The Sustainable Tourism Certification Alliance Africa ("the Alliance")

2nd Annual Conference

Garden Court Marine Parade

Durban, South Africa

Conference Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sustainable Tourism Certification Alliance Africa ("the Alliance") second Annual Conference was held on 9 May 2013 at Garden Court Marine Parade in Durban South Africa. The event was attended by 32 delegates through which nine African countries, four regional organisations and four global organisations were represented. Countries represented included Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Tanzania. Regional organisations represented included Serendipity Africa, Stand cc, Fair Trade Tourism (FTT), Heritage Environmental Management Programme ("Heritage") and the Regional Tourism Organisation of Southern Africa (RETOSA). Global Organisations included the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), the International Trade Centre (ITC), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

The objectives of the conference were to:

(i) Share knowledge on current sustainable tourism initiatives inclusive of those that help to develop an enabling environment for sustainable tourism certification in Africa; and

(ii) Generate knowledge and understanding of demand for sustainable tourism products in Africa's major tourist source markets.

The conference was opened by Mr Greg McManus, Alliance Chairperson and Managing Director of Heritage. Subsequent to formal opening of the event the following presentations were given:

1. "Background to the Alliance (2007 – 2013)" presented by Ms Netsai Sibanda, Alliance Secretariat and Stakeholder Relations Coordinator, FTT;
2. "RETOSA sustainable tourism strategy for the southern African region" presented by Mr Kwakye Donkor, Marketing and Communications Director, RETOSA;
3. "Botswana eco-certification system" presented by Mr Richard Malesu, Environment and Safety Coordinator, Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO);
4. "Eco Tourism Kenya's Eco-rating certification scheme" presented by Ms Elizabeth Wachira, Board Member of Eco Tourism Kenya;
5. "ITC Standards map and market analysis tools" presented by Ms Aimee Russillo a consultant for ITC;
6. "The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)" presented by Mr Amos Bien, Technical Director, GSTC;
7. "Market segmentation studies in the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands" presented by Ms Katarina Mancama, Marketing Manager, FTT;
8. "Experience working with the Netherlands responsible tourism market from the perspective of an inbound tour operator" presented by Ms Anne Van Der Tuuk, General Manager, Abang Africa; and
9. "Experiences of an Indian responsible tour operator" presented by Mr Gopinath Parayil, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Blue Yonder Holidays.

Ms Hazel Milne, Alliance Vice chair and Programme Coordinator for Eco Awards Namibia closed the conference.

The content of all presentations, as well as subsequent debates and discussions, were excellent. Important issues affecting sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism certification for Africa were well presented and discussed. The conference set the stage for well-informed discussions in relation to the Alliance Annual Meeting, scheduled to take place on 10 May 2013.

In Attendance

	Country	Organisation	Representative
1	Botswana	BTO	Mr Richard Malesu
2	Botswana	BTO	Ms Joyce Morontshe
3	Global Organisation (based in Costa Rica)	GSTC	Mr Amos Bien
4	Global Organisation (based in Switzerland)	ITC	Ms Aimee Russillo
5	Global Organisation (based in Germany)	GIZ Sector Project: Sustainable Development through Tourism (GIZ)	Mr Manuel Junck
6	Global Organisation (based in Switzerland)	SECO	Ms Janice Golding
7	India	The Blue Yonder	Mr Gopinath Parayil
8	Kenya	Eco Tourism Kenya	Ms Elizabeth Wachira
9	Lesotho	Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC)	Mr Sehlabaka Ramafikeng
10	Lesotho	LTDC	Mr Tsepang Hatase
11	Lesotho	Lesotho Hotels & Hospitality Association (LHHA)	Mr James McGregor
12	Mauritius	Mauritius Tourism Authority	Mr Niven Muneesamy
13	Mozambique	GIZ – Mozambique	Ms Jutta Niemann
14	Mozambique	GIZ – Mozambique	Ms Karin Allgoerwer
15	Namibia	Eco Awards Namibia	Ms Hazel Milne
16	Regional (based in South Africa)	Serendipity Africa	Ms Helen Turnbull
17	Regional (based in South Africa)	Stand cc	Ms Anna Spenceley
18	Regional (based in South Africa)	FTT – Alliance Secretariat	Ms Jennifer Seif
19	Regional (based in South Africa)	FTT – Alliance Secretariat	Ms Netsai Sibanda
20	Regional (based in South Africa)	FTT – Alliance Secretariat	Ms Khaya Thwala
21	Regional (based in South Africa)	FTT	Ms Katarina Mancama
22	Regional (based in South Africa)	RETOSA	Mr Kwakye Donkor
23	Regional (based in South Africa)	Heritage	Mr Greg McManus
24	South Africa	Abang Africa	Ms Anne Van Der Tuuk
25	South Africa	International Centre for Responsible Tourism (ICRT) South Africa	Ms Heidi Van der Watt
26	South Africa	National Department of Tourism (NDT) – Responsible Tourism Directorate	Mr Bekithemba Langalibalele
27	South Africa	National Accommodation Association (NAA)	Ms Caroline Ungersbock
28	Swaziland	Swaziland Tourism Authority	Mr Bongani Dlamini
29	Swaziland	Swaziland Tourism Authority	Mr Sipho Simelane
30	Tanzania	Responsible Tourism Tanzania (RTTZ)	Mr Damian Bell
31	Tanzania	Tanzania Tourist Board	Mr Philip Chitaunga
32	Tanzania	Tanzania Tourist Board	Ms Devota Mdachi

1. **Conference organisation and objectives (including background to the Alliance)**

The conference was organised by the Alliance Secretariat and facilitated by Mr Sehlabaka Ramafikeng, Acting Chief Executive of Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC).

Conference objectives were to:

(i)   Share knowledge on current sustainable tourism initiatives inclusive of those that help to develop an enabling environment for sustainable tourism certification in Africa; and

(ii) Generate knowledge and understanding of demand for sustainable tourism products in Africa's major tourist source markets.

The conference programme is attached as Annexure 1.

Alliance Chairperson's opening remarks

It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Alliance to this, the second Annual Conference. We meet today in an atmosphere of global change that brings both challenges and opportunities for certification bodies across the continent and, indeed, the world.

Our industry has in many countries managed to come through the global recession a little leaner, but certainly smarter. This, in itself, poses a challenge to certification and sustainable tourism practice in general. What was a niche business strategy in the past (being more sustainable and aware of the impacts and responsibilities associated with tourism) is now becoming the norm in accommodation establishments across the world.

Daily, I am reminded by potential certification clients, that they already do what is required to meet the sustainability guidelines and standards of global, regional and national tourism bodies. This makes certification a 'nice to have' in times of economic strain. The differentiator that certification provides tends to disappear into insignificance when compared with the realities of running a business.

Coupled with this is the continued misuse of terminology that separates certified businesses from the general market and an increasingly subdued response to responsible tourism by the general travel sector. With the '10 billion traveller' scenario now looming globally, is there enough consumer support and demand for certified businesses, or will what we are attempting to do be 'drowned out' by the flood of new products and services aimed at meeting demand?

These are the challenges we face as certification agencies, organisations and bodies, which give rise to a number of questions – namely:

- How do we remain relevant in this changing environment, and how do we encourage participation by an industry that continues to overlook the benefits associated with certification?

- As an Alliance, what will we need to do to ensure the principles and very real need for more responsible travel is met, and how will we meet the challenges that we face?
- Does certification need legislative support in our destination markets and/or do we need to create greater awareness in source markets?
- What benefits and cooperative beneficiation can we collectively achieve through alignment with national and international initiatives?
- How can the private and public sectors work together to ensure the benefits of tourism are shared across the board?

In South Africa great strides have been made to introduce a national responsible tourism programme but, even here, without meaningful benefits, incentives and encouragement at industry level, we will battle to make 'inroads' into certification in relation to the national standard. Across the continent we face the same problem in getting certification acknowledged and accepted, so where to now?

Globally, with over 140 labels and standards in operation, attempts are being made to consolidate often differing approaches under single labels for purposes of simplicity and to establish a degree of quality control. This raises the question as to whether this will make any difference if the fundamentals of certification beneficiation.

Presentation: "Background to the Alliance (2007 – 2012)" presented by Ms Netsai Sibanda, Alliance Secretariat and Stakeholder Relations Coordinator, FTT

Ms Sibanda presented on the Alliance's background over the period 2007 – 2013. Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- The Alliance saw its inception in 2007 as the Sustainable Tourism Network Southern Africa (STNSA). The Alliance was dormant from 2010 – 2012 as a result of resource constraints and was re-launched as the Sustainable Tourism Certification Alliance in 2012.
- The Alliance was established in response to external trends towards international accreditation, harmonisation, dual certification and mutual recognition. The Alliance provides services to members seeking international recognition, mutual recognition and other forms of partnerships.
- The overall objectives of the Alliance are to: build regional capacity to reduce poverty, improve livelihoods, and promote resource efficiency through sustainable tourism management practices; and to facilitate an integrated approach to sustainable tourism standards-setting and certification that will achieve higher levels of market and development impacts, as opposed to certification systems operating in isolation of each other.

Alliance members as at 9 May 2013 are indicated in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of Alliance members

	Country	Organisation
1	Botswana	BTO
2	Germany	Tourcert
3	Global	GIZ Sector Project: Sustainable Development through Tourism
4	Global	GSTC
5	Global	SECO
6	International	Rainforest Alliance
7	International	Yellow Railroad
8	International	ITC
9	Kenya	Basecamp Foundation
10	Kenya	Eco Tourism Kenya
11	Madagascar	Boogie Pilgrim
12	Namibia	Eco Awards Namibia
13	Regional	Africa Safari Lodge Foundation
14	Regional	All Out Africa
15	Regional	FTT
16	Regional	Heritage
17	Regional	Open Africa
18	Regional	RETOSA
19	Regional	Serendipity Africa
20	Regional	Stand cc
21	Seychelles	Seychelles Tourism Board
22	South Africa	Levelle Perspectives
23	South Africa	NDT
24	South Africa	South African Tourism (SAT)
25	Swaziland	Swaziland Tourism Authority
26	Tanzania	Responsible Tourism Tanzania (RTTZ)
27	Tanzania	Tanzania Tourist Board
28	United States of America	Greenloons

The presentation is attached as Annexure 2.

2. Update on existing initiatives in Africa

Session Moderator: Mr Damian Bell, Executive Director, Responsible Tourism Tanzania (RTTZ)

2.1 Presentation: "RETOSA sustainable tourism strategy for the southern African region" presented by Mr Kwakye Donkor, Marketing and Communications Director, RETOSA

Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- RETOSA is a Southern African Development Community (SADC) institution mandated to develop regional tourism in southern Africa. When RETOSA was established the focus was on marketing – looking at increasing tourist numbers to the region. Recently, SADC member states have realised that although there

are a number of marketing activities underway, tourists are not coming – and this has been attributed to factors including product quality and, most recently, demand for 'green' products. As such, RETOSA has now added product development, harmonisation of policies, regulations and standards as well as sustainable tourism development to its overall mandate.

▪ RETOSA's understanding is that sustainable tourism is achievable only if we tie in everything we do as a sector at regional, national organisation and individual level, including tourism's relationships with other sectors.

▪ Guiding principles for RETOSA's plan include the following:

  ✓ Environmental (sustainable tourism) awareness among all stakeholders;
  ✓ Protection of tourism environments (biodiversity, culture and heritage sites);
  ✓ Adoption of sustainable management practices by all players;
  ✓ Poverty alleviation through tourism i.e. capacitating local communities; and
  ✓ Climate change adaptation and mitigation systems by the tourism sector.

Discussion points on the presentation were as follows:

▪ RETOSA's Regional Tourism Database will be published and openly available on the new RETOSA website in the near future.

▪ Although RETOSA makes reference to 'green' tourism, use of this terminology is semantically adaptable. In fact, 'green' in the RETOSA context refers to issues pertaining to the *triple bottom line* i.e. social, economic and environmental considerations.

▪ The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) General Assembly (GA) will happen in Africa for the first time in August 2013. Discussions are underway on how the event can encompass biodiversity considerations. There is a programme that will be facilitated around these issues during the event. Furthermore, Boundless Southern Africa, a product of RETOSA, will also have a programme during the event focusing on youth in relation to tourism development. Lastly, Zimbabwe and Zambia are jointly looking at community beneficiation from this global event. Conference participants were invited to attend the ministerial discussion being organised and facilitated by RETOSA during Indaba on 13 May 2013, at which responsible tourism issues could be raised.

The presentation is attached as Annexure 3 of this report.

2.2 Presentation: "Botswana eco-certification system" presented by Mr Richard Malesu, Environment and Safety Coordinator, BTO

Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

▪ BTO's sustainable tourism programme of work arose in response to the proliferation of camps and lodges in the Okavango Delta – Botswana's primary tourism area. In 2002 a National Ecotourism Strategy was put in place. A key recommendation of this strategy was to establish and maintain Botswana as a genuine and successful ecotourism destination.

- BTO's eco-certification programme awards certification at three levels: Level 1, referred to as 'Green', which is a basic entry level and reflects all of the mandatory criteria to be met in order for facilities to be awarded certification; Level 2, referred to as 'Green +', which provides a higher standard for those who have achieved Level 1; and the 'Ecotourism' level, which defines those facilities that have met the principles of ecotourism. This level reflects the facilities' commitment and involvement of communities, including cultural resources enhancement and socio-economic responsibilities, nature conservation and environmental management.

    Discussion points on the presentation were as follows:

- It is notable that BTO's programme has strong support at national government level.
- BTO has a set of tools available for facilitation of knowledge-sharing on responsible tourism.
- As Botswana began to market itself as a sustainable tourism destination, more tourism products wanted to be associated with the principles of sustainable tourism and, as such, developed an interest in becoming certified.
- The eco-certification programme is trying to encourage its marketing department to develop incentives for tourism products to become certified. Current incentives include certificates and plaques as well as profiling on BTO's website.
- Namibia has similar tourism product offerings to Botswana. Eco Awards Namibia is trying to incentivise bigger properties in urban areas to become certified as most certified products are currently located in desert/natural areas. Discussions in Botswana are currently underway with respect to the possibility of adapting BTO's standard to accommodate tourism products in urban areas. The Alliance, through facilitation of information-sharing amongst its members, will be useful in informing further discussions in this regard.

The presentation is attached as Annexure 4.

2.3 Presentation: "Eco Tourism Kenya's Eco-rating certification scheme" presented by Elizabeth Wachira, Board Member, Eco Tourism Kenya

Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- All members of Ecotourism Kenya accept responsibility for protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural environment of the areas in which they operate. They undertake to implement sound environmental practices in all their operations, the properties they manage and/or promote, the destinations they manage and/or sell, the natural areas they visit and the tours they package. And all this is done in collaboration with the communities they are part of.
- Members are required to: educate their visitors about their natural areas and local cultures; observe the Kenya Safari Code and Coast Code; actively participate in programs developed

to promote sustainable tourism including voluntary certification; have clear environmental goals and to develop programs necessary to achieve these goals; and develop linkages with local communities in the areas in which they operate.

Discussion points on the presentation were as follows:

- To date, government support and engagement with Eco Tourism Kenya has been minimal. The Kenyan government has only recently expressed an interest in working with the organisation.
- There are no mechanisms currently in place for provision of co-financing towards the costs of certification.
- The International Ecotourism Society has developed a paper on incentives that could be offered to improve uptake of certification by tourism products.
- A programme to certify tour operators is being developed by Eco Tourism Kenya. It is still in its developmental stages. The criteria are currently being developed.
- Bottles are a waste problem in tourism. Wilderness Safaris has come up with a way to manage waste in relation to water bottles that involves tourists being provided with a branded plastic water bottle. A water cooler is then placed in the lobby from which water bottles can be refilled. Guests are also encouraged to leave their bottles behind so they can be re-used and/or recycled.
- Countries should look at policy-based incentives for sustainable resource use. South Africa and Kenya have certain tax-based incentives in place. In Kenya, for example, businesses are encouraged to use solar power though certain tax-based incentives. In the South African context, it is likely that tourism products would be encouraged to become certified in the event of certification becoming a mandatory consideration in the procurement of goods and services at public sector level.
- The value of the certification brand should be sufficient incentive for tourism products to become certified. Heritage is facing a challenge where some hotel groups are looking to establish in-house environmental management systems.

The presentation is attached as Annexure 5.

3. Sustainable tourism tools and resources – what's available globally / global best practice

Moderator: Anna Spenceley, Founder and Director of Stand cc.

3.1 Presentation: "ITC Standards Map and market analysis tools" presented by Aimee Russillo on behalf of ITC

Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- ITC is an agency of the United Nations that enables business export success globally by providing, with partners, trade development solutions to the private sector, trade support institutions and policy-makers.
- ITC has developed five web portals which include: the Trade Map; Market Access Map; Investment Map; and

the Trade Competitiveness Map and Product Map. These portals aim to enhance the transparency of global trade and market access, as well as to help users in their market analyses.

- A Global Database called the Standards Map has been developed by the ITC. It contains information on the scope of each standard (product/geographical scope), requirements, verification/certification processes, governance, standard-setting and review policies, monitoring and evaluation processes as well as research materials.

Discussion points on the presentation were as follows:

- The Heritage standard has been uploaded onto the standards database. This process has been useful in identifying the strong elements of the standard as well as areas for improvement.
- The Standards Map is free to use and ITC provides significant technical support, meaning input (inclusive of time) required from standard-setters/owners is minimal.
- The Standards Map is a neutral platform that allows standard-setters/owners to conduct comparative analyses with other standards. It is objective and systematic.
- ITC also has mechanisms in place to serve as a publication resource.
- ITC also has good research tools covering a variety of topics. Use of the research functions is free and facilitates access to information that is available in the public domain.
- GSTC is contemplating using the ITC Standards Map as a tool for use in the GSTC standards 'recognition' process.   This would, however, require modification of information in the database in order to ensure conformity issues are addressed. The GSTC standard has been uploaded onto ITC's Standards Map.

The presentation is attached as Annexure 6.

3.2 Presentation: "GSTC" presented by Amos Bien, Technical Director, GSTC

Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- Objectives of the GSTC are to: create universal principles of sustainability for all types and scales of tourism; promote sustainable tourism through a common language – the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria; promote the widespread adoption of global sustainable tourism standards; ensure the tourism industry continues to drive conservation and poverty alleviation; and make destinations more sustainable.
- The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria are a set of common guidelines created with input from experts, groups and companies around the planet, defining sustainable tourism in a way that is actionable, measureable and credible, and setting a minimum standard of sustainability for tourism businesses across the globe.
- The Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria serve as a universal language defining a minimum standard for sustainability. They are global principles that can be adapted to address local conditions and specific industry sectors.   The Criteria also serve as a guideline for establishing and harmonising programmes, provide support to certifiers, and offer credibility and global market outreach.

Discussion points on the presentation were as follows:

▪ An Alliance survey conducted in 2012 showed there was strong interest from Alliance members to become GSTC 'recognised'. For this reason Mr Bien was invited to present on GSTC and field questions around issues of cost etc. in the 'recognition' process. Subsequent to a workshop to be facilitated by Mr Bien on 10 May 2013, confirmed interest in achieving GSTC recognition would be requested from members. One a critical number of members have confirmed their interest, the Alliance will look at facilitating joint resource mobilisation to secure co-financing for the costs associated with achieving GSTC recognition.

▪ For developing countries in Africa, the cost of GSTC 'recognition' is very high at private sector, NGO and national government level. Heritage is a private sector company. As such, the decision to become GSTC 'recognised' is value-based. There is need to debate the issue of return on investment (ROI). There is risk of alienating African countries - with no clearly communicated benefits. Certification programmes are ready to apply for recognition but cannot afford to do so.

▪ When the GSTC process was initiated it was free. As the organisation's financial situation shifted (i.e. funding came to an end), no subsidies could be provided. The organisation is currently operating with zero external funding. Alliance members could look at joint resource mobilisation or, alternatively, it could approach the GSTC board of directors to 'voice' this problem.

▪ There are some serious challenges in terms of how to make the GSTC process work for everyone. In South Africa, for example, there is a national minimum standard for responsible tourism. Standard owners face serious challenges in this context as the GSTC could be perceived to be competing with the national process (particularly in relation to cost considerations). The GSTC has, in the past, negotiated with different national bodies, and is open to discussing different sets of arrangements with national certification/accreditation bodies.

The presentation is attached as Annexure 7.

4. Understanding the demand for sustainable/responsible tourism in key source markets

Moderator: Mr Bongani Dlamini, Marketing Manager, Swaziland Tourism Authority

4.1 Presentation: "Market segmentation studies in the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands" presented by Ms Katarina Mancama, Marketing Manager, FTT

Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

▪ The research combined Fairtrade consumer profiles, general consumer profiles and tourism profiles to produce a segmentation model defining segments specifically relevant for responsible tourism targeting. The research assessed behaviour change techniques against these segments, producing insights and suggested actions for trade partners and sustainable tourism products to gain further traction in these segments.

- Europe is generally well versed on sustainable living, with a specific focus on environmental consciousness. Higher educated consumers have a distinct awareness of global issues and feel the need to make a difference with how they live and how they consume. Europe enjoys a broad selection of fairly trade produce so awareness is high on certification labels. Price and quality of sustainable products still influence buying behaviour for the majority of consumers. However, against this backdrop, many Europeans do consider travel as essential to their lives, and so find ways to offset the negative impacts.

Discussion points on the presentation were as follows:

- Branding is a problem. We need less brands/labels as this is confusing for the consumer. A basic set of minimum standards needs to be identified to which certification programmes must align. An example of such a scenario is the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) in Europe. PEFC is the world's largest forest certification umbrella organisation, endorsing national and/or regional forest certification standards that meet its rigorous sustainable forest management criteria. Its criteria are founded on internationally recognised criteria and indicators developed by government agencies around the world. In the agricultural production sector there are various programmes operating under one umbrella (i.e. one organisation does the audit). Max Havelaar has also recognised the power of coming together under one umbrella.
- The next step could be to unpack research findings in terms of relevance for the region. The findings can be adapted for relevance in specific country contexts.
- The narrative reports produced indicate that tour operators are very open to sharing marketing information with FTT.

The presentation is attached as Annexure 8.

4.2 Presentation: "Experience working with the Netherlands responsible tourism market from the perspective of an inbound tour operator" presented by Anne Van Der Tuuk, General Manager, Abang Africa

Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- Abang Africa is an inbound tour operator based in Cape Town that works primarily in the Dutch market. Its mission is to use responsible tourism as a sustainable development tool for people in southern Africa, benefiting local communities and visitors.
- One of the challenges faced is to make responsible tourism for everybody, without having to comprise on budget or comfort levels.
- Challenges in selling Fair Trade Tourism certified products include insufficient product supply and diversity as well as competition with mainstream tour operators.

Discussion points on the presentation were as follows:

- Communication of stories is a very effective marketing strategy. Stories can positively impact tourist perceptions of a destination as well as influence tourist satisfaction.

- There is an increase in the demand for more participatory experiences inclusive of engagement with local communities. The cultural experience is good for messaging targeted at potential tourists.
- In attempting to increase supply, certifiers have historically communicated marketing and/or market access benefits which have failed to come to fruition. Marketing benefits need to be communicated cautiously to potential clients by certifiers.
- The business case for certification, comprising of aspects such as increased staff retention, increased operational sustainability and resource efficiency should be passionately addressed by certification organisations in their communications with potential clients.
- Information on how and where to locate certified businesses should be easily accessible/available to business and leisure travellers.

The presentation is attached as Annexure 9.

4.3 Presentation: "Experiences of an Indian responsible tour operator" presented by Gopinath Parayil, Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Blue Yonder Holidays.

Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- The Blue Yonder is probably India's first travel company to have positioned its business based on the 'triple bottom line' responsible tourism principles.
- The organisation came to fruition in response to the need to raise funds for local research and interventions to improve livelihoods in order to create better places for people to live and travel.'
- The Blue Yonder has been careful about choosing partners and defining their role in tourism activities. Tourism has been highlighted by the organisation as a supplementary source of income for local communities. As such, it encourages all project partners to continue doing their traditional jobs or other engagements such as plumbing and carpentry – with tourism activities serving as supplementary means of income diversification.

Discussion points on the presentation were as follows:

- Communicating stories to tourists has been very effective in marketing and tourist experiences.
- The Blue Yonder is involved in a number of developmental projects. It then links these projects to tourists.
- The Blue Yonder focuses on both European and domestic markets. There is a huge untapped potential to grow tourism within the Indian 'middle class'.
- There is huge potential for increased trade partnerships between India and South Africa.

The presentation is attached as Annexure 10.

5. Summary and concluding remarks

Ms Hazel Milne, Alliance Vice Chair and Programme Coordinator for Eco Awards Namibia, closed the conference. In so doing, Ms Milne thanked the event organisers and participants for a positive and highly informative conference. Highlights of the concluding remarks were as follows:

- ✓ Content of the conference was excellent.
- ✓ The stage was set for informed discussions in the Annual meeting scheduled to take place on 10 May 2013 around important issues affecting sustainable tourism, particularly in relation to southern and East Africa.

Annexures	
Annexure 1	Alliance 2nd Annual Conference Programme
Annexure 2	Background to the Alliance (2007 – 2012)
Annexure 3	RETOSA sustainable tourism strategy for the southern African region
Annexure 4	Botswana eco-certification system
Annexure 5	Eco Tourism Kenya's eco-rating certification scheme
Annexure 6	ITC Standards Map and market analysis tools
Annexure 7	GSTC
Annexure 8	Market segmentation studies in UK, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands
Annexure 9	Experience working with the Netherlands responsible tourism market from the perspective of an inbound tour operator"
Annexure 10	Experiences of an Indian responsible tour operator