Southern Africa Regional Brand Communications and Management Strategy:

RETOSA Capacity-Building Workshop Report (Draft 4)

11-12 Sept 2012, Maseru, Lesotho
1. Purpose of This Report

1.1 Purpose

This report summarises the key points discussed and outcomes of the regional destination branding capacity-building workshop, held on 11\textsuperscript{th} & 12\textsuperscript{th} Sept 2012 at the Maseru Sun Hotel in Maseru, Lesotho, attended by tourism marketing personnel from RETOSA member states.

It is intended as both a record of issues discussed and outcomes agreed, and as a guide to inform the next steps in the development of the Southern Africa Regional Brand Communications and Management Strategy.

2. Workshop Protocols, Content, Format and Attendance

2.1 Workshop Protocols

The workshop was opened by the Honourable ‘Mamahele Radebe, Minister of Tourism, Environment and Culture for Lesotho, accompanied by the Principal Secretary, Mr. Makalo Theko.

The workshop was then facilitated variously by Tom Buncle, Yellow Railroad; Prof. Ernie Heath, University of Pretoria; Kwakye Donkor, RETOSA; and Roseana Kandulu, Commonwealth Secretariat (ComSec).

2.2 Workshop Content and Format

The workshop contained presentations, which were aimed at setting the scene and providing insights on destination branding, as follows:

General:
- Destination branding practices and principles
- Travel trends
- Regional branding practice elsewhere in the world
- Presentations from individual states on their approach to branding and marketing
- Marketing tactics and innovative approaches to destination marketing
- Nation-branding case studies

Regional Brand-Specific:
- The development of the Southern Africa regional brand “Experience Southern Africa” by RETOSA
- Analysis of responses to pre-workshop questionnaire on member states’ branding skills and practice by Yellow Railroad
- Draft Brand Communications Strategy by Yellow Railroad
- Draft Brand Management Strategy by Yellow Railroad

Several breakout sessions were then held, with five groups debating the following issues and feeding their conclusions back to all delegates in a plenary session (These conclusions are identified below):

- Draft Brand Communications Strategy – key elements
- Draft Brand Management Strategy – key elements
- Critical success factors for the regional brand

A workshop agenda is attached at Appendix 3.

2.3 Attendance

A total of 25 marketing delegates attended from ten RETOSA member states:
- Botswana
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- South Africa (Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa and Boundless Southern Africa)
- Swaziland
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

Most were from national tourism offices (NTOs), with representatives from tourism ministries and private sector associations, and two regional organisations (Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa and Boundless Southern Africa).

(See attached list of delegates at Appendix 1.)
3. Background and Rationale

The need for a capacity-building workshop for marketing personnel from RETOSA member states and RETOSA staff was identified at the inception meeting of the Southern Africa Brand Communications and Management Strategy project, held in Johannesburg in May 2012.

The purpose was defined as to:

- Increase destination branding skills amongst member states’ marketing personnel.

- Further awareness and understanding of the Southern Africa regional brand amongst member states; and thereby improve their capacity to implement and manage the regional brand.

For these reasons, it was agreed that this workshop should target those responsible for implementation in the field of branding and marketing for their countries, rather than chief executives or senior management who did not have direct responsibility for branding and marketing.

4. Capacity-Building Skills Assessment

4.1 Pre-Workshop Questionnaire

In order to assess the level of branding skills and experience amongst potential workshop delegates, a questionnaire was distributed to delegates several weeks prior to the workshop.

Delegates were then followed up by telephone by Yellow Railroad to elicit responses and to encourage them to provide a detailed and textured level of information on their knowledge and experience of destination branding. The aim was to gather sufficient insight into their branding capacity to enable Yellow Railroad to design a targeted and efficacious workshop, which would maximise this opportunity for developing their capacity in the field of destination branding.

This was instrumental in helping design the content of the workshop programme, in order to maximise delegates’ time and build appropriately on their existing skills.
4.2 Conclusions

Key observations arising from questionnaire responses are as follows:

Response Rate and Branding Capacity:
- 9 out of 14 member states responded = 64% response rate.
- Overall the responses showed a significant level of understanding of destination branding and marketing; and there were several very pertinent comments about the role and challenges associated with destination branding.

National Brand Status:
- Most member states have no official destination brand strategy.
- Few member states have a destination brand toolkit.
- Few member states measure their brand impact.
- Only some stakeholders in member states use the national brand, other than the national tourism office (NTO) or national tourism administration (NTA).
- Responsibility for their brand lies (rightly) with marketing departments in every member state that responded.

Southern Africa Regional Brand:
- Awareness of the regional Southern Africa brand is quite limited.*
- Confidence in their ability to implement the regional Southern Africa brand is low amongst member states.*
- Almost all member states considered that the regional Southern Africa brand could add value to their own countries.
- Main areas of concern in relation to the successful implementation of the regional Southern Africa brand were:
  o Need to obtain buy-in from member states
  o Need to avoid conflict with national brand
* These responses establish a useful baseline from which to measure progress on the regional brand. In particular, it will enable RETOSA to evaluate progress in terms of future familiarity, confidence, and commitment to the regional brand, as the regional brand is rolled out and member states begin implementing it.

Workshop Expectations:
Member states’ main expectations of the capacity-building workshop were:
- To understand more about destination branding in general;
- To enable member states to improve and sharpen their own national branding;
- To understand the regional brand, how it might add value, and how it might complement member states’ own national brands.
- To leverage the regional brand at national and international fairs and targeted platforms.
- To secure political and leadership support for the collective application and implementation of the regional brand.

A detailed analysis of delegates’ responses is attached at Appendix 2.
5. Expectations and Challenges - Workshop Participants

5.1 Expectations

At the inception of the workshop, participants were asked to state what they expected to achieve from the workshop. Their expectations fell into four key areas:

- To learn more about destination branding in general.
- To enable member states to improve and sharpen their own national branding.
- To understand the regional brand, and in particular:
  - how it might add value to member states’ own national brands;
  - how it might complement member states’ own national brands;
  - how it would avoid conflicting with their own national brands.
- To network with colleagues from other member states.

More specifically, delegates further articulated the following more detailed expectations that they had of the workshop:

- To obtain new ideas and approaches to destination branding and marketing and to network and learn from each other.
- To understand more about implementing destination branding strategies.
- To achieve clarity on how to leverage country brands, together with the umbrella regional brand, in a mutually beneficial manner, to grow business for Southern Africa. (“How can we both cooperate and compete?”)
- To identify and agree on issues of common interest and mutual benefit that should be addressed under the envisaged regional branding and marketing umbrella.
- To discuss ways of collaborating, while competing, in a spirit of “co-opetition” and with a shared regional vision.
- To clarify how to leverage the regional brand in destinations where there are similar products, experiences and target markets.
- To agree on a “road map” illustrating how individual countries can co-brand within the regional context.
• To discuss equitable ways in which the different stages of tourism development and marketing in the respective countries can be accommodated within the regional branding and marketing strategy for Southern Africa.

• To address the communication challenges in the region in a practical and mutually beneficial manner.

• To discuss the possibility of RETOSA providing a “gateway to knowledge” on best practices, trends, market intelligence, etc. for destinations in the region.

5.2 Challenges

During the first workshop session, each member state made a presentation on their country’s approach to destination branding and marketing and the challenges they faced from a competitive perspective. From these presentations the following lessons and challenges were apparent:

• The need to reconcile member states’ national brands with the regional Southern Africa brand – “Experience Southern Africa”.

• Understanding the relative priorities that should be assigned to logo development (including straplines) and brand positioning.

• Engaging and achieving buy-in from key public and private sector stakeholders, as well as the media, is critical for the successful branding and marketing of the region.

• Achieving understanding and commitment to both national destination branding and to the regional brand from leaders – particularly at senior levels in government and the tourism industry – in member states. Ideally political leaders should actively endorse the brands of their respective countries, as well as the umbrella brand for the region, and be the leading brand champions in the region.

• Collaboration between neighbouring countries, where they share opportunities to offer a coherent cross-border tourism experience.

• Human and financial resources required to implement branding – at both national and regional levels. Limited budgets require a smart and innovative approach to branding and marketing.

• Many destinations have similar tourism product offerings and target the same markets, but there is also a wide spectrum of complimentary experiences across the region. Each country has its own distinctive cultural heritage; some have more wildlife than others; and the variety of landscapes and climates is immense – e.g. from tropical rainforest in the Democratic Republic of Congo to the deserts of Namibia, and from the beaches of Mozambique to the mountains of Lesotho, and many others.
This reflects a depth and diversity of product offerings and experiences that can be packaged and themed under the *Experience Southern Africa* brand to appeal to a wide spectrum of both general visitors and special interest market segments in order to enhance the region’s competitiveness.

- There is considerable **individual and collective energy and passion** in the region that should be harnessed under a shared tourism vision.

- Continuous **engagement, communication and collaboration** are key challenges to ensure buy-in and participation of all key stakeholder groups. This needs to be based on mutual respect and trust.
6. Draft Regional Brand Communications and Management Strategy

A first draft of the Regional Brand Communications and Management Strategy was circulated to delegates at the workshop.

6.1 Draft Brand Communications Strategy

Key Aims of the Brand Communication Strategy:

The overall aim of the regional brand is to enhance the global visibility and awareness of Southern Africa as an attractive and multi-faceted tourism destination and thereby:
- Improve the region’s competitiveness
- Ensure the sustainability of the tourism sector
- Contribute towards poverty reduction

The key communications objectives for the Southern Africa brand are defined in the draft strategy as:

- To enhance the **visibility and positive awareness** of the Southern Africa region through application of the Southern Africa brand.

- To encourage **stakeholders in member states to own the brand** and the brand development process, to be proud of it, and to use it in their own marketing communications, thereby uniting countries of the region in a cooperative approach to marketing Southern Africa wherever appropriate.

- To ensure that the Southern Africa brand achieves as much **market impact** as possible, from the combined resources of RETOSA member states, and that it remains **sustainable** through its continued use and, when necessary, refreshment by member states.

**Strategic Communications Approach:**

The strategic aim, in terms of implementation, is that the Southern Africa brand should underpin all marketing communications about countries in Southern Africa and thereby enhance individual states’ tourism marketing activities and leverage positive associations for Southern Africa in the minds of potential visitors for the benefit of all countries in the region.

A strategic approach is recommended, which utilises, firstly, the existing marketing activities of member states to communicate the regional brand values and, secondly, additional discrete activities to project the regional brand.
The **four regional brand pillars** (wilderness, diversity, humanity, climate) represent the basis of Southern Africa communications.

**Core messages, themes and stories** need to be developed, which reflect elements of these Southern African pillars. These need to be developed both by individual member states and RETOSA and conveyed in their marketing communications.

Southern Africa’s **target markets** comprise:
- The regional market, including internal domestic markets, who should be addressed with three aims in mind:
  - To sensitise them to the impact of tourism on their livelihoods;
  - To increase their awareness and acceptance of the Southern Africa brand;
  - To encourage them to travel within their own countries and the region.
- “Traditional” international markets (e.g. Europe, North America)
- Emerging international markets (esp. Japan, China, Russia, India, Brazil)

A mix of **marketing tactics and channels** is recommended in the draft strategy as follows:

- **Run a regional campaign with the aims of:**
  - **sensitising** Southern Africa residents to the impact of tourism on their livelihoods;
  - encourage domestic and regional travel;
  - spread awareness – and acceptance – of the **Southern Africa regional brand** and its value.

- **A Southern African website portal**, which is inspiring, user-friendly, easily navigable, with links both to individual member states’ own websites and to other organisations, particularly bookable products.

- **A marketing/PR agency** should be appointed to undertake cost-effective marketing activities for Southern Africa, such as PR, social media and e-marketing.

- Representation is proposed at selected and highly targeted **international trade fairs**, in order to develop links with outbound tour operators in key and emerging markets and thereby encourage them to package Southern African programmes and itineraries.

**Recommended trade fairs comprise:**

- Trade fairs in **established markets**, where RETOSA could coordinate a Southern African section, in order to maximise market impact by grouping Southern African countries together.
- Trade fairs in **emerging markets**, where RETOSA could mount a pioneering presence on behalf of member states.
Niche market fairs – usually in established markets – where Southern Africa has a competitively strong product (e.g. birding, scuba-diving, weddings/honeymoons etc.)

Delegate Discussion:

Key elements identified by delegates as essential or desirable in communicating the regional brand were:

- All member states should consider how they might **co-brand**, using their own brand and the Southern Africa regional brand. e.g.:
  - By conveying elements of the **four regional brand pillars** as appropriate in their own marketing communications (wilderness, diversity, humanity, climate)
  - By developing **themes and stories** for distribution via websites, blogs, PR and other channels that reflect elements of these regional brand pillars, while still conveying member states’ own national brand characteristics.
  - By including the “**Experience Southern Africa**” regional brand logo in member states’ own marketing collateral.

- A Southern Africa section could be organised at major **trade fairs** such as WTM and ITB by RETOSA, with a hierarchy of marketing opportunities (e.g. from stand space to brochure racking) available to member states.

- RETOSA should consider mounting a pioneering presence on behalf of Southern Africa at targeted trade fairs in **emerging markets** (e.g. Brazil, Russia, India and China).

- Ideally, and subject to resources, a **marketing agency** should be appointed to promote Southern Africa in key markets. This should be in addition to activity undertaken by member states (N.B. markets would need to be agreed by RETOSA). This agency would need to be effectively managed and monitored by RETOSA.
6.2 Draft Brand Management Strategy

Key Aims of the Brand Management Strategy:

The aim in developing a brand management strategy is to:
- Develop a robust approach for managing, monitoring and improving the brand
- Ensure the process is sustainable
- Secure member states’ and stakeholders’ commitment
- Deliver cost-effective management through cooperation & resource-sharing between member states & RETOSA Secretariat

Strategic Brand Management Approach:

The key challenges in managing the regional brand were identified as:

- Capacity & resources in member states & RETOSA Secretariat
- Understanding of the regional brand: its potential impact and opportunities for implementation
- Management & planning
- Commitment & sustainability
- Evaluation - demonstrating impact & added value

The draft strategy recommends that these are addressed as follows;

Understanding:
- Annual on-going capacity-building seminars, coaching etc.
- Annual meetings & briefings w leaders & opinion-formers
- Experience Southern Africa brand section on regional website (brand news, implementation, brand toolkit, chatroom/advice/Q & A site)
- Regional brand toolkit:
  - Explain destination branding
  - Role & value of regional brand
  - Regional brand characteristics
  - Implementation guidelines (imagery, tone of voice, design style, colours, “dos” & “don’ts”)
  - Technical specifications for logo

Management & Planning:
- Appoint a regional brand guardian (RETOSA Secretariat) to:
  - Oversee implementation of the regional brand
  - Maintain brand integrity & encourage its use by appropriate organisations (e.g. NTOs, tourism ministries, travel trade)
  - Monitor the regional brand’s health & impact; recommend when it should be refreshed
– Key contact point & source of information on regional brand
– Manage any licensing/technical issues

• Establish regional brand steering group to:
  – Support brand guardian
  – Monitor brand guardian’s performance & brand’s impact
  – Assess when to refresh the brand

• Establish annual regional marketing planning process
  – Prepare annual regional marketing plan

Commitment & Sustainability:
• Recruit regional brand champions to:
  – Endorse and promote the regional brand
  – Encourage others to use it in their own marketing communications

• Identify regional brand advocates to:
  – Extend the use of the regional brand, particularly in their own organisations

• Internal marketing/ongoing capacity-building for executives
• Regular briefings for leaders
• Appoint marketing agency – based in south Africa, with international associates in key markets for Southern Africa
• Develop the RETOSA website as a Southern Africa regional portal
• Appoint a webmaster – in the RETOSA Secretariat

Evaluation:
• Evaluate the regional brand’s health and impact – c. every 3 years

Delegate Discussion:

Key elements identified by delegates as essential or desirable in managing the regional brand were:

• RETOSA should register the “Experience Southern Africa” regional brand logo.

• RETOSA should register key web domains applicable to Southern Africa (e.g. Experience Southern Africa.com/.net etc.)

• The RETOSA Secretariat should be the custodian of the regional brand.

• A regional brand steering group should be formed, comprising one member from each of the fourteen member states. (i.e. All member states should be represented on the steering group.)

• A regional brand steering committee should be established in each member state. This would promote and monitor usage of the regional brand by each member state, and
thereby perform a role at national level similar to that performed by the Regional Brand Steering Group at regional level.

- **Tourism product data should be collected and managed at national level**, with links to the RETOSA regional web portal.

- A *webmaster* should be appointed by RETOSA to manage the development of the regional web portal and communicate needs and opportunities to member states.

- A *crisis management strategy* should be developed for the regional brand.

### 6.3 Regional Brand Implementation –

#### 6.3.1 Implementation Guidelines

Guidelines for implementing the Regional Brand Communications and Brand Management Strategy were discussed. These included the marketing tactics and channels and methods for managing the regional brand included above.

The inclusion of these guidelines in the strategy is important, in order to address the challenges outlined, and in particular to achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure **understanding** of the regional brand, its value and potential, amongst key marketing staff in member states;

- To encourage **commitment** and buy-in to the regional brand throughout the region and thereby to maximise its application by member states in their own marketing as well as their active participation in its future development;

- To provide **practical guidance** to key marketing staff and others in member states on how to implement the regional brand, thereby inspiring their confidence in implementing the brand.

#### 6.3.2 Respective Roles

During an interactive breakout session, workshop participants were required to indicate how they thought the "Experience Southern Africa" brand could be applied in three areas:

- In **member states’ own communications**;
- By **member states in partnership with RETOSA**;
- By **RETOSA** – and specifically what member states expected from RETOSA in applying and managing the regional brand.

The perspectives provided by the participants are outlined below:

#### 6.3.2.1 How Can Member States Apply the Experience Southern Africa Brand in their Own Marketing Communications?

**Priority 1:**
• **Build awareness** and **lobby for support** and ownership of the *Experience Southern Africa* brand initiative amongst politicians, government officials and private sector stakeholder associations in the respective member states.

• Reflect the “*Experience Southern Africa*” brand in all **member states’ country-specific marketing and communication material**, marketing events and activities.

• Build awareness of **complementary regional experiences** (e.g. routes, trails, events, etc.) in communication and promotional campaigns.

• Where possible, **link and/or align the four pillars** (diversity, wilderness, humanity and climate) of the “*Experience Southern Africa*” brand to the respective member states’ own brand pillars.

• **Sensitise, excite and engage private sector** stakeholder representative organisations and industry stakeholders in member states to embrace and add value to the regional brand by co-branding their offerings with the “*Experience Southern Africa*” brand.

Priority 2:

• When it is ready, **launch** the “*Experience Southern Africa*” brand in the respective member states in collaboration with local NTOs/NTAs/DMOs. Also communicate the roll-out strategy, indicating partnership/collaboration opportunities to all the relevant public and private sector stakeholders in member states.

• Invite **RETOSA to participate in member state-specific events/platforms**, to communicate the regional “*Experience Southern Africa*” brand campaign and the benefits of participating in the campaign to key stakeholders and opinion-formers.

• Engage relevant stakeholders and develop **regional packages and experiences** (e.g. routes/trails, events special interest themes) under the regional branding campaign.

6.3.2.2 How Can the *Experience Southern Africa* Brand be Applied by Member States in Partnership with RETOSA

**Priority 1:**

• As one of the first-phase branding initiatives, develop a **joint regional domestic marketing campaign** (e.g. “*Experience Southern Africa Yourself*”) to engage and excite local residents, the media, etc. (along the lines of Canada’s “Locals Know Best” campaign and New Zealand’s “101 Must Dos” campaigns). N.B. Discount vouchers may be useful to encourage/enable local residents to visit and stay in accommodation that is priced for international visitors – e.g. in low season.

• Where possible assist and support each other to get the **buy-in of political and public sector leaders and stakeholders, as well as the private sector**, to embrace and commit to the regional brand. In this regard best practices and successes can be shared via the RETOSA knowledge and information “gateway”.

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• Co-branding and endorsement by RETOSA and member countries with the focus on collaborative marketing initiatives and opportunities. Consider an accreditation system – e.g. “member of RETOSA” (c.f. Star Alliance - leveraging the benefits of all).

• RETOSA should make a concerted effort to link the regional brand with all the other destination brands in the region. All member country brands should also be identified and included in RETOSA communication and marketing initiatives (practically displaying the benefits of cross marketing).

• There should be a common understanding among RETOSA and member countries that the branding process should be seen as a longer-term journey, starting with a high impact launch, following by some key milestones and a roll-out action plan for all participating stakeholders.

• Develop an awareness and capacity-building programme for all public and private sector stakeholders. This should include a brand manual/toolkit, which would act as an “instruction manual” and inspire confidence amongst stakeholders in applying the regional brand.

• At the regional level the key icons/brand features of the member countries should be used in a co-ordinated and cohesive manner to enhance and reinforce the respective country-specific brands and marketing efforts (marketing “noise” should be avoided).

• In accordance with the brand guidelines the destination-specific and regional “Experience Southern Africa” brand must be correctly and consistently used and positioned to reinforce the brand message and positioning in the marketplace.

This needs to be rigorously and continuously monitored and enforced by the regional brand custodian (RETOSA Secretariat).

Priority 2:
• RETOSA should continuously identify, address and communicate issues of mutual benefit and common interest to member destinations in a pro-active and co-ordinated manner.

• Continuous tracking, monitoring and evaluation of the branding journey and actions and progress should be undertaken and communicated to all stakeholder groups.

6.3.2.1 What is Expected from RETOSA and How Should RETOSA Apply and Manage the Regional Brand?

• RETOSA should make a concerted effort to get ALL member countries to contribute their membership fees within the required timeframes.
• RETOSA should launch a targeted and **continuous communications campaign** to sell the benefits of involvement in RETOSA initiatives and active participation in the “Experience Southern Africa” branding initiative.

• RETOSA should have a **specific strategy to address the disparities between member states**. So, for example, capacity-building and support programmes for some countries in marketing and communication can be facilitated. (N.B. RETOSA should communicate in appropriate languages, other than English, to member states: Portuguese – Angola and Mozambique; French – DRC.)

• A concerted effort needs to be made to look at **innovative and practical ways to address the financial constraints and mobilise funds** to undertake the regional branding and marketing initiatives (e.g. explore partnerships with industry stakeholders, undertake cost-sharing initiatives, etc.).

• The stages of the **respective member states’ destination life cycles**, as well as the key features of each country, should be considered in RETOSA communication strategies and messages (e.g. country-specific languages).

• A key part of RETOSA’s brand communication strategy should be to **inspire and excite public and private sector stakeholders in terms of taking ownership** and managing the collaborative brand partnership in a cohesive and mutually beneficial manner.

• RETOSA must engage in a focussed and targeted **PR campaign**, using appropriate media, the RETOSA website, social media, etc. to spread the new branding message.

• **RETOSA needs to be the custodian** of the “Experience Southern Africa” brand, and to assiduously protect the brand’s identity and integrity.

• RETOSA should come up with a **powerful value proposition** as to why member countries should participate and what the benefits and responsibilities of participation will be.

• RETOSA, in collaboration with member states, should explore innovative and creative ways to **leverage funding and collaborative opportunities** to implement and manage the regional brand strategy. Appropriate low-cost/free opportunities should be identified and effectively exploited.

• Ideally RETOSA should also address all relevant strategic issues of common interest and mutual benefit that **individual member countries cannot effectively do on their own** (advocacy, lobbying, facilitating the Uni-visa initiative, open skies, airlift strategies, etc.).
7. Critical Success Factors

Workshop participants identified the following factors, which they considered to be critical to the successful implementation of the Southern Africa regional brand:

- A clear and distinctive **value proposition** is required for the regional brand. This should clearly state the benefits of the regional brand to member states. This must be communicated to, and embraced by, all key public and private sector stakeholders in member states.

- The **benefits** related to the regional branding initiative should be **tangible and relevant**.

- Member states must understand that the regional brand does not conflict with their own national brand, how it can complement their own brand and **add value for all member states**.

- **Acceptance, endorsement and commitment to action** on the part of all member states are essential.

- A **shared tourism vision**, underpinned by passion and commitment to make the new branding initiative happen. This will require a powerful communications campaign to make all stakeholders (including local residents and the media) aware of, and excited about, the campaign.

- A user-friendly “**road map**” and practical roll-out plan for the regional brand is essential.

- **RETOSA needs to be adequately resourced** (human and financial capacity) and supported to facilitate the regional branding initiative.

- **Smart mobilisation and co-ordination of resources** in the region will be critical – particularly resource-sharing and exploitation of cost-effective communications channels, such as digital marketing, social media and PR.
8. Conclusions

- **Positive feedback** was received from delegates on the content and format of the workshop, which deepened their understanding of, and commitment to, the regional brand. The workshop delivered against delegates’ expectations, which they had expressed at the beginning of the workshop:

  - 96% considered the workshop content and procedure to be excellent or very good.
  - 100% felt the level of participation was excellent or very good.
  - 100% thought that the workshop had been relevant and beneficial to their countries. (See Appendix 4, *Workshop Feedback from Delegates*.)

- **Member states’ understanding and acceptance** of the regional brand moved from partially sceptical to committed, and importantly:
  - Delegates felt there would be no conflict with their own national brands.
  - Delegates felt that the regional brand could add value to their own brands.
  - Delegates committed to the actions outlined in the *Next Steps-Action* section of this report (see below).

- **Maintaining the momentum** achieved at this workshop will be important, particularly in light of the following factors:
  - As member states return to their “day job”, their regional brand-consciousness may diminish. This needs to be maintained through swift action on the outcomes of this workshop and regular communication on progress by the RETOSA Secretariat.
  - Although those delegates who attended the workshop were marketing decision-makers and executives, not all those responsible for implementing the regional brand in member states could attend the workshop. Delegates need to act as brand advocates on their return home and inform and inspire these others in their own countries about the regional brand.
  - Some countries didn’t attend the workshop. Their buy-in will need to be elicited to encourage their commitment to the level of those who attended the workshop (RETOSA).

- The **critical success factors** outlined above will need to be addressed – and articulated in the revised Regional Brand Communications and Management Strategy – in order to underpin the regional brand’s potential for success.

- **Key resolutions from the workshop** discussions identified above (*Draft Regional Brand Communications and Management Strategy and Critical Success Factors*) will be incorporated into the next draft version of the Regional Brand Communications and Management Strategy. This will be submitted to RETOSA members prior to the October Validation Workshop.
9. Next Steps - Action

9.1 Next Steps

The following action will be taken, beginning immediately:

- **Workshop Report**: The draft report (this report) on workshop outcomes will be completed and sent to ComSec and RETOSA by 21 Sept 2012. *(YR)*

  Following ComSec and RETOSA’s approval, it will be forwarded by RETOSA to workshop participants by 30 Sept 2012. *(RETOSA)*

- **Internal Communications in Member States**: Representatives of member states, who participated in the workshop, will report back to their principals on the outcomes of the workshop. *(Member states)*

- **Communication with Member States not Represented at this Workshop**: Member states not represented at the capacity-building workshop should be engaged on a personal level by RETOSA to bring them up to speed on the progress to date. *(RETOSA)*

- **Regional Brand Communications and Management Strategy**: The next draft version of the Regional Brand Communications and Management Strategy will incorporate key points and resolutions proposed by delegates during the Lesotho capacity-building workshop. This will then be submitted to ComSec and RETOSA for approval and subsequent circulation to RETOSA members in advance of the October Validation Workshop. *(YR)*

- **Ongoing Capacity-Building**: The Brand Communication/Marketing Capacity-Building Workshop will become an annual event in the RETOSA programme. *(RETOSA)*