

**Proposed Upgrade of the Sani
Pass (Phase 2):
Social Impact Assessment
Specialist Study**

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Natural Resources

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A social impact assessment (SIA) forms a component of an EIA. SIA, as defined by the International Association for Impact Assessors (2003), is the process followed to assess the social impacts (both positive and negative) of planned developments. SIAs consider how social, ecological and economic changes impact on the social environment of the target area. This SIA, for the proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass, aims to determine the nature, extent and significance of the social and tourism impacts of the proposed development.

The components of the SIA methodology included:

- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Surveys with road users, tour operators and accommodation providers
- Stakeholder meetings with tourism and resident organisations, municipality representatives, craft and taxi associations
- Site visits and observation
- Telephonic and email communication with key stakeholders
- Review of other documentation and studies

The environmental significance of the potential impacts associated with the proposed upgrade of the Sani Pass was calculated using a ranking scale based on the Guideline Documentation in the EIA Regulations (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, April 1998). The following categories were applied (see Annexure 5 for details on rating and scoring methods):

- Probability of occurrence (how likely is it that the impact may occur?)
- Duration of occurrence (how long may it last?)
- Magnitude (severity) of impact (will the impact be of high, moderate or low severity?)
- Extent of impact (will the impact affect the national, regional or local environment, or only that of the site?)

Options for mitigation were identified and the environmental significance of impacts was recalculated taking mitigation into consideration. Consideration has also been given to how the environmental significance of these impacts changes against selected alternatives for the proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass.

Given the strong link that the Sani Pass provides between South Africa and Lesotho, the proposed upgrade would impact on both countries. The boundaries of the SIA therefore incorporate an assessment of the impacts that will likely be experienced in both countries, with a focus on changes to tourism and local development at the Sani Top and Mokhotlong District.

Primary South African stakeholders identified in the SIA include:

- Local Government - The target area falls within the Sisonke District Municipality and the KwaSani Local Municipality
- Local residents - The KwaSani area is predominantly rural with to urban node namely Underberg and Himeville
- Tourism Accommodation providers - There are approximately 74 accommodation providers registered with SDCTO, providing a wide spectrum of accommodation in the Southern Drakensberg from large hotels to bed and breakfasts establishments.
- Tour operators and guides - Tour operators offering 4 x 4 day excursions up Sani Pass and into Lesotho currently fall into one of two categories (i) day trips to experience the Pass and Basotho culture, (ii) special interest tours with a duration of one or more nights. There are

currently four major tour operators and a number of other smaller operators based in Himeville / Underberg. There are also a number of provincial and national tour operators also offer tours up the Pass.

- Craft and entertainment groups - there are a number of craft and dance groups in the KwaSani area
- Sporting events promoters and participants - There are currently two events directly dependent on the Sani Pass namely the Sani Pass Transfrontier Mountain Bike Race and the Sani Stagger
- Road users - The Sani Pass road is used by commuters for a range of non-tourism activities. It is an important business route and is an important link for families and friends living across the border in Lesotho.
- Taxi operators - Members of the Underberg Taxi Association provide a link between Goodhope Store (at the foot of the Sani Pass in South Africa) and Underberg for travelers to and from Lesotho.

Primary stakeholders in Lesotho include:

- Mokhotlong District Administration - The Mokhotlong District includes 15 local community councils including Liphamola Council into which the Sani Top and Sani Flats areas fall.
- Mokhotlong District Residents - Local residents frequently visit South Africa via the Sani Pass for a range of purposes including health care, education, recreation, shopping and visiting family and friends.
- Traders - Traders in Mokhotlong rely on the Sani Pass as a supply route as a large proportion of the goods sold in the Mokhotlong District are purchased from KwaZulu-Natal as well as Gauteng.
- Taxi operators - Approximately 10 of the members of the Mokhotlong Taxi Association have 4 x 4 taxis and use the Sani Pass daily to transport people to and from South Africa.
- Tourism Accommodation Establishments - There are a number of accommodation establishments along the route from the Sani Pass to Mokhotlong that cater for tourists namely Sani Top Chalets and Sani Top Backpackers, No. 10 Riverside Lodge, St. James Lodge, and Molumong Lodge
- Local Guides and Service Providers - A number of Mokhotlong residents in the vicinity of Sani Pass offer tourists cultural insights and experiences, and who provide services such as guiding for pony trekking and hiking, cultural dancing, history and culture tours (e.g. to local schools, traditional healers, and other sites of local interest), as well as traditional cooking.

The Sani Pass is located in the Sisonke District Municipality and the KwaSani Local Municipality. The area is largely rural with few small urban nodes (Himeville and Underberg). The key activities shaping the character and function of the area are environmental conservation, agriculture and tourism. The Sani Pass road (P318) runs through the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park which is a listed World Heritage Site managed by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (the Provincial conservation agency). The Park lies along the eastern border of South Africa and Lesotho and addresses conservation and community development issues in both countries.

The Sani Pass is an international link road into Lesotho, and is widely used by private and commercial road users, including local residents, tour operators and tourists, traders, taxis and officials (e.g. police, government etc.). The Sani Pass is therefore an important international trade, service and tourism link between Lesotho and South Africa (and KwaZulu-Natal in particular).

The social context of tourism is inextricably linked to the economic tourism environment. Therefore economic performance of tourism will directly impact on a range of social issues such as employment and skills development. Tourism also has an indirect effect on other social issues such

as sense of place and quality of life. According to the KwaSani Local Municipality IDP (2009-2010), tourism is a core economy in the area (second only to agriculture).

Sani Pass is one of the highest road passes in Africa and the World (AEC 2008). Furthermore, the road passes through the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, which is one of seven World Heritage Sites in South Africa, and only one of two that have been proclaimed for being of natural as well of cultural significance. The major attributes contributing to the tourism attraction of the Sani Pass include:

- Access to the iconic status of the Drakensberg Mountain Range
- The World Heritage Site status of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park
- The Sani Pass and its access as gateway to the Kingdom of Lesotho from KwaZulu-Natal and access to unspoiled wilderness areas characterized by vast open space and outstanding scenery and offering a world class wilderness experience
- Breathtaking mountain scenery
- Many unique/charismatic species of plants and wildlife
- Access and opportunity to enjoy a variety of adventure and outdoor activities (e.g. fly-fishing, hiking, mountain biking)

The tourists to KwaSani can be categorized into two broad groups:

- a) International tourists - visiting the KwaSani area are primarily on package holidays traveling in organized tour groups and staying in hotels. A small percentage comprise of self-drive tourists, staying in hotels or guest houses. A large percentage of these are attracted by the day trips up the Sani Pass organized by tour operators.
- b) Domestic tourists - attracted by a range of leisure and sporting activities. Most of the domestic tourists are self-drive holiday makers, many of whom have their own 4x4 vehicles, and are attracted by the trip up the Sani Pass and access to Lesotho.

The following issues raised during the scoping phase of the EIA were assessed during the SIA:

- Changes to sense of place
 - Identify criteria for quality of life and characteristics of sense of place and assess how these will change by considering likely consequences for local residents and tourists
- Changes to tourism
 - Identify current tourism patterns and profile
 - Assess extent of tourism market
 - Determine likely changes to profile and market extent
 - Social interpretation of likely consequences of changes
- Changes to local economic development
 - Identify how changes to tourism and associated business enterprises will affect social aspects of local economic development such as employment, service delivery etc
- Changes to quality of life
 - Assess how changes to the sense of place and local economic development will affect people's lifestyles and well-being
- Consequences of upgrade on road users
 - Review of use of Sani pass by non-tourists
 - Determine likely changes for non-tourist road users
- Changes to safety and security
 - Identify safety and security concerns of stakeholders
 - Review existing crime and security profile
 - Assess likely changes to this profile and social consequences

- Changes to residential and tourism patterns in Lesotho
 - Review of social and tourism patterns in Mokhotlong District in Lesotho
 - Review usage of the Sani Pass by tourists to Mokhotlong District
 - Assess likely consequences for tourism stakeholders, road users and local residents

The proposed upgrade of the Sani Pass would result in a range of positive **and** negative impacts in South Africa and Lesotho, with some stakeholders benefitting and others losing. The table below summarises that impacts that were identified and the significance rating with and without mitigation:

Description	Impact	Significance Rating	
		Without Mitigation	With Mitigation
Change to sense of place	Negative	Moderate	Moderate
Reduced sustainability of 4 x 4 day tour operators and closure of some of the operators due to insufficient tourist numbers	Negative	High	High
Reduced sustainability of specialist tour operators due to reduced tourist numbers	Negative	Moderate	Moderate
Loss of the 4 x 4 experience up the Sani Pass resulting in reduced domestic 4 x4 self drive tourists to the KwaSani area	Negative	Moderate	Low
Reduced business and potential closure of some tourism accommodation providers in short term to medium	Negative	Moderate	Low
Shrinkage in local economy and decrease in associated socio-economic conditions in the short to medium term	Negative	Low	Low
Reduction in quality of life for some local residents in short to medium term	Negative	Low	Low
Improved conditions for business and private commuters using the Sani Pass	Positive	High	
Loss of socio-economic benefits associated with changes to two sporting events	Negative	Moderate	Low
Improved road safety and reduced risk of accidents and a increase in road safety on the Pass	Positive	High	
Reduced sustainability of some tourist accommodation and associated services in the Mokhotlong District to reduction in tourist numbers in the short term	Negative	Moderate	
Increased business and improved sustainability of some tourism	Positive		Moderate

accommodation and associated service providers in Lesotho in the medium to long term			
Improved socio-economic conditions for residents in the Mokhotlong District	Positive		High

The implementation of Alternative 5 for the proposed upgrade will primarily result in a short term negative impact for the tourism sector in KwaSani (which is a major driver of the local economy) as well as a loss of some features of the local sense of place and quality of life for local residents. There is however a chance for these negative impacts to KwaSani tourism to be offset if appropriate mitigation is implemented through marketing and branding. In the long term, the upgrading of the Sani Pass could result in growth in the tourism sector through the development of new markets (e.g. increased access to the Pass by non-4 x 4 vehicle owners). This would also spill over into local economic development.

While the net impact in Lesotho will likely be positive for Mokhotlong District stakeholders in general, it could initially result in negative impacts for tourism stakeholders in the District. Again this could be offset with appropriate mitigation undertaken by the tourism stakeholders themselves, and this could result in net benefits for tourism development in Lesotho.

Alternative 4 could however provide an opportunity to phase in the upgrade, which could help to minimise or mitigate short term negative impacts (with only the first part of the Pass upgraded to a hardened surface in the short term). Alternative 4 could initially be implemented, with Alternative 5 only being implemented when there is no longer fill material available to maintain the upper reaches of the Pass as a gravel surface (in the medium to longer term). This alternative would provide stakeholders, particularly tourism operators, the opportunity to adjust their businesses in response to a gradual change to the adventure experience on the Pass, rather than an abrupt short term adjustment to the market (associated with the upgrading of the entire Pass to a hardened surface) which is more difficult to adapt to. This combination of alternative 4 and 5 could provide the opportunity for minimising short term negative impacts while enhancing the opportunity for the medium to long term potential positive impacts.

1. INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) are conducted to assess the environmental, social and economic impacts of public and private development in terms of the National Environmental Management Act (Act 107 of 1998) (NEMA) and the Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989, Amended 1997) (ECA).

The goal of an EIA is to bring about a more ecologically, socio-culturally and economically sustainable and equitable environment. By identifying impacts in advance:

- a) Better decisions can be made about which developments should proceed and how they should be implemented
- b) Mitigation measures can be identified to minimise negative impacts and maximise benefits associated with the development

A social impact assessment (SIA) forms a component of an EIA. SIA, as defined by the International Association for Impact Assessors (2003), is the process followed to assess the social impacts (both positive and negative) of planned developments. SIAs consider how social, ecological and economic changes impact on the social environment of the target area.

A core principle in national EIA legislation is that of sustainable development. SIAs must therefore consider the principles of sustainable development which include social and environmental justice, ensuring that (Scott *et. al.* 2006):

- a) Principles of procedural equity are followed
- b) Principles of distributional equity are taken into consideration when designing the methodology and analyzing the results of the assessment
- c) Principles of intergenerational equity are incorporated to contribute to the social sustainability of the development

This report addresses the socio-economic and tourism impacts associated with the proposed upgrade of the Sani Pass. A way of conceptualising the socio-economic impacts (both positive and negative) is to consider changes that could be brought about as a result of the proposed development, to one or more of the following (IAIA 2003):

- People's way of life (e.g. how they live and work on a daily basis)
- Their culture (e.g. beliefs, values)
- Their community (e.g. cohesion, character)
- Their environment (e.g. quality of air and water)
- Their health and well being (e.g. physical and social)
- Their personal property

This SIA, for the proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass, aims to determine the nature, extent and significance of the social and tourism impacts of the proposed development, with specific reference to the following issues raised during the scoping phase of the EIA:

- Change to sense of place
- Change to tourism experience and tourism activities
- Changes for commercial and private road users
- Changes to local economic development
- Changes to quality of life
- Changes to safety and security risks
- Changes to sports and recreation activities

Given the strong link that the Sani Pass provides between South Africa and Lesotho, the proposed upgrade would impact on both countries. The boundaries of the SIA therefore incorporate an assessment of the impacts that will likely be experienced in both countries, with a focus on changes to tourism and local development at the Sani Top and Mokhotlong District.

2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The Department of Transport (DOT) has proposed as the Phase 2 upgrade, a complete re-grading and re-surfacing of the Sani Pass to a hardened surface, all-weather road. The upgrade will include road widening, re-alignment of sections, new bridges, storm water control and attenuation systems, bank and slope stabilisation and road servitude rehabilitation¹.

The Sani Pass Road currently provides access to, and passes through the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park (UDP), which is a proclaimed World Heritage Site. Sustainable access to the Park needs to be developed and carefully managed and Sani Pass Road (P318) forms an integral part of this initiative. Furthermore, a co-operation agreement was signed between Lesotho and South Africa, in 2005, to improve access between the two countries via Sani Pass. This project is thus part of a broader initiative to improve accessibility between SADC countries. The intention is for South Africa to surface the P318 from Himeville to the Lesotho border. Further it is the intention of the Lesotho Government to upgrade the road from the South African border to Mokhotlong, approximately 60 km away. The ultimate goal is to have a hard-surfaced road all the way to Maseru.

The project engineers have identified that the degradation of the Sani Pass road is caused by a number of factors. The main contributor is the poor storm water drainage system which is unable to cope with the excessive water flows and the run-off which are eroding the surface of the road and the slopes of the Pass. In addition, the degrading condition increases safety risks on the Sani Pass Road. In order to rectify these problems and prevent further degradation, the EIA Project Team has considered a number of Sani Pass road upgrade alternatives, which range from retaining the *status quo*, to making minor improvements to the drainage, to reconstructing the entire road structure. The alternatives are described in order of increasing scale of upgrade from Alternative 1 (the 'no-go' alternative and the *status quo* remains) to Alternative 6 (complete upgrade). The summaries below describe the key aspects of each Alternative.

➤ **Alternative 1A: No-Go**

The No-Go Alternative retains the current *status quo* where the Sani Pass Road is retained as a gravel road with some maintenance and no upgraded storm water and erosion engineering. No improvements will be made to the drainage system nor will the safety issues be addressed. It has been indicated that this alternative is not feasible in terms of sourcing of materials nor will it address the current environmental and safety issues on the Pass. Without proper engineering on the Pass, the road is likely to continue degrading to a state where the environmental degradation and safety risks are unacceptable and the road will have to be closed (Alternative 1B). This alternative will not meet any of the DOT's objectives of the proposed project.

¹ A full project description and details on all the alternatives is available in the Final Scoping Report for the EIA which can be accessed from Arcus Gibb (the lead environmental consultant on the EIA) or downloaded from the following website: <http://projects.gibb.co.za/Projects/ProposedSaniPassUpgrade/tabid/267/Default.aspx>.

- **Alternative 1B: Closure of the Pass**
The current condition of road is deteriorating to such a degree that if measures are not taken to rectify the problems the road will be unsafe for public use and will continue to cause significant environmental damage. If no action is taken the road may have to be closed, decommissioned and handed over to EKZNW for rehabilitation and integration into the UDP. Vehicle or pedestrian traffic will no longer be able to move between Lesotho and South Africa through this route. This alternative will not meet any of the DOT's objectives of the proposed project.
- **Alternative 2: Re-gravel, minor drainage improvements and maintain**
The second option is make minor improvements to the drainage system. Although this will not address the water problem *per se*, it may slow down the flow of water. The road will remain a gravel surface and will be maintained regularly. Degradation of the road will continue as the cause of the erosion will not be corrected. This alternative will not meet the DOT's objectives of the proposed project.
- **Alternative 3: Improve geometrics, upgrade drainage, retain splash-throughs, construct retaining walls and re-gravel**
The third alternative is to improve the structure of the road, upgrade the drainage system so that the splash-throughs are still retained, and construct retaining walls. The construction will allow the road to retain its original state but the factors which are causing the degradation will be addressed. The road surface will be graded, re-gravelled and maintained on a regular basis. This alternative will not meet all of the DOT's objectives of the proposed project. Furthermore, while the alternative may potentially negotiable by a 2 x 4 drive vehicle, the DOT maintains the current 4 x 4 vehicle restrictions would be retained for safety reasons.
- **Alternative 4: Improve geometrics, upgrade drainage, construct bridges, retaining walls, hard surface up to km 25, gravel to km 33**
Alternative 4 will address the same issues as Alternative 3 regarding improving the geometrics of the road to control the drainage and erosion. A hard surface will be constructed for the first portion of the road, up to km 25, and the remaining section, to km 33, will remain as a gravel surface and be maintained on a regular basis. The most appropriate type of hard surface has not been resolved as yet. This alternative will meet most of the DOT's objectives of the proposed project.
- **Alternative 5: Improve geometrics, upgrade drainage, construct bridges and retaining walls, hard surface from km 14 to km 33**
Alternative 5 has been expressed as the preferred alternative for the project by the proponent (DOT). This option involves improving and re-constructing all the geometrics of the road as in Alternatives 3 and 4 but includes hard surfacing the entire road. The hard surface will either be a concrete surface, asphalt or chip and spray, or a combination of the three depending on the section of Road. This alternative will meet all the DOT's objectives of the proposed project.
- **Alternative 6: Improve geometrics, upgrade drainage, construct bridges and retaining walls, hard surface from km 14 to km 31 and tunnel (3km)**
Alternative 6 involves improving and reconstructing the geometrics of the road to control water run-off and erosion and constructing a hard top surface from km 14 to km 31. A tunnel will then be constructed through the mountain from km 31 and will exit 3km into Lesotho. This alternative will not meet all the objectives of the proposed project.

The Department of Transport's preferred alternative is Alternative 5. This SIA has therefore been conducted according to the specifications of Alternative 5. Changes to the significance of the impacts for the other viable alternatives are reviewed in Section 6 of this report.

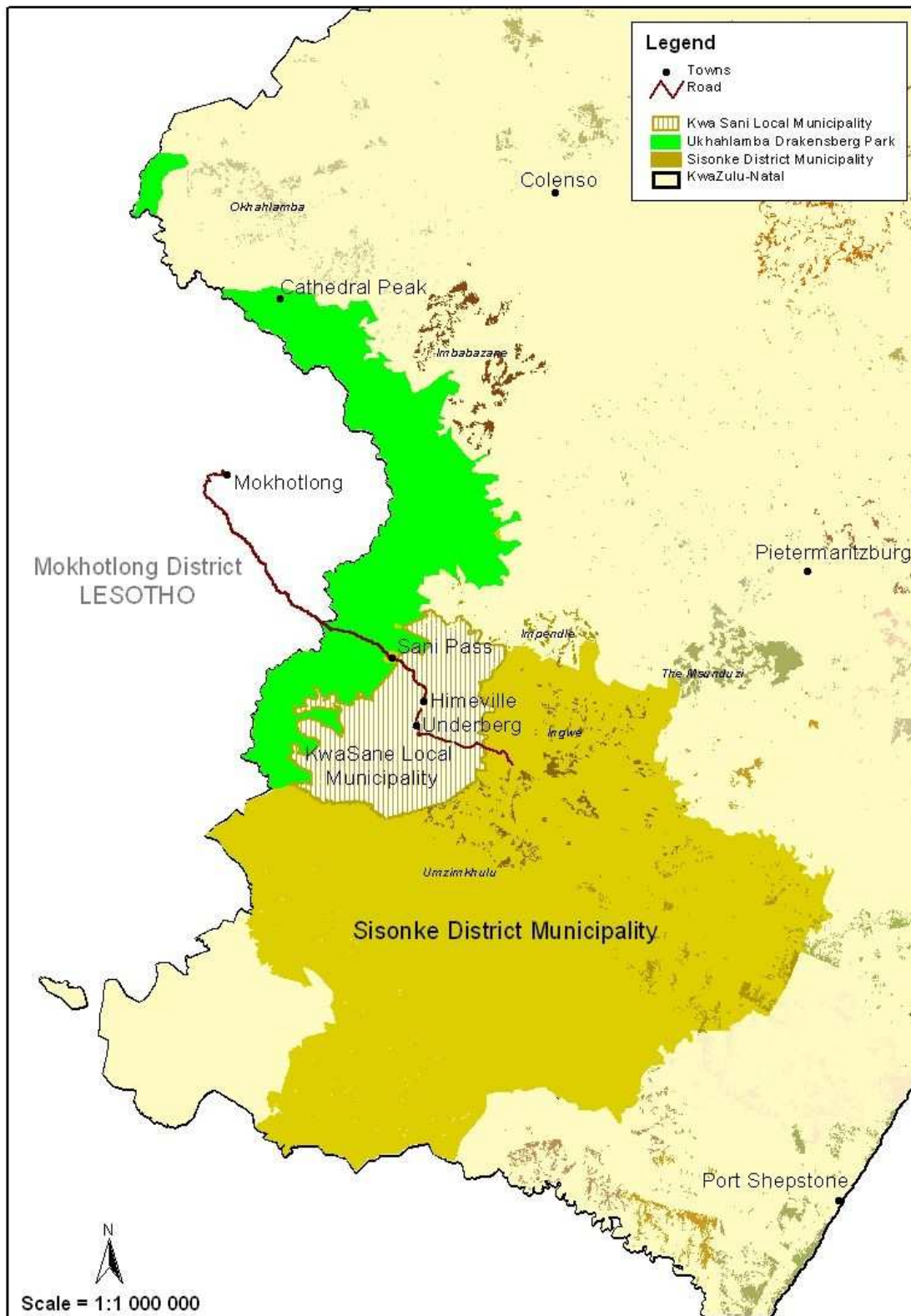


Figure 1: Overview of the location of the Sani Pass and surrounds

3. DESCRIPTION OF RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

The upgrade of Sani Pass is reported to be part of South Africa's programme to promote integration within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region. Furthermore, South Africa and Lesotho have signed a Declaration of Intent to promote technical cooperation and activities in the area of transport, which includes the upgrade of the Sani Pass. This agreement is part of regional cooperation agreement in terms of the SADC Protocol on Transport, Telecommunication and Meteorology. It is also in fulfillment of the vision of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), commitment to the Almaty Declaration on Landlocked Countries and in fulfillment of SADC's Millennium Development Goals (Acer Africa, 2006).

The social impacts arising from the proposed upgrade of the Sani Pass will vary in scale. The primary affected environment in terms of this SIA has been defined as the KwaSani Municipal area in South Africa, and the Mokhotlong District in Lesotho (Figure 1). Criteria used to define this primary environment were distance from the site (Sani Pass) and the primary activities undertaken in the target area that are associated with, or affected by, the Sani Pass (e.g. residential, tourism, business). The SIA considered issues raised by primary stakeholders (those located in the primary affected environment or directly impacted by the proposed upgrade) as well as secondary stakeholders who have an interest in the issues associated with the proposed development, but who are not directly affected.

Given the focus of the SIA (i.e. socio-economic and tourism impacts), the receiving environment is described both in terms of the socio-economic context of local residents as well as the tourism context in the KwaSani Municipality (South Africa) and Mokhotlong District (Lesotho).

3.1. Socio-Economic Environment

The Sani Pass is located in the Sisonke District Municipality and the KwaSani Local Municipality. The area is largely rural with few small urban nodes (Himeville and Underberg). The key activities shaping the character and function of the area are environmental conservation, agriculture and tourism. The Sani Pass road (P318) runs through the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park which is a listed World Heritage Site managed by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (the Provincial conservation agency). The Park lies along the eastern border of South Africa and Lesotho and addresses conservation and community development issues in both countries.

The Sani Pass is an international link road into Lesotho, and is widely used by private and commercial road users, including local residents, tour operators and tourists, traders, taxis and officials (e.g. police, government etc.). The Sani Pass is therefore an important international trade, service and tourism link between Lesotho and South Africa (and KwaZulu-Natal in particular).

3.1.1. Sisonke District Municipality

Sisonke District Municipality (DM) is located in the south west of KwaZulu-Natal and is comprised of five local municipalities, namely KwaSani, Ubuhlebezwe, Ingwe, Greater Kokstad and uMzimkhulu. Sisonke DM recognises the need to align its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) with both the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS) and the Provincial Spatial Economic Development Strategy (PSEDS). In accordance with these provincial strategies, Sisonke DM has identified tourism as a key sector to facilitate economic development, generate employment opportunities and alleviate poverty. Sisonke DM recognises that KwaSani Local Municipality currently attracts the most tourists visiting the DM, and this is attributed to its location as the gateway of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park.

Sisonke District Municipality IDP (2008-2009) recognises the urgent need to address the backlog in road infrastructure, eradicate water and sanitation backlogs, eradicate backlogs in electricity delivery and address challenges associated with the overload of electricity networks.

The IDP also reports crime to be a serious issue in the District with assault, burglary and stock theft being the most prevalent. Stock theft is particularly prevalent in the KwaSani Municipal area, which is one of the Local Municipalities forming the border between Sisonke District Municipality and Lesotho. The crime status of the area is widely attributed to the socio-economic condition of that area, namely the lack of employment and thus high poverty levels (Sisonke District Municipality 2008-2009 IDP).

3.1.2. KwaSani Local Municipality

KwaSani Local Municipality (LM) is located in the foothills of the southern Drakensberg. The economy of the KwaSani LM is based primarily on tourism and commercial agriculture (KwaSani Municipality IDP 2006-2007). Himeville and Underberg are the main service centres, providing a range of wholesale and retail trade facilities, as well as basic essential services, accommodation and some healthcare services to the surrounding population and to tourists. In addition to these two small towns, there are a number of rural community settlements including KwaPitela (adjacent to the P318), Stepmore, Mqatsheni, Enhlanhleni, Ntwasahlobo, Netherby, Ridge, and KwaThunzi.

KwaSani LM and has a population of approximately 15 324 with relatively low population densities (KwaSani Local Municipality IDP 2006-2007). The population is characterised by low levels of education and high levels of unemployment with an employment rate of only 33%. The total labour force is estimated at 4 941 (of which only 3 410 employed and 1 531 are unemployed), while 4 041 people are not economically active (KwaSani IDP 2006-2007).

The 2007/08 KwaSani IDP provides the following indicators of local infrastructure development:

No of households	4 641
% access to electricity	37.1
% access to water	76.3
% access to sanitation	94.8
% access to refuse	28.2
% access to telephones	84.0
% formal dwellings	58.2

The Sisonke District Municipality is largely responsible for service delivery in the KwaSani Local Municipality, but is struggling with backlogs in electricity, water, sanitation and road infrastructure (see section 3.1.1). The KwaSani LM is responsible for solid waste disposal, but is experiencing big challenges as the municipal refuse site was closed (by the Department of Agriculture and Environmental Affairs) and has been changed into a Waste Transfer Station. The refuse is now being transported to Pietermaritzburg.

The poor condition of local and district roads is recognised as hindering the full potential of tourism, agricultural and forestry, which are key economic sectors in this area (KwaSani IDP 2006-2007). In particular the link road between Himeville and Nottingham Road (P27/2) has been highlighted and an important economic and tourism link that, if upgraded, could benefit local economic development in the area.

KwaSani LM has identified tourism as one of its key economic sectors, with the Sani Pass, Bushman's Nek, and Garden Castle forming the key tourism attractions in the area. There is an abundant range

of tourism and recreational activities in the LM and along the Sani Pass itself, ranging from 4x4 and quad biking tours, bird watching, nature trails and sporting events, to festivals and fairs. Underpinning this is a relatively well developed retail, service and infrastructure sector. This sector includes accommodation facilities (ranging from upmarket lodges to backpackers accommodation), gifts and curio shops, food and beverage retailers as well as fuel and service providers. These are concentrated in Underberg and Himeville and are also scattered across farms throughout the KwaSani Local Municipality. However no development is found between the start of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park and the Lesotho Border Post (KwaSani IDP 2006-2007).

3.2. Tourism Environment

The social context of tourism is inextricably linked to the economic tourism environment. Therefore economic performance of tourism will directly impact on a range of social issues such as employment and skills development. Tourism also has an indirect effect on other social issues such as sense of place and quality of life.

Tourism in developing countries represents a key opportunity for social upliftment as it is relatively labour intensive and presents comparatively low barriers to entry for entrepreneurs with regards to skills. However to realise social benefits associated with tourism requires tourists, and it is therefore a service driven industry in the truest sense. An understanding of the social context and expectations of the tourist is important in any decision that impacts on tourism. Both international and domestic travel patterns have changed considerably in recent years. In particular domestic and regional tourism in the developing world has grown rapidly, especially in emerging economies such as South Africa. Although international tourism is often regarded as more attractive and important, domestic tourism is more resilient and it therefore remains the driving force for the tourism economy in the southern African context.

3.2.1. Global Tourism Framework

Tourism represents one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world and is one of the World's largest generators of foreign currency and jobs (United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO] 2001). Global tourism is witnessing a growth in the number of destinations and an increase in diversity of tourism products. Consequently destinations are working harder to meet evolving visitor expectations in order to remain competitive. Some recent trends in the global tourism sector include:

- Increasing domestic and short-haul travel and less long-haul travel due to global safety and security concerns and cost
- Increasing independent travel, decreasing organized tours
- Later bookings and more self-planning trips
- Growth of the low-cost airline industry
- Growing maturity of tourists who are increasingly seeking a differentiated tourism experience such as cultural tourism, ecotourism and adventure tourism.

Dynamic destinations are responding to the following market needs that include:

- Shorter 'get-away' vacations
- Good value-for-money
- High-quality tourism products and services
- Enriching and authentic travel experiences
- Destinations which are safe, clean and green
- Convenient transportation to and within destinations

- The ability to use the Internet to find information on destinations and products of interest
- Responsible Tourism - products that are considered by virtue of their operations to be considerate of socio-economic and environmental sustainability.

In addition to the general and key trends, visitors are increasingly seeking a variety of enriching tourism experiences rather than the simplistic “sun, sand and sea” experiences. These experiences include:

- Nature-based tourism
- Cultural heritage tourism
- Learning and experiential tourism and
- Health and wellness tourism

There are two generic global trends that are applicable to the KwaSani area, namely cultural-heritage tourism and nature-based - adventure tourism.

➤ ***Cultural- Heritage Tourism***

Heritage is a form of inheritance that a society passes down to its current and future generations. Heritage tourism covers a wide spectrum of natural and cultural landscapes and activities. Cultural tourism is closely related to heritage tourism and involves the visiting of a range of heritage attractions related to the activities of humans such as monuments and museums, but it goes beyond this in that cultural tourists often want to ‘consume’ or ‘immerse’ themselves in the contemporary way of life of the destination that they are visiting. There are a wide range of cultural and heritage resources that can attract tourists, these range from attractions such as museums, traditional villages (visits and overnight stays), natural sites such as national parks and game reserves. Cultural and heritage tourism is growing in popularity globally. The World Tourism Organisation estimates that cultural tourism is growing at a rate of 15% per year is growing faster in popularity than most other tourism segments (UNWTO, 2001).

➤ ***Nature-Based-Adventure Tourism***

An increasing number of tourists are requesting active, recreational experiences or travel adventures. This sector includes everything from bird watching to fly fishing, white water rafting and wilderness trekking to golf. Many travellers seek adventure, challenge and excitement in an outdoor setting. Nature-based tourism draws those who want to experience the natural and unspoiled beauty of a destination and those who want active and unusual holidays. Nature-based tourism is largely dependent upon two fundamental supply side factors, namely appropriate levels of environmental quality and suitable levels of consumer service (UNWTO, 2001).

3.2.2. National and Provincial Tourism Frameworks

In South Africa, the total number of foreign tourist arrivals² grew from 3.7 million in 1994 to 9.59 million in 2008. According to South Africa Tourism the majority of international arrivals to South Africa originate from the SADC and other African countries accounting for 7.3 million arrivals in 2008 whilst overseas arrivals account for 2.18 million arrivals. Lesotho accounted for 2.16 million arrivals to South Africa in 2008 which makes it the single biggest contributor to tourist arrivals to South Africa and on its own is almost equal to all overseas arrivals.

² Foreign tourist arrivals (according to the World Tourism Organisation definition) are all foreign arrivals less all those who stayed for less than one day and more than 365 days and excludes travelers who were remunerated from within the place they travelled to. The closest possible approximation to this definition, given the current format of statistics issued by Stats SA, is All Foreign Arrivals less “workers” and “contract workers”. SA Tourism uses this definition. The sensitivity of the difference between this definition and the closest alternative definition has been tested to be less than 0.5%.

South Africa Tourism’s monthly domestic market surveys for 2005 revealed that approximately 11.6 million of South Africa’s 36.2 million domestic tourism trips 32% were undertaken in KwaZulu-Natal.

KwaZulu-Natal presently enjoys approximately 20.4% of South Africa’s foreign tourism market ranking it 3rd as a Province after Gauteng and the Western Cape. In contrast to the national growth percentage of 2.7% TKZN (2008) reports an 8% growth in foreign visitation which suggests that the “Zulu Kingdom” is becoming a more popular destination amongst foreign market segments.

The Drakensberg (i.e. northern, central and southern Drakensberg – see Figure 2) is the 3rd most visited destination in KZN after Durban and Zululand/Elephant Coast. The *Southern* Drakensberg however is ranked only 7th out of 8 tourist destination areas in KwaZulu-Natal. In terms of the domestic market, TKZN indicates that 652 000 domestic tourists visit the Drakensberg of which some 30-35% visit the Southern Drakensberg.

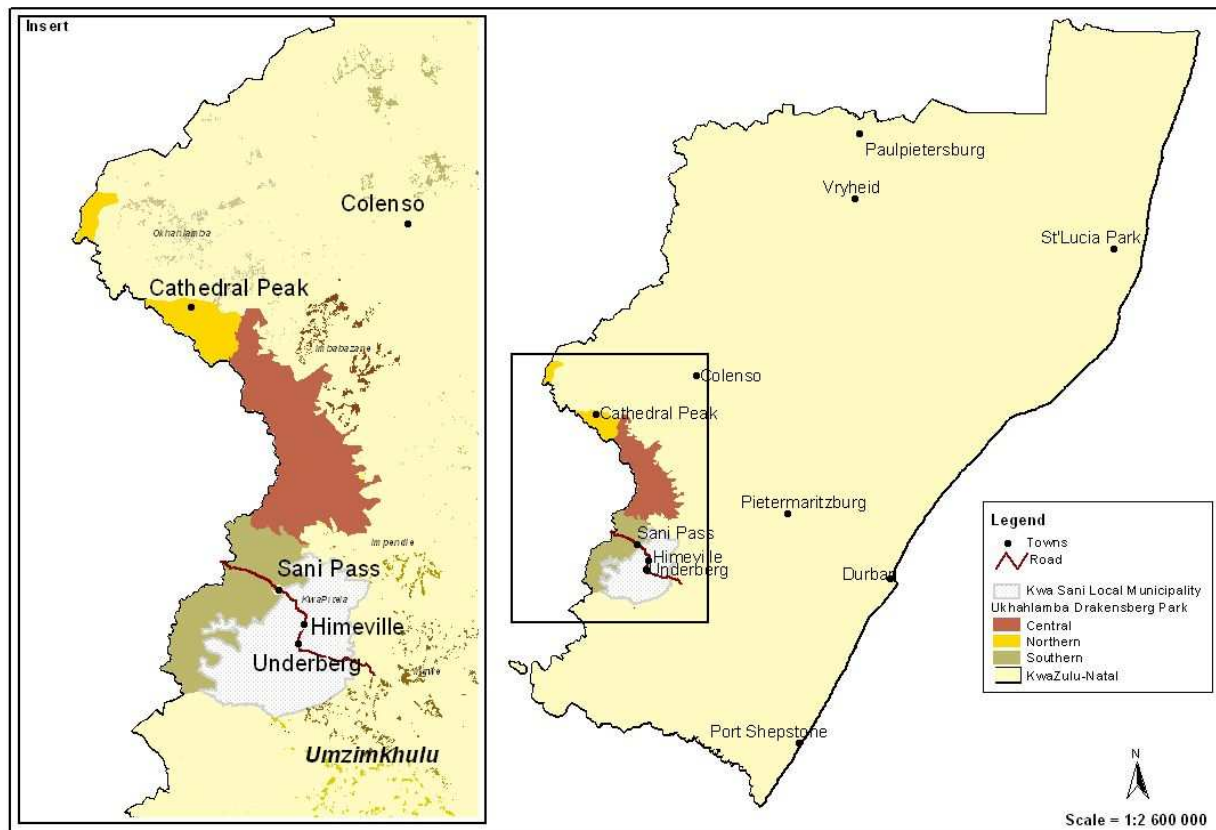


Figure 2: Location of Sani Pass in relation to northern, central and southern Drakensberg regions

Given that Tourism KZN (TKZN) has an expressed desire to broaden the visitor perception that KwaZulu-Natal is predominantly a beach destination, it is likely that TKZN marketing efforts towards hinterland tourism products will enhance foreign tourism to the Drakensberg - especially with it having a World Heritage Site as a primary attraction.

Prior to the Drakensberg being declared a World Heritage Site in 2000, only 20% of KZN’s foreign tourists that arrived in South Africa visited this mountain range. It is now in the order of 30% (TKZN, 2008). Many of the hotels and Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife accommodation facilities in this area now run at annual occupancy rates in excess of 80%. This has stimulated many new direct and indirect jobs, in one of the poorest areas in South Africa. The Drakensberg is therefore a key tourism destination in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa. This growth trend should act as a motivation for KwaSani

Municipality to penetrate such markets as an additional economic benefit over and above its base market of the South African tourist. The following section describes the tourism framework and context in the KwaSani Municipality.

3.2.3. Local Tourism Framework

The tourism product/economy in the KwaSani area may be generically categorised into two groups namely Cultural-Heritage Tourism and Nature- Based - Adventure Tourism, which for the purpose of this report is collectively referred to as eco-cultural tourism (based on definitions in section 3.1.1).

a) Sisonke District Municipality

The Sisonke IDP (2008/09) reports that the area has a great variety of natural tourism assets and is reasonably well endowed with accommodation establishments such as guest houses, bed and breakfast establishments and hotels. Tourism facilities are mainly located within the KwaSani Local Municipality. The IDP reports that it is estimated that there was a total of 2 609 tourist beds available in the district with the majority of these being located at KwaSani Local Municipality. It also reports that the KwaSani Local Municipality enjoys a high percentage of leisure based holiday occupancy rates and is relatively well developed to cater for tourism. Four key tourism categories are highlighted for the region:

- **Avi-tourism** - The district municipality has rare and endangered bird species which has made Sisonke a high potential birding destination, and led to the development of initiatives such as the Sisonke Birding Route.
- **Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site** - The status of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park as a world heritage site brings tourism potential in the area with regards to eco-tourism.
- **Eco- and adventure tourism** - The winter snow especially in the KwaSani area attracts a wide range of tourists. Rivers provide excellent opportunities for paddling and the mountainous landscape provides opportunities for 4x4 owners and tourism operators looking for challenging destinations.
- **Culture tourism** - This is based on traditional villages; production of arts and craft and traditional dancing. A number of community residents have embarked on Arts and Craft Work. The District, in partnership with the KwaSani Municipality, has packaged an application for the establishment of a Craft and Commodity Centre to market craft work to tourists.

b) KwaSani Local Municipality

The KwaSani Draft Integrated Development Plan (2009/2010) recognises the core economies of the area as being Agriculture and Tourism. The IDP proposes that the Southern Drakensberg tourism be based on its present reputation as a destination that offers, tourism opportunities based on the natural and cultural assets of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage site, including the popular excursion up the Sani Pass Road into Lesotho. The Vision, according to KwaSani Municipality Tourism Development Plan (KSTDP) (2006) for the KwaSani Municipality is:

“That the Southern Drakensberg becomes the principle tourism activity gateway for the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site in KwaZulu-Natal and in so doing, provide socio-economic beneficiation for all its constituent communities”.

The KwaSani Municipality Tourism Development Plan (Haley Sharpe, 2006) reports an estimated 2 500 tourist beds in the Local Municipal area. The average occupancy rate is estimated at 54% (SIA Tourism Survey 2009³). Sani Pass is an integral part of the Southern Drakensberg tourism experience and a key element in the branding of the area. According to KwaSani Municipality Tourism Development Plan:

“The eco-cultural appeal of the Southern Drakensberg and in particular the Ukhahlamba- Drakensberg World Heritage Site appears to be the major draw card with one tour operator reporting that in excess of 18-20 000 tourists per annum are transported up the Sani Pass as part of the KwaSani visitor experience.”⁴

The IDP (2009/10) identified the potential upgrade of the Sani Pass as a positive development for the area, and highlights landslides on the Pass as a potential disaster risk.

c) Regional and International Tour Operators

Tourism is market driven, and regional and international booking agents and operators are therefore a vital link for the tourism economy of KwaSani. A large percentage of the estimated 18 000 to 20 000 tourists transported up the Sani Pass annually (KSTDP, 2006) are referred or booked by international and regional agents. The views and perceptions of these agents about the impact of the proposed upgrade of Sani Pass will therefore substantially affect the future of the tourism market if the upgrade is undertaken.

3.2.4. Tourism’s Contribution to the Local Socio-Economic Environment

According to the KwaSani Local Municipality IDP (2009-2010), tourism is a core economy in the area (second only to agriculture). Based on the results of the SIA Tourism survey⁵ and consultation with accommodation providers, an average of 0.67 permanent staff are employed per guest house tourist bed, and 0.62 per hotel bed. Based on the estimated 2 500 tourist beds in KwaSani (KSTDP 2006) and an average ratio of tourist beds (across hotels and guest houses) to permanent employees of 1:0.65 this translates to approximately 1 625 permanent jobs created through the accommodation sector of tourism.

The total KwaSani Municipality population is 15 324 people with an estimated employment rate of 33%⁶ (3 410 people). The estimated 1 625 permanent jobs created by tourist accommodation venues account for approximately 48% of all jobs in the KwaSani area (this is more than the 23% reported for agriculture in the KwaSani 2009/10 IDP).

The four biggest 4 x 4 tour operators (see details in section 3.2.6) account for another 34 permanent skilled jobs and between 30 – 40 freelance (part time) skilled jobs. The total contribution of tourism to employment in the KwaSani areas increases to about 50% when considering these additional permanent jobs outside of the accommodation sector.

3.2.5. Key Attractions of the Tourism Experience

Sani Pass is one of the highest road passes in Africa and the World (AEC 2008). Furthermore, the

³ Survey conducted with tourism operators in the KwaSani area in 2009 as part of the Social Impact Assessment. See Annexure 6 for details.

⁴ KwaSani Municipality Tourism Development Plan (2006) Haley Sharpe Southern Africa, Pietermaritzburg

⁵ Survey conducted with tourism operators in the KwaSani area in 2009 as part of the Social Impact Assessment

⁶ The KwaSani IDP (2006-2007) reports the total labour force as estimated at 4 941 people (3 410 employed and 1 531 unemployed) and 4 041 people are not economically active (i.e. of working age but not actively seeking work) – see section 3.1.2 for details.

road passes through the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, which is one of seven World Heritage Sites in South Africa, and only one of two that have been proclaimed for being of natural as well of cultural significance. The major attributes contributing to the tourism attraction of the Sani Pass include:

- Access to the iconic status of the Drakensberg Mountain Range
- The World Heritage Site status of the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park
- The Sani Pass and its access as gateway to the Kingdom of Lesotho from KwaZulu-Natal
- The easiest access to Thaba Ntlenyana (3482m), the highest peak south of Mt. Kilimanjaro
- Access to unspoiled wilderness areas characterized by vast open space and outstanding scenery and offering a world class wilderness experience
- Many unique/charismatic species of plants and wildlife
- Access and opportunity to enjoy a variety of adventure and outdoor activities (e.g. fly-fishing, hiking, mountain biking)
- Rural, agricultural scenery and land use
- Mountain Rivers and dams stocked with trout
- Relatively low population density and small local population of people

The following key brand elements are used by the local tourism operators to highlight their perceptions of the current Southern Drakensberg tourism experience:

- Breathtaking mountain scenery
- Peace and tranquility conducive to physical relaxation and mental/spiritual rejuvenation
- Quality wilderness opportunities
- Quality outdoor recreation and adventure opportunities

The KwaSani IDP (2009/10) suggests that the Southern Drakensberg tourism is based on its present reputation as a destination that offers among other things:

- Outstanding scenery and highland landscapes approaching the escarpment of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg World Heritage Site
- Some of South Africa’s finest fly fishing venues on rivers, lakes and dams
- The popular excursion up the Sani Pass Road to Lesotho
- Highly regarded holiday and leisure options within an abundance of activities for long stay and weekend getaway visitors (including mountain climbing; hiking; fly fishing; mountain biking; birding; golf; arts and crafts; horse riding; wildlife viewing; canoeing; retail and motor biking)
- Increasing number of events for athletes, canoeists, mountain climbers, extreme sports, etc.
- Selection of culturally significant attractions to include San culture, the pioneering history of the area and other cultural/community sites such as Reichenau Mission and Duma’s grave
- A number of hospitality establishments offering overnight accommodation for the business sector
- Avi-tourism

The following key attractions are ranked in order of importance by local stakeholders⁷:

Rank	Attraction	Score	Dependency of Attraction on Sani Pass
1	Sani Pass 4 x4 adventure	100%	Direct
2	Mountain Scenery	100%	Partially

⁷ Results of the SIA survey (2009) involving eight different surveys/sources covering the key stakeholder spectrum and tourism supply chain, from the client (domestic and international) to the regional and international tour operator and including local accommodation and tour operators

3	Culture (incl. people & rock art)	88%	Partially
4	Birding (Incl. endemic species)	75%	Partially
5	Access to Lesotho (Incl. 4x4& other off road adventures)	63%	Direct
6	Other outdoor pursuits (Incl. horse riding, Hiking, MTB, Fishing, Rafting & Canoeing)	63%	Not
7	World Heritage Status	50%	Not

For the purpose of this impact assessment the key strengths identified by local tourism providers can be divided into two categories, and are summarized in the table below (crosses denote relevance as perceived by local tourism providers):

- (i) Those directly dependent on Sani Pass
- (ii) Those not dependent on Sani Pass

HIGHLIGHTS / STRENGTHS / BENEFITS OF THE CURRENT TOURISM EXPERIENCE	ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS	TOUR OPERATORS
Directly Dependent on Sani Pass		
Uniqueness of Sani Pass as it is	X	X
Gravel being more forgiving in adverse weather conditions than a hard surface		X
Sporting Events on the Pass: Sani Stagger, Sani2C	X	X
Highest Pub In Africa		X
Border-stamp Collectors	X	X
Access to Lesotho 4x4 & other off-road opportunities	X	X
Only access to Lesotho from KZN	X	X
Accessibility to intimate nature experience for “less abled” or mobility impaired people (i.e. by driving up the Pass)	X	X
‘Splash throughs’ (water crossing) along Pass		X
Due to limited nature of accessibility people numbers and crime related incidences are reduced in comparison to high access areas which results in low impact tourism		X
Continual growth rate in tourism businesses (tour operators)		X
Infrequent road closures (only 0-10 days per year on average)		X
Extended border post hours to 06h00 – 18h00 (started approx. 3 months ago)	X	X
Adventure / challenge of driving the pass		X
Birding / Endemic Species	X	X
Academic Field Trips	X	
Continual growth rate in tourism businesses (Accommodation)	X	
Not Directly Dependent on Sani Pass		
Wildlife		X
Botanical Diversity		X
Iconic Status / World Heritage Site Status	X	X
Culture		X
Rock Art	X	
Splashy Fen Music Festival	X	
Other Sporting Events (e.g. equestrian events)	X	
History		X
Geology		X

High Quality Nature Experience		X
Autumn Colours	X	
Photography	X	
Access to Snow	X	X
Other outdoor pursuits such as Horse riding, Hiking, MTB, Fishing, Rafting & Canoeing	X	X
Relaxation and rejuvenation	X	X
Inclusion in itineraries that include Sea, Mountains and other tourism destinations	X	
Range of accommodation available offering value for money	X	
Synergy and interdependency of tourism product / community	X	
Stop off point between Northern KZN, Mpumalanga, Gauteng etc and Wild Coast / Eastern Cape	X	
The conservation ethos of the tourism business community	X	X

These key attractions will be impacted on to varying degrees and in different ways by the proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass.

3.2.6. Local Tourism Stakeholders

Tourism in the KwaSani area is largely focused on eco-cultural and this results in a smaller range of tourism stakeholders involved in the local tourism sector in comparison to areas with a more diverse tourism sector. The key stakeholders in tourism are:

➤ **Sisonke District Municipality**

The tourism portfolio falls under the Economic and Community Services Division of the Sisonke District Municipality. The District Municipality's current core focus is water and sanitation service provision. The Municipality only plays a facilitatory role in tourism and does not make any direct investment into the tourism market but rather relies on tourism associations and product owners for direction⁸. The District Municipality reports⁹ that in the case of the proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass, KwaSani District Municipality's view will inform the District Municipality's position.

➤ **KwaSani Local Municipality**

Municipal functions and roles in relation to tourism are set out in the Provincial Tourism Act, and functions delegated to the Local Municipality in conjunction with the Sisonke District Municipality are set out in the Municipal Structures Act. No tourism portfolio exists in the Local Municipality at management level, however there is a Senior Tourism Officer (answerable to the Manager Technical / Community Services), supported by two Information Officers (in the Tourism Office based in Underberg).

➤ **Southern Drakensberg Community Tourism Organisation (SDCTO)**

The SDCTO is a voluntary membership tourism forum which represents 92 members (KSTDP, 2006). Responsibilities include destination marketing, tourism development and management as a public/private partnership. SDCTO represents private sector/community interests in tourism.

➤ **Accommodation Providers**

There are approximately 74 accommodation providers registered with SDCTO, providing a wide spectrum of accommodation in the Southern Drakensberg from large hotels to bed and

⁸ Personal communication - Mrs Nandi Dlamini (Director of Economic and Community Services, Sisonke DM)

⁹ Personal communication - Mrs Nandi Dlamini (Director of Economic and Community Services, Sisonke DM)

breakfasts establishments. The standard (and associated rates) of accommodation reflect the full spectrum of tourist requirements in terms of affordability and quality.

➤ **Tour Operators and Guides**

Commercial tours up the Sani Pass date back to 1955, when the first paying tourists were taken up the Pass. After 1994 and the influx of international tourists to South Africa, full time tour operations operating exclusively up Sani Pass into Lesotho became viable and in 1996 the original Mokhotlong Transport Company started trading as Sani Pass Tours. This was the first dedicated commercial tourism business offering tourists a 4 x 4 adventure up Sani Pass.

Tour Operators offering 4 x 4 day excursions up Sani Pass and into Lesotho currently fall into one of two categories (i) day trips to experience the Pass and Basotho culture, (ii) special interest tours with a duration of one or more nights, such as bird watching, botanical tours, and overland adventure tours. Today there are four major Tour Operators based in Himeville / Underberg specialising in day tours up the Pass. The combined number of seats available is 197 on 28 vehicles employing 34 permanent skilled staff and approximately 30 – 40 freelance guides. Collectively, the “big 4” operators account for approximately 80% of this market. There are also a number of smaller local operations offering specialist flower, bird watching tours, mountain biking and motor biking that include Sani Pass in their product offering (See Annexure 2). A number of other provincial and national tour operators also offer tours up the Pass but these tours make up a smaller percentage of the operators overall business.

➤ **Craft and Entertainment Groups**

Crafts from the area produce souvenirs which appeal to both domestic and international tourists. A project initiated by the Local Municipality led to 26 crafters being trained. A collective business was set up, which has been branded as Kuhle Gifts & Décor. A shop has been opened in the Underberg village mall. The aim is to create employment for 200 people.

There are also a number of traditional dance groups, primarily operating at the hotels, and these create part time employment for approximately 300 dance group members.

➤ **Sporting events promoters and participants**

There are a number of sporting events and festivals held in the KwaSani area (e.g. Drak Challenge Adventure, Sani2C, Drak 250 Off-Road Race, as well as numerous polo and music events etc. [KSTDP 2006]). There are currently two events directly dependent on the Sani Pass namely the Sani Pass Transfrontier Mountain Bike Race and the Sani Stagger (a running event). These two events are both arranged by local organizers with the income generated being shared between the organizers, local businesses and contributions are also made to local charities. Temporary jobs are also created during these events and a range of benefits are generated for other service providers as a result of the influx of contestants and their supporters into the area.

➤ **Taxi operators**

Members of the Underberg Taxi Association provide a link between Goodhope Store (at the foot of the Sani Pass in South Africa) and Underberg for travelers to and from Lesotho. They are currently constrained from extending this service up to the South African Border Post or even into Lesotho by the fact that they would require 4 x 4 taxis to operate this route. They currently have an agreement with the Mokhotlong Taxi Association (see section 3.3) which operates the route as far as Goodhope Store, to provide the link to and from Underberg. Once in Underberg, the commuters then transfer to long distance taxis for access to and from major centres in South Africa.

3.2.7. Tourist Profile and Statistics

An estimated 493 000 bednights are sold in the KwaSani area annually¹⁰. The tourists can be categorized into two broad groups:

c) International tourists

International tourists visiting the KwaSani area are primarily on package holidays traveling in organized tour groups and staying in hotels. A small percentage comprise of self-drive tourists, staying in hotels or guest houses. A large percentage of these are attracted by the day trips up the Sani Pass organized by tour operators. Annually, an estimated 17 000 international tourists undertake a day trip with one of the “big 4” tour operators up Sani Pass¹¹. A few opt for longer overland trips across Lesotho. Few of the self-drive tourists undertake their own trips up Sani Pass. A total of 22 961 international travelers (i.e. excluding South African and Lesotho nationals) are estimated to undertake the trip up Sani Pass in total per year¹², which means that about 5 961 could be undertaking the trip on self-drive holidays or specialist tours into Lesotho.

A large percentage of the international tourists arrange their travel itineraries through regional and international booking agents. The booking agents report that the trip up the Sani Pass is the key attraction on the tourist itinerary to the Southern Drakensberg. On average the international tourists spend two nights in the Southern Drakensberg area before moving on to the Central and Northern Drakensberg.

d) Domestic tourists

Domestic tourists to the area are attracted by a range of leisure and sporting activities (see section 3.2.5). Most of the domestic tourists are self-drive holiday makers, many of whom have their own 4x4 vehicles, and are attracted by the trip up the Sani Pass and access to Lesotho.

The South African Border Post statistics¹³ indicate that approximately 25 283 South African’s undertake the trip up Sani Pass per annum. An estimated 90% of these are tourists¹⁴ meaning that approximately 22 754 South African tourists travel up the Sani Pass annually.

The SIA survey¹⁵ indicated that, of the domestic tourists undertaking self drive trips up the Sani Pass, 43.2% are from Gauteng, 37.4 % are from KZN and 11.8% are from Mpumalanga. Free State, Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Western Cape accounted for approximately 2% each. Approximately 66% of the SIA survey respondents reported that they had only ever

¹⁰ This figure was obtained using the KwaSani Municipality Tourism Development Plan (2006) estimate of 2 500 beds in the area an average occupancy rate of 54% per annum based on the SIA survey (2009), see Annexure 6 for results of occupancy rate calculations.

¹¹ This estimate was derived from interviews with the four largest KwaSani based tour operators.

¹² Statistics from the South African Police Services at the Sani Pass Border Post

¹³ Statistics from the South African Police Services at the Sani Pass Border Post

¹⁴ Lesotho Tourism Development Cooperation (2009). 2008 Arrival Statistics Annual Report

¹⁵ SIA tourism survey undertaken in 2009 as part of the EIA

undertaken one trip up the Sani Pass (i.e. they were undertaking their first trip) while 34% were undertaking a return visit.

More than 91% said that they were spending two or more nights in the Himeville / Underberg area in tourist accommodation during their visit to the Sani Pass.

The mountain scenery was reported by 92% of the respondents as a key attraction drawing them to undertake the trip up the Sani Pass. Approximately 76% of the respondents rated the 4 x 4 experience as the key attraction and reason for them for undertaking the trip to the Sani Pass area. A large majority (64%) rated the plants and flowers as a key attraction while 37% rated the birdlife, and 39% rated the wildlife as key attractions. Visiting Lesotho and the associated cultural experience was rated by 54% of respondents as a key attraction for their trip up the Sani Pass.

Approximately 66% of the domestic tourists surveyed (SIA Tourism Survey 2009) indicated that they would still visit the area and travel up the Pass if it were upgraded, and 83% suggested that they would still recommend the experience to friends if the route was upgraded.

3.3. Receiving Environment in Lesotho

3.3.1. Primary and secondary receiving environments

Lesotho has the distinction of being the country with the highest average altitude in the world. It is marketed as a tourism destination that offers quality adventure and traditional cultural tourism opportunities. The eastern region of Lesotho is made up of Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka and Quacha's Nek Districts which are characterized by extremely rugged conditions and very low population densities.

The Sani Pass is the only road access from KwaZulu-Natal into Lesotho and is the main tourism link to the Eastern region of Lesotho. It is the second most important border post for tourism, after Maseru Bridge in the west. Eastern Lesotho can also be accessed via Qacha's Nek border post located in the Eastern Cape in a remote area. The remoteness of this access in terms of the main tourism corridors makes it insignificant in terms of a tourism gateway. Although tourist maps also show Ramateseliso's Gate as an access point, this is inaccessible by vehicle.

The road from Sani Pass to Mokhotlong and onto Butha Buthe District (in the North) is regarded as the Roof of Africa, crossing a number of mountain passes over 3000m. The tar road linking Butha Buthe to Mokhotlong is currently in a very poor state of repair.

In terms of the proposed Sani Pass upgrade, the primary receiving environment would be the immediate area adjoining the Sani Pass (commonly referred to as 'Sani Top') and the areas adjoining the road to Mokhotlong. The secondary receiving environments would include the rest of Mokhotlong District and to a lesser extent Thaba-Tseka District (which includes the Katse and Mohale Dams).

Mokhotlong District, one of 10 districts in Lesotho, is the largest and least populated of all the districts in Lesotho (Acer Africa 2006). The District is largely rural with very limited infrastructure and economic activity. There is also very little tourism infrastructure on the Lesotho side of the Sani Pass, with the notable exception being the Sani Top Chalets.

May *et al* (2002) report that districts in the mountainous areas of Lesotho are three times poorer than the Lesotho national poverty average. Agriculture forms an integral part of household food production and livestock forms an integral part of the culture and livelihoods of the Basotho people (Carvalho 1990). The Sani Flats (immediately after the Sani Pass and before Black Mountain Pass) have historically been used as a summer grazing area for livestock by people from the lower areas of the Mokhotlong District (Mohlomi, *Pers Com* 2008). Grazing of goats and sheep in this area has led to the establishment of a number of sheering sheds with the wool and mohair exported directly to South Africa via the Sani Pass.

3.3.2. Key Stakeholders in Lesotho

A range of primary socio-economic and tourism stakeholders were identified and engaged during the course of the SIA:

- ***Mokhotlong District Administration***

The Mokhotlong District is headed by a District Administrator (Ms. Makhotatso Tsita). It includes 15 local community councils including Liphamola Council (led by Principle Chief Morena Mathialira Seiso) into which the Sani Top and Sani Flats areas fall. The District Administration and Principle Chief are responsible for a range of administrative duties including road maintenance (under the direction of the National Ministry of Ministry of Public Works and Transport) and land use planning.

- **Local Residents**

Mokhotlong is the capital of the District, and is the only town in the district. It has a population of approximately 7 000 people. According to the 1996 census there were 74 496 people living in Mokhotlong District (Ministry of Economic Planning 1996). Local residents frequently visit South Africa via the Sani Pass for a range of purposes including health care, education, recreation, shopping and visiting family and friends. There are also strong cultural and family links between local households in KwaSani and Mokhotlong, with many families split between the two areas¹⁶.

Approximately 13 477 Basotho travel into South Africa through the Sani Pass border post per annum¹⁷.

- **Traders**

There are a large number of formal and informal traders operating in Mokhotlong. There is a high level of dependence among traders on the Sani Pass as a supply route as a large proportion of the goods sold in the Mokhotlong District are purchased from KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg and Durban) as well as Gauteng (Johannesburg). The Sani Pass offers the

¹⁶ Before the establishment of the international border post at Sani Pass, there was free movement of local people in the area and marriages between members of households in South Africa and the Mokhotlong District of Lesotho are reported to have been common. There are currently still strong family ties between these households split between South Africa and Lesotho with family members frequently travelling between the two areas for social and cultural events.

¹⁷ Statistics obtained from South African Police Services at the Sani Pass Border Post.

traders the shortest route for accessing these supply centres, and even with the Sani Pass road in its current condition, it is still the preferred route for these traders.

- **Taxi operators**

Approximately 10 of the members of the Mokhotlong Taxi Association have 4 x 4 taxis and use the Sani Pass daily to transport people to and from South Africa. All 10 taxis usually operate in peak season ferrying about 150 people per day (e.g. around the festive period) and sometimes some of the taxis are even required to make more than one trip per day. However, as few as three taxis (carrying maximum of 45 people) may be used per day in off-peak season. The purchase and maintenance costs of the 4 x 4 taxis are very high and they are limited to 15 seater vehicles. These costs are reflected in the fares with a one way trip from Mokhotlong to Goodhope Store (at the foot of the Sani Pass in South Africa) being R70 per person.

- **The Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation**

The Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) is a parastatal organisation under the Minister of Tourism which is tasked with tourism marketing and planning within Lesotho. The mission¹⁸ of the LTDC is to be a catalyst of the National Tourism Directorate to position Lesotho as a preferred adventure tourist destination, and a champion for development of a strong and vibrant tourism sector which contributes to sustainable economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation and protection of the natural and cultural heritage.

- **Accommodation Establishments**

There are two accommodation establishments Sani Top Chalets and Sani Top Backpackers (www.sanitopchalet.co.za) in the immediate vicinity of the Lesotho Border Post. There are also three accommodation establishments on or close to the road between Sani Pass and Mokhotlong offering services to tourists:

- No. 10 Riverside Lodge
- St. James Lodge (www.stjameslodge.co.za)
- Molumong Lodge (www.roofofafrica.co.za)

There are 2 hotels (Mokhotlong and Senqu) in Mokhotlong. Local business travelers and government officials are the primary targets of both hotels. In both cases international tourist trade makes up 10% (or less) of their current market. There are a few local Mokhotlong residents offering rooms to local business travelers, but they do not engage in the tourism market.

- **Local Guides and Service Providers**

There are a number of Basotho residents in the immediate vicinity of Sani Pass that offer tourists cultural insights and experiences, and who are mainly supported by South African based 4x4 tour operators. These stakeholders include a number of households at 'Skiring' (located on the Sani Flats, just in from the Sani Border Post) who host day visitors on the 4x4 tours from South Africa, providing lunch and a demonstration of local lifestyles and culture.

Operating from and in conjunction with No. 10 Riverside Lodge, St. James Lodge and Molumong Lodge are also a number of local Basotho entrepreneurs offering guiding services for pony trekking, hiking, cultural dancing, history and culture tours (e.g. to local schools, traditional healers, and other sites of local interest), as well as traditional cooking.

These tourism activities provide important cash incomes for these households.

¹⁸ <http://www.ltdc.org.ls/organisation.php>

3.3.3. Key Features of the Lesotho Tourism Experience

A study undertaken by the Maloti Drakensberg Transfrontier Project (MDTP) entitled *20 Year (2008-2028) Tourism Strategic Framework for the Maloti Drakensberg*¹⁹ provides the most relevant tourism perspective for Lesotho in so far as this study is concerned. The most popular attractions and activities engaged-in were reported to be sight-seeing (due to the terrain and a wide variety of flora in Lesotho) and adventure tourism. For the Adventure enthusiasts the following were reported to be the main attractions:

- 4X4
- Trekking
- Pony Trekking
- Sani Pass
- Katse Dam and Mohale Dam
- Maletsunyane Falls
- Oxbow
- Mahlasela Afri Ski
- Malealea

The report²⁰ also sites Sani Pass along with Katse Dam and Malealea as the “*three most popular Tourist Attractions visited during August – September 2007 and December 2007 – January 2008*” (LTDC Visitors’ Survey 2008).

In terms of expenditure the report states that it is evident that South Africa has remained the main source of expenditure compared to the rest of the other source markets for tourism in Lesotho and in the Sani Pass area.

In addition, an MDTP report²¹ identifies the following key strengths and weaknesses of tourism in Lesotho in the vicinity of the Sani Pass:

- Strengths
 - Scenic Mountainous Terrain
 - Rich Cultural heritage
 - Popular pony trekking activities
 - Symbolised by well-known Roof of Africa Rally
 - Maloti Tourism Route in existence
- Weaknesses
 - Poor road infrastructure and signage
 - Poor communication network
 - Inadequate accommodation and amenities
 - Lack of grading system for suppliers
 - Poor skills base and no service culture
 - Slow progression towards government commitment to the completion of tourism development projects
 - Poor air transport network
 - Lack of concerted facilitation of private sector investment in tourism

¹⁹ Although the following extract from *Comparative Analysis of Visitors’ Surveys, 2007/2008* published by the LTDC pertains to the whole of Lesotho it is equally relevant to the study area

²⁰ *Comparative Analysis of Visitors’ Surveys, 2007/2008* - Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC)

²¹ *20 Year (2008-2028) Tourism Strategic Framework For The Maloti Drakensberg – Maloti Drakensberg Frontier Project (MDTP)*

- Tourists feel very insecure

3.3.4. Key Tourism Markets

The table below provides a breakdown of tourists (using all entry routes to enter Lesotho) was published by the LTDC²². These figures show that South Africans are the single most significant tourism market for Lesotho tourism. This is significant; not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of accessibility - having a significant market on 'the door step' is a major positive factor.

Source Markets	Total Arrivals to Lesotho	% of Total Arrivals to Lesotho	% Total Entering for Holiday
South Africa	248,548	88.24%	81.34%
Germany	6,469	2.30%	5.37%
United Kingdom	5,006	1.78%	3.53%
Holland/Netherlands	4,995	1.77%	4.11%
Zimbabwe	4,534	1.61%	1.79%
United States	3,522	1.25%	1.81%
China	2,407	0.85%	0.27%
Botswana	1,796	0.64%	0.71%
Swaziland	1,361	0.48%	0.50%
Canada	829	0.29%	0.53%

Between January and December 2008 the numbers of visitors entering Lesotho for holiday purposes through Sani Pass border post was reported to be 20 276 which makes up 18.31% of total holiday arrivals for Lesotho and the second most significant after Maseru which accounts for 37,174 (33.54%).

The problems facing the Mokhotlong District in terms of benefiting from tourism are access to tourists and a lack of attractions. It has been pointed out that the main attractions identified (sight-seeing, 4x4, trekking and pony trekking) are possible to enjoy in Mokhotlong.

The average occupancy rate in Lesotho is reported to be 23%, and therefore capacity does not currently constrain tourism growth. The problem rather appears to be:

- Lack of tourist specific accommodations, facilities and associated tourism infrastructure offering an appropriate standard (a general lack of focus on tourists as a market)
- Lack of an appropriate tourism vision, strategy and marketing

As a result of the lack of 'value added' tourism where other assets promote themselves in relation to the key asset of Sani Pass, the majority of tourists entering via Sani Pass visit just for the day or pass through and stay in other districts due to lack of incentive to stop. The cumulative result is that there is currently a great untapped potential for tourism to provide employment and related socio-economic benefits to the Sani Top area as well as the greater Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka Districts, however this is not being harnessed and the majority of tourists entering the country for multi-day tours are passing through these districts to spend their money in other regions of Lesotho.

²² Arrival Statistics Annual Report 2008 - Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE SIA METHODOLOGY

A range of methods were used in the SIA to capture social data that could be used in the assessment of the impacts of the proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass on the surrounding communities. The approach included the collection of primary data as well as a review of data and information from other sources to gather secondary data. Data on the socio-economic profile in the areas surrounding the Sani Pass were also gathered and considered. The methodology was based on quantitative and qualitative techniques, and was designed to capture the perceptions, preferences and concerns of the various stakeholder groups.

Two types of data were collected:

- a) Baseline social data including employment, housing, services and infrastructure levels.
- b) Stakeholders' views of their current quality of life, tourism experiences and their perceptions about the desirability of the proposed development and the impacts (both positive and negative) it might have on them.

The components of the methodology included:

- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Surveys with road users, tour operators and accommodation providers
- Stakeholder meetings with tourism and resident organisations, municipality representatives, craft and taxi associations
- Site visits and observation
- Telephonic and email communication with key stakeholders
- Review of other documentation and studies

a) Interviews and meetings with key stakeholders

Telephone and one-on-one interviews and meetings were conducted with a range of key stakeholders, both in South Africa and Lesotho. These included (see Annexure 1 and Annexure 2 for details):

- Sisonke District Municipality
- KwaSani Local Municipality
- SAPS Sani Pass Border Post
- Underberg Ratepayers' Association
- Tourism authorities (Tourism KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa Tourism, KwaSani Tourism and Southern Drakensberg Community Tourism Organisation)
- Kuhle Craft Shop
- Organisers of Sani Stagger
- Organisers of Sani Transfrontier Mountain Bike race
- Underberg Taxi Association
- KwaPitela Community representatives

- District Administrator Mokhotlong District (including District Council, Health, Education, Agriculture, Roads, Police)
- Principal Chief Liphamola Council
- Traders in Mokhotlong District
- Mokhotlong Hotel
- Senqu Hotel
- Mokhotlong Taxi Association
- Lesotho-KZN Taxi Association
- Lesotho tourism service providers (guides, dancers, and accommodation providers)

Tourism stakeholders engaged include (Annexure 2):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| • Lowlands B&B | • St James Lodge |
| • Mkomazana | • Albizia Tours |
| • Tumble In B&B | • Thaba Tours |
| • Brentwood Inn | • Private Tour Guide |
| • Karmichael B&B | • Off-road Adventures |
| • Sani Lodge Backpackers | • Major Adventures |
| • Cedar Garden | • Big Sky Safaris |
| • Lake Glencarri | • Sani Pass Tours |
| • Pied Piper Expeditions | • Drakensberg Adventures |
| • Moorcroft Manor Country House | • Cachet Tours |
| • Sani Manor | • Drifters |
| • Sani Top Chalets | • AfriFriends – Unique African Journeys |
| • Molumong Lodge | • Highline Tours and travel |
| • Sani Pass Hotel and Leisure Resort | • Dragonfly Africa |
| • Giants Cup Wilderness Reserve | • Celafrica Tours |
| • Pennygum Country Cottages | |

b) Surveys

Surveys were conducted both with road users as well as tourism operators:

- A road user survey²³ was undertaken at the Sani Pass Border Post over the Easter Weekend (April 2009). A purposive convenience sampling technique was applied and both outgoing and returning road users were sampled. A total of 76 interviews were conducted. The data from the surveys were coded by grouping responses generated in open ended questions, as well as by coding close ended questions. Data was entered in to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and was then analysed using SPSS. Frequencies were calculated and the results reflected the number of people that responded in a particular way to each question. A key function of the survey was to provide an opportunity for people to describe their reasons for visiting the area and to reflect on their perceptions of how the proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass would affect their visitor experience and their willingness to use the Pass in the future. This enabled the SIA team to reflect on how the proposed upgrade may change the user profile of the Pass and how this may impact on the surrounding residents and business operators, focussing on tourism in particular.
- Tour operator and accommodation providers' surveys were conducted through a dual approach. Firstly a workshop was undertaken with local tour operators and with local accommodation providers. Secondly a questionnaire was emailed to tourism operator stakeholders (with the assistance of the Southern Drakensberg Community Tourism Organisation). Results were captured using Microsoft Excel and analysed to assess business profiles. This information was used to interpret how changes in road users and activities as a result of the upgrade may impact on local tourism operators.
- International and regional booking agents were surveyed via the internet. A total of 7 responses were obtained. These were analysed to assess how booking agents may change their bookings to the Southern Drakensberg area if the Sani Pass is upgraded.

The results from a road user survey conducted (in 2008) under the auspices of the Sani branch of Wildlife and Environment Society of Southern Africa (WESSA), independently if the EIA, were also considered.

c) *Telephonic communication*

Numerous telephonic interviews were conducted with many stakeholders including sporting event organisers, tourism operators, Tourism authorities, Municipal representatives. Telephonic interviews were conducted with stakeholders who were unable to participate in meetings and workshops, or to follow up on information provided during workshops and meetings.

d) *Site visits and observation*

Visits were taken by the SIA team to sites in both South Africa as well as Lesotho. These site visits were conducted for the purpose of personal observation of target areas as well as to undertake stakeholder consultation.

e) *Review of documentation and other studies*

Documents were reviewed to obtain information to supplement the primary data collected during the SIA. Documents reviewed included reports on socio-economic statistics for the social profile of the area, social and development plan strategies such as IDPs, tourism development plans, etc (see section 8 for details).

²³ See Annexure 4 for survey questionnaires.

Statistics²⁴ on the people passing through the South African Border Post at Sani Pass were also obtained from the South African Police.

The following issues raised during the scoping phase of the EIA were assessed during the SIA:

- Changes to sense of place
 - Identify criteria for quality of life and characteristics of sense of place and assess how these will change by considering likely consequences for local residents and tourists
- Changes to tourism
 - Identify current tourism patterns and profile
 - Assess extent of tourism market
 - Determine likely changes to profile and market extent
 - Social interpretation of likely consequences of changes
- Changes to local economic development
 - Identify how changes to tourism and associated business enterprises will affect social aspects of local economic development such as employment, service delivery etc
- Changes to quality of life
 - Assess how changes to the sense of place and local economic development will affect people's lifestyles and well-being
- Consequences of upgrade on road users
 - Review of use of Sani pass by non-tourists
 - Determine likely changes for non-tourist road users
- Changes to safety and security
 - Identify safety and security concerns of stakeholders
 - Review existing crime and security profile
 - Assess likely changes to this profile and social consequences
- Changes to residential and tourism patterns in Lesotho
 - Review of social and tourism patterns in Mokhotlong District in Lesotho
 - Review usage of the Sani Pass by tourists to Mokhotlong District
 - Assess likely consequences for tourism stakeholders, road users and local residents

The environmental significance of the potential impacts associated with the proposed upgrade of the Sani Pass was calculated using a ranking scale based on the Guideline Documentation in the EIA Regulations (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, April 1998). The following categories were applied (see Annexure 5 for details on rating and scoring methods):

- Probability of occurrence (how likely is it that the impact may occur?)
- Duration of occurrence (how long may it last?)
- Magnitude (severity) of impact (will the impact be of high, moderate or low severity?)
- Extent of impact (will the impact affect the national, regional or local environment, or only that of the site?)

Options for mitigation were identified and the environmental significance of impacts was recalculated taking mitigation into consideration.

Consideration has also been given to how the environmental significance of these impacts changes against selected alternatives for the proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass.

²⁴ See Annexure 3 for 2008/09 numbers and statistics.

5. DESCRIPTION OF ISSUES AND ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF IMPACTS

5.1. Change to sense of place in Sani Pass and surrounds

5.1.1. *Description of the issue*

Sense of place is a component of 'cultural identity'. Sense of place is an intensely personal response to the environment, social and natural, which the individual experiences in daily life. At a broader level it can reflect the individual's perception of the whole region²⁵. Sense of place is also typically defined as the essential character of an area, or its *genus loci* (literally 'spirit of a place'²⁶). The sense of place typically is represented by the feelings, emotions and attachments to a locality by residents (past or present), which may be articulated in art, literature, music or histories, or may become part of individual or group memory²⁷. Sense of place may be affected by either real or perceived impacts as a result of a proposed development.

The sense of place of the Sani Pass and surrounds for local residents and tourists in the primary affected environment of KwaSani is strongly influenced by the history, the culture, land use, and visual landscape of the area. The local character or sense of place is typically described as:

- Tranquil and quiet rural setting
- Sense of space with low concentrations of human settlement
- Low crime levels
- Low pollution levels
- Extensive wilderness atmosphere and a 'gateway' to adventure
- A holiday destination of choice for leisure and adventure seeking tourists

Some level of local economic development is recognised as currently taking place and this is viewed positively by local residents because of perceptions that this has the potential to contribute to reducing crime levels (e.g. through job creation and poverty alleviation).

The sense of place is also strongly associated to the natural character of the landscape both along the Sani Pass itself and in the adjacent areas (including the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park and Mokhotlong District). The area is widely marketed for its outdoor recreational activities such as fly fishing, hiking, mountain biking, bird watching etc., creating a sense of a healthy outdoor living lifestyle.

Although large parts of the natural habitat have been transformed by farming activities this contributes to the appeal and sense of place, local residents and tourists generally perceive the area to represent a wilderness with an "off road experience" and "getting away from it all". The proximity of the Sani Pass and its "untamed" reputation adds significantly to the sense of adventure of the area, which is further added to by the Sani Pass acting as the "gateway to the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho" which is renowned for its open and 'untamed' spaces.

²⁵ www.deh.gov.au/soe/2001/heritage/glossary.html

²⁶ www.culture-routes.lu/picture/glossaire_list.php3

²⁷ www.media.pearsoncmg.com/intl/ema/uk/0131217666/student/0131217666_glo.html

5.1.2. Assessment of the impact

The sense of place in the KwaSani area is likely to be affected both during the construction and operation phases. During construction, the sense of place will be temporarily affected by nuisance factors such as noise and dust pollution, as well as the influx of heavy machinery and construction equipment.

In the long term, the upgrading of the Sani Pass may result in a change in the general ambience of the area. The loss of the “rough dirt road” and its replacement with an easily navigable hardened surface will alter the “sense of remoteness” and sense of being “off the beaten track”. Upgrading the Pass will also allow more vehicles to travel freely up the Pass and will increase traffic using the Pass to access Lesotho, or accessing South Africa from Lesotho.

Increased non-tourism traffic and an associated increased economic development in the urban nodes of Underberg and Himeville in the long term (see section 5.3) could transform the sense of place from a tourism dominated atmosphere to one with greater emphasis on retail, trade and services.

The sense of place for many of the middle to upper socio-economic categories of the local population will therefore change, with many of the attributes that attracted them to the area initially being lost, as a result of the growth of the area into a service region for Lesotho as well as becoming a transport route between South Africa and Lesotho. For the poorer sectors of the local community (e.g. in low cost housing settlements and rural communities) this change in the sense of place may be viewed as positive as it could enhance employment and improvements to associated aspects of well-being and lifestyle.

A new sense of place is likely to develop in association with the new profile of the area in the long term. However, the sense of place of the KwaSani area, and Underberg and Himeville in particular, being the gateway to the “Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho” and the close association of the area with one of the few areas with road access to the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park and World Heritage Site will not change.

5.1.3. Options for mitigation

The sense of place cannot be restored through mitigation. The magnitude and significance of the impact to sense of place cannot be reduced. However a new sense of place will be developed and this could be positive if the changes are well managed.

Mitigation could take the form of offsets, for example maximising socio-economic benefits to the affected communities during the construction phase through jobs and economic spin offs. Measures can also be put into place during the construction phase to ensure careful management and planning of operations to minimise visual, noise and dust pollution particularly in and surrounding Underberg, Himeville and other settlements.

5.1.4. Rating of significance of the impact

IMPACT	Change to sense of place for local residents in the primary affected environment		
	Description	Score	With Mitigation
Probability	Probable	3	3
Duration	Permanent	5	5
Extent	Limited to the local area	2	2

Magnitude	Moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way	6	6
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	39	39
RANKING	Negative	Moderate	Moderate

5.2. Change to the Tourism Environment

It is estimated that only 30% of KwaZulu-Natal's foreign tourists visit the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park and World Heritage, across the Southern, Central and Northern Drakensberg collectively (TKZN, 2008). International and regional booking agents (SIA Tourism Survey 2009) indicated that the Sani Pass was upgraded they would likely reduce the number of bookings which they make to the Southern Drakensberg, but these tourists would not be lost to the Province as a whole as they would be booked into facilities in the Central and Northern Drakensberg instead.

In terms of the domestic tourism market, TKZN reports that the southern Drakensberg is ranked only 7th in popularity out of 8 tourist destination areas in KwaZulu-Natal, and so the upgrading of the Sani Pass is therefore unlikely to have a significant impact on the tourism sector in the Province as a whole.

Sani Pass is however a key tourist attraction within the Southern Drakensberg and forms the foundation of many of the local tourism operations in the KwaSani area (see section 3.2.5 and 3.2.7). The proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass would impact to varying degrees on the key attributes of the Pass from a tourism perspective, and this will have implications for a range of tourists attracted to the KwaSani area. This will in turn have impacts for a number of the tourist operations associated with the Sani Pass and those employed by them or those who gain business as a result of the tours taking place in the area.

Although the upgrade of the Sani Pass is regarded positively in the KwaSani IPD (2009/10), the KwaSani Tourism Office opposes the proposed upgrade on the grounds that it believes the proposed upgrade would have a negative impact on tourism in the area. The District Municipality reports that its position on the proposed upgrade would be informed by the KwaSani Local Municipality but that it would not support a development that impacted negatively on local economic development and job opportunities.

5.2.1. Reduction in international tourists and sustainability of 4x4 tour operators

a) Description of the issue

Tour operators offering 4 x 4 excursions up Sani Pass and into Lesotho currently fall into one of two categories (i) day trips to experience the Pass and Basotho culture at Sani top, (ii) special interest tours for one or more nights such as bird watching, botanical tours, and overland tours into Lesotho. The day trippers are by far the most significant in terms of numbers (see section 3.2.6). Therefore the 4x4 day tour operators are directly dependent on the Sani Pass for the bulk of their business. The upgrading of Sani Pass will not completely destroy the tourism experience but will reduce part of the adventure aspects of the trip. This changes the 4x4 experience offered by the tour operators and thus may result in shrinkage in the market.

The Regional and International Agents and Tour Operator engaged during the SIA Tourism Survey (2009) reported that they believe that the upgrading of the Sani Pass to a hardened surface would

remove the key attraction for international tourists taking day trip up the Pass by removing the 4 x 4 adventure aspect. They are of the opinion that there are many other more spectacular mountain passes around the world, but that most of these are tarred. The key feature that attracts international tourists is the 4 x 4 experience of the Sani Pass. The agents therefore believe that if the Sani Pass is upgraded to a hardened surface it will no longer make the trip up the Pass an attraction for international tourists because there is very little else to see or do at the top of the Pass for day visitors. Seventy-five percent of the regional and international tourism operators and agents responding to the survey indicated that they would remove the Sani Pass and Southern Drakensberg from their itinerary. For the purposes of this SIA it was therefore assumed that this could result in a 75% decrease in the number of international tourists currently making use of local 4 x 4 operators based in Underberg and Himeville for day trips up the Sani Pass.

Based on this estimated 75% reduction in bookings from international and regional agents, and assuming that there are an estimated 17 000 international tourists undertaking day trips up the Sani Pass, the number of tourists booking with the day tour operators could be reduced to 4 250 tourists per annum. This is currently the annual total for one of the current 'big 4' operators.

The inclusion of the cultural experiences provided to day visitors through the home visits to Basotho households at *Skiring* at the Top of Sani Pass will likely retain some of the attraction and demand by international tourists using the day tour operations.

b) Assessment of the impact to 4 x 4 tour operators

An estimated 75% reduction in international tourists undertaking day tours up the Sani Pass will threaten the sustainability of the local 4 x 4 tour operators currently operating up the Sani Pass. This is the core of their business stream and if they continue trying to operate as they currently do, there may not be sufficient business to support all of the current 'big 4' tour operator as well as the smaller operators. This will result in a loss of jobs (section 5.3.2. deals with the details of the estimated impacts in terms of job losses) as well as income earning opportunities both in South Africa and Lesotho.

Given the more focussed nature of the other specialised tours (e.g. the overland, botanical and bird watching tours), upgrading of the Sani Pass is unlikely to substantially affect these tours. The consumer market for these specialist tours is more selective and the key attraction of the tours will be impacted on to a very limited degree. The multi-day overland tours into Lesotho will be impacted on to a lesser extent as the key attraction of the adventure trip into the mountains of Lesotho will remain largely unaffected.

The construction phase of the proposed upgrade (with an anticipated duration of three years) will also have a significant impact to the tour operators. The schedules of the day tour operators will be substantially impacted on which will complicate their operations and logistics. However they may experience a short term increase in demand for tours from tourists wishing to experience the trip up the Pass before the upgrade is completed. The construction phase is likely to have less of an impact on the specialist tours and their time schedules are not as constrained as the day tour operators.

c) Options for mitigation

Options for mitigation are limited since the DOT's preferred alternative for the upgrade of the Sani Pass is for the road to be surfaced to an all weather surface (likely a hardened surface), which removes the 'untamed wilderness' characteristic of the Pass that is a key attraction for many of the tourists. However, careful consideration of the visual characteristics of the upgrade design could help to minimize these impacts to some extent. For example, use of 'natural' colouring in the surfacing material, rehabilitation of the cut and fill sites.

Other mitigation opportunities could be explored by the tour operators themselves, for example diversifying their current business operations to grow the specialist component of their businesses, which will be more resilient to the impacts associated with the upgrade of the Pass.

d) Rating of significance of the impact

The rating has been calculated separately for the predominantly day tour operators and the specialist tour operators:

➤ Predominantly day tour operators

IMPACT		Reduced sustainability of 4 x 4 day tour operators and closure of some of the operators due to insufficient tourist numbers		
		Description	Score	With Mitigation
Probability	Definite		5	5
Duration	Permanent		5	4
Extent	Limited to the local area		2	2
Magnitude	Very high and results in complete destruction of patterns and permanent cessation of process		10	8
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability		85	70
RANKING	Negative		High	High

➤ Predominantly specialist tour operators

IMPACT		Reduced sustainability of specialist tour operators due to reduced tourist numbers		
		Description	Score	With Mitigation
Probability	Highly probable		4	4
Duration	Medium term (5 – 15 years)		3	3
Extent	Limited to the local area		2	2
Magnitude	Moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way		6	4
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability		44	36
RANKING	Negative		Moderate	Moderate

5.2.2. Reduction in domestic 4 x 4 self drive tourists attracted to the Sani Pass experience

a) Description of the issue

Domestic tourists to KwaSani can be divided into two categories (i) 4 x 4 tourists drawn to the area to undertake the trip up the Sani Pass (and possibly into Lesotho) as an adventure holiday (ii) tourists drawn to the area to enjoy the range of ‘non-Pass’ related activities and experiences on offer.

An estimated 22 754 domestic tourists undertake the trip up the Sani Pass annually (see section 3.2.7). The SIA survey (2009) results indicate that 75% of these domestic tourists would still be willing to return if the Pass was upgraded to a hardened surface, because the rugged mountain landscape and the scenery would still be beautiful and a key attraction. The Pass would also still

provide access to Lesotho. The 25% who suggested they would not return if the Pass was upgraded stated that this would be because the rugged 4x4 adventure experience and the sense of remoteness would be lost.

The experience of domestic tourists visiting the KwaSani area for the other key attractions for which the area is famous would remain unchanged. For example those visiting the area for the breathtaking mountain scenery, peace and tranquility conducive to physical relaxation and mental/spiritual rejuvenation, quality wilderness opportunities (see section 3.2.5). The area is also renowned for offering some of South Africa’s finest fly fishing venues on rivers, lakes and dams and it is a highly regarded holiday and leisure option with an abundance of activities for long stay and weekend getaway visitors (including mountain climbing; hiking; fly fishing; mountain biking; birding; golf; arts and crafts; horse riding; wildlife viewing; canoeing; retail and motor biking). None of these attractions would be adversely affected by the proposed upgrading of the Pass. The upgrading of the Sani Pass would therefore not impact on all the domestic tourists visiting the KwaSani area, only some of those drawn primarily for the trip up the Pass.

b) Assessment of the impact to domestic tourists

There is likely to be an overall reduction in the number of domestic tourists to the KwaSani area in the short to medium term due to the reduction in the adventure (4 x 4) aspect of the trip up Sani Pass for the 4 x 4 enthusiasts. This is however likely to be a relatively small reduction, of only about 25 %²⁸ (i.e. potential loss of 5 688 out of 22 754 domestic tourists per year that go up the Sani Pass specifically) since the majority (75%) of the domestic Sani Pass 4 x 4 tourists suggested they would still visit the area.

The many tourists drawn to the area to enjoy the range of ‘non-Pass’ related activities and experiences on offer would not be negatively impacted by the proposed upgrade of the Pass.

Furthermore the high wear and tear to vehicles driven up the Pass, in its current condition, limits even the number of 4 x 4 vehicle owners who are able/willing to travel up the Pass. Upgrading the Pass would open up the Pass to domestic tourists who do not have 4 x 4 vehicles and who are not currently able to travel up the Pass, or people who are not willing to incur the wear and tear to their vehicles. This potential increase in tourists could mitigate some of the anticipated initial short to medium term losses. Tourism KwaZulu-Natal estimates a potential increase of 10 – 15% in domestic tourists (Tourism KZN *pers. comm.* 2009). (The estimated impact of this increase is addressed in section 5.2.3).

c) Options for mitigation

Mitigation options proposed under section 5.2.1 could also address the potential loss of domestic 4 x 4 tourists to the area. For example, careful consideration of the visual characteristics of the upgrade design such as using ‘natural’ colouring in the surfacing material, rehabilitation of the cut and fill sites.

d) Rating of significance of the impact

IMPACT	Loss of the 4 x 4 experience up the Sani Pass resulting in reduced domestic 4 x4 self drive tourists to the KwaSani area		
	Description	Score	With Mitigation
Probability	Highly probable	4	3

²⁸ SIA Tourist Survey 2009

Duration	Permanent	5	3
Extent	Limited to the local area	2	2
Magnitude	Low and will cause a slight impact on processes	4	2
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	44	21
RANKING	Negative	Moderate	Low

5.2.3. Reduction in tourists to KwaSani and decreased sustainability of some accommodation providers

a) Description of issues

There is direct relationship between 4x4 Sani Pass tourists and local accommodation providers. Both international and domestic tourists make use of the accommodation facilities in the KwaSani area. A total of 493 000 bednights are estimated to be sold in the KwaSani area annually (see section 3.2.7).

Large international tour groups rely more on hotels while domestic self-drive tourists rely more on the guest houses in the region. A reduction in the number of international day trip tourists and domestic self drive 4x4 Pass visitors as described in section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 will reduce the demand for accommodation facilities in the KwaSani area:

- International tourists impact on accommodation
South African Border Post statistics (Annexure 3) indicate that approximately 22 961 international tourists travel up Sani Post annually. It is also assumed that the international tourists spend an average of 2 days in the area, using local accommodation facilities
- Domestic tourists impact on accommodation
Approximately 22 283 domestic South African tourists travel up Sani Pass annually. The SIA Tourism Survey (2009) indicated that most of these tourists spend more than 1 night in the KwaSani area during this holiday to the region:

Nights booked into KwaSani accommodation	Percentage of respondents
1	8.7%
2	32.6%
3	37%
4	13%
5	6.5%
7	2.2%

There will not be a decrease in the domestic tourists attracted to the area for the other range of key attractions (as described in section 3.2.5) and their duration of stay will most likely remain the same and will not therefore impact on the number of bednights sold annually.

b) Assessment of the impact

- Loss of bednights associated with international tourists
A worst case scenario assumes that all the international tourists using the Pass are lost to the local tourism market as a result of the proposed upgrade. Based on the South African Border Post statistics (Annexure 3) indicating an estimated 22 961 international tourists using the Pass, and the assumption that each tourist spends an average of 2 nights in the

region, the loss of this business in this worst case scenario would be estimated to result in a loss of 45 922 bednights annually:

Percentage Foreign Tourists Lost	Estimated number of international tourists	Number of Nights spent in area	Associated Number of bednights lost
100%	22 961	2	45 922

In a more likely scenario is however that not more 75% (17 220) of the estimated 22 961 international tourists using the Pass would no longer visit the KwaSani area as a result of the proposed upgrade. The loss of business to accommodation facilities is reduced to 34 441 bednights (still assuming international tourists spend 2 nights in the area on average) in this scenario:

Percentage foreign tourists Lost	Estimated number of international tourists lost	Number of nights spent in area	Associated number of bednights lost
75%	17 220	2	34 441

- Loss of bednights associated with self drive 4 x 4 domestic tourists

In an unlikely worst case scenario, if 100% of the estimated 22 754 South African (domestic) self drive 4 x 4 tourists stopped traveling to the area to undertake the trip up the Sani Pass (for example in the short term during construction), approximately 64 803 bednights could be lost per annum:

Estimated number of domestic tourists lost	Percentage domestic tourists	Number of nights spent in area	Associated Number of bednights
22 754	8.70%	1	1 980
22 754	32.60%	2	14 836
22 754	37%	3	25 257
22 754	13%	4	11 832
22 754	6.50%	5	7 395
22 754	2.20%	7	3 504
Total Loss in worst case scenario			64 803

Based in the SIA survey results indicating that approximately 25% (estimated 5 688) of the domestic self drive 4 x 4 tourists visiting the Sani Pass would no longer visit the area if the pass is upgraded, and applying the range in the duration of nights spent in the area, a more likely scenario would be that the upgrading of the Sani Pass could result in a loss of 16 199 bednights per annum:

Estimated number of domestic tourists lost	Percentage domestic tourists	Number of nights spent in area	Associated Number of bednights
5 688	8.70%	1	495
5 688	32.60%	2	3 709
5 688	37%	3	6 314
5 688	13%	4	2 958
5 688	6.50%	5	1 849
5 688	2.20%	7	876

Total Loss	16 199
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If the worst case scenario of a loss of 100% of both international and 100% of the self drive 4 x 4 domestic tourists currently using the Pass was realized, a total of 110 725 bednights could be lost in the KwaSani area per annum. This equates to approximately 22% of the business for accommodation facilities (assuming occupancy of 54% and an estimated total bednights sold of 493 000 per annum as illustrated in Annexure 6).

However, considering that a new market of tourists could be attracted to the KwaSani area were the Sani Pass upgraded (i.e. with reduced wear and tear to vehicles and improved road safety), a more likely scenario would be the loss of a maximum of 75% of the international tourists and only 25% of the domestic tourists (as indicated in the SIA survey) in the short term with medium to long term recovery in the market. In this case an estimated 50 640 bednights could be lost in the short term accounting for 10% of the current business for accommodation facilities.

A 22% loss of business may result in the closure of some of the accommodation facilities in KwaSani, particularly those catering most directly for the 4x4 adventure tourist and the large international tour groups. Most businesses may be able to survive a 10% loss of visitors if this is only of short term duration and a growth in domestic tourists is realized in the medium to long term.

In the medium to long term better accessibility (i.e. no longer needing a 4 x 4 vehicle) to travel up the Pass will likely open new tourism opportunities and could increase the domestic tourism market (see section 5.2.2) by a potential 10 – 15% (Tourism KZN *pers.com.* 2009). This view is also highlighted by the global tourism trends outlined in section 3.2. Results from the SIA Tourism survey (2009), which indicated that 83% if the current Pass users would recommend the experience to friends even if the Pass is upgraded also corroborates this view. This growth in total visitors to the KwaSani area could exceed the initial loss in 4 x 4 self drive domestic tourists and international day tripper tourists.

c) Options for mitigation

A large percentage of the visitors to the KwaSani area originate from Gauteng Province (SIA Tourism Survey 2009). The road link (D27/2) between Himeville and Nottingham Road, which is the shortest route (as opposed to the route via Howick), is un-surfaced and currently in very bad condition. This limits the number of tourists willing or able to use this road. Upgrading of this road would substantially shorten the distance for visitors traveling from Gauteng the northern provinces, and areas in KwaZulu-Natal, which could add to the attractiveness of the KwaSani as a destination for tourists from these areas. This could help to increase the number of domestic tourists to the area in mitigation for the potential loss of international tourists, many of whom would still come to the area.

Furthermore, mitigation options proposed under section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 could also address the potential loss of tourists to the area and the consequential impacts for accommodation facilities. For example, careful consideration of the visual characteristics of the upgrade design such as using ‘natural’ colouring in the surfacing material, rehabilitation of the cut and fill sites.

A number of mitigation options could also be explored by the local authorities, tourism associations and accommodation providers themselves to reevaluate and reposition their business and marketing strategies in order to:

- Identify who and where the new markets will be
- Research what products and services will attract them

- Plan and invest accordingly

These activities could help to grow the domestic and international tourist market, building on the unchanged features of the area (e.g. mountain scenery, fishing, etc.) to compensate for the loss of tourists attracted primarily for the adventure trip up the Sani Pass.

d) Rating of significance of the impact

IMPACT		Reduced business and potential closure of some tourism accommodation providers in short to medium term	
	Description	Score	With Mitigation
Probability	Highly probably	4	3
Duration	Medium term	3	3
Extent	Limited to the local area	2	2
Magnitude	Moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way	6	4
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	44	27
RANKING	Negative	Moderate	Low

5.3. Socio-economic impacts from changes to the local economy

5.3.1. Description of the issue

The local economy of the KwaSani Municipality is underpinned by agriculture and tourism. Indicators of economic development in the area are evident for example in the recent development of two shopping malls, although a number of the shops remain unfilled by tenants. A major construction project such as the upgrading of the Sani Pass could significantly affect the local economy of the area, in particular the towns of Himeville and Underberg.

During the construction phase the procurement of materials and equipment hire, expenditure on accommodation and food etc, as well as the creation of local employment opportunities could stimulate local development and socio-economic benefits for a range of households and businesses in the area. However, the disruptions during the construction phase could deter tourists from coming to the area during this phase. This may have a negative financial impact on numerous businesses including tour operators, event organisers, and accommodation facilities and eating establishments. In addition, long term changes to the characteristics of the area and key tourism attractions could change the tourism profile. In the long run, the changes to the tourism profile of the area will affect local development and while some new jobs and business opportunities may be created, others may be lost and some businesses may close with resultant job losses.

Therefore while some businesses may benefit from the economic stimulation, others may lose, with the associated negative socio-economic impacts and impacts to quality of life.

Sisonke District Municipality in general and KwaSani Local Municipality in particular are affected by low levels of skilled labour and high unemployment rates (Sisonke and KwaSani IDPs). Local communities of KwaPitela, Mqatsheni and Stepmore are among the poorest communities in

KwaSani where, as noted in the Sisonke DM IDP, low levels of education hinder local people in acquiring new skills and secure jobs.

The construction period for Phase 2 of the upgrade of Sani Pass is estimated to take approximately 3 years to complete. During this time many jobs for skilled and unskilled workers will be created. It is already evident how the KwaPitela Community has benefitted from employment opportunities in Phase 1 of the upgrade. These benefits could be extended if a similar employment approach is applied in Phase 2 (i.e. preference given to local households when filling employment opportunities) and benefits may be extended to low income settlements at Mqatsheni and Stepmore but to lesser extent. Local job opportunities associated with the Sani Pass Upgrade Phase 1 have however largely been limited to unskilled labour rather than skilled positions or contracts.

Improved road infrastructure may encourage increased traffic between Lesotho and South Africa through Underberg. This may increase business for retail and wholesale shops in Underberg. This may further encourage development of new business in Underberg.

The Phase 2 upgrade of Sani Pass may therefore result in the following positive and negative local economic impacts:

- Employment and skills development during construction of the road and long term maintenance of the Pass , as long as there is a policy to ensure that local labour is utilized where possible in the building of the road
- Increased spend and support of local businesses during construction phase
- Job losses associated with a reduction in the tourism sector and shrinkage of business for service industries
- Increased pressure and decrease in quality of service delivery and infrastructure (due to increased demand) if the District and Local Municipalities are unable to overcome the current backlogs and problems with service delivery

Economic stimulation potentially associated with the construction phase, could result in increased jobs and income levels, which would boost the standard of living for local beneficiaries, which would also positively impact on the local quality of life. However, these changes may not be long term and sustainable as they would be linked to the construction phase. Careful planning with regard to economic decline post construction would need to be considered.

Conversely job losses and an overall shrinkage in the local economy would result in a decline in the standard of living for a number of residents. Increased unemployment and decreasing standards of living could result in an increase in crime levels, which is currently largely attributed to current unemployment and poverty levels.

5.3.2. Assessment of the impacts

a) Job losses

The potential reduction in international and domestic tourists to the area may decrease business for the tour operators and the accommodation providers may result in job losses. The 'big 4' tour operators currently create employment for 34 permanent skilled staff and approximately 30 – 40 freelance guides. The estimated 75% shrinkage in international tourists using the 4 x 4 tour operators' guides could consequently result in the loss of up to 26 skilled permanent jobs and 23 – 30 freelance part time guide jobs. The jobs associated with the specialist tour operators are unlikely to be significantly impacted on.

Given that the current occupancy rates result in approximately 1 695 permanent jobs created, the estimated reduction in occupancy rates (see section 5.2.3) could result in a corresponding

loss of between 339 (assuming a worst case scenario of a 20% loss of tourists to accommodation facilities) and 152 jobs (assuming scenario of 9% shrinkage in tourists to accommodation facilities). This would translate to an increase of 3% - 7% in the unemployment rate in KwaSani, in the short to medium term, until the anticipated increase in new domestic tourists to the area. The majority of the accommodation operations may however be able to sustain their businesses during the short term shrinkage in the tourist numbers, and may then take advantage of the long term recovery that will likely be associated with the proposed upgrade of Sani Pass.

The cultural dancing entertainment sector has experienced significant growth, and approximately 300 dancers are currently involved, albeit not full time employment or as their main source of income. It is estimated that there is an average of 3 performances per week (mainly offered through the bigger hotels) in the area earning the groups approximately R1000 per performance. A reduction in tourists to the area will reduce the number of performances requested as well as potentially the number of dance groups that are able to operate. This will be of particular significance as this sector often provides vital incomes for households without formal employment and living below the poverty line.

b) Job creation

A number of jobs will be created during the construction phase of the upgrading of the Sani Pass. An estimated 20 to 25 skilled jobs and 200 unskilled jobs are anticipated to be created directly by the construction activities themselves²⁹. The skilled positions will likely need to be sourced from outside of the KwaSani area (given the low level of skilled labour reported in the Sisonke IDP), however there will be opportunities for local labour to benefit from the availability of unskilled jobs.

A small number of jobs will also potentially be created in the long term through ongoing maintenance operations required on the Pass.

There will however likely be a net loss with the number of jobs lost as well as the job skills profile, not being mitigated for directly by the jobs potentially created through the construction activities.

c) Shrinkage in service sector

There will also be an indirect socio-economic impact on service enterprises associated with the potential shrinkage in the tourism sector. The tourism sector is recognized to create positive spin-offs to the restaurant and catering services, mechanical services for vehicles, fuel retailers, and arts and crafts in particular. While the shrinkage in the tourism sector may not be sufficient to result in the closure of any of these service businesses overall, it could negatively impact on their turnover and net profits.

In the medium to long term however, a recovery in the tourism sector as well as increased traffic volumes in and out of Lesotho as a result of the upgrade of the Sani Pass could outweigh the initial losses and in turn drive long term economic development in the region. This could also result in increased employment opportunities in the region.

d) Quality of services and infrastructure

²⁹ Eddie Gademan: Principle Engineer, SSI (Consulting Engineers)

The District and Local Municipalities are struggling to address backlogs in the provision and maintenance of services and infrastructure in the KwaSani area (see section 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). In particular, problems with water provision are widely reported, while the condition of electricity and sanitation services are also reported to be unsatisfactory. Concerns are also widely expressed regarding the condition of many of the district roads. Increased pressure associated with the construction phase (i.e. influx of people working³⁰ on the upgrade, increased number of vehicles associated with construction activities) could result in a further reduction in the quality of these services which would negatively impact on the quality of life for local residents. This could be compounded if workers' villages need to be established and require the additional supply of basic service.

5.3.3. Options for mitigation

Mitigation opportunities relate to maximising the economic benefits that could accrue to the local economy. Examples of these include:

- Supporting local accommodation and service sectors for housing temporary and permanent workers
- Maximising the purchase of materials and equipment from local suppliers
- Maximising employment opportunities for local people through preferential employment strategies
- Skills development and training programmes to assist unskilled workers during the construction phase to set themselves up as SMMEs or be in a better position to seek employment in other sectors once the road construction is completed
- Consultation with local residents' associations to develop management procedures to manage worker villages and the expectations around employment opportunities in order to minimize safety and security concerns and risks
- Consultation with local authorities on the planning and siting of the construction of workers' villages and the supply of services to these villages (e.g. water, solid waste disposal, etc.)

Careful medium to long term planning by the District and Local Municipalities and local enterprises to proactively position the economies of Underberg and Himeville to harness the growth potential associated with anticipated increased business (e.g. harnessing new trade opportunities with Lesotho) and tourist numbers could help to maximise long term benefits for the region. These long term potential growth benefits could outweigh short term economic shrinkage.

5.3.4. Rating of significance of the impact

IMPACT	Shrinkage in local economy and decrease in associated socio-economic conditions in the short to medium term
	Description
	Score
	With

³⁰ There have been no reports of an influx of unemployed people in search of work during Phase 1 of the Sani Pass upgrade. Recruitment has been carefully managed with employment opportunities benefitting local residents. It is proposed that the same system will be applied for recruiting workers for the proposed Phase 2 upgrade, and so it is unlikely that the Phase 2 upgrade will result in a large influx of work seekers. There will however be an increase in the number of people working in the area during the construction phase.

			Mitigation
Probability	Probable	3	2
Duration	Medium term	3	3
Extent	Regional	3	3
Magnitude	Low and will cause a slight impact on the processes	4	1
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	30	14
RANKING	Negative	Low	Low

5.4. Change to quality of life of local residents

5.4.1. Description of the issue

Quality of life is influenced by the level of enjoyment and fulfilment derived by humans from the life they live within their local economic, cultural, social, and environmental conditions³¹, and is often closely associated with the sense of place.

The quality of life in the KwaSani area has typically been described by residents as being relatively good and defined by:

- Levels of economic development
- Levels of crime and sense of security
- Sense of community
- Quality of surrounding natural environment

Burglary and stock theft are prevalent in the region and this does negatively affect quality of life. The challenge of controlling drug smuggling across the Lesotho-South African border is also reported an issue (KwaSani IDP 2008/09). The KwaSani IDP associates crime levels with high unemployment and poverty levels in the area, and any increase in unemployment and poverty could result in increase crime and security risks.

One of the features attributed to the quality of life for many residents is the sense of community that characterises the lifestyle for many residents (Underberg Ratepayers Association *pers com.* 2009). Support networks, friendliness of residents and that fact that residents know so many of their neighbours and other residents makes for a strong sense of community that is important for many of the local residents.

Key natural features described by local residents as contributing to their quality of life are the scenic beauty as well as low pollution levels.

5.4.2. Assessment of the impacts

Potential job losses and associated increases in unemployment rates, together with a potential shrinkage in economic activity in the short term, could result in associated reductions in standards of living that could increase the risk of crime in the area. In addition, any influx of people anticipating job creations associated with the construction phase could also increase unemployment levels in the area³². The resultant increased risk of crime and security may negatively impact on quality of life for local residents.

³¹ www.indicators.top10by2010.org/glossary.cfm

³² An influx of people looking for work at the start of the Phase 1 upgrade of the Sani Pass was not reported and it is not therefore anticipated to be a significant issue during the proposed Phase 2 of the upgrade.

While there have been reports of criminal activities on other road construction projects where motorists have been stopped at temporary “stop/go” control points, these incidents have been mainly at night and on main roads (Acer Africa 2006). It therefore seems unlikely that this will be an issue or significant risk during the construction phase of the proposed Sani Pass upgrade since the route is not open outside daylight hours.

The upgrading of the Sani Pass is unlikely to have any impact on crime associated with stock theft and drug smuggling as these activities do not rely on main transport routes such as the Pass.

An influx of new people to the area, or a departure of some residents as a result of perceptions regarding the loss of sense of place and quality of life could result in erosion to the sense of community which would detract from the quality of life for residents.

As described in section 5.3 the current quality of services (e.g. water and electricity supplies) and infrastructure detracts from the quality of life for local residents. Any further decrease in the quality of services would erode the current levels of quality of life for all residents in the KwaSani area. Simply maintaining current levels of services and infrastructure will require additional financial investment from the local authorities.

The scenic beauty of the natural environment will not be lost, however some aspects will be changed, for example the loss of the rugged and sense of remoteness of the Sani Pass area. The construction activities in the short terms could also result in a level of environmental pollution (e.g. visual and dust pollution) which would detract from the current levels of quality of life.

There are however also potential benefits for quality of life associated with growth of the area as a service and transport centre will improve services, employment etc in the area. These could positively impact on the quality of life of some of the poorer sectors of the community.

5.4.3. Options for mitigation

As with impacts to sense of place, the impacts to quality of life cannot easily be regained through mitigation. Mitigation could be attempted through offsets, for example maximising socio-economic benefits to the affected communities during the construction phase through jobs and economic spin offs.

Mitigation measures could also be put into place during the construction phase to ensure careful management and planning of operations to minimise potential impacts to services and infrastructure and crime and security (as described in section 5.3.3).

5.4.4. Rating of significance of the impact

IMPACT	Reduction in quality of life for some local residents in short to medium term		
	Description	Score	With Mitigation
Probability	Improbable	2	1
Duration	Long term	3	3
Extent	Local area	2	2
Magnitude	Low and will cause slight impact on processes	4	2
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x	18	7

RANKING	Probability		
	Negative	Low	Low

5.5. Improved conditions for road users and commuters

5.5.1. *Description of issue*

The Sani Pass road is used by commuters for a range of non-tourism activities. It is an important business route and is an important link for families and friends living across the border in Lesotho. Historically, before the Sani Pass was accessible to motor vehicles, local people travelled on foot and horse or donkey to visit family and friends or to trade in a range of products with people across the border. When the Sani Pass became accessible to motor vehicles and the South African and Lesotho governments established border posts, the movement of people became more regulated (with the requirement of passports), however, it has always been part of the life of people living in this area.

The condition of the Sani Pass road significantly affects the free movement of these people and often restricts some stakeholders from participating in important family events and gatherings (e.g. funerals and weddings), and undertaking important business appointments due to the high cost and lack of availability of transport options on Sani Pass.

The use of the Pass is also currently confined to those who own or have access to 4 x 4 vehicles for transport.

South African Border Post statistics indicate that there are approximately 2 300 non-tourist South African road users driving up the Sani Pass annually (either in their own private vehicles or on public transport). The Underberg Taxi Association operates between the ruins of the old Goodhope Store (at the foot of the Sani Pass) and Underberg, providing a link for passengers coming from Lesotho on Mokhotlong Taxi Association taxis who are taken only as far as the old Goodhope Store.

The South African Border statistics indicate that approximately 13 481 Basotho travellers use the Pass annually, and a large percentage of these can be assumed to rely on taxi transport. In total 16 009 commuters (i.e. including an estimated 2 528 South African non-tourists travellers) are estimated to use this Pass per annum for non-tourism related activities, which is a significant number of travellers.

The route becomes impassable at times during winter and the rainy season, due to snow and rain. Poor travelling conditions make it impossible at times for even 4 x 4 vehicles to navigate the Pass. Poor road conditions also result in very high vehicle maintenance and operating costs for regular road users.

Travel times up and down the Pass are restricted to daylight hours because of the treacherous nature of the route (this is enforced by the operating times of the two Border Posts).

5.5.2. *Assessment of impact*

The proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass could positively impact on road users, improving the quality of the trip as well as road safety. Upgrading the Sani Pass road could also reduce the operating and travel costs for road users, and reduced duration of road closure. As a result of improved safety for

road users, upgrading the Pass could also create the opportunity for extended border control hours. This could increase the use of the Pass by business and private commuters (rather than travelling via Maseru).

The upgrading of the Sani Pass could also make it possible for the members of the Underberg Taxi Association to extend their current route beyond the old Goodhope Store, either up to the Border Post or even into Lesotho to Mokhotlong. While this would need to be negotiated with the Mokhotlong Taxi Association (which currently has 4 x 4 taxis that can operate up and down the length of the Pass) it would mean that the Underberg Taxi Association members could increase their share of the income from commuters using this route (i.e. the Mokhotlong Taxi Association currently charges R70 for their portion of the journey from Mokhotlong while the Underberg Taxi Association only earns R20 for its part of the journey from Goodhope Store to Underberg).

Impacts and issues will start being experienced during the construction phase. All road users are likely to experience some disruptions and negative impacts, as the traffic flow will be unavoidably affected due to the movement of construction vehicles and the construction operations themselves (e.g. narrowing of the road and road closures at times). Risks of road accidents during this time will also be higher.

5.5.3. Options for mitigation

This is a positive impact and no mitigation is required. However for the positive impact to be permanently retained it requires continuous investment in road maintenance once the road has been upgraded. If the road is not maintained these positive impacts could be reversed.

5.5.4. Rating of significance of impact

IMPACT	Improved conditions for business and private commuters using the Sani Pass	
	Description	Score
Probability	Definite	5
Duration	Permanent	5
Extent	National	4
Magnitude	Moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way	6
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	
RANKING	Positive	High

5.6. Loss of sporting events and associated local socio-economic benefits

5.6.1. Description of the issue

A range of sporting events are held in KwaSani annually, and two are held on the Pass specifically:

a) The Sani Pass Transfrontier Mountain Bike Race

The Sani Pass Transfrontier Mountain Bike Race is unique in many respects, and it is one of the few sporting events in South Africa which takes place in a World Heritage Site. It is one of the hardest mountain biking events in South Africa, and the toughness of the event and the ruggedness of the terrain are the key attractions. Riders have the experience of riding through

the unspoiled beauty of a World Heritage Site, with breathtaking views and challenging climbs up the Pass itself. All rides start at the Sani Pass Hotel and three options are offered:

- The 72kms Epic takes riders up Sani Pass, along the Sani Flats in Lesotho, before climbing up Black Mountain Pass from where they turn back to the finish at the Sani Pass Hotel. This is a rare chance to cycle in a World Heritage Site.
- The 42kms Classic takes riders to the top of Sani Pass before turning back to the Hotel.
- The 27kms Family Ride takes riders to the South African Border Post before turning back to the finish at the Hotel.

The event is restricted to 300 bike riders in an attempt to retain the uniqueness and exclusivity of the event. Riders are attracted from all over the Country, and are drawn by the challenging and adventurous character of the event. Upgrading the Pass will change the nature of the route and negatively impact on the current attraction of the event to the extent that it will no longer be suitable for a mountain biking event of this nature. While the opportunity may still exist to arrange an alternative cycling event, the upgrading of the pass will mean that it would no longer be seen as a pure mountain biking event.

b) Sani Stagger

The Sani Stagger is known as 'The Ultimate Endurance Race'. This is an annual event run along the Sani Pass and is organised by the local Sani Athletic Club, under the rules of the KwaZulu Natal Athletics. It has become a popular race on the race calendar, attracting runners from all over South Africa. A total of 560 entries are accepted annually across the two races comprising the Sani Stagger:

- 21,1km down race starts at the Lesotho Border Post and is run down to the Sani Pass Hotel (maximum 160 entries at a fee of R250 per entry)
- 42,2km marathon starts at the Sani Pass Hotel and is run up to the Lesotho Border Post and back down to the Sani Pass Hotel (maximum 400 runners at a fee of R175 per entry)

The need to limit the entries is both as a result of the narrowness of the route as well as a method of retaining the uniqueness and exclusivity of the event. The event proves very popular every year with all the entries for the down run usually being reserved within 48 hours of the entries opening.

The runners are attracted by the rugged terrain and the adventure. The attraction of the event will be altered or even potentially lost if the route is upgraded to a hardened surface. Upgrading of the Sani Pass could negatively impact on the Sani Stagger by being less attractive to the runners currently attracted to the event. There could therefore be a drop off in the number of entries. It is however also possible that the event may become more attractive to another sector of the running fraternity or may remain popular with those who currently do it.

5.6.2. Assessment of impact

Both sporting events are founded on the rugged off-road nature of the Pass. Upgrading of the Pass will therefore remove the unique feature of the events and therefore in all likelihood result in the loss of the events in their current form. This will result in a loss of experience for the participants as well as a loss of economic benefits for the organisers and the economic benefits for a range of support services (accommodation, catering, entertainment etc.) in the KwaSani area.

Each runner in the Sani Stagger is estimated to be accompanied by about 3 family members or friends for the weekend, and similar estimates could be made for the mountain biking event. This influx of event entrants and supporters is estimated to make a significant economic contribution to

the local economy. A decrease in the number of runners and cyclists attracted to the event could therefore also have a negative impact on the local economy.

Some of the funds raised by the Sani Stagger are donated to charity, and the beneficiary is the Clouds of Hope Children’s Christian Care Centre (abandoned or orphaned children) in Underberg. A decrease in the funds raised by the event would in turn negatively impact on the amount of funds donated to the charity.

Once upgraded the Pass could however still be used for running and cycling events, but these would likely appeal to a different market to the current participants. For example if upgraded to a hardened surface a road racing cycling event could be hosted and a road running event could be started.

5.6.3. Options for mitigation

While there would be little mitigation that could be undertaken by the Department of Transport to promote the continuation of the sporting events in their current form, mitigation options are available for the event organisers to continue offering modified the events that would appeal to a new market (e.g. road cyclists and runners). The revised form of these events would however only be possible after the completion of the construction phase. The local socio-economic benefits from the events to the region could therefore be sustained.

5.6.4. Rating of significance of impact

IMPACT			
Loss of socio-economic benefits associated with changes to two sporting events			
	Description	Score	With Mitigation
Probability	Highly probable	4	3
Duration	Permanent	5	2
Extent	Local area	2	2
Magnitude	Low and will cause a slight impact on processes	4	2
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	44	18
RANKING	Negative	Moderate	Low

5.7. Improved road safety

5.7.1. Description of issue

South African Border Post statistics (Annexure 3) indicate that approximately 11 888 motor vehicles travelled up the Pass over 12 months during 2008/09.

Road safety is recognised as an issue associated with the current poor condition of the Pass. Relatively low numbers of accidents have been reported on the Pass in recent time. The Mokhotlong Taxi Association suggested that this is largely due to the fact that drivers recognise the dangers associated with the road and extreme caution is taken when travelling the route because it is so dangerous.

Accidents have nevertheless occurred and in 2005 an international tourist was paralysed in a road accident on the section of the road approaching the Pass (part of the Phase 1 upgrade section). The victim successfully sued the Department of Transport for millions of Rands in damages. The South African Courts found in favour of the claimant on the basis that the Department of Transport had not maintained the road in a safe condition. The Pietermaritzburg High Court Judge said the poor state of the road to Lesotho was an indictment of the Department³³.

Several other more minor accidents have also been reported on the Pass, often associated with brake or gearbox failures.

5.7.2. Assessment of the impact

Upgrading the Pass could reduce the risk of accidents due to improved road safety conditions and reduced wear and tear on vehicles. On the other hand improved conditions may result in increased vehicle speeds on the upgraded road and this could increase the risk of accidents as a result of driver recklessness. Mitigation measures could however be put in place to reduce vehicle speeds and contribute to an overall improvement to road safety.

Road safety during the construction phase is also a key issue, as the movement of heavy machinery, vehicles and other dangerous construction activities (e.g. blasting) could pose a risk to road users and will require careful management and planning.

5.7.3. Options for mitigation

This is a positive impact and no mitigation is required except to put in measures to ensure that safe speeds are maintained on the upgraded road. Furthermore, if the positive impacts to road safety are to be permanently retained, this will require continuous investment in road maintenance once the road has been upgraded. If the road is not maintained these positive impacts could be reversed.

Strict road safety controls must be implemented on the Pass, otherwise increased travelling speeds could reverse the benefits of the upgrade. Examples of these could include:

- Speed checks should be installed to ensure safe operating speeds are not exceeded
- Safety barriers must be installed particularly on sharp bends
- Strict enforcement of weight restrictions to ensure over-loaded vehicles are not permitted on the Pass
- Safe pull over sites (off the road) for drivers to stop to rest or enjoy the views

In addition, strict safety regulations will also be required during the construction phase to avoid incidents of collisions between road users and construction vehicles, or risks of accidents on areas under construction due to poor conditions.

5.7.4. Rating of significance of the impact

IMPACT	Improved road safety and reduced risk of accidents and a increase in road safety on the Pass	
	Description	Score
Probability	Highly probable	4
Duration	Permanent	5
Extent	International	5

³³ http://www.lawlibrary.co.za/professionalupdate/2009/06_02/recentjudgments_kzp.htm

Magnitude	Moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way	6
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	64
RANKING	Positive	High

5.8. Impacts to the Lesotho

The proposed upgrade of the Sani Pass is likely to impact on the people of Lesotho in two ways:

- a) Change to the tourism context in Lesotho
- b) Change to the quality of life and local economic conditions in the Mokhotlong District

5.8.1. Change to the tourism context in Lesotho

a) Description of the issues

An estimated 110 711 tourists visited Lesotho in 2008, but only 18% of these entered through the Sani Pass Border Post (the highest percentage enters through Maseru Border Post)³⁴. For the same reasons as described in section 5.2, there is likely to be a decrease in the short term in the number of tourists entering Lesotho from South Africa up the Sani Pass:

- International tourists, and particularly the day visitors using the 4 x 4 tour operators, may decrease by approximately 75%.
- South African 4 x 4 self drive tourist numbers may decrease by 25%.

However given that Sani Pass only accounts for a relatively small percentage of the tourists entering Lesotho in total, the upgrading of Sani Pass is unlikely to substantially impact on the tourism sector of Lesotho as a whole.

Furthermore, many of the key attractions for day visitors will also remain and continue attracting even day visitors up the Pass. For example the vista from the top of the escarpment, the Basotho cultural experience at 'Skiring', and lunch at the highest pub in Africa at the Sani Top Chalets. Furthermore, overall the 4 x 4 overland adventure holidays in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho will remain unchanged by the upgrading of the Sani Pass.

In the long term it is also expected that the improved condition of the road may attract additional tourists to the area (see section 5.2.2) which could counter the initial negative impact to visitor numbers.

b) Assessment of the impact

• *Impact to accommodation providers*

As is the case on the South African side of the Pass, the success of current accommodation establishments is partially linked to the attraction of the existing Sani Pass 4x4 adventure. The anticipated negative impact to accommodation service providers in the KwaSani area in South Africa is therefore also likely to be experienced by accommodation facilities in the Mokhotlong District of Lesotho. The negative effect will mainly be experienced by those products that are aimed at the tourist wishing to experience the high adventure of traveling up the gravel pass in its current form. These include Sani Top Chalets, No. 10 Riverside, St. James Lodge and Molumong Lodge within the primary affected environment of the Mokhotlong District. The two hotels in Mokhotlong (Senqu and Mokhotlong Hotels) are not

³⁴ Lesotho Tourism Development Cooperation (2009) - 2008 Arrival Statistics Annual Report.

aimed at the tourism market and will unlikely experience a negative impact. This decrease is however anticipated to only be short term. Improved road conditions could encourage more South African tourists to undertake the trip up the Pass as 4 x 4 vehicles would no longer be a prerequisite and this would open the market up to more people (see section 5.2.2).

The potential reduction in international and domestic tourists travelling up the Pass will initially impact on the accommodation and restaurant services at the Sani Top Chalets. A number of the day visitors travelling up the Pass have lunch at the restaurant and the anticipated decrease in these numbers could impact on the current levels of business for the restaurant. The potential increase in South African tourists undertaking the trip up the Pass (as a result of 4 x 4 vehicles no longer being a prerequisite) could enhance business for the Sani Top Chalets in the medium to long term, with the opportunity of having the experience of lunch at the highest pub in Africa becoming accessible to more people.

No. 10 Riverside is a more culturally oriented tourist experience and it therefore offers a more unique and specialized experience to South African and international tourists. No. 10 Riverside is currently very dependent on the overland and specialized tours arranged by the South African 4 x 4 tour operators in Underberg / Himeville. It is too far from the Sani Top to be affected by the anticipated reduction in day visitors up the Sani Pass in the short term. Therefore while it may experience some decline in visitor numbers, the specialized nature of the tourists visiting No. 10 Riverside may minimize the impact. However, because No.10 Riverside is so heavily reliant on business through the South African tour operators, any loss in business to these operators will be felt by No. 10 Riverside unless it is able to start independently marketing itself to access other regional tour operators that have access to international and domestic clients.

St. James Lodge and Molumong Lodge appeal to the 4 x 4 self-drive adventure tourist and the Lodges both have their own marketing and advertising strategies. While some decline in the market is anticipated, the adventure offered by an overland trip through Lesotho as a whole remains and visitor numbers are therefore unlikely to be severely affected by the proposed upgrade of Sani Pass.

- *Impact to complimentary tourism support businesses*

This sector includes cultural visits, traditional dancing and singing, local guides and pony trekking associated with the Sani Pass tour operator business. Due to the high level of dependency on international tourists, largely provided through the South African 4 x 4 tour operators, this sector will be impacted on, but as explained above the impact is anticipated likely to be moderate to low. Again, those directly reliant on the international day visitors to the Pass (such as the operators at Skiring) will be most affected in the short term, while those associated with the overland and specialised tours will be less affected. Furthermore, the medium to long term growth potential in the tourism market linked with the improved accessibility of the area as a result of the upgrading of the Pass, would also offer long term growth opportunities for these stakeholders.

Anticipated reduction in tourists traveling up the Sani Pass in the short term may therefore have a negative impact on tourism operators in Lesotho in the short term. However, if the growth in new markets is realized as a result of the improved road conditions on the Pass, this could support a recovery and long term growth in the market.

c) Options for mitigation

The primary objective of upgrading the Sani Pass is based on the fulfillment of the signed agreement between the Lesotho and South Africa to improve access between the two countries as part of an initiative to improve accessibility between SADC countries. However appropriate consideration needs to be given to the planning of associated economic developments if the true potential is to be harnessed, and the compromising of current investment and tourism operations is to be avoided. This mitigation can only be undertaken by the Lesotho Government (e.g. maintenance and upgrading of road infrastructure in Lesotho) and stakeholders themselves.

The strong reliance by tourism operators in the Mokhotlong District on the tourist market supplied by tourism operators in South Africa via the Sani Pass, is a potential weakness. However this weakness could be mitigated by Lesotho operators expending their marketing efforts in order to attract tourists entering Lesotho through alternative border posts.

The upgrading of the Sani Pass will present significant potential for tourism in the Eastern and Western Districts of Lesotho which could far outweigh the short term losses described above. However this will not happen without a focused effort by tourism stakeholders in Lesotho. Mitigation could include the upgrading of tourism accommodation facilities, signage and service levels, as well the development of appropriate brand and an informed marketing strategy for example to evolve the sector further than the adventure market (MDTP, 2008). In particular, without positive interventions in the Mokhotlong District to entice tourists to stop and stay in the area, any benefit of increased tourist numbers accessing Lesotho via Sani Pass will likely pass through en-route to better accommodations and services elsewhere in Lesotho.

Mitigation options in terms of road design and minimization of visual impacts that may detract from the tourist impacts (as proposed in section 5.2 and 5.7) is the only likely mitigation that could be undertaken by the South African Department of Transport.

d) Rating of significance of impact

Before mitigation the impacts to the tourism sector in the Mokhotlong District may be negative in the short term. However with appropriate mitigation and interventions by the Lesotho Government and stakeholders the upgrading of the Sani Pass could be turned into positive impacts. The impacts with and without mitigation are therefore presented in two separate tables.

Without mitigation:

IMPACT	Reduced sustainability of some tourist accommodation and associated services in the Mokhotlong District to reduction in tourist numbers in the short term	
	Description	Score
Probability	Probable	3
Duration	Short term	2
Extent	International	5
Magnitude	Low and will cause a slight impact on processes	4
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	
RANKING	Negative	Moderate

With mitigation:

IMPACT	Increased business and improved sustainability of some tourism accommodation and associated service providers in Lesotho in the medium to long term	
	Description	Score
Probability	Probable	3
Duration	Permanent	5
Extent	International	5

Magnitude	Moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way	6
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	48
RANKING	Positive	Moderate

Note: The positive impact may only be achieved with substantial mitigation and input by the Lesotho Government and stakeholders. It cannot be facilitated by the Department of Transport or South African stakeholders.

5.8.2. Improved quality of life and economic development in the Mokhotlong District

a) Description of the issues

The proposed upgrade of the Sani Pass is widely and enthusiastically supported by stakeholders (government and private alike) in the Mokhotlong District. The proposed upgrade of the Sani Pass is likely to impact on the people of the Mokhotlong District in a number of ways:

- a) Improved socio-economic conditions in the Mokhotlong District
- b) Improved commuting and travel conditions
- c) Opportunities for development and job creation on the Sani Top and adjacent areas

Mokhotlong is the only town in the District, and is a key source of supplies for residents and trading stores across the district. The economy of Mokhotlong is constrained by its distance and relative isolation from other economic nodes. Travel and transport costs into and out of Mokhotlong are very high. The reliance in the Mokhotlong District on imported goods from South Africa places great importance on the Sani Pass as a trade route. Traders in Mokhotlong purchase a significant percentage of their goods from Pietermaritzburg and Durban, and to a lesser extent from Johannesburg (Mokhotlong Traders *pers. comm.* 2009). The shortest route to transport these goods to Mokhotlong is via the Sani Pass. The condition of the road greatly affects the profitability of their businesses and the affordability of goods to the people in Lesotho. Poor road conditions mean high maintenance and transport costs for the traders³⁵ and the frequency of Pass closure also affects the viability of the traders' businesses. This impacts both on the availability and price of commodities for local residents. Retailers and traders reportedly charge substantially higher prices for goods in Mokhotlong than in other centres in Lesotho, and this is justified by the high transport costs to either get goods up the Sani Pass or via Maseru. The range of food and luxury commodities available in Mokhotlong is also limited.

The condition of the Sani Pass road also affects the free movement of people from Lesotho to South Africa. Residents in the Mokhotlong District widely report access to South Africa via the Sani Pass as being important for a range of reasons, primarily:

- Access to schools for their children
- Access to health care facilities in South Africa (as far as Durban and Pietermaritzburg)
- Access to family and friends
- Recreation (such as shopping expeditions, access to the sea, visiting shopping malls etc)

An estimated 13 477 Basotho annually travel down Sani Pass to South Africa in public or private transport³⁶. The Mokhotlong Taxi Association has ten 4 x 4 taxis operating between Mokhotlong and the old Goodhope Store (just outside Himeville) per day. All ten taxis usually operate in peak seasons (e.g. around the festive season) ferrying about 150 people per day. Sometimes some of the taxis are

³⁵ For example, traders are forced to overnight in South Africa as they cannot complete the trip in one day because of the time it takes to cover the short distance of the Pass and the restricted operating times of the Border Posts.

³⁶ Statistics obtained from the South African Police Services at the Sani Pass Border Post (Annexure 3)

even required to make more than one trip per day to meet the demand of commuters. About three taxis (carrying about 45 people in total) may be used per day out of peak season. The purchase and maintenance costs of the 4 x 4 taxis are very high and they are limited to 15 seater vehicles. These costs are reflected in the fares with a one way trip from Mokhotlong to Goodhope Store costing R70 per person. Cost and safety are widely regarded as limitations for free travel for local residents. Poor weather conditions and closure of the Pass are not only an inconvenience to the commuters, but also affect the business owners in Mokhotlong and the incomes to the taxi operators.

b) Assessment of impacts

Improved access and travel conditions on the Sani Pass will help to reduce the transport costs and therefore retail prices of commodities and, due to affordability, potentially also increase the range of goods available from retailers in Mokhotlong. Upgrading the Sani Pass would also open up the opportunities for residents to travel to South African themselves to purchase items not available or at lower cost than in Mokhotlong.

Upgrading the Sani Pass is therefore have a significant positive impact on local residents across the Mokhotlong District, as well as taxi operators, traders and residents wishing to travel to South Africa (for education, healthcare and shopping opportunities). The upgrading of the Sani Pass and the associated improved ease and affordability of travel via the Pass therefore has a strong influence on the quality of life, social well-being and socio-economic circumstances of many households in the Mokhotlong District of Lesotho.

Increased number of travellers could increase population pressures in the vicinity of Sani Top through increased demand for permanent settlement and infrastructure development. This could pose a risk for environmental degradation in this fragile environment. Increased settlement in this area would also impact on tourism experiences if not properly managed as the 'wilderness' nature of Sani Top would be altered.

The Sani Top and Flats are zones by District Administration and Traditional Council as summer grazing (important for maintenance of traditional and commercial livestock herds). There is therefore a restriction of the transformation of grazing land to other land uses which prevents uncontrolled development in the area. An increase in tourist numbers through the area in the long term could however encourage the establishment of new tourism developments in the vicinity of the Sani Top³⁷. The chance of uncontrolled development will therefore be prevented if controls are enforced by the traditional and Government authorities of Lesotho.

If there is an increase in settlement density and development on the Sani Flats through, this could result in a transformation of the sense of place with a loss of the rugged wilderness character. However sense of place is viewed differently by different sectors of society. While it may be a negative impact to tourism, the Basotho community living close to the Sani Pass largely view this development as a positive influence on their current quality of life, lifestyles and livelihoods.

c) Opportunities for mitigation

The impacts of the road upgrade on socio-economic conditions in the Mokhotlong District are anticipated to be positive. The only risk would be uncontrolled development in the vicinity of the Sani Top. However this forms part of the World Heritage Site and as such development must be controlled. Furthermore traditional and Government controls are in place to regulate and unauthorised attempts to develop in the Sani Flats area.

³⁷ Reports from the Principle Chief and District Administrator are that there is already an application for a new hotel development in the vicinity of the Sani Top Chalets

IMPACT Improved socio-economic conditions for residents in the Mokhotlong District		
	Description	Score
Probability	Highly probable	4
Duration	Permanent	5
Extent	International	5
Magnitude	Moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way	6
SCORE	Significance Points = (Magnitude + Duration + Extent) x Probability	64
RANKING	Positive	High

5.9. Cumulative Impacts

In a worst case scenario, the cumulative impacts of a decrease in tourists to the KwaSani area (and the associated reduction of tour operators and accommodation providers), the change in sense of place (and the associated relocation of some upper and middle income earners away from KwaSani), shrinkage in the local economy and degradation of services and infrastructure could have a significant impact on the KwaSani Municipality. It is possible that the socio-economic conditions in Underberg and the surrounds could deteriorate to such an extent that this could start eroding the overall tourist attractions of the area. This could result in a further loss in tourists and an associated decline in tourism operations and additional shrinkage in the economy. If this negative cycle were perpetuated as a result of a lack of appropriate mitigation, the KwaSani area could lose its tourist appeal and lose any potential of harnessing the new tourism market potential that may be associated with the upgrading of the Sani Pass.

In this case the magnitude of the impact of the proposed upgrading of Sani Pass would be negative and would be of high significance. The probability of this occurring is however assessed to be improbable (i.e. some possibility but low likelihood).

However, in the case that adequate mitigation is implemented (by the DOT as well as local stakeholders as outlined in section 5) the proposed upgrading of the Sani Pass could have a positive cumulative impact in the medium to long term for the KwaSani area as a result in the net growth in domestic tourists, increased trade opportunities with Lesotho, and the associated economic development. While this would likely still have a negative impact to the sense of place for many residents.

6. ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

The DOTs preferred alternative for the upgrading of Sani Pass is Alternative 5 (improve geometrics, upgrade drainage, construct bridges and retaining walls, hard surface from km 14 to km 33) (see section 2 for details on alternatives).

Alternative 3 was the alternative that was widely supported by tourism stakeholders (in KwaSani and Mokhotlong). Alternative 3 involves improving geometrics, upgrade drainage, retain splash-throughs, and construct retaining walls and re-gravel but retaining it as an un-tarred gravel road (Alternative 3). The Department of Transport has however reported that Alternative 3 is not sustainable in the long term due to insufficient fill material for the ongoing maintenance and repair of the gravel surface that would be required. This alternative is also reported to result in a range of negative environmental impacts associated with trying to secure this fill material.

Alternative 4 involves improving the geometrics, upgrade drainage, construct bridges, retaining walls, hard surface up to km 25, gravel to km 33). Alternative 4 will address the same issues as Alternative 3 regarding improving the geometrics of the road to control the drainage and erosion. A hard surface will be constructed for the first portion of the road, up to km 25, and the remaining section, to km 33, will remain as a gravel surface and be maintained on a regular basis. This alternative will meet most of the DOT's objectives of the proposed project, and is a potential compromise between the goals of the DOT and the wishes of tourism stakeholders.

The table below illustrates the anticipated difference in impacts associated with Alternative 3 and Alternative 4:

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT ASSOCIATED WITH ALTERNATIVE 5	DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT ASSOCIATED WITH ALTERNATIVE 3	DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT ASSOCIATED WITH ALTERNATIVE 4
SOUTH AFRICA: Negative impacts		
Change to sense of place for local residents in the primary affected environment	Reduced reduction in change to sense of place as the retention of the gravel road would retain the perceptions of ruggedness and wilderness experience on the Pass	Limited change to sense of place as a result of retention of a portion of the gravel surface and associated restriction for 4 x 4 vehicles on the pass only
Reduced sustainability of 4 x 4 day tour operators and closure of some of the operators due to insufficient tourist numbers	Little or no impact on tourist numbers using tour operators to access the Pass and the Sani Top	Some loss to the attractiveness of the 4 x 4 adventure aspect of the Pass due to upgrading, but retention of some part of the tour operators business
Reduced sustainability of specialist tour operators due to reduced tourist numbers	Little or no impact on tourist numbers using specialist tour operators to access the Pass and the overland adventure holiday in Lesotho	Little or no impact on tourist numbers using specialist tour operators to access the Pass and the overland adventure holiday in Lesotho
Reduced 4 x 4 self drive domestic tourists to the KwaSani area	Unlikely to substantially reduce domestic tourists on self-drive holidays up the Pass, and a potential increase in numbers due to reduced wear and tear on vehicles and improved road safety	Unlikely to substantially reduce domestic tourists on self-drive holidays up the Pass, and a potential increase in numbers due to reduced wear and tear on vehicles and improved road safety
Reduced business and for some tourism accommodation providers in short term but with medium to long term growth opportunities associated with potential increased domestic market	No loss of tourists for accommodation venues and a potential increase in tourists associated with increased self drive domestic tourists due to reduced wear and tear on vehicles and improved road safety	Little or no loss of tourists for accommodation venues and a potential increase in tourists associated with increased self drive domestic tourists due to reduced wear and tear on vehicles and improved road safety
Shrinkage in local economy and decrease in associated socio-economic conditions in short term with long term growth opportunities associated with new market opportunities	Little change to local economy, however opportunity for limited growth associated with improved condition of Pass and potential for small increase for domestic tourists, but little long term growth as only limited new market opportunities	Little change to local economy, however opportunity for limited growth associated with improved condition of Pass and potential for small increase for domestic tourists, but little long term growth as only limited new market opportunities
Reduction in quality of life for local residents if Municipality is unable to maintain levels of services and infrastructure	Reduction in quality of life for local residents if Municipality is unable to maintain levels of services and infrastructure	Reduction in quality of life for local residents if Municipality is unable to maintain levels of services and infrastructure
Loss of socio-economic benefits associated with	No change to current sporting events	Limited loss of socio-economic benefits associated

two sporting events		with two sporting events
SOUTH AFRICA: Positive impacts		
Improved conditions and road safety for business and private commuters using the Sani Pass	Improved conditions would be retained but restricted to 4 x 4 vehicles only	Improved conditions would be retained but restricted to 4 x 4 vehicles only
Increased road safety and reduced risk of accidents if speed and safety control mitigation measures adequately implemented	Increased road safety and reduced risk of accidents if speed and safety control mitigation measures adequately implemented	Increased road safety and reduced risk of accidents if speed and safety control mitigation measures adequately implemented
LESOTHO: Negative Impacts		
Reduced sustainability of some tourist accommodation and associated services in the Mokhotlong District to reduction in tourist numbers in the short term	No loss of tourists for accommodation venues and a potential increase in tourists associated with increased self drive domestic tourists due to reduced wear and tear on vehicles and improved road safety	No loss of tourists for accommodation venues and a potential increase in tourists associated with increased self drive domestic tourists due to reduced wear and tear on vehicles and improved road safety
LESOTHO: Positive Impacts		
Increased business and improved sustainability of some tourism accommodation and associated service providers in Lesotho (if mitigation is successfully implemented by Lesotho Government and stakeholders)	Positive impact to tourism in the long terms would likely be retained as a result of increased in visitor numbers, but little long term growth as only limited new market opportunities (i.e. 4 x 4 only)	Positive impact to tourism in the long terms would likely be retained as a result of increased in visitor numbers, but little long term growth as only limited new market opportunities(i.e. 4 x 4 only)
Improved socio-economic conditions for residents in the Mokhotlong District	Improved socio-economic conditions for residents in the Mokhotlong District, but would be limited due to continued 4 x 4 vehicle restrictions	Improved socio-economic conditions for residents in the Mokhotlong District, but would be limited due to continued 4 x 4 vehicle restrictions

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The proposed upgrade of the Sani Pass would result in a range of positive *and* negative impacts in South Africa and Lesotho, with some stakeholders benefitting and others losing:

Description	Impact	Significance	
		Without Mitigation	With Mitigation
Change to sense of place	Negative	Moderate	Moderate
Reduced sustainability of 4 x 4 day tour operators and closure of some of the operators due to insufficient tourist numbers	Negative	High	High
Reduced sustainability of specialist tour operators due to reduced tourist numbers	Negative	Moderate	Moderate
Loss of the 4 x 4 experience up the Sani Pass resulting in reduced domestic 4 x4 self drive tourists to the KwaSani area	Negative	Moderate	Low
Reduced business and potential closure of some tourism accommodation providers in short term to medium	Negative	Moderate	Low
Shrinkage in local economy and decrease in associated socio-economic conditions in the short to medium term	Negative	Low	Low
Reduction in quality of life for some local residents in short to medium term	Negative	Low	Low
Improved conditions for business and private commuters using the Sani Pass	Positive	High	
Loss of socio-economic benefits associated with changes to two sporting events	Negative	Moderate	Low
Improved road safety and reduced risk of accidents and a increase in road safety on the Pass	Positive	High	
Reduced sustainability of some tourist accommodation and associated services in the Mokhotlong District to reduction in tourist numbers in the short term	Negative	Moderate	
Increased business and improved sustainability of some tourism accommodation and associated service providers in Lesotho in the medium to long term	Positive		Moderate
Improved socio-economic conditions for residents in the Mokhotlong District	Positive		High

The implementation of Alternative 5 for the proposed upgrade will primarily result in a short term negative impact for the tourism sector in KwaSani (which is a major driver of the local economy) as well as a loss of some features of the local sense of place and quality of life for local residents. There is however a chance for these negative impacts to KwaSani tourism to be offset if appropriate mitigation is implemented through marketing and branding. In the long term, the upgrading of the Sani Pass could result in growth in the tourism sector through the development of new markets (e.g. increased access to the Pass by non-4 x 4 vehicle owners). This would also spill over into local economic development.

While the net impact in Lesotho will likely be positive for Mokhotlong District stakeholders in general, it could initially result in negative impacts for tourism stakeholders in the District. Again this could be offset with appropriate mitigation undertaken by the tourism stakeholders themselves, and this could result in net benefits for tourism development in Lesotho.

Alternative 4 could however provide an opportunity to phase in the upgrade, which could help to minimise or mitigate short term negative impacts (with only the first part of the Pass upgraded to a hardened surface in the short term). Alternative 4 could initially be implemented, with Alternative 5 only being implemented when there is no longer fill material available to maintain the upper reaches of the Pass as a gravel surface (in the medium to longer term). This alternative would provide stakeholders, particularly tourism operators, the opportunity to adjust their businesses in response to a gradual change to the adventure experience on the Pass, rather than an abrupt short term adjustment to the market (associated with the upgrading of the entire Pass to a hardened surface) which is more difficult to adapt to. This combination of alternative 4 and 5 could provide the opportunity for minimising short term negative impacts while enhancing the opportunity for the medium to long term potential positive impacts.

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ANNEXURE 1

Stakeholders Consulted During Social Impact Assessment

1. South Africa Stakeholders (see Annexure 2 for tourism stakeholder list)

Name	Organisation
Captain T. Khumalo	Station Commander SAPS Sani Pass Border Post
Councillor M B Banda	Mayor KwaSani Local Municipality
Hamilton Thusi	Member Underberg Ratepayers' Association
Maggie Bather	Store Manager Kuhle Craft Shop
Mr John Jackson	Chairperson Underberg Rate Payers' Association
Michael Dlamini	Tourism Officer KwaSani Tourism
Nandi Dlamini	Director Economic and Community Services, Sisonke District Municipality
Nhle Msomi	Admin Clerk SAPS Sani Pass Border Post
Nompumelelo Molefe	Tourism Officer Sisonke District Municipality
Sthembile Sondezi	Community Development Officer KwaSani Local Municipality
Jabulani Sondezi	KwaSani LM- LED Manager
Kenny Keith	Underberg Taxi Association - Chairperson
Themba Mtolo	Underberg Taxi Association
Councillor Ndlovu	KwaSani Local Municipality
Makhotatso Tsito	District Administrator
A Hlophe	KwaPitela Development Committee-Dept Chair
Sara Radebe	KwaPitela Development Committee-Chair
Trish Crawley	Sani Stagger
Sam Knox	Sani Transfrontier Mountain Bike Race

2. Lesotho stakeholders

Name of representative	Organization
Makhothatso Tsita	District Administrator Mokhotlong District
Morena Mathialira Seiso	Principal Chief Liphamola Council
Molefe John Mpesi	DA's Office Mokhotlong District
Thabo Mokotso	DA's Office Mokhotlong District
Ariol Nkune	Trader Mokhotlong District
Chesetsi Ntsiki	Agriculture Mokhotlong District
Frans Mathaba	Roads Mokhotlong District
Khoabane Khalema	District Council Mokhotlong District
Lebokeng Radabane	DCC Mokhotlong District
Malineo Morojele	Mokhotlong Hotel Mokhotlong District
Malingo Lekhotsa	Senqu Hotel Mokhotlong District
Mamatebele Hoohlo	Education Mokhotlong District
Manapo Mokitini	DHA Health Mokhotlong District
Masempi Moreki	Public Health Mokhotlong District

Mohlabana Tsunyane	Roads Mokhotlong District
Motibang Tsumane	Mokhotlong Taxi Association
Khotsang Moshoeshoe	Lesotho-KZN Taxi Association
Matoetoe Masaballa	Mokhotlong Taxi Association
Mr Matela	Principal Roads Engineer (PRE) National Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Mrs Malie	Principal Secretary Ministry of Tourism
Rossinah Mabeleng	Administrator Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation
Jonathan Aldour	Sani Top Chalets

ANNEXURE 2

Tourism Stakeholders Consulted During the Impact Assessment

1. STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATING IN ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS WORKSHOP

(HELD AT UNDERBERG COUNTRY CLUB 10H00 28 APRIL 2009)

- Lowlands B&B
- Mkomazana
- Tumble In B&B
- Brentwood Inn
- Karmichael B&B

- Sani Lodge Backpackers

- Cedar Garden

- Lake Glencarri

2. ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS RESPONDING TO QUESTIONNAIRE

- Pied Piper Expeditions

- Moorcroft Manor Country House

- Sani Manor

- Birches B&B

- Molumong Lodge

- Sani Pass Hotel and Leisure Resort

- Giants Cup Wilderness Reserve

- Pennygum Country Cottages

- St James Lodge

- Louwlands B&B

3. STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATING IN TOUR OPERATORS WORKSHOP

(HELD AT SANI LODGE BACKPACKERS 09H00 14 APRIL 2009)

- Russell Suchet Sani Lodge backpackers

- Simone Suchet Sani Lodge backpackers

- Kobus Van Den Berg Chairman - Southern Drakensberg Community Tourism Association

- Chris Wheeler Albizia Tours

- Mondli Miya Thaba Tours
- Ian Foster Private Tour Guide
- Chris Corbett Off-road Adventures
- Lucky Shezi Major Adventures
- Daniela Schulze Major Adventures
- Kelvin Strachan Big Sky Safaris

4. TOUR OPERATORS PARTICIPATING IN SURVEY

- Major Adventures
- Thaba Tours
- Sani Pass Tours
- Drakensberg Adventures

5. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGENTS PARTICIPATING IN SURVEY

- Cachet Tours
- Drifters
- AfriFriends – Unique African Journeys
- Highline Tours and travel
- Dragonfly Africa
- Celafrica Tours
- African Insight

ANNEXURE 3 Border Post Statistics of Road Users

Departures from South Africa 2008 / 2009

These statistics were obtained from the South African Police Border Post at Sani Pass in June 2009. No statistics were available for October 2008, therefore May 2008 – May 2009 has been used to try to still reflect a 12 month period:

MONTH	Motor Vehicles	South African Citizens	Foreigners (Including Lesotho)	Lesotho Nationals only	Foreigners (Excluding Lesotho Nationals)
May 2008	892	2282	2152	934	1218
June	842	1640	2108	1000	1108
July	1073	2268	3170	996	2174
August	859	2080	2675	1095	1580
September	808	1901	3260	1182	2078
November	957	1560	3467	972	2495
December	1070	1889	4111	2960	1151
January 2009	1494	3339	4789	630	4159
February	952	2007	2223	700	1523
March	718	1473	1427	852	575
April	881	1548	4056	1282	2774
May	1342	3296	3004	878	2126
Total	11888	25283	36442	13481	22961

ANNEXURE 4
SIA Tourism Survey Questionnaires

(1) SANI PASS USER QUESTIONNAIRE

To be completed *before* your trip up the Pass

- 1. Country of Residence**
 - a. South African City/Town _____ Province _____
 - b. _____
Lesotho City/Town _____ Region _____
 - c. _____
International

- 2. Age**
 - a. Under 20
 - b. 21 – 45
 - c. 45 – 65
 - d. Over 65

- 3. Number of people traveling with you in your party** _____

- 4. What is the reason you are using this road.**
 - a. Business
 - b. Commuting (e.g. visiting family, passing through are en-route etc)
 - c. Tourist

- 5. Tourist Only: Is this your first visit**
 - a. Yes
 - b. No - If No - How many previous visits and over how many years _____

- 6. Business / Commuters Only: How often do you use this road:**
 - a. 1 – 5 times per month
 - b. 6 – 10 times per month
 - c. 10 – 20 times per month
 - d. 20 – 30 times per month
 - e. more

- 7. Where are you coming from** _____ **Where are you going to** _____

- 8. Did you stay in the area last night:** **South Africa / Lesotho**
 - a. Name of town _____

- 9. Name of accommodation venue** _____

- 10. Will you be staying in the area tonight?** **South Africa / Lesotho**
 - a. Name of town _____
 - b. Name of accommodation venue _____

- 11. How many nights in total in the area?** _____

- 12. Mode of Travel**
 - a. Organized Tour Name of Tour Company _____

(local) or (Regional) or (International)
 - b. Hire vehicle

- c. Own Vehicle (local) or (Regional) or (International)
- d. Taxi / public Transport

13. Tourists only: On a scale of 1 - 5 how would you rate the following as attractions of the Sani Pass (1=little attraction 5= great attraction)

- a. Mountain Scenery
- b. Soft Adventure
- c. Hard Adventure
- d. Visiting Lesotho and learning about its culture
- e. Wildlife
- f. Birdlife
- g. Plants and flowers
- h. The 4 x 4 experience

14. For you, what is the most significant attraction which would / could bring you back again to this area

15. Would your experience be affected by upgrading the Sani Pass to a hardened surface:

- a. Yes if yes why _____
- b. No if not why _____

16. Tourists only: On a scale of 1 – 5 how do you feel about the following statements (1=No/5= Yes)

- a. Upgrading the Sani Pass road to a tar or concrete surface will have a positive effect on tourism
- b. Upgrading of the Sani Pass will have positive effect on the local economy
- c. Upgrading of the Sani Pass attract more visitors
- d. Leave the pass as it is
- e. The trip up Sani Pass is the only main attraction to visiting this area

17. Would you like to raise any other issues?

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

(2) SANI PASS EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

To be completed *after* your trip up the Pass

1. Did you complete a questionnaire before your Sani Pass experience?

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. Country of Residence

- a. South African City/Town _____ Province _____
- b. Lesotho City/Town _____ Region _____

3. Age

- a. Under 20
- b. 21 – 45
- c. 45 – 65
- d. Over 65

4. **Tourists only:** On a scale of 1 - 5 how would you rate the following as attractions of the Sani Pass (1=little attraction 5= great attraction)

- a. Mountain Scenery _____
- b. Soft Adventure_____
- c. Hard Adventure_____
- d. Visiting Lesotho and learning about its culture__
- e. Wildlife_____
- f. Birdlife_____
- g. Plants and flowers__
- h. The 4 x 4 experience_

5. **Having completed the trip up the pass – what turned out to be the most significant attraction** _____

6. **Based on your experience would you come back again to this area again if the road surface was upgraded to all weather hard top surface**

a. Yes -If yes why_____

7. No -If No why_____

8. **Would you recommend it to friends/tourists if the road surface was upgraded to all weather hard top surface**

a. Yes -If yes why_____

b. No -If No why_____

9. **Tourists only:** On a scale of 1 – 5 how do you feel about the following statements (1=No / 5= Yes)

- a. Upgrading the Sani Pass road to a tar or concrete surface will have a positive effect on tourism
- b. Upgrading of the Sani Pass will have positive effect on the local economy
- c. Upgrading of the Sani Pass attract more visitors
- d. Leave the pass as it is
- e. The trip up Sani Pass is the only main attraction to visiting this area

10. **Would you like to raise any other issues?**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

(3) REGIONAL & INTERNATIONAL TOUR OPERATORS SURVEY

1. BUSINESS DETAILS:

a. Business Name: _____

b. Contact Person: _____

c. E-mail address: _____

2. MARKETING INFORMATION

a. List in order of priority (starting with most important) the key attractions / Key selling points of the Southern Drakensberg region.

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

- iv. _____
- v. _____
- vi. _____

- b. On a scale of 1-5 (0 = not applicable; 5 = greatest; 1 = least) the importance of the following in marketing the Southern Drakensberg to your clients:
 - i. Mountain Scenery
 - ii. Adventure
 - iii. Visiting Lesotho and Learning about its culture
 - iv. Wildlife
 - v. Bird watching
 - vi. Plants and flowers
 - vii. The 4 x 4 experience

- c. Sani Pass is the only attraction for including the Southern Drakensberg in an itinerary.
 - i. Yes: _____
 - ii. No: _____

- d. If Sani Pass is upgraded to a hardened surface, thereby not requiring a 4 x 4 how would this affect your marketing of the Southern Drakensberg, tick appropriate boxes (select as many as are appropriate):
 - i. Not at all. Everything will remain the same
 - ii. Will still be included but Local 4 x 4 tour operators will no longer be used
 - iii. Sani Pass will no longer be included but will remain an optional tour
 - iv. Sani Pass tour will be replaced by an extended Lesotho & Cultural tour
 - v. Changing of current routes to include an overnight in Lesotho in addition to overnight in the Himeville / Underberg area
 - vi. An overnight in Himeville / Underberg will be replaced with an overnight in Lesotho
 - vii. An overnight in Himeville / Underberg could be replaced with an overnight in Lesotho
 - viii. Completely new route including the Eastern Lesotho Highlands and the eastern Free State would be attractive.
 - ix. Other.

3. CURRENT TOUR INFORMATION

- a. Please indicate (yes or no) below the nature of the tours that your company is currently sending to the Southern Drakensberg.
 - i. Tailor-made Guided Tours: _____
 - ii. Tailor-made Self Drive Tours: _____
 - iii. Scheduled Departure Tours: _____

- b. Please provide an indication of the frequency and size of the groups that your company sends to Sani Pass by circling the appropriate group sizes.
 - i. 1-5 pax:
 - ii. 1-10 pax
 - iii. 1-20 pax
 - iv. 1-30 pax
 - v. 30+ pax

- c. Please indicate (yes or no) if and how Sani Pass is featured in your tour packages:
 - i. Not at all: _____
 - ii. An included activity: _____
 - iii. An optional activity: _____
 - iv. If optional what percentage of clients do the Sani Pass Tour: _____ %

- d. Do you currently make use of local 4 x 4 tour operators in Himeville / Underberg for Sani Pass or Lesotho guided tours (yes or no): _____
- e. Do you currently make use of accommodation in Himeville / Underberg area (yes or no) If no please indicate from where your clients are travelling to Sani Pass: _____

- f. If the pass was upgraded to an all weather hardened surface accessible for all vehicles
- g. How would this affect your marketing of the Southern Drakensberg:
 - i. We will stop marketing it all together
 - ii. We will increase / decrease Tailor-made Guided tours (circle appropriate answer)
 - iii. We will increase / decrease Tailor-made Self-drive tours (circle appropriate answer)
 - iv. We will increase / decrease Scheduled Guided tours (circle appropriate answer)
 - v. Please use the space provided to add additional comments:

- h. Would you make use of local tour operators in Himeville / Underberg for Sani Pass or Lesotho guided tours (yes or no): _____
- i. Would you make use of accommodation in Himeville / Underberg area (yes or no):

ANNEXURE 5 IMPACT RATING AND SCORING SYSTEM

The significance (quantification) of potential environmental impacts is determined using a ranking scale, based on the following (terminology has been taken from the Guideline Documentation on EIA Regulations, of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, April 1998):

- Probability of occurrence (how likely is it that the impact may occur?)
- Duration of occurrence (how long may it last?)
- Magnitude (severity) of impact (will the impact be of high, moderate or low severity?)
- Extent of impact (will the impact affect the national, regional or local environment, or only that of the site?)

Each of these factors has been assessed for each potential impact using the following ranking scales:

Probability	Duration
1 - very improbable (probably will not happen)	1 - of a very short duration (0–1 years)
2 - improbable (some possibility, but low likelihood)	2 - of a short duration (2-5 years)
3 - probable (distinct possibility)	3 - medium-term (5–15 years)
4 - highly probable (most likely)	4 - long term (> 15 years)
5 - definite (impact will occur regardless of any prevention measures)	5 - permanent
Extent	Magnitude
1 - limited to the site	0 - small and will have no effect on the environment
2 - limited to the local area	2 - minor and will not result in an impact on processes
3 - limited to the region	4 - low and will cause a slight impact on processes
4 - will be national	6 - moderate and will result in processes continuing but in a modified way
5 - will be international	8 - high (processes are altered to the extent that they temporarily cease)
	10 - very high and results in complete destruction of patterns and permanent cessation of processes

The environmental significance of each potential impact is then be assessed using the following formula:

$$\text{Significance Points (SP)} = (\text{Magnitude} + \text{Duration} + \text{Extent}) \times \text{Probability}$$

The maximum value is 100 Significance Points (SP). Potential environmental impacts were rated as high, moderate or low significance on the following basis:

- < 30 significance points = **LOW** environmental significance.
- 31- 60 significance points = **MODERATE** environmental significance
- > 60 significance points = **HIGH** environmental significance

ANNEXURE 6

Calculations of Occupancy Rates

Establishment Name	Owner/ Manager	Beds	Occupancy	Weighted Occupancy
Albizia House B&B	Meg & Chris Wheeler	6	30%	1.8
Drakensberg Gardens Resort	Rob & Helen Gooderson	400	55%	220
Eagles' Rock Retreat	Barbara Errol King	27	65%	17.55
Eland Valley Resort	Nazeera Baddat	16	55%	8.8
Elgin B&B & Farm Cottages	Jeannine Bonsma	12	64%	7.68
Giants Cup Wilderness Reserve	Wolf/Caroline Avni	50	45%	22.5
Himeville Arms	Fiona	130	60%	78
Lake Naverone	Paul van Tichelen	42	55%	23.1
Penwarn Country Lodges	Debbie Hibbert	6	32%	1.92
Sani Top Chalet	Jonathan Aldous	40	35%	14
Taylor's B&B	Edith Taylor	12	30%	3.6
Thekwane's Nest	Keith & Wendy Maree	14	65%	9.1
Sani Manor	Kobus van der Berg	6	32%	1.92
Umzimkulu River Lodge	Lynn & Steve Williams	39	51%	19.89
TOTAL		800		54%

Estimated bednights available in KwaSani per night	2500
Annual bednights available	912500
Average annual bednights sold at 54% occupancy	492750