farmers that will have to be resettled in order to establish the core wildlife-wilderness block.

7 FINANCIAL ASPECTS

No in-depth economic analysis has been undertaken as yet, due to the large number of variables that must still be researched. These financial variables include the costs of the extensive rehabilitation program, the huge and very expensive re-introduction of wildlife program, and also the multitude of costs inherent in the various social projects. Early indications are that a substantial operating and development loss will have been incurred by year six, after which sustainable and profitable use of the rehabilitated resources may be possible. The 'selling' of assets to private investors, for example the 22 wildlife blocks of 5 000 ha each in the core wildlife-wilderness zone that has been approved by government, will cover most of the establishment expenses. However, the cumulative loss at that stage has been calculated to be US \$3 million, and may indeed be considerably more. The company will thus obviously need donor assistance to ensure the eventual success of the venture.

8 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR REGISTERING AS A VCA

Since a number of plans have already been compiled for the Coutada, including a major Biodiversity Business Plan, the mandatory Verified Conservation Area Management Plan following on this introductory proposal, should be completed by mid-2014 at the latest. The plan will be compiled in accordance with the prescribed VCA Standards, and will be an extensive elaboration of this brief proposal document.

9 LETTER OF SUPPORT

Included as a separate document.

10 CONTACT DETAILS

AvW Lambrechts, PO Box 1360, Rayton 1001, South Africa
Email: lampies@kleinfontein.net
Cell: +27(0)825566158

**ADDENDUM TO THE PROPOSAL: THE EVENTUAL
ESTABLISHMENT OF COUTADA 5, SOFALA PROVINCE,
REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE, AS A VERIFIED
CONSERVATION AREA**

**PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE VCA PROGRAMME AT
EARTHMIND, BY AFRICA FUTURA WILDLIFE RESTORATION
LDA. DECEMBER, 2013**



ADDENDUM: PROVISIONAL WORK PLAN

Due to certain practical problems, no work plan was included in the original document. The work plan that follows is provisional, and do not indicate a start/launch date.

**PROVISIONAL WORK PLAN
(A number of the activities will run concurrently)**

| ITEM | DURATION |
|---|----------|
| Note: The existing Biodiversity Business Plan for Coutada 5 contain a number of implementation or operations plans; these plans will form the background for the final implementation plan | |
| PLANNING PHASE | |
| Prepare and submit plan to Earthmind: full VCA proposal document | 3 weeks |
| Prepare supporting plans: drafts (Social, agriculture, biodiversity: applying the CCB, CMP and other standards) | 6 weeks |
| Submit supporting draft plans to Earthmind for comments | 4 weeks |

| | |
|--|----------|
| Finalize supporting plans | 3 weeks |
| Prepare draft presentations, based on the above plans and the existing Biodiversity Business Plan for Coutada 5 | 3 weeks |
| Submit draft presentations to Earthmind for comments | 2 weeks |
| Finalize presentations | 2 weeks |
| Identify High Conservation Areas | 4 weeks |
| Prepare plans and identify sites: hunting/tourism facilities | 24 weeks |
| Plan road network | 24 weeks |
| CONSULTATION/NEGOTIATION PHASE | |
| Negotiate with Earthmind (local or in Switzerland) | 1 week |
| Initiate negotiations with possible donor agencies: written submissions | 5 weeks |
| Negotiate with possible donor agencies: oral presentations (Europe) | 2 weeks |
| Negotiate with local government (Mozambique): social, wildlife and agriculture aspects | Ongoing |
| Establish community structures: Coutada 5: Community Trust; Conservation; Agriculture) | 12 weeks |
| Negotiate with involved parties: involuntary resettlement program | 16 weeks |
| Implement Public Consultation and Disclosure Plan | Ongoing |
| Negotiate with government and NGO's: sustainable agriculture venture | 12 weeks |
| Negotiate with government, possible suppliers of wildlife and possible donor agencies: wildlife reintroduction program | 16 weeks |
| SURVEYS AND WORKSHOPS | |
| Undertake social impact assessments: prepare final plans | 20 weeks |
| Undertake biodiversity impact assessments: prepare final plans | 24 weeks |
| STRUCTURE PHASE | |
| Establish company management structure: to implement the plans, and daily management | 8 weeks |
| Establish specialist structure: to implement the VCA, CCB and CMP standards | 12 weeks |
| INVESTOR PROGRAM | |
| Sell 22 wildlife blocks to investors | 2 years |
| Sell 20 cattle ranching blocks to investors | 2 years |
| Obtain 'dires' (ownership certificates) for the investors | 2 years |
| IMPLEMENTATION PHASE (only the major activities are listed) | |
| 1 Involuntary resettlement program: preparation of resettlement area | 36 weeks |
| 2 Involuntary resettlement program: actual resettlement | 36 weeks |
| 3 Sustainable agriculture program: preparation of smallholder cultivation plots | 36 weeks |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 4 Sustainable agriculture program: training of smallholder farmers | 2,5 years |
| 5 Sustainable agriculture program: establish smallholder farmer cooperative | 1 year |
| 6 Sustainable agriculture: implement conservation agriculture techniques | 2 years |
| 7 Wildlife reintroduction program: prepare predator acclimatizing camps | 24 weeks |
| 8 Wildlife reintroduction program: prepare 210 000 ha fenced enclosure (180 km fence) | 2 years |
| 9 Wildlife reintroduction program: purchase, transport and release game species into acclimatizing camps, or into the major unit | 5 years |
| 10 Establish High Conservation Value Areas/Special Preservation Areas | 12 weeks |
| 11 Tourism: build hunting/ecotourism camps | 3 years |
| 12 Tourism and general management: provide internal road network (approximately 500 km) | 3 years |
| 13 Management: provide management infrastructure and equipment | 3 years |
| 14 Community development: implement the community development plan | Ongoing |
| 15 Tourism: implement the institutional tourism development plan | 4 years |
| 16 Administration: provide the required administrative structures and procedures to deal with the Coutada 5 project | 1 year |
| 17 Administration: implement the personnel, infrastructure, waste, security, and health operational management plans | Ongoing |
| 18 Ecosystem restoration: implement the ecosystem restoration plan | Ongoing |
| MONITORING PHASE | |
| Monitor progress with the implementation of policies, plans and actions | Ongoing |
| TOTAL TIME FRAME (for the above activities) | 7 years |