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**Private Sector Community Forestry
Partnerships in the Eastern Cape:**
the Lambazi Case Study

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L. Sisitka
Environmental Science Programme
Rhodes University



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L. Sisitka

Work in support of the Forest Enterprise Development Office,
Hunting Technical Services and Environmentek, CSIR

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Address for correspondence:

Environmental Science Programme, Rhodes University, P.O. Box 94, 6140
Grahamstown, South Africa. E-mail: C.Fabricius@ru.ac.za

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1. CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY

This Lambazi case study forms part of a broader investigation into community – private sector forestry partnerships in the Eastern Cape. This provincial study in turn, contributes to one of the three major research themes of a wider national research project referred to as 'Instruments for Sustainable Private Sector Forestry in South Africa.' This national investigation is co-ordinated by the CSIR, in collaboration with DFID and IIED. Its aim is to understand how the private sector is involved in forestry in South Africa, how it is changing and how it can help to achieve sustainable forest management in the future. The three themes include: redistribution of forest assets, impacts of certification, and company-community forestry partnerships.

Partnerships between communities, government and forestry companies have existed in South Africa in various forms, the most visible of which to date have been the commercially-focused outgrower schemes operating in KwaZulu-Natal, followed more recently by state-sponsored efforts towards building joint forest management relationships around managing state forest resources in the Eastern Cape and elsewhere. Private companies have recently started to explore new forms of partnerships in collaboration with communities. The State is also exploring a new brokerage role in facilitating partnerships between communities and other actors in developing small-scale enterprises. Thinking around different types of partnerships has been recently spurred to some extent by potential opportunities afforded through the state forest restructuring process. The broad objectives of new individual partnerships may vary, and the roles that participant actors assume towards achieving different sets of objectives within partnership relations need to be understood.

The objective of the research into partnerships in the Eastern Cape is to understand key issues in the evolution of new forms of partnership between private companies and communities in forest management, as well as their operation in the context of empowerment and redistribution processes, and the lessons that can be learned for forestry from other related sectors in South Africa. The case studies of the woodlots investigate the potential for the development of such partnerships around woodlots. In the Eastern Cape there are about 150 woodlots totalling some 12 000 ha and employing some 1300 labourers. As part of the process of restructuring state forests, DWAF is planning to transfer these woodlots to the neighbouring communities. It is hoped this will create new opportunities for community development and community-private sector partnerships.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Location:

The project is in the Lambazi area of the Wild Coast approximately 12 km East of Lusikisiki, and within this municipality. The area proposed for the project is 7,500 ha of the former TRACOR agricultural lands, and 1,650 ha of forestry land currently under state management through DWAF.

Type of Forest:

The main part of the proposal area is unafforested, with the forest component of the DWAF area currently a mixture of young and mature pine plantations, in some state of neglect, with considerable areas of unafforested land. This is currently not a formal component of the project, but has been discussed by Rory Mack, the Sappi representative, and included in the funding proposal put to the FAO. At present DWAF have not made any decisions concerning the possible devolution of this forest to these communities or any other. The original proposal was to develop primarily a pulpwood producing forest of principally eucalyptus species, but more recent talk has been of the possible production of sawn timber for conversion and utilisation by local small-scale businesses.

Ownership of Forest Land:

The main area of land in question is state land owned by the communities concerned. This land is in fact State-owned land held in trust by the Department of Land Affairs. The communities, although their understanding is that they 'own' the land have a tenure of entitlement granted to the tribal authority. The existing forest area is state land, nominally owned by the Minister for Water Affairs and Forestry. Various tenures exist over portions of the former land, most notably by the Magwa Tea co-operative, which has tenure over 2000ha, and wishes to increase this by 500ha. This tenure does not extend over land identified for the forestry project, but is another part of the total 12000ha TRACOR land.

Project Initiation:

Back in 1994 SAPPI negotiated the lease of 6000ha from TRACOR, but the latter 'reneged on the agreement'. During 1995 and 1996 SAPPI held meetings and discussions with both provincial and national government officials to discuss the concepts, tenure issues and securities associated with afforestation proposals for the area. In 1997 and early 1998 further discussion were held with the newly formed WCSDI, the DLA, Magwa Tea (in its various guises), and DWAF among others to promote the idea of afforestation. At the end of 1997 SAPPI through the agency of the tribal authority and the Great Chief, met with the Lambazi Community Development Association (LACODA) representing the Lambazi communities and started to develop a proposal for the afforestation of 4000ha. LACODA trustees thought that this was too much and reduced the area to about 2000ha. A budgeted

proposal for the development of a range of forestry and agricultural projects was submitted to the FAO in early 1999. This was rejected by the FAO as being 'too broad', indicating that they would support a forestry project. By this time an NGO, LIMA, with long-standing connections to SAPPI had been brought in by SAPPI to facilitate the negotiations, and potentially to manage the project, which now in SAPPI's view no longer warranted the services of a full-time forester, as had been the original intention.

A second proposal to the FAO for the funding of the preparatory phase of a forestry project, including the costs of obtaining the necessary surveys and permits, has recently been submitted.

In summary: SAPPI have undoubtedly been the initiators of this project, which roughly in its current form was probably conceptualised in 1997.

Stage of Progress:

As described above, there is currently an application lodged with the FAO for funding for the preparatory phase, and to date no practical activity has taken place.

Complicating the issue is the fact that several major role players, including the DLA, DWAF, and the provincial department of agriculture, have had almost no involvement, in any official sense, in the last few years if at all. Further complications arise from the involvement, over the same area of land, of another 'zonal' committee, established by the Lusikisiki TRC, and the apparent initiation by the Department of Public Works, under their Minister Stella Sigcau, of yet another agricultural and forestry project in the same area. A dairy project, supposedly due for funding by ESKOM, has also been discussed.

For all practical purposes, the SAPPI forestry project is in its very early stages despite having been active, in one form or another, for some 7 years. (*SAPPI are tired of waiting and have said they will "...pull out..." if there are further hold-ups.*)

3. OUTLINE OF PERSONS AND GROUPS INTERVIEWED

- *Dambile Mdoda* - A forester, employed by LIMA to manage the Working for Water programme for DWAF in this area. He has no direct involvement with the SAPPI project at all, but is very well established with the community. His intention is to stay with Working for Water, which he says could give him work for the next 20 years in various areas along the Wild Coast. LIMA, on the other hand, see him as the natural facilitator for the 2 year capacity building and preparatory phase of the SAPPI project. He inevitably had little useful information about the project, but was immensely helpful in enabling us to meet with the LACODA members. Dambile was also helpful in facilitating the meetings themselves, ensuring at certain points that each member contributed their views on particular aspects.
- *The LACODA Committee Members* - these represent 6 villages in the Lambazi area, adjoining the ex-TRACOR land, and having communal ownership of that land. The Villages are Dimfi, Khonjwayo, Ndengane, Rhole, Ntlavukazi, and Cuthwini. The total population of the villages is about 7000, with different

headmen under one Chief, responsible to the Amapondo King. LACODA was established among the villages after the liquidation of TRACER in 1997 (Although this only became fully effective in 1998) to look at ways of developing this area of land. They are the group who have been in direct negotiations with SAPPI over the project and are the central committee for development in the area. The Committee has in total 36 members of whom only 4 have been members since the foundation. There are problems retaining committee members, and others have to be co-opted. 9 of the 36 were present on the first day with 19 on the second. There is some doubt, even among the committee members, that they truly reflect the interests of their villages. *(The setting up of the TRC 'zonal' Committee is a serious problem for LACODA who see their influence being eroded by this)*

- *Rory Mack (by telephone)* - forester with SAPPI, now responsible for the project development from SAPPI's side. He has only himself been associated with the project for about 9 months, and does not have personal knowledge of much of the background, but has been instrumental in furthering negotiations with the community, and perhaps in introducing the new focus on the production of milling timber for local manufacture. Rory is also a co-opted member of the board of LIMA.
- *Duncan Stewart (by telephone)* - Managing Director of LIMA Rural Development Foundation. A long and strong track record in implementation of rural development projects, often on behalf of government agencies, parastatals, other NGOs and private companies. LIMA has been associated with SAPPI for 11 - 12 years and has managed SAPPI's outgrower schemes in the Eastern Cape and KZN. Duncan had produced the original business plan for the Lambazi project, and was then asked to manage the project when the area identified for forestry fell from 4000 to 2000 ha. LIMA were initially dismayed by the FAO rejection of the initial proposal as this ran counter to LIMA's own view of holistic development, but understood the administrative complexity of funding a broad project.
- *Graham Harrison (by telephone)* - DWAF Community Forestry Officer, based in Kokstad. A strong personal contact of Rory Mack's, who travelled with him to Harare to meet Michel Laverdiere of the FAO regional office since the FAO will only fund projects with the involvement of a govt. department. He believes that DWAF are on a 'learning curve' in relation to the restructuring processes and the Private Company/ Community partnerships.
- *Ceba Mtoba* - DWAF Regional Director, Southern Region. Was unsure of the location of Lambazi, or the involvement of any DWAF staff in the project. He did know about the Ntsubane forest, but was unaware of any proposal for the lease of this by the Lambazi community, and suggested that Stuart Charlton at Kokstad may be more closely involved. He described the classification of the DWAF/SAFCOL forests, and the approaches to their restructuring. Ntsubane is considered a Category 'B' forest. The DWAF forester had been withdrawn because it was too small and remote from other forests. Mr Mtoba suggested that there were a variety of options for Ntsubane, including eco-tourism, with

community involvement in the management. He denied that these category B forests were commercially unattractive to the larger forestry companies.

- *Vuyokwazi Mbelani* - DLA, Deputy Director, East Cape Region. She had had no contact with the project for about 2 years but had a good understanding both of the land ownership and tenure issues, and the complexity of the community and other dynamics in the area. Vuyo was particularly concerned about the initiative by the Dept of Public Works, which had been launched without any consultation with any stakeholders or responsible govt. departments. She was unaware of the new 'zonal' committee, and not encouraging with regard to DWAF's understanding of community involvement and development. The DLA had not been contacted by any of the main agencies involved in the project. There was concern about the compliance of the forestry proposal with the TRC's Integrated Development Plan (IDP), and Land Development Objectives (LDOs). This would need looking at. No state land can be released for any purpose without the authorisation of the DLA, and this had not been sought.

4. METHODS

Interviews - these were conducted with the individuals representing the various agencies other than the community representatives. Several of these interviews were by telephone as it proved impossible to arrange meetings with many people, most of whom operate over wide areas of the country.

Workshops or Meetings - The discussions with the community representatives took the form of meetings, although these were referred to by some committee members as 'workshops'. The meetings were held almost solely in Xhosa as all but one participant (the researcher) had Xhosa as their mother language, and most participants had little or no English. This also eliminated the need for constant translation, and the consequent waste of time in this process. As is usual in these situations the participants were initially reluctant to speak, but soon relaxed and participated fully in the discussions, with some, inevitably, being more dominant than others. This tendency was countered by asking questions of each individual participant at certain stages.

Participatory exercises - no formal PRA or similar methodologies were employed. This was partly due to the time constraints, but more importantly due to the fact that the committee members were very well versed in meeting procedures, and more than capable of participating in open discussions on topics which they had discussed amongst themselves and with others many times before.

5. NATURE OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The nature of the partnership is extremely fluid, with a large number of interested parties, and constant changes in the dynamics between the role-players, and between them and others outside the process. The area in which the project is set is one where there have been many initiatives started, with varying degrees of success, and there is considerable confusion as to what is happening, and who has which entitlements to the land in question.

5.1. THE MAIN ROLE-PLAYERS

1. *The Community* - this is represented by the inhabitants of the 6 villages identified above. They are in turn represented, in terms of this project at least, by the Lambazi Community Development Association (LACODA). There is some question as to whether the communities are adequately or truly represented by this committee of 36 members, many of whom play little part in attending meetings or other functions. They are 'tired of waiting for something to happen'.
2. *SAPPI* - the company initiated the project some years ago, but has been disappointed and considerably frustrated by the slowness of the process, and the reduction of the areas for potential afforestation. Their current representative is Rory Mack. SAPPI are devolving responsibility for the longer term facilitation and management of the project to LIMA
3. *LIMA* - a long-standing NGO with much experience in rural development projects. LIMA has worked closely with SAPPI for a number of years, and are co-operating in this project, at this phase on a 'risk' basis, without remuneration, in the expectation of funding from the FAO to finance their facilitation role over the next 2 years.
4. *DLA* - the department was involved in earlier negotiations and discussions concerning the project, but have been distant from it for the past 2 years. Frikkie de Waal produced a report for their Regional Director on the SAPPI proposals in 1998. Their involvement is essential in order that the land is released for the project to continue.
5. *DWAF* - their involvement is again central to the process. Currently they are running a Working for Water project in the Lambazi area; removing alien tree species such as eucalyptus, pine, and wattle. The most appealing aspect of the WfW project to community members is the provision of employment, albeit on a short-term contract basis. This is considered infinitely preferable to the uncertainties of self-employment. This project is being managed by LIMA and employs some 70 people from the local communities. Dambile Mdoda manages this project. DWAF's community forestry officer, Graham Harrison, is involved with the project, with Stuart Charlton and Ceba Mtoba concerned with the proposed Ntsubane forest component.
6. *FAO* - the identification of the FAO as a partner is, of course, to some extent speculative, but should they accept the new proposal they would be major players in the project. Their earlier rejection of the original proposal on the grounds that it

was 'too broad' was itself a major influencing factor on the process, running counter, as it did, to the wishes of the community and the NGO.

7. *Wild Coast Strategic Development Initiative (WCSDI)* -they were again involved in early negotiations with SAPPI as the latter sought their help in 'fast-tracking' the project as part of the move to speed up agricultural and other development of the area. WCSDI were quite closely involved in the project development for perhaps two years (from 1997 to 1998), but again it appears that they have had no close involvement for some time. According to SAPPI, they have not had contact from WCSDI for 2 years, and they know little about the project.
8. *The Provincial Department of Agriculture* - in December 1997 a letter was sent to the office of the MEC, but this 'enjoyed no response'. Since then it would appear that the department have been conspicuous by their absence with no-one able to give us the name of a single official with whom they have had dealings concerning the project.
9. *The Tribal Authority* - it was through the TA that SAPPI took the project to the community, and the Chief and headmen have been closely involved in negotiations throughout.
10. *Lusikisiki Municipal TRC* - the municipality have not had any direct involvement in the project, but have set up their own 'zonal' Lambazi Farms Development Committee to look at the development of this same area. They have produced the IDP and LDOs for the area with which any developments must comply.
11. *Department of Public Works* - headed by Stella Sigcau, this department has apparently its own development agenda for the area, with R5 million allocated for agricultural and forestry projects. Prior to last year's general election Stella (whose constituency this is) apparently flew in by helicopter and organised for areas of land to be prepared and planted with beans by community members. These lands are still being tended, although much of the crop has failed. She apparently asked no one about the land 'not even her brother (the Great Chief)'. There has been no consultation with any other role-player about their plans. SAPPI and LIMA planned to meet them in Umtata on 11 May, but this fell through and a meeting is now arranged for early June.
12. *The Magwa Tea Co-operative* - They have tenure on 200 ha of the former TRACOR land, and were the first group to be approached by SAPPI. They now have no direct involvement in the project, but an undoubted interest in the land in question.
13. *ESKOM* - they are extremely shadowy figures in the whole scenario. The community still believes that there is a possibility of a dairy project being set up, funded by Eskom on 90 ha of land centering on the old TRACOR buildings. The community insisted that this 90 ha did not form part of the forestry proposal so that there would be no conflict.

Of the above role-players only the first 6 are considered here as 'partners' in the project, and even with these the nature of the 'partnership' is often very tenuous and unclear with very little communication between the government departments and the

other actors, and between themselves. It is hard to determine what role, if any, the others may play in the future of the project. In any event no direct contact was made with any of these latter 'partners'. Indeed direct contact was only made with the first 5 on the list.

5.2. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTNERS

5.2.1. THE COMMUNITIES

They, not surprisingly, are looking for employment opportunities, infrastructural improvements (particularly schools, roads, a clinic), independence, self-employment possibilities. They are concerned that the young children can get jobs in the area and not move away. Other expectations include the avoidance of erosion in the rainy season, the development of different projects out of the success of the main one, the development of hiking and horse trails with accommodation, brick-making, basketry, sewing, and seaweed collection and sale. They would like the timber to be used to set up small industries to make furniture and crafts in the area, and not for the wood to be taken out of the area. All want to see us running a big industry. There is a great call for training to be central to the project. It is considered a key element. *(As with many rural development projects there is a strong tendency for people to undervalue their own real skills, and this is often reinforced by outsiders 'bringing in' skills and training. Although training is often helpful, recognition of existing skills and abilities creates a far stronger foundation for subsequent skill development. There is also often the problem that the training is out of context, and people are trained for skills that they may not have an opportunity to practice for a long time if at all. The situation at Lambazi is that the community members feel almost entirely reliant on the expertise, and of course money, brought by the outsiders)*

5.2.2. SAPPI

Their initial objective, as with their other 'outgrower' schemes, was undoubtedly to set up a fairly large-scale (4000ha) pulpwood producing forest to supply their mill. They originally identified some 60,000ha throughout the former Transkei area as potentially suitable for pulpwood production. This project was originally conceived as part of SAPPI's ('unique') Community Forest Scheme, aimed at 'the upliftment of rural communities', and they continue to stress their commitment to this scheme. One element of this commitment could be the positive publicity that such community development initiatives can bring such large companies. Over time, and after some frustrating experiences, SAPPI's views and objectives have changed. The reduction in the area for aforestation (at the behest of the community), and the slow pace of progress have combined to compel SAPPI to reduce their expectations, and their involvement, with the proposed devolution of management to LIMA, funded by an outside agency, possibly the FAO. Their current objective is probably to secure this funding, and then withdraw almost completely except for the provision of technical support, through Rory Mack working with LIMA when needed. Any further delays in

the process will probably lead to their complete withdrawal; we really can't wait much longer. If there are any more delays, we'll probably pull out.

5.2.3. LIMA

They are no strangers to this kind of situation, and would be pleased to see the scheme develop, as have other outgrower schemes, which they are managing. This is certainly a more complex situation than the other projects, and will require very sensitive and committed facilitation, but the rewards could be very large in terms of 'whole community development', and this would be LIMA's main objective. The funding from the FAO, should it materialise, will go a long way to supporting this fairly large NGO over the next couple of years, and this must surely also be a powerful motivation behind their involvement. LIMA, according to the FAO proposal, stand to earn some R677,760.00 over the two year period for their facilitation, with management costs budgeted at R250.00/hour, and technical and training costs at R220.00/hour in addition to the costs of a full-time facilitator and administration. In the same proposal R1500.00/month is allocated to the 'Development Committee', presumably LACODA?

5.2.4. DLA

Their understanding of the project is currently rather poor, having been distant from the process for some while now. As with most rural development initiatives, particularly those concerning changing land-use and changes in tenure and occupation, they will be concerned to see that the process complies with all the relevant legislation and policy guidelines. In the longer term they will wish to see real empowerment of the communities involved, both through improvements in their economic situation and through the development of skills. The DLA will be very concerned about the appropriateness of the land uses, and that they conform with the national and local plans and strategies as enshrined in such as the Integrated Development Plan and Land Development Objectives of the local municipality. Although there is as yet no formal connection with the land restitution or redistribution processes, and no discussion regarding possible transfer of ownership to the communities the DLA could themselves initiate such a process under the strategy for devolution of state land. This would, though, be subject to any outstanding land claims over the area.

5.2.5. DWAF

Their involvement is quite strong at one level, and much more tenuous at another. The direct involvement of DWAF (or another national government department) is a pre-requisite for FAO funding, and DWAF, as befits a forestry project, is the department closest to the action. They are keen to see the development of community based forestry projects both associated with their own restructuring processes and through other initiatives. Of the two main elements of the project of most interest to DWAF, the one where they are most active is in assisting the facilitation of the afforestation proposal where they would wish to see the

establishment of a long-term, sustainable, community managed forestry enterprise. The other element, concerning the possible inclusion of the Ntsubane forest under the management of the community, has yet to be seriously examined, certainly by the Regional Director, and here they would be looking at a range of options. Their objectives would be those identified in their restructuring policy. An additional objective for DWAF is to learn from the lessons of the experience to inform their future engagement in such projects.

5.2.6. FAO

Again this is inevitably speculation, but it seems clear that this prospective funder will wish to see considerable capacity building within the communities, and ultimately want them to achieve a visibly sustainable and profitable forestry enterprise.

5.3. THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ACTORS

As no contractual agreements have been entered into between any of the partners, there are few, if any, formal rights associated with the project itself and only those vested in existing land entitlements. Another possible complication here is that there were people removed from the land in question by the former Transkei government to clear the land for development by TRACOR. Some of these are apparently claiming that this had been a 'forced removal' (although this is doubtful), and may have lodged a land claim and certainly intend to re-settle part of the land. The official line is that it was a 'negotiated removal' with compensation having been paid to the households concerned. Here too, only the main actors are considered.

5.3.1. THE COMMUNITIES

They have formal rights of entitlement to the land subject to approval by the various authorities for the purposes they wish to utilise it. Authorisation is needed from; (1) the Tribal authority, which appears to be in agreement with the SAPPI proposals; (2) the Municipal authorities in relation to their IDP and LDOs (this could prove something of a problem if the municipal authorities develop alternative plans for the land through their zonal committee); (3) the DLA who must release the land in terms of its state ownership element, and approve the proposed land-use in the light of the expected benefits to the communities. LACODA as the main representative body for the communities have formal responsibility, through their constitution, to represent the best interests of their communities and report all discussions and activities back to those communities. Beyond that they appear to have no particular rights, except to enter into negotiations with third parties on behalf of the communities, and apparently to receive reimbursement of their expenses and a small stipend for attending committee and other associated meetings.

5.3.2. SAPPI

They have the right to enter into negotiations with landowners (and in some cases tenants) to promote the development of commercial forests on suitable land. This is subject to the usual constraints on land-use. In cases such as this, where they were

the initiators, they have the responsibility for ensuring that all parties are kept fully informed of all aspects of the process, to consult all the statutory agencies, and to facilitate all negotiations in a fully transparent manner. They must ensure that all legal requirements are satisfied at all stages of the process. SAPPI do not appear to want sole rights to purchase any timber produced, but will guarantee purchase if no other buyer is found.

5.3.3. LIMA

As they are currently acting in an unofficial capacity, except for their involvement in the WfW project, they also have no real formal rights within the project. Any responsibility they take for furthering the facilitation of the process prior to a formal funding contract being signed is only of their own choosing. Having entered the arena, though, they have created for themselves something of a moral responsibility to the community, as, of course, have SAPPI.

5.3.4. DLA

The department has the formal legal right to be kept informed of all developments in such cases concerning changing land-use and tenure. This is particularly so where communities are involved. They do, though, also have a responsibility to ensure that they retain close links with projects and initiatives involving community management of land. It is hard to determine whose is the greatest responsibility for ensuring the engagement of the DLA in these cases. Presumably it is safe to say that both the initiating agency, in this case SAPPI, and the DLA themselves should share the responsibility.

5.3.5. DWAF

They have responsibility to monitor all forestry activities in the country, and here have added responsibilities both in terms of the FAO application, where DWAF is the responsible department, and in relation to the possible disposal of the Ntsubane forest. They too have the formal legal right to be kept informed of all forestry developments and the responsibility themselves to keep up to date with such initiatives. DWAF also have responsibility for ensuring that any forestry proposal complies with all relevant legislation in terms of the surveys and permits required. The department will almost certainly have a responsibility for consulting with other relevant government departments i.e. the DLA.

5.4. THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIPS

Although there are a large number of possible actors/partners in this project, there has been little interaction between most of them and it is thus difficult to determine with any accuracy what the precise nature of many of the relationships are. There is, however, an over-riding impression of considerable mistrust and confusion in some of these relationships, while others appear to be more solidly grounded.

The strongest and most productive relationship is that between SAPPI and LIMA. They have a long history of working together and understand each other's agendas very clearly. This is very apparent to the community who, according to Duncan Stewart of LIMA were "...initially very skeptical of us and our relationship with SAPPI". This suspicion has not entirely disappeared as one committee member stated during discussions that: "SAPPI and LIMA are one and the same because they are saying the same thing so I don't distinguish between the two."

In itself this statement also indicates something of the nature of the relationship between SAPPI and the community. There is an underlying tension and uncertainty concerning the direction the project is being taken. LACODA as the representative group for the communities has been in negotiations with SAPPI since 1997 and yet there still seems to be considerable differences in understanding between them. As another committee member expressed this: "There is still uncertainty among ourselves'. I think we still need a holistic presentation, which is going to unearth the advantages and disadvantages", and another: "SAPPI confused us when they rejected the area that we identified. The community had given us a clear mandate that the area we identified was not in use and there was no problem, but the confusion started when it was rejected and SAPPI wanted an extension."

One saving factor in the rather strained relationship between SAPPI/LIMA and the community has been the presence of Dambile Mdoda who has gained the respect of the committee members and has built a strong, if occasionally rather dominant, relationship with them. Dambile, of course, has no formal role in the project, and has no intention himself of taking on the facilitating role. If he should move to another WfV project with another community, this important relationship thread would be broken, much to the detriment of the project, and undoubtedly to the distress of the committee.

It is probable that SAPPI's links with the tribal authority are quite strong, but the latter rely very much on LACODA to provide the main ongoing contacts. Relationships between these main actors and the government agencies are mostly very distant, with the exception of DWAF in the person of Graham Harrison. Here there is a strong link between SAPPI and DWAF, with DWAF providing the necessary institutional support for the funding application. Other aspects of DWAF's involvement are less clear, but there is certainly no relationship with the Regional Director, with regard to the Ntsubane component.

Although the DLA were involved, in the person of Nick Matabese, in the early negotiations there is no, or perhaps even a rather negative relationship between SAPPI and the DLA, who they believe have not performed their duties with regard to the project. The DLA in their turn are rather dismissive of DWAF's involvement in community projects generally, although they have no information on DWAF's role here.

The WCSDI has also been criticised by SAPPI in the past for failing to deliver, and now have only a very peripheral role in the process. Indeed it appears that SAPPI have decided at some stage to press on regardless, without further consultation with the government departments or other statutory agencies, who they feel were not responding quickly or positively enough.

This is particularly the case with the provincial department of Agriculture who have no role whatsoever in the process, and have not responded to any approaches.

The municipal authority has also had little impact on the process in any direct way, but their intervention in the shape of the zonal committee is creating considerable tension in the LACODA committee, and the relationship here is strained to say the least.

Similarly with the Dept. of Public Works, their activities are simply a further source of confusion, and although they are not in any way directly involved in the project, their mere presence in the shadows is heightening the uncertainties. SAPPI/LIMA are looking to meet with them to see whether it will be possible to develop a positive relationship with them.

6. THE RESOURCES

6.1. NATURAL

The area of land in question has been subject to a variety of mostly low intensity agricultural practices over the years. These include the growing of maize and grazing of livestock, with occasional attempts to cultivate beans and other crops. The land is described by everyone as 'fertile', and it is recognised that much of the land in this coastal belt is indeed very fertile and potentially extremely productive. An EIA will have to be carried out before any aforestation permits are issued, but it is likely that most of the area will be identified as having little conservation or bio-diversity value, and is therefore suitable for forestry or other agricultural activities. There remains the issue as to whether taking such land for forestry is the best use for it, although in 1997 the role of aforestation as an 'anchor project' for development in the Transkei was emphasised. Taking land for cultivation will decrease the grazing areas available and put more pressure on the remaining grasslands, another impact that must be taken into account. The wide range of land-use options available here is probably another complicating factor as it is difficult for community members to decide which would be the most, and most immediately beneficial option. In general people here have a distinct preference for agricultural rather than for forestry. The former is something they feel they understand better.

- The Ntsubane forest is in itself probably already much degraded from the point of view of its bio-diversity, but it is associated with areas of indigenous forest and other important natural features, such as the Magwa River and Frazer's Falls. Water in this area is usually more than adequate for both domestic and agricultural purposes, although the afforestation of a potentially large proportion of the land would inevitably affect the availability to some extent, and the impact of this would need to be carefully assessed.

6.2. HUMAN

A considerable amount of time has been given to this project by all main partners, in particular SAPPI and the communities through LACODA. LIMA have more recently been brought into the frame as have DWAF. The longer-term commitment of human resources to the project, should it every actually materialise, will be very much from the community. At this stage it is impossible to determine at what level this commitment is likely to be, or how many people will be involved. Should the funding from the FAO be forthcoming, LIMA will be committing considerable staff resources to the facilitation phase of the project with Duncan Stewart co-ordinating, a full-time facilitator living and working within the communities, and other staff providing technical support and training, with administrative back-up. SAPPI, too, may continue to provide some technical support, perhaps through Rory Mack. All appropriate local, provincial and national government departments will need to commit some human resource to oversee and monitor the project from their perspectives, with DWAF and the DLA needing to work particularly closely with the project.

6.3. PHYSICAL

The physical resources require will be identified once the project has become finalised. The majority of these resources will inevitably be provided by outside funding, and it is unlikely that any of the partners themselves will commit themselves to provision of the materials and equipment needed, although SAPPI may provide the seedlings. The existing buildings and equipment at the former TRACOR depot are being used by a variety of people, and this project itself, although currently using a building as a meeting room, may have no access to these resources, particularly if another project, such as the proposed dairy, does happen. There may have to be some serious negotiations regarding the use of the facilities, which include a weighbridge, a very valuable piece of equipment for a forestry enterprise.

6.4. SOCIAL

Once again the communities are the ones with most social resources at stake. There are already considerable tensions within the communities, even within the committee itself, and with different groups within the communities being pulled in different directions by the various projects and little clarity as to the real direction of this particular initiative, there is a strong possibility of even greater social tensions

developing. Should the project be successful, however, there is a likelihood of the resulting employment and income generation helping to heal the rifts. There little possibility though, that all community members can ever benefit equally from such projects, and there will inevitably be changes in the social dynamics as benefits accrue more to some families than others. There is probably already some social division between community members and the LACODA committee ('Do we really represent the interests of our communities?')

6.5. FINANCIAL

To date, almost all financial commitment has been from SAPPI in terms of the time their staff has spent developing the project and negotiating with the communities and others. There is no indication that they will look for reimbursement of these costs. They are not intending to fund any of the further development of the project in terms of the surveys and permits required, hence the application to the FAO. LIMA have also committed time to the project, without, as far as we can determine, any recovery of their costs. Should the FAO decide to support the project, they will be more than adequately compensated in the form of substantial funding over 2 years. The FAO themselves have yet to determine their financial involvement. There has so far been no discussion with the communities about the possibility of they themselves investing financially in the project, and they have no financial resources at stake except perhaps in the sense that commitment to the project could preclude individuals from benefiting financially from other employment. It is unlikely at this stage that anyone would refuse the chance of work in favour of the project, and some of the problems with loss of committee members may be associated with their finding work.

7. OTHER FACTORS

7.1. DIFFERENT DECISION-MAKING ABILITIES, STRUCTURES, AND PROCESSES:

There are considerable differences in the capacities and abilities of the main partners:

SAPPI is one of the largest forestry companies in the world with a gross cash flow (earnings before tax, depreciation, interest and amortisation) in the latest March quarter of \$262 million, from total sales of \$1.187 billion representing some 1.7 billion tons of pulp. They are a very tightly structured, highly professional international company with, in effect, limitless resources of finance and skilled personnel.

LIMA is a very experienced NGO with 35 staff, operating a number of large development projects throughout KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. It operated with a gross revenue in 1999 of over R6million. It works closely with the DLA and other government agencies as well as with communities and commercial companies.

LACODA represent 7000 almost universally impoverished people in 6 villages where illiteracy rates are very high, and the most money ever handled by the majority are the pension payments of perhaps R500 a month which may have to support households of 10 - 20 people.

The committee are though very articulate and quite well versed in meeting procedures. One of the members has recently completed his teacher training, although he has no job, he has the strongest language skills and is fluent in English. SAPPI and LIMA have well established structures of authority and responsibility, with clear mandates for their operations. They also have easy access to information and to government departments and other organisations, while LACODA can only really operate through the agency of an external organisation such as an NGO. Their main links are within the tribal authority, and to some extent with the municipality.

Decision-making by the stronger partners is within clearly defined parameters, and decisions at different levels can be taken by individuals with clear areas of authority. Decision-making at the community level is much more complex; although the committee members are mandated to take community decisions to the table, they can find themselves in a difficult position when, as happened, their mandate is overturned by other partners, such as SAPPI or the FAO.

The processes that all are collectively engaged in are mostly determined by the stronger partners who can dictate the direction, if not the pace! For SAPPI, in particular, the process is seen as a straightforward one of consultation, negotiation and decision; while for the community there are far more complications in terms of community consultation, other project potentials, and general uncertainty.

The government departments have ostensibly clear structures and lines of authority, which should facilitate their active involvement in the process, but there are problems of devolution of responsibility (in both DWAF and the DLA), and an apparent lack of communication both within and between departments

7.2. DIFFERING OBJECTIVES:

Ultimately the difference in objectives is probably not a key factor. Each of the main partners shares the vision of an economically and socially empowered community engaged in a variety of income generating activities and small businesses associated with and arising out of a core forestry project. The emphases within this may vary, with SAPPI, DWAF (and the FAO) focussing strongly on the forestry enterprise, with LIMA and the community, together with the DLA looking more broadly at a range of options that can develop from the project, but the commonalities probably outweigh the differences.

The most significant differences are probably to be found in the approaches to how this is to be achieved. SAPPI have a very strong, clear commercial approach, and find the delays very frustrating, and are reluctant perhaps to accept the inevitability of not having things entirely their own way. They find it difficult to accept that their intention to help in the 'upliftment' of the communities through this project is not

simply welcomed with open arms by all parties, and have had to quite radically alter their expectations in terms of the establishment of large tracts of pulpwood forests. LIMA are much more experienced in these processes, and in negotiating the tightrope between the company on one hand and the communities on the other, with all the other role-players hovering around somewhere. They are the best placed to create and develop processes that are likely to be acceptable to most if not all partners, and which can lead to eventual adoption and implementation of the proposals. LACODA are operating from a position of uncertainty, not wishing to close the options for their communities, while also not wanting to alienate the other partners and risk losing the potential for the development of the project. They too are frustrated at the lack of action, but are less clear who is responsible for this. Although they have approved the second application to the FAO they seem unaware that this, should it go ahead, would represent another 2 years of workshops and facilitation before any real practical activity takes place.

8. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS (1)

The main strategy adopted by SAPPI, in the light of the changes to their original plans, has been the involvement of LIMA in the process to take over the facilitation and preparatory phases, and probably to manage the project into the implementation phase. SAPPI have also, as noted above, ceased consultations with most of the government departments, and pursued their plans with only those who have responded positively to their approaches. While this has worked in terms of them moving closer to the realisation of the project, albeit in an altered form, there will come a time when the other partners' formal assents are necessary for the final implementation, indeed for the issue of the necessary permits and permissions. It remains to be seen how their exclusion so far will affect their willingness to co-operate. Since, however, their primary interests must be in the benefits to the communities, they will find it hard to withhold such permissions, and SAPPI would certainly be quick to point out that they are jeopardising the project if they were to do that.

LIMA's strategy is very much one of holding the middle ground, and maintaining good working relationships with all other parties.

LACODA, as described above, is trying not to upset their partners, or 'frighten them off', while keeping their options open.

9. FACILITATING MECHANISMS

Although there are a raft of laws and policies associated with activities such as this project, few of them have been invoked so far. SAPPI's original concept was

developed 'in-house' as their Community Forestry Scheme, which was taken in 1994/5/6 to various provincial and national government agencies. This was linked with the establishment of the WCSDI in 1997 and its role to 'fast-track' forestry, agriculture, and other development programmes along the Wild Coast, and was reinforced by the publication in 1997 of the CSIR report 'Wild Coast Spatial Development Initiative - Afforestation Potential'. This report affirmed forestry as an important and appropriate potential element in the development of the area. The liquidation of TRACOR, releasing their land for other development, and the restructuring of the Magwa Tea Co-op were also events which encouraged SAPPI to continue negotiations.

The agreement by the tribal authority to allow the development of the land for a forestry project enabled the negotiations to proceed, but the release by the DLA of the land has still to be negotiated.

No reference so far has been made to the designations for the land in the TRC's IDP and LDOs.

The Ntsubane forest component of the project, although described in the FAO application, has not been formally discussed with the responsible officers in DWAF. The transfer of the forest to the community under a leasehold agreement will be an important element in the programme as it could generate employment and income fairly rapidly. The transfer would probably fall within DWAF's forest restructuring policy.

The formalisation of the relationship between the company and the communities would require the establishment of properly constituted Private Company-Community Partnerships (PCCPs). This has yet to be done, and will probably depend on the outcome of the application to the FAO.

10. BARRIERS

Apart from the gulf in experience and abilities between the main partners, one of the main barriers that seems to be the cause of many of the problems experienced here is that of poor communication. This is apparent not only between partners, but also within their organisations.

That there has been an almost complete breakdown in communication between SAPPI and both the DLA and the WCSDI is very clear, and there is little communication between the DLA and DWAF. The municipal authorities appear to have little communication with anyone, although the chair of LACODA has been co-opted onto the zonal committee and reports back. And as for the Provincial Department of Agriculture and the Department of Public Works!

The strongest lines of communication exist between SAPPI and LIMA, with seemingly good communication between these and the DWAF Kokstad office which

itself, though, appears not to communicate well with the Regional Director at King William's Town.

Communication between SAPPI/LIMA and LACODA is ostensibly fairly good, but all documents are in English and therefore inaccessible to most committee members, and inevitably to the great majority of the communities. Apparently there used to be someone who translated these documents, but: "...that was a long time ago...now we have no-one..." and "We have all these papers at our houses but do not understand them." This can only add to the strong feeling of uncertainty that pervades the project, particularly from the communities' perspective. Many community members and some on the committee are still saying that they "...cannot eat trees...", and that they want to grow food crops and cannot understand the value of forestry. This is after at least 3 years of direct negotiations indicating again that real communication has been poor. When asked, though, if they feel under pressure to do the forestry, the committee members unanimously declare that they are not. This probably indicates their almost desperation to keep things going, even if they do not fully understand the process. As none of the alternative development proposals have as yet amounted to anything (let alone a tin of beans), they wish to hang on to all options with the idea that 'something good may come out of it in the end'.

The scattering of villages in the project are poorly served by the dirt roads and have the usual rural infrastructure problems with few schools or clinics.

From LACODA's point of view the presence of the zonal committee formed by the municipality has created a whole new area of tension, and they feel that their authority to represent their communities is under threat. There definitely seems to be the potential for a major power struggle here.

The lack of recognition of skills within the committee and within the communities is probably more important than the actual lack, although undoubtedly skills will need developing in order to manage the project. LACODA claim that there has so far been no training given by either SAPPI or LIMA, and identify 'how to conduct meetings', 'business management', and 'how to handle or manage the forestry business' as areas of training they require. They state that: "The reason this training is important is that we are used in our culture to plant for the stomach (subsistence)."

This lack of faith in their own abilities is reinforced by their response to the question: "What would you do if the FAO did not provide the funding?" To which the replies included: "We would ask LIMA to look for funds from elsewhere", and "We will go around for assistance to various departments. In other words they cannot conceive of initiating something themselves, without outside help. They also said that they were waiting for someone to work with them."

This belief in outside intervention, and their assertion that they trust the outsiders (even the abalungu!) more than their own people, is a major barrier to their progress, and one that is in no way mitigated by the attitudes of some outside agencies.

One response emerged, entirely unbidden, in relation to corruption, and we were unable to determine the exact cause of this. This went as follows: "It is not me who is collecting money from SAPPI for transport fees. I'll make a noise and start accusing the committee that it is corrupt and is misusing the funds." This statement, apart from the obvious reference gives further indication of tensions within the committee itself.

For the other, more peripheral players in the project, the major barriers apart from the communication problem would appear to be some lack of motivation to become involved, and perhaps an unwillingness to work at the pace and level demanded by SAPPI. This leads to the thought that the powerful commercial imperatives of 'success', 'action', 'growth', and 'results', to which SAPPI certainly subscribe, are not particularly compatible with the modes of operation of government departments (at all levels), and certainly not with the dominant culture within poor rural communities. LIMA, with their considerable experience of this, have probably less of a problem fitting into this model of activity, although marrying this to what they fully understand to be the way the others think and operate must be quite a task.

There is a real question over whether the DLA and WCSDI have the capacity, particularly in terms of available human resources, to adequately support and assist in the facilitation of such projects. As more and more rural development initiatives are started, often of considerable complexity and involving large private companies, the resource base of the various responsible government departments is stretched beyond their capabilities, making it extremely difficult for them to fulfil their statutory obligations.

11. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS (2)

As yet it does not appear that these barriers are being addressed in any real manner. It is a moot point as to whether they have been fully recognised by the partners, as this, of course, is a pre-requisite for taking appropriate action to overcome the problems.

The engagement of LIMA in the process is perhaps one recognition by SAPPI that things are not working as they should, and that SAPPI themselves do not have the necessary skills to address the problems.

LACODA have attempted to meet with the zonal committee, but at these meetings they were "...knocked...so they don't solve the problem...". They state that they will continue to negotiate, and do not intend to give up all they have done.

The attempt by SAPPI and LIMA to meet with the Department of Public Works is another case of the partners trying to overcome some of the barriers to progress, or at least remove some of the uncertainty surrounding developments in the area.

There remain considerable barriers that need to be overcome to afford any real chance of a successful outcome for the project.

12. INFLUENCE OF THESE ACTIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIPS

As there have been few attempts to address the barriers it is impossible to record their effect on the relationships. The most positively beneficial action has been indirectly through the engagement of LIMA and the personal presence of Dambile Mdoda, notwithstanding his lack of real involvement in the project. He has certainly been able to explain some of the issues troubling the committee, in an informal and relatively unprejudiced way.

13. SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES FOR ROLE-PLAYERS

To date there have been few such outcomes beyond increasing the sense of frustration of most of the partners. There has been considerable raising of the expectations of the communities, with, in the most part, subsequent disappointment. The process is, however, moving slowly towards some kind of resolution with everyone centrally involved very keen to see some action at last.

For SAPPI the frustrations of the past few years may militate against their direct involvement in any future projects of this nature, certainly without the full engagement from the outset of an experienced facilitating agency such as LIMA. Community members too are desperate for some activity, and seem prepared to acquiesce to almost any proposal as long as something tangible results.

The position of LACODA is certainly under some threat from the activities of the zonal committee, and the outcome of this intervention remains to be seen.

LIMA, having committed considerable time already will be relieved if they receive the funding to continue with more formal facilitation of the project.

DWAF consider this process very much a 'learning curve', and will be developing better understanding of the complex dynamics of community involvement in forestry activities. They may also, through the leasing of the Ntsubane Forest (if this does happen), make further progress in their own re-structuring process.

The DLA will need to re-engage with the process and re-establish their authority in these cases to meet their obligations and responsibilities. While it may be possible for the facilitation roles and community support roles to be devolved to NGOs or consultants, only the DLA itself can fulfill its statutory obligations, and it needs to find the capacity to implement these.

The same may well be true for the WCSDI for whom the successful outcome of this project would be a significant step towards their aim of stimulating sustainable economic activity in this area.

14. SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES FOR THE RESOURCES

As no agreements have as yet been finalised there are not likely to be any significant impacts at all on the natural resources, and only a continuation of the current impacts on the human resources of the main partners. There may, and should, be greater input from the DLA and WCSDI among others which would increase their human resource commitment.

15. INTRODUCTION OF FACILITATING MECHANISMS AND REMOVAL OF BARRIERS

In the very early days of SAPPI's attempts to establish forestry projects in this area, a 'Task Team' was set up comprising representatives from all major role-players. This foundered, because, according to SAPPI: "...a number of task team members did not regularly attend the meetings, whilst local participants of the TLC also failed to attend meetings...". This is always a problem with such fora, but it would seem essential in this situation that a meeting of all interested parties is convened, and such a team re-established. The terms of reference should include compulsory attendance at every meeting and tight time-scales set for reporting and action for each participating organisation. Without such a forum to oversee the process, it is hard to see how the problems of poor communication and uncertainty (fuelled by rumour and speculation) can be overcome, or how role-players can be held accountable for their actions (or lack of them).

The problem of poor communication in terms of the language of debate and documentation must be addressed. It is a truism to say that: "...people never have enough information...", but to expect people to make major, life-changing decisions based on documents that are entirely incomprehensible to them is really not acceptable. All important documents, particularly legal agreements, constitutions, proposals, applications, etc. should be written and discussed in the majority participants first language, in this case isiXhosa.

The lack of faith and confidence in their own skills and abilities is a problem that affects many poor rural communities and others in similar situations. The

reinforcement of this perception by the assumption by outsiders that they have the answers and will bring and transfer the skills is also a dominant theme in many development situations. The provision of training is undoubtedly an important component of this as many other projects, but recognition, utilisation and enhancement of skills already present in individuals and communities is equally if not more important. The proposal submitted to the FAO contains reference to "...adapted Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques". These would be to "...inform the facilitation consultants about the communities' interests...and...will be used to plan and establish models for community participation...". There is really no need for these with people who have been discussing their situation with outsiders for years, except perhaps to help identify and value these inherent skills and abilities, and discuss how these can best be employed and developed.

Addressing the fundamental incompatibility between the cultures represented by the main partners; the powerful, financially impelled culture of a major international company with overwhelming belief in their own abilities and 'right', and the deeply socially and traditionally constrained culture of the communities whose self-belief has been almost destroyed by years of oppression and who are only now beginning to rediscover their own sense of 'right', is something only time can do, with the aid of sensitive facilitation from others with some understanding of both sides, namely a facilitating NGO, such as LIMA, and the DLA. Absolute openness and 'transparency' at all stages and between all partners is critical to the development of the trust and respect needed to ensure long-term success of the project, and here language and communication are essential tools.

16. SUMMARY DISCUSSION

The situation at Lambazi is extremely complex with many interested parties seemingly following their own agendas without reference to others. Within the project itself, several key role-players have been absent from the process for some time and their re-involvement is essential. The development of the communities' own capacities and confidence is another key aspect that as yet has not been addressed in any meaningful way, and without this there can never be true 'sustainability' of any project.

Both of the main partners, SAPPI and the communities, have each experienced considerable frustration at the slowness of the process, the one as they see little return on their "...sunken cost and tremendous effort..." and the other with their expectations of jobs and income constantly being thwarted. In this at least they are united. Inevitably though, they will tend to put the responsibility for the delays either on the other, or on the lack of positive support and assistance from the statutory agencies. These agencies have a clear responsibility to aid the facilitation of such initiatives, but appear unable to do so, and rely increasingly on the involvement of consultants and NGOs. While these can be very effective in certain areas of

facilitation, they cannot undertake the statutory elements of the work, and it is here that the most urgent action is often required.

The fundamental and almost universal problem of communication, in all senses, is one that strongly pervades this project. Some means must be found to bring all parties together both to agree an appropriate process and programme, and to guarantee commitment to expedite their particular responsibilities for the process.

This area, along with much of the former Transkei, particularly along the Wild Coast, has seen many initiatives come and go, almost without exception leaving behind no tangible or sustainable benefits to the people. Expectations and hopes have been raised and dashed time after time, each disappointment further damaging the confidence and trust of the communities.

While there is increasing reliance on outside intervention to stimulate (and fund) almost all development there is a corresponding abrogation, by the communities, of their own responsibilities for their own futures. It would be encouraging to see the problems in this case being positively addressed, and the visions of the partners realised, but it seems clear that this level of intervention and funding cannot ever be made available to all the thousands of similar communities throughout the former homelands and some way needs to be found for the communities themselves to take real control over the form and direction of their own development.