

"to the cartographer the river seem to divide the land, and to the politician this is certainly so. But to the locals, the !Gariep [LOR] is a cultural epicenter around which people have always congregated. The river is not only a lifeblood in the desert, but a place which the Nama of both South African and Namibia revere as a thread tying them together, despite its political role as a boundary designed to separate people and nations."

Thornton, M

THE PEOPLE



3 THE PEOPLE

Within this section of the LORMP the following is addressed:

- *Subsection 3.1* identifies the stakeholders who have a role to play in attaining the objectives as envisaged for the area; and,
- *Subsection 3.2* summarises the needs and expectations of the various communities of interest participating in the planning process.

3.1 STAKEHOLDERS AND ROLE PLAYERS

Numerous stakeholders are affected by the LOR generally and specifically when addressing the unlocking of the ecotourism potential of the river as a resource shared by Namibia and South Africa as sovereign states. Within this section these stakeholders will be identified according to the specific community of interest within which they resort (refer Figure 16), and the role that these stakeholders play within the broader strategy aimed at unlocking the ecotourism potential in an equitable and sustainable manner discussed.

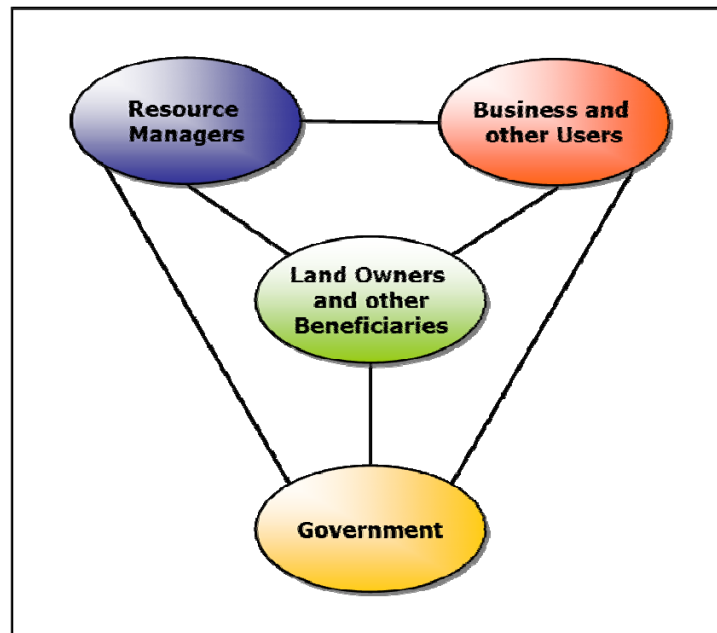


Figure 16: Communities of Interest

3.1.1 Resource managers

The first community of interest is the resource managers formally tasked with the responsibility of managing the natural and cultural resources of the area, and these include public, private and communal role players, including, *inter alia*:

- National Conservation Authorities:
 - MET, Namibia; responsible for Ai-Ais Hot Springs Game Park, and the Sperrgebiet, and,
 - SANParks, South Africa, responsible for the AFNP and the RNP;
- Provincial Conservation Authorities:
 - DTEC, Northern Cape, South Africa; responsible for NNR, and the proposed ORMNR and ORMTRS;

- Communal Conservation Authorities:
 - Richtersveld WHS Management Authority, South Africa;
 - Bondelswarts Community responsible for the Gamaseb and Warmbad Conservancies, Namibia; and,
- Private Conservation Authorities:
 - ANP; Namibia.

Various private and communal landowners between AFNP and the ORM do manage the natural and cultural resources on their properties, yet these properties do not have formal protection area status, and till this status is afforded to them they can not be seen as formal protected area resource managers.

This applies to various private and communal farms in the Riemvasmaak, Onseepkans, Oranjevalle, Pella, and Goodhouse river sections, such as the potential Riemvasmaak Conservancy, the Sandfontein Private Game Reserve, Klein Pella and other.

3.1.2 Landowners

The second community of interest is the landowners on whose land the natural and cultural resources are located. Often the landowners and the resource managers are the same, yet in some cases they do differ, as is the case in the RNP, where the landowners is the Richtersveld Communal Property Association (CPA) and the resource manager is the SANParks, managing the Park under a co-management agreement between the state and the community.

Within this community of interest the following landowners are found, including, *inter alia*:

- State:
 - Namibia:
 - Department of Land Affairs;
 - South Africa:
 - Department of Land Affairs;
 - Department of Public Works;
- Communal:
 - Namibia:
 - Bondelswarts;
 - Bethanie;
 - Aus;
 - Topnaars;
 - Berseba;
 - South Africa:
 - Riemvasmaak Community;
 - Onseepkans;
 - Pella;
 - Witbank;
 - Goodhouse;
 - Richtersveld;
- Private Landowners:
 - Namibia:
 - Aussenkehr;
 - Noordoewer Farmers;
 - Various landowners between Noordoewer and Ariamsvlei;
 - South Africa:
 - Blouputs farmers;
 - Byna Bo Farms;
 - Nous Wes Boerevereniging Farmers; and,
 - Klein Pella.

3.1.3 River Industry

The third community of interest is the formalised river industry who utilises the river commercially or recreationally, and includes, *inter alia*:

- APA Members including but not limited to:
 - Kalahari Outventures;
 - Gravity Adventures;
 - Wildthing Adventures;
 - Bundi;
 - River Rafters;
 - Felix Unite; and
 - Amanzi.

- SANParks:
 - Augrabies 3-in-1 Adventure; and,
 - Sendelingsdrift Camp.

Several commercial companies offer accommodation options for the river industry to utilise, including lodges, camps and campsites, and these include Norotsama Lodge at Aussenkehr, Felix Unite, Wildthing, Amanzi, Aquacade, etc. at Noordoewer/Vioolsdrift, the SANParks facilities at Sendelingsdrift and Augrabies Falls. Many of these facilities would not be viable if the river was not the attraction and thus these facilities can be regarded as river operations, albeit indirectly.

3.1.4 Government

The fourth community of interest is the Government role players at different spheres, responsible for providing the framework within which the other three communities of interest must operate. This clarified operational environment enables the relationships between the various role players to be established and controlled ensuring equitable participation by all affected stakeholders. The role players within this community of interest includes, *inter alia*:

- National Government:
 - Namibia:
 - MET;
 - Ministry of Water Affairs;
 - Ministry of Agriculture;
 - Ministry of Arts and Culture;
 - Ministry of Mining;
 - Ministry of Fishing;
 - South Africa:
 - DEAT;
 - DWAF;
 - Department of Land Affairs;
 - Department of Science and Technology;
 - Department of Agriculture;
 - Department of Minerals and Energy;
 - Department of Foreign Affairs;
 - Department of Home Affairs;
 - Department of Safety and Security;
 - National Treasury;

- Regional or Provincial Government:
 - Namibia:
 - Karas Regional Council;
 - South Africa:
 - Northern Cape Provincial Government;

- Local Government:
 - Namibia:
 - Constituencies;
 - Land Boards;
 - South Africa:
 - District Municipalities – Siyanda and Namaqua; and,
 - Local Municipalities – Richtersveld, Khai Ma; (Upington, Poffadder, Springbok).

3.2 NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS

During interactions, both collectively and individually, the following needs and expectations became apparent, and form part of the various inputs required for the planning component of this LORMP.

3.2.1 Resource Management Community

Critical to successful resource management is clarity regarding the importance of specific resources, albeit vegetation, water or culture. Within South Africa, the resources on communal land between Onseepkans and the Richtersveld were shown to be under-protected necessitating additional efforts from resource management authorities to achieve national targets. In this regard the DTEC must work closely with the Department of Land Affairs to ensure that wherever possible, critical land is not disposed of for possible inclusion in the national conservation estate of the country.

This clarity also allows for specific discussions between resource management authorities and landowners to take place so as to secure conservation worthy areas without necessitating land to be expropriated.

Additionally, resource management inputs regarding the riparian habitat integrity were also addressed through this planning process providing insight into the management of the river and the associated aquatic ecosystem.

3.2.2 Land Owners and Users

Throughout the participatory planning process the historical rights of communities as owners and users of land and associated resources became apparent. Within South Africa this need and expectation is formally addressed through the land restitution and water management programmes aimed at redressing past imbalances due to gender and racial discrimination, while in Namibia this aspect is being addressed in a similar way, targeting specific communities for land reform programmes as well as within the concession policies of the country.

Critical to the success of these programmes is the provision of alternative livelihoods for the landowners, aimed at diversifying the options available to them, and broadening the investment, operational and partnership options on offer.

Private landowners, both in Namibia and South Africa have requested clarity and commitment from the respective Governments to recognise their rights as landowners, and to negotiate conservation management opportunities in good faith, recognising the role that the private sector can play in conservation initiatives. This specific need has been raised in the discussions between the MET and the GFRCC, at Sandfontein, Riemvasmaak, Augrabies, Pella and in the Richtersveld.

As recently restituted landowners, many of the communities have requested direct assistance in land use planning, aimed at achieving sustainable and equitable benefits from their land. Many of the land use options are complex and differ tremendously from traditional communal use of landscapes and resources, necessitating a certain degree of training and capacitation, as well as financial planning and modelling to enable the communal landowners' active participation in business ventures without exposing the communities to unnecessary risks.

Clarity regarding the relationship of communal landowners with the state was raised in most discussions, necessitating specific aspects to be addressed to ensure that the communities' collective rights to resources do not erode entrepreneurship and individual economic opportunities, to the detriment of both the community and individuals within communities.

3.2.3 River Industry (Business Community)

During numerous interactions with the river industry operators who utilise the LOR as part of their suite of adventure options, the request was continuously made to address and clarify the operational environment within which they operate. Currently, this environment is unclear, with the industry experiencing seasonal fluctuations, with excessively high peaks and total slumps in occupancy levels.

Additionally, the operators are concerned about the safety of guests due to a lack of enforcement regarding the safety standards and operational procedures. Since the Africa Paddling Association is a voluntary organisation and membership is not compulsory, it is difficult to enforce industry norms and standards. As a possible solution, a partnership between the APA and the TFCA management could solve this through an agreement regarding the industry norm and standard for the LOR enforced through concession compliance. In this way the industry can be regulated through concessions managed by the overarching TFCA management structure. Since only concessionaires will be utilising specific portions of the river, industry self-regulation, rather than policing becomes important, due to breaches in safety and operational procedures resulting in a possible termination of the concession.

Further clarity regarding carrying capacities, campsites, environmental norms and standards etc is also a need that the river industry expects to be addressed. Currently the campsites are largely on a first come first served basis, creating extremely difficult operational conditions during peak periods. It is expected that by limiting the maximum number of people and boats within a specific stretch of the Lower Orange River the occupancy levels will be increased, by spreading the usage over longer periods of time.

Not only does this make many of the camps and river operations more viable, but also addresses the need for employment security for local beneficiaries, since the current trend is to import all staff rather than employ local people.

This approach will enable the industry to develop training programmes for local staff, knowing that they will be utilised throughout the year and not just during peak periods. This certainty will encourage the active involvement and commitment of local communities to the river industry, thereby reducing the risks of the industry.

Opportunities can also be established where the industry can transfer financial risks to local community structures while retaining operational risks. These partnerships will enable communities and river operators to form mutually beneficial relationships, based on sound business principles.

The possibility of a collective insurance programme for all guests was also raised as a need, where the industry stressed the difficulty of accessing affordable insurance cover as individual operators yet felt that a collective approach, possibly within a TFCA would enable more efficient access to this industry requirement.

3.2.4 Government

As the pivot on which the relationship between the resource managers, land owners and river industry will need to be balanced, Government, within both Namibia and South Africa, will need to plan their specific interventions, within and between the countries, based on the guidelines provided by the SADC Protocols.

Through the TFCA agreement and structure that exists between the two countries, strategies, programmes and plans can be developed guided by this management plan for the LOR, to address the specific issues that are deemed important by the other communities of interest aimed at unlocking the ecotourism potential of the river.

To do this the Governments in the two countries need to know that the actions that they embark upon truly address the needs and expectations of the affected stakeholders and role players, and that the initiatives of Government serve the public effectively and efficiently, based on identified local needs, providing Government with a mandate to operate.