

The Wild-Coast of the Eastern Cape has long been identified as having a great potential for the development of the Eastern Cape in particular and for South Africa in general. The area was identified, because of its unique position, as providing a model for integrating rural development initiatives based on land and agrarian livelihoods with modern approaches to community driven tourism development. Academic institutions and NGOs have done many studies in Wild Coast which all confirm the great potential this region has for agriculture and tourism. However Wild Coast has, for a long period of time been a neglected region of the country as a results the area is suffering from weak infrastructure provision and down- run of rural economy, and high unemployment. However as a result of its attractive geographical location, unique natural resources and high levels of poverty, the Wild Coast has received a great deal attention from both international donor agencies and national development agencies, including Development Bank of Southern Africa. This area has drawn a great interests and support from National, Provincial and Local government institutions. Moreover tourism is identified as a key national sector for economic growth via GEAR and particularly through the Spatial Development Initiative programme, which specifically includes the Wild Coast SDIs. Given the attention and resources being aimed and provided for this area within the framework of SDIs in South Africa, it is critical to assess the provision and efficacy of public service delivery planning initiatives that will and may facilitate and support these activities. This review was done through interviews with key stakeholders, provincial and local government leaders, planners and district municipality managers, tourism development agencies and community leaders, development agencies and financial institutions that are involved in the Wild Coast SDIs. Published and other unpublished documents and data sources were consulted.

A number of government programmes are being implemented in the Wild Coast. These include a wide range of programmes all focusing on poverty eradication, infrastructure, small-crafts centres and institutional development. The approach to development in Wild Coast strategy is to build an interface and develop a synergy with SDI programmes. The SDI development strategy in intended to foster the Community, Public and Private Sector partnerships. The high levels of poverty, underdevelopment, structural weaknesses in the economy and high levels of unemployment require a multi-sectoral development approach.

The key objectives of SDI strategy in the Wild Coast are:

- To generate sustainable economic growth and development in the Wild Coast area
- To generate long-term and sustainable employment for local inhabitants
- To maximize the mobilization of private investment, especially in the context of community tourism development and to lessen demands on government funds for development projects
- To exploit spin-off opportunities from tourism investments for the development of SMME's and for the development of local communities
- To exploit the under-utilised location and economic advantages of SDI areas for export oriented growth.

The key government intervention programmes include social programmes focusing on poverty eradication and HIV/Aids. A wide range multi-year poverty eradication programmes driven at local government and provincial governments. Social programme includes main development clusters. Wild Coast is largely rural and depends on agricultural economy and there a numerous agricultural projects intended to rescusitate rural agriculture. Another key government programme revolves around the SDI development strategy, the focus of the SDI development programmes is community based tourism development. In simple terms it is tourism development for the benefit of communities not as beneficiaries but as major participants in tourism industry. The key strategy to create an environment for community, public and private sector partnerships for sustainable tourism development. The challenge is to integrate rural development strategies and SDI development framework.

Many of the projects mentioned are still in the planning phase and very little impact has of date been made on the ground. Unemployment and poverty remain very real threats for these communities. Infrastructure development projects have generated a series of short-term employment opportunities. The impact of these development employment programmes is often undermined by high retrenchment rates in mining and other industrial sector and as a result the unemployment rate continue to increase in spite of these efforts. The private sector investment in wild coast has rather been very slow and only UE and World Wild Life Fund are active in the Wild Coast. The DBSA is the only local major participant in the Wild Coast and others like IDC have been mentioned but with no concrete development projects. However a number of small-scale isolated projects are beginning to show positive results. Training and registration of local tourism guides to develop rural tourism, under a code of conduct. The EU R80m community tourism

development has had great impact though training and awareness campaign, high expectations have been created.

The DWAF through working for water and sanitation projects have also created limited short-term employment opportunities. The SDI development strategy has yet to show results. The Wild Coast area is experiencing high levels of poverty, declining levels of agriculture and food production, and general economic stagnation in spite of increased social expenditure in the region. Programmes such as the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) and the Wild Coast Spatial Development Initiative (SDI) have yet to yield tangible results, and public sector performance generally is sub optimal. Levels of non-state investment in the region are minimal, suggesting the need for the public sector to play a more decisive role in kick-starting a medium to long-term accumulation strategy for the region. While a number of potential high impact projects have been identified in the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) in the Wild Coast area through the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP), there are concerns about the capacity of local government in the district to leverage resources and deliver with scale and impact. This suggests the need to reinforce the IDP and ISRDS processes through innovative and focused resource & skills pooling strategies for the packaging and implementation of priority projects. In particular, there exists a requirement for a more deliberate and focused attempt to develop productive capabilities and create jobs through targeted and sustained interventions in key economic sectors such as agriculture and agro-forestry.