

# Cinco Grandes Reserve

## Conservation Area Audit

### Coutada 5, Mozambique

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cinco Grandes formally known as Coutada 5 lies in eastern central Mozambique and encompasses approximately 680 000 ha along the northern bank of the Save River and extends to the estuary and coastal islands. There are approximately 50 000 people resident in the area mostly concentrated on water courses, river floodplains and coastal plains. Larger settlements are concentrated on the coast with their epicentre on the estuary of the Save River. The developer Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration has secured lease hold to the entire area and proposes a zoned economic development of the entire area including a conservation wildlife undertaking of approximately 250 000 ha.

#### 1.1 THE AREA

##### 1.2.1. Locality

The area is shown in figure 1 with the conservation development concentrated in the area to the west of the main road as shown in figure 2 which is the main north south arterial EN1 for Mozambique. The area centres on the coordinates 20°54'06.2"S and 34°17'23.0"E.

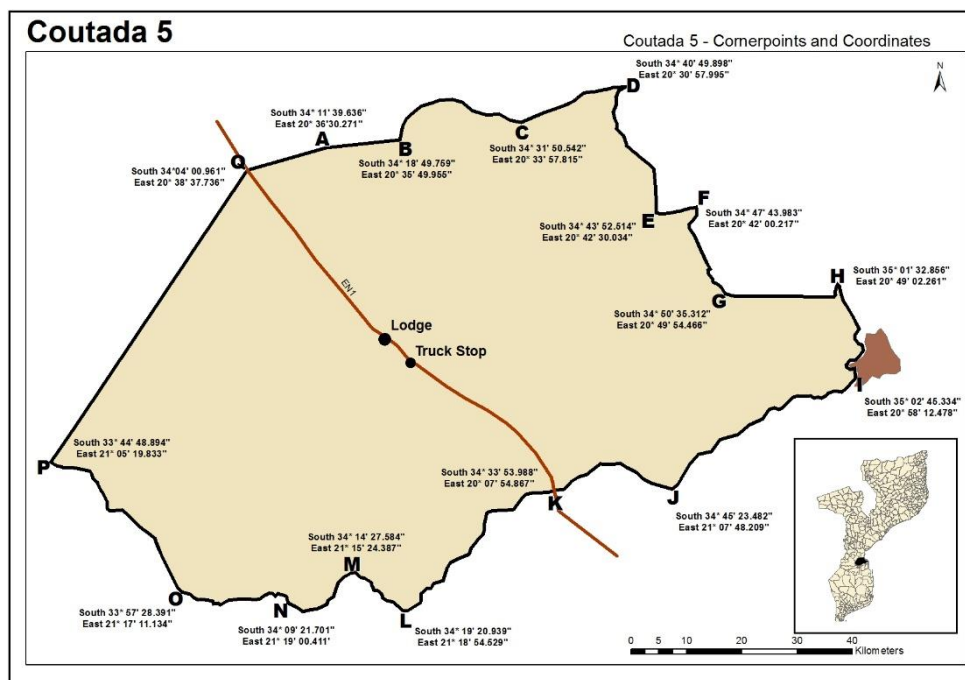


Figure 1: Map showing Coutada 5 in Mozambique

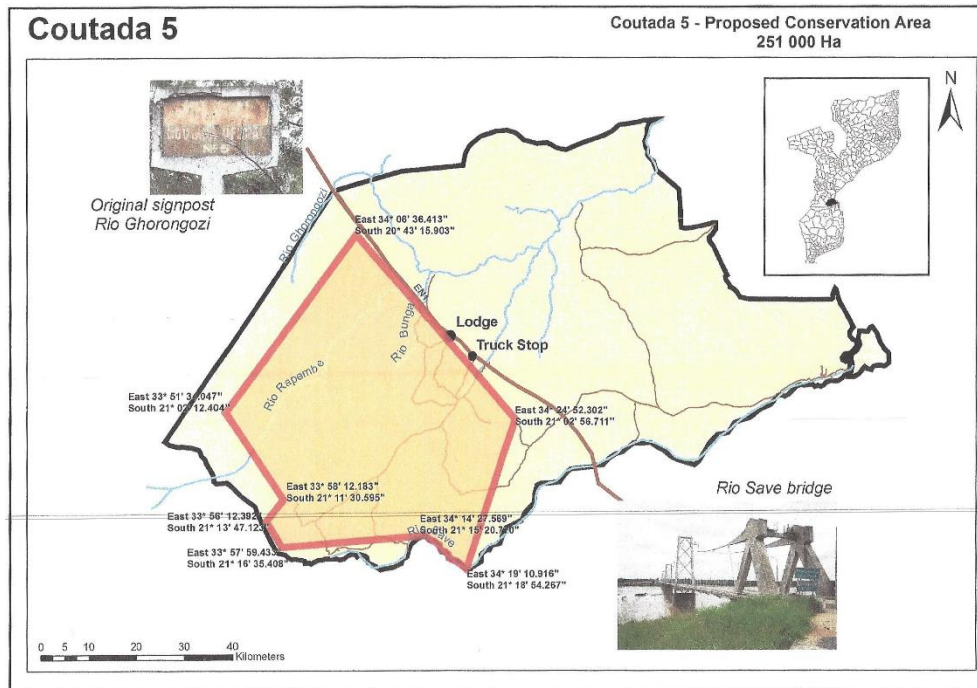


Figure 2: Proposed location of the Conservation Area

### 1.1.1 Description

The areas biomes can broadly be described as savannah with freshwater pans and mangrove swamp. The conservation development will take place in the savanna which can be further subdivided into broad leaved open woodland in the north with denser broad leaved woodland to the south. These are bounded by the riparian fringe and floodplain grassland of the Save River in the south. The whole area is interspersed with grassland dambos, hydromorphic grasslands and pans, some holding water year round.

The vegetation is dominated by *Colospospermum mopane* as large trees with discontinuous canopies in the south and in the north as clumped monoclonal colonies forming thickets.

## 2 OBJECTIVES OF THE DEVELOPER

### 2.1 DEVELOPER DETAILS

Africa Futura Wildlife Restoration, Lda, Rua de Sochangane nr 5451, Maputo, Mozambique. [www.africafutura-wr.com/coutada5/index.html](http://www.africafutura-wr.com/coutada5/index.html)

### 2.2 OBJECTIVES

The developer has commenced with a phased development of a number of projects aimed at sustainable economic development of the area. These include agronomy

and livestock farming, agroforestry, game ranching, fishing tourism, highway services and other rural enterprises. The model contemplated provides socio economic upliftment of surrounding communities and cross subsidization of a large wildlife conservation and utilization undertaking.

### 2.3 EXPERTISE

From an economic development perspective excellent experience is provided by the primary developer and shareholder, Urs Wettstein (urs.wettstein@wettsteinco.ch) who has global experience in corporate investment and development. Protected area management is currently exercised by Oliver Wettstein (oliver.wettstein@gmail.com). Supporting expertise is provided by Dr Piet du Plessis (ghoenaskraal@telkomsa.net) and Dr Niels Jacobsen (nielshgj282@gmail.com).

## 3 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

### 3.1 Existing development

There is currently very little in terms of development in the area. A large number of very small subsistence communities exist, mostly close to rivers and streams and on the coastal plain and estuaries.

### 3.2 Management structures in place

Management structures are in place based at Buffalo camp near the centre of the total area. It is also clear that the developer has identified all officials and government structures in the region and nationally in Maputo and is actively engaged with the aforementioned.

### 3.3 Biodiversity resource

Besides the vegetation of the area being in near pristine condition the biological diversity resource has been severely compromised by consistent utilization pressure. This pressure has at times in recent history been exacerbated by severe culling events fuelled by local and regional conflicts. There is evidence that the food chain has also been compromised with invertebrates largely absent leading to collapse of the avifaunal and herpetofaunal components. Under a conservation management regime it is envisaged that this will quickly recover. There is some evidence that ungulate species (impala, nyala, waterbuck, sable antelope, Lichtenstein's hartebeest, Burchells zebra and wildebeest) are present but in very low numbers and occasional sightings are still made of elephant, lion and leopard. Populations of crocodile and hippopotamus persist on most of the waterways and are a source of conflict with local artisanal subsistence farmers and fisherman.

A rigorous restocking venture is contemplated and this will accelerate the recovery of the ecology of the area.

Clearly most inhabitants of the area are dependent on the natural resources for their survival and any development will lessen this dependence.

### 3.4 Infrastructure

This is limited to the main road north with a secondary road east to the coast. Village infrastructure is rudimentary at best and access is mostly via dirt tracks and game paths.

### 3.5 Logistics

The area is logistically isolated but the presence of the main road facilitates the fairly rapid access of supplies to the area. A substantial airfield is available.

### 3.6 Conservation worthiness

From a conservation perspective the area is ideally suited to the creation and maintenance of a significant wildlife undertaking. Not only will this undertaking contribute to the conservation estate of Mozambique but provide a pillar for economic development of a very impoverished region of the country. The area also has significant expansion capabilities particularly to the west to link to the Limpopo Trans Frontier Conservation Area.

### 3.7 Achievability of the proposed undertaking

The envisaged development as a whole including the wildlife conservation undertaking is achievable given foreign direct investment.

## 4 AUDIT OVERVIEW

### 4.1 Auditor

The audit inspection and report was compiled by Prof Brian Reilly registered VCA auditor.

### 4.2 Criteria

For any audit to be relevant is essential that criteria are established against which a finding can be made and proposals made to guide management for the future. Criteria for this audit are divided into five categories and are listed by the VCA Standard as follows:

#### Overview of the Conservation Area

- Is there an Executive Summary providing a concise description of the area and its conservation plans?

- Is there a map of the area
- Is the area's size in hectares and ecoregion specified?
- Is the location of the area identified with two decimal geographic coordinates that can be used for an internet map?
- Are the names and contact details of the management authority provided?
- Is supporting evidence of the manager's right to manage the area provided?

#### Biodiversity Baseline Conditions

- Is there evidence of a science-based description of the conservation area's biodiversity baseline conditions?
- Does it include an assessment of the following topics: Habitats, Legally Protected Areas, Invasive Alien Species, Ecosystem Services, and Production of Living Natural Resources?
- Are any significant recent changes to the biodiversity status of the area documented?
- If there is built infrastructure, is this also documented?

#### Conservation Impact Assessment

- Have the key stakeholders with respect to the management plans for the conservation area been identified and consulted?
- Have the area's internal 'inside-the-fence' Strengths and Weaknesses with respect to maintaining or improving its conservation status been identified and assessed?
- Have the external broader landscape Opportunities and Threats facing the area with respect to its conservation status been identified and assessed?
- Does the SWOT Analysis address the Habitats, Legally Protected Areas, Invasive Alien Species, Ecosystem Services and the Production of Living Natural Resources?
- Does the SWOT Analysis focus on area-based conservation in the support of broader sustainable landscape management?
- If there is a relevant project-based impact assessment, is it compliant or compatible with the IFC Performance Standards, notably PS6?

#### Conservation Area Actions & Monitoring

- Building on the information and insights generated from the assessment of baseline conditions and potential impacts, does the Plan include a set of conservation actions that aim to minimise negative impacts, weaknesses and threats and to enhance positive impacts, strengths, and opportunities?
- Are these actions consistent with the biodiversity mitigation strategy as set out in IFC PS6 and reflected in the definition of conservation in the World Conservation Strategy?
- Do these actions address conservation priorities within the area to be registered as a VCA?

- If feasible, do these actions also address conservation priorities within the broader landscape?
- As appropriate, are stakeholders positively engaged in the implementation of these actions?
- Are the actions monitored and are the monitoring procedures robust?

#### Overall Assessment

- When was the area visited as part of the audit process?
- Which staff and stakeholders were interviewed as part of the audit process?
- Are the assessment of baseline conditions and potential impacts adequate to establish an effective set of conservation actions?
- Is the set of actions coherent, strategic and realistic?
- What is your overall assessment of the effectiveness of the area's conservation management plan?
- Is the area's conservation management plan compliant with the VCA Standard?
- Should the area be registered as a VCA?

Conditions constitute the actual situation on the ground and findings are made as the difference between criteria and conditions.

## 4.2 Conditions

#### Overview of the Conservation Area

- Is there an Executive Summary providing a concise description of the area and its conservation plans? **YES**
- Is there a map of the area? **YES**
- Is the area's size in hectares and ecoregion specified? **YES**
- Is the location of the area identified with two decimal geographic coordinates that can be used for an internet map? **PARTIALLY**
- Are the names and contact details of the management authority provided? **YES**
- Is supporting evidence of the manager's right to manage the area provided? **YES**

#### Biodiversity Baseline Conditions

- Is there evidence of a science-based description of the conservation area's biodiversity baseline conditions? **YES BUT LIMITED**
- Does it include an assessment of the following topics: Habitats, Legally Protected Areas, Invasive Alien Species, Ecosystem Services, and Production of Living Natural Resources? **YES**
- Are any significant recent changes to the biodiversity status of the area documented? **YES**
- If there is built infrastructure, is this also documented? **YES**

## Conservation Impact Assessment

- Have the key stakeholders with respect to the management plans for the conservation area been identified and consulted? **YES**
- Have the area's internal 'inside-the-fence' Strengths and Weaknesses with respect to maintaining or improving its conservation status been identified and assessed? **YES**
- Have the external broader landscape Opportunities and Threats facing the area with respect to its conservation status been identified and assessed? **YES**
- Does the SWOT Analysis address the Habitats, Legally Protected Areas, Invasive Alien Species, Ecosystem Services and the Production of Living Natural Resources? **YES**
- Does the SWOT Analysis focus on area-based conservation in the support of broader sustainable landscape management? **YES**
- If there is a relevant project-based impact assessment, is it compliant or compatible with the IFC Performance Standards, notably PS6? **YES**

## Conservation Area Actions & Monitoring

- Building on the information and insights generated from the assessment of baseline conditions and potential impacts, does the Plan include a set of conservation actions that aim to minimise negative impacts, weaknesses and threats and to enhance positive impacts, strengths, and opportunities? **YES**
- Are these actions consistent with the biodiversity mitigation strategy as set out in IFC PS6 and reflected in the definition of conservation in the World Conservation Strategy? **YES**
- Do these actions address conservation priorities within the area to be registered as a VCA? **YES**
- If feasible, do these actions also address conservation priorities within the broader landscape? **YES**
- As appropriate, are stakeholders positively engaged in the implementation of these actions? **YES**
- Are the actions monitored and are the monitoring procedures robust? **CAN BE IMPROVED**

## Overall Assessment

- When was the area visited as part of the audit process? **YES – 20-24 APRIL 2015**
- Which staff and stakeholders were interviewed as part of the audit process? **MANAGER, DEVELOPER, SUPPORTING EXPERTS, STAFF AND COMMUNITY**
- Are the assessment of baseline conditions and potential impacts adequate to establish an effective set of conservation actions? **YES**
- Is the set of actions coherent, strategic and realistic? **YES**
- What is your overall assessment of the effectiveness of the area's conservation management plan? **THE PLAN IS COMPREHENSIVE AND ALL ENCOMPASSING. THE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN WILL HAVE TO BE FOLLOWED TO BE EFFECTIVE**

- Is the area's conservation management plan compliant with the VCA Standard? **YES**
- Should the area be registered as a VCA? **YES**

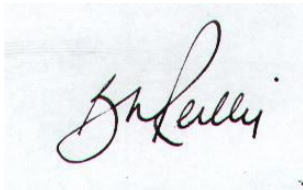
#### 4.3 Findings

Although the entire development is still in its infancy, I find the stated objectives and horizon view of the developer to be admirable in bringing economic development to this area of the country and the sub-continent. The mobilization of foreign direct investment for economic development and cross subsidization of a substantial wildlife undertaking is a model designed at creating a community that is economically independent and the subsequent socio economic upliftment a guarantee of conservation of wildlife.

I find very little disparity between the criteria for a VCA and the condition on the ground as experience first-hand.

#### 5. DECLARATION

I declare the above to be my own work, free from outside influence and an objective and independent reflection of the condition and activities on the ground as evidenced in the area contemplated in this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Reilly', is written on a light blue background.

*BRIAN REILLY M.Sc(Wildl. Mgmt); Ph.D(Nat. Cons); Pr.Nat Sci*