

**Blue Flag Beaches in the Eastern Cape: Implications for Tourism, the
Environment and Socio-economy.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own original work, except where stated, and that it has not been submitted for a degree to any other university.

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ABSTRACT

The Blue Flag programme in South Africa is managed by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). The main objective of the Blue Flag is to improve the understanding of the coastal environment and to promote the incorporation of environmental issues in the decision making process. Blue Flag programmes promote sustainable development in fresh water and marine areas and this programme challenges the beach operators and Municipalities to achieve high standard of water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management and safety and services. The study seeks to investigate the effects of the Blue Flag award on the environment and tourism at selected Eastern Cape beaches. The research was conducted on the following beaches Gonubie in East London, Middle beach in Kenton on Sea, Wells in Port Elizabeth and Cape St Francis in Kouga municipality.

This study employed qualitative research methods with interviews that were conducted and secondary information from WESSA that were analysed. This study suggests that Blue Flag programme should receive support from the Municipal councillors so that they provide all the necessary support to the programme. One of the key findings are that Municipalities that source funding elsewhere for the Blue Flag award (under one of the National Departments Coast Care projects) are more successful in retaining the award. The study recommends that the public should be educated on how to keep the beaches clean and safe. Business owners have confirmed that they receive benefits in having the Blue Flag in their areas and it has been evident that the Blue Flag has contributed to the socio-economy of the area, and there is an increase in tourists. Business owners

need to be encouraged to assist in making sure that the beaches receive and retain the award. There is a need to educate the public about the Blue Flag and the public have to be encouraged to keep the beaches clean and to take ownership of their beaches.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is defined as the activities of persons travelling to and staying in a place outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purpose (Doswell, 1997). It is also perceived as being sum relations and phenomena resulting from travel and stay of non-residents, in so far stay does not lead to permanent residence and is not connected with any permanent or temporary earning activity. Vanhove (2005) describes tourism as the entirety of interrelations and phenomena which result from people travelling to and stopping at places which are neither their main continuous domiciles, nor places of work, either for leisure or in the context of business activities, or study. It is deemed to include any activity concerned with the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and their activities during the stay at these destinations (Vanhove, 2005). Tourism can therefore be described as the sum of relations and phenomena which result from travelling and visiting an area by non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity (Keyser, 2002).

Tourism is usually viewed as being multidimensional, possessing physical, social, cultural, economic and political characteristics. Tourism is distinct from other sectors, in that, it is a cross-cutting sector and it involves a big diversity of services and

professions, which is linked to many other economic activities and policy areas. It is made up of five different sectors; these are: accommodation, food and beverage services, recreation and entertainment, transportation, and travel services (Oludele et al., 2009). Although tourism is not a panacea for economic development it does have some advantages over other sectors for developing pro-poor growth. Pro-poor tourism is defined as tourism that generates net benefits for the poor. Benefits may be economic, but they may be social, environmental or cultural. Urban tourism is one of the main factors of economic increases of European cities. Eco-tourism has been defined variously as responsible travel to natural areas that concerns natural environment and sustain wellbeing of the local people (Asandi et al., 2011).

With the advent of political change in South Africa in 1995, the country's potential to development her considerable tourism assets was significantly increased. The new government was faced with considerable challenges, not least of which were mitigation of the rampant unemployment and historic underdevelopment in the country's rural communities. Government seized on tourism as a catalyst for the development of rural areas (Ulosoy et al., 2011). In 1995, the Reconstruction and Development Programme was adopted as Government strategy to bring about fundamental change in the country. In 1996, the National White Paper Development and promotion of tourism in South Africa was published and unequivocally stated that there was an urgent need to create sustainability of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The tourism industry, more than any other industry, can provide sturdy, effective and sustainable legs for the RDP to walk on (Government of South Africa, 1996). Prior to 1995, wildlife and its

related activities were regarded as the pivot of rural tourism in the country. Rural tourism is increasingly conceived and utilized as an instrument of socio-economic development (Butler and Clack, 1992; Ganon, 1994; Greffe, 1994; Luloff et al., 1994; Shaw and Williams, 1994). It is also argued that tourism is best promoted as a complement to an already thriving rural economy as opposed to one that is weak and in which tourism will create a highly unbalanced income and employment distribution (Butler and Clark, 1992). These contentions underpin the argument that tourism should not be relied on as the economic savior of rural areas but should form part of a wider economic diversification strategy (Gannon, 1994) through which rural tourism may fulfill its promise in providing an additional income stream to rural communities and become a vehicle for the development and support of other rural economic sector (Long and Edgell, 1997; Sharpley and Sharpley, 1997). Although it is difficult to dispute the logic of diversification, the reality, however is that in many of South African's rural areas the development of cultural or village-based tourism projects is frequently perceived as the only economic option. It is argued that the future of rural tourism is dependent not only upon its integration with local economic sectors and development goals (Butler et al., 1998) but also upon the inclusion of the local community in determining the type and scale of rural tourism in a particular local area to ensure its compatibility with local needs and acceptability to local residents (Butler and Clark, 1992; Hall and Jenkins, 1998). It is further argued that to ensure maximum community beneficiation, control of tourism resources should not be granted to outsiders (Oliver-Smith et al., 1989). However, in South Africa, government actively encourages outsiders/foreign investment

as a mean of stimulating the development of tourism in rural areas (Government of South Africa, 1996).

International tourism is regarded as an essential part of economic development strategies in many African countries. Although international tourism is an economic activity, it is also a way in which many people interact. It causes high demand on services and facilities that generate challenges and opportunities to host countries (Diekes, 2000). International tourism plays a critical role in the economic development process of many countries. While the host country spends in order to attract more tourists, they increase their revenue through the visitor's spending. A relatively strong currency increases the purchasing power of individuals, and this has a positive impact on the fiscal balance as the government collects more tax revenue. Similarly, an increase in international tourism earnings has a desirable impact on the balance of payments, namely that an increase in foreign tourism earnings increases foreign reserves that are utilized to reduce the trade deficit while the net transfer rise (Oludele et al., 2010). Before 1994, South African government considered international tourism and environmental matters insignificant, but this changed at the introduction of democracy. International tourism is now seen as a sector with high economic value under the Department of Tourism (DT). In 1994, the number of tourists was 3.7 million, and rose to 5.7 million in 1998 (DEAT, 2005)

Most of business travellers pass through the OR Tambo international Airport in Johannesburg on their way to major cities in Southern Africa. This demonstrates that

the majority of the 11, 1 million tourists who visited the Southern Africa region in 2005 were international. Although, the global tourism trend declined as a result of the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001, South Africa's international tourism growth increased instead, and South Africa has then been seen as a safe destination. The reasons for the increase in number of tourist could further be attributed to the country's attractions and enticements, which include it well developed physical, transport, education and health infrastructure, cultural diversity and festivals, traditional dress and customs, as well as music, and natural beauty such as game reserves, bird sanctuaries, health spa and fresh water reserves. As such South Africa's growth in tourism arrivals in 2006 surpassed experiences elsewhere. (Oludele, 2010). South Africa became one of the fastest growing tourist's destinations in the world. Almost 8.4 million international tourists visited South Africa in 2006– over a million more than 2005. Hence, South African tourism grew by almost 14% in 2006, three times the global tourism growth rate of 4,5 % for the same period. Township tourism, which has increased hugely in popularity since South Africa's multiracial elections of 1994, is now a multimillion-dollar business. The conference industry in South Africa is well established and growing. The country has a huge range of world–class venues available of incentive Convention Events, suitable for every kind of gathering, from 10 people to 10 000. There are world-class accommodation/ hotel facilities. South Africa is home to seven UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Robben Island, Greater St Lucia Wetland Park, Cradle of Humankind, uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park, Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape, Cape Floral Region and Vredfort Dome, among others (Oludele, 2010).

Tourism is regarded as the fourth largest and fastest growing industry in South Africa. In 2002 tourism contributed 8,2 % of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and has a projected 12% yearly growth rate for the next few years. In terms of tourism revenues, in 1990, South Africa ranked second, and in 1995 and 1998, it ranked first in the top 20 tourism earners in Africa (Oludele et al., 2010). In tourism-related sectors, tourism's share in total employment has also been increasing since 1994, reaching a peak of 11.6% in 2001 and declining to approximately 8% in 2005. Although tourism's contribution to employment has decreased since 2002, it is not because of negative growth in the industry. Tourism's share has been declining because other sectors in the economy have been adding jobs to the economy (DEAT/SA Tours, 2006: Stats SA, 2007).

The South African government has accepted the significance of tourism and has taken it upon itself to develop it and be responsible in the planning process. The government's objectives therefore include building a world-class tourism destination and incorporate the historically disadvantaged communities into tourism economy over a period of 10 years (1994-2004). South Africa became a member of UNWTO and the Indian Ocean Tourism Organization in November 2002. South Africa became the 27th country and the second African country after Egypt to receive the status of the approved Destination Status (DEAT), South African Tourism (SAT), the Tourism Grading Council and a new Partnership for Africa's development Tourism Action are partners with DEAT. The DEAT provided funds to prospective entrepreneurs through the Tourism Enterprise Programme in helping the small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMME) to attend and

showcase their products both in South Africa and overseas. International tourism is therefore the country's channel for economic and social development. The government is also seeking to encourage business relationships between foreign entrepreneurs and local and emerging entrepreneurs. The government also seeks to encourage all establishments to upgrade their standards of service, particularly SMMEs and emerging entrepreneurs, and to maximize their revenue –earning potential by adding value. The government provides marketing and mentoring support in order to develop the community –based tourism products. Visitors are also encouraged to spend more money in the local economy, visit local bars and restaurants, and participate in tours to local areas, thereby bringing business to local communities (Oludele et al., 2009). However, tourism development requires quality infrastructure. Without improvement in the infrastructure of former homeland areas, tourism development there has a bleak future (Viljoen and Naicker, 2000). Local communities are envisaged to benefit from the formation of business partnerships with the external investors, government support for local business development, revenue from land leased to investors, job opportunities, capacity building and improved infrastructure. If community empowerment is to occur, growth policies need to go hand in hand with the provision of basic service and development of human resources.

Worldwide, urban tourism is acknowledged to be an extremely important form of tourism (Ashworth and Page, 2011). From an historical perspective, regional tourism is not a new phenomenon in South Africa's tourism economy. Before the Second World War, South Africa already was a popular holiday destination for the white colonial settler

populations of the former territories of Southern and Northern Rhodesia, the Belgian Congo and Portuguese-controlled Mozambique (Ferrario, 1978). During school holiday period, tourists from these colonial territories-especially Southern Rhodesia would travel to South Africa visiting either Johannesburg for the purpose of entertainment and shopping or heading to coastal resorts from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth. Colonial government and large colonial enterprises authorized employees to spend their leave in Africa with South Africa a favoured destination because of its natural beauty, beaches and health resorts (Anon, 1940). During 1940 increased revenue was reported from visitors hailing from all corners of Africa, especially from the colonial territories of southern and Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, the Belgian Congo, Angola and Tanganyika (Anon, 1940). This pattern of regional tourism, mainly dominated by white's visitors from colonial territories, was continued after 1945 and the imposition in 1948 of apartheid policies. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, four out of five visitors to South Africa were whites residents originating from mainly South and Northern Rhodesia or Mozambique; a total of 172,000 tourists (Ferrario, 1978). By the early 1980s the nature of regional tourism and the characteristics of regional tourists were shifting. Along the continued flow of white leisure visitors from newly independent Zimbabwe, there was evidence of a growing stream of tourist flow of lower-income Black visitors from Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. These new regional tourists were travelling to South Africa primarily for the purpose of visiting friends and relatives and secondary flow of business purposes, this was confirmed by the study conducted on behalf of South African Tourism Board in 1990s (Bureau of Financial Analysis, 1992). A new element in African tourism flows by the early 1990s was the shopper

tourist; for example, 28% of visitors from Lesotho started shopping as their major purpose of travel to South Africa (Bureau of Financial Analysis, 1992). The period of late apartheid the mid-1980s represents a watershed in the regional tourism to South Africa with change from the dominance of old regional tourists, white visitors from the former settler colonies, to the new black regional tourists drawn from independent African countries. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, the volume of such tourism was limited by a combination of international sanctions, South Africa's pariah status and the often extreme difficulties that faced Black African travellers seeking to visit apartheid South Africa.

After democratic transition in 1994 these constraints on regional tourism fell away and the number of regional tourists escalated considerably. Several factors spurred the expansion of regional travel during the post-apartheid period (Rogerson, 2004; Rogerson and Kiambo, 2007). The first factor was stimulus of rising living standards, wealth and income for a segment of the population in several African countries. In an early analysis of African tourism, Dieke, (1998) argued business motivations were the main driver for regional tourism in Africa. With rise of living standards, however, this tourism driver has been supplemented, and in some respect, overtaken by a segment of pure leisure travel as established elites and small middle class secured the means to travel, particularly in countries such as Nigeria, Botswana, Kenya and Angola (South African Tourism, 2007). Secondly, considerable improvements in networks of transport infrastructure have facilitated expanded regional travel. Land transport linkages between countries have been greatly enhanced especially through the transport corridor

programme of regional spatial development initiatives, the most notable of which was the Maputo development corridor connecting Johannesburg and Mozambique's capital city (Rogerson, 2001). Better road networks have linked to rising levels of private car ownership across Southern Africa and easier cross –border travel arrangements to increase the potential for regional tourism. Air link between South Africa and the rest of Africa have also greatly extended since 1994 (South African Tourism, 2007).

Expansion has occurred across South Africa in the supply of both formal and informal accommodation with range of options offered to regional visitors from budget lodging to luxury hotels. Among other important development are easier access for foreign exchange in several African countries enhanced telecommunication links and integration controls and visa regulations for African visitors (Rogerson and Kiambo, 2007). The advent of democracy in South Africa opened up a host of new business opportunities, triggering a wave of new regional travel movement. As the city of Johannesburg is the financial hub for Southern Africa and locational choice for the headquarter offices of leading South African and foreign enterprises with business operations in different African countries (Rogerson, 2005), regional to South Africa for business purpose has much expanded. South Africa's tourism industry was established as far back as the 1920s but not identified as a high priority strategic sector for development planning until after the 1994 democratic transition (Rogerson and Visser, 2004). With the exception of the two coastal cities Durban and Cape Town which from the late nineteenth century constructed themselves as leisure tourism destination (Rogerson and Visser, 2007; Bickford-Smith, 2009) urban tourism in South Africa

remained undeveloped until the early 1980s and 1990s. Tourism planning in South Africa's cities commence from the mid-1980s. In common with the international experience of urban economic restructuring and the making of post-industrial cities, tourism promotion grew markedly in significance on the South African urban policy agenda (Rogerson, 2006). This shift linked to the appearance of a new urban entrepreneurialism in South Africa with tourism identified as a potential vehicle for urban regeneration and local economic development in the country's leading centers (Nel and Rogerson, 2005). The urban managers and policy makers of Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban intervened actively to stimulate the tourism sector as a mean to catalyze urban economic growth especially for urgent needed local employment creation (Rogerson, 2006). Tourism promotion now is a critical driver for local economic development planning in South Africa (Nel and Rogerson, 2005; Rogerson, 2006; Rogerson and Visser, 2007; Rogerson and Rogerson, 2010). Several dimensions of the invention and promotion of South African cities as tourist destination are strikingly similar to those occurring in North America or Western European cities. The most visible manifestation of tourism promotion are the waterfront redevelopments and flagship leisure projects that have transformed and regenerated large spaces of inner-city Durban and Cape Town (Maharaj et al., 2006 ; Ferreira and Visser, 2007).

According to Khan (2006), the link between tourism and trade could be substantially by the following arguments: when tourists leave their home country to visit a foreign country, they shift their expenditure patterns from their home country towards the foreign country. Tourists consume goods and services in the foreign country, many of

which have to be imported. Tourism could lead to trade. Travel may also lead to increased international trade through business visitors starting up new ventures or government agents negotiating trade agreements. A number of tourists may also travel to foreign country to buy luxury items or request local producers to export favourable items to their home country, which is solicits trade. Khan (2006) stated that tourism might encourage international trade as follows: tourists purchase food, souvenirs, transportation and so on in the foreign country, many of which have to be imported (Fry et al., 2010).

Beaches are big business and beach managers have to be cognizant of the preferences and priorities of the beach users along with the prime reason why any particular beach is selected for rest and recreation. The value of beaches for tourism economies is commonly cited, with beaches being an important asset and amenity both for locals and visitors alike (Tudor and William, 2003). Information about beliefs, opinions, preferences perceptions and concerns is strategically essential to coastal managers in structuring and developing beach management plan. Additionally, awareness of existence of beach awards and their attributes were ascertained from beach users (Tudor et al., 2006). Beach user's value for recreation and beach characteristics are revealed through their choice of which beach to visit. This decision depend both on the costs (both money and time) of visiting the beach and the features of the beaches of importance to their recreation experience (Lew et al., 2005). Klein et al. (2004) proposed that because tourism is closely tied to the quality of beaches, it follows that beach quality is important to a local tourist economy. Therefore, the expense of maintaining the quality of the

beach must ultimately be considered to be an investment in the tourist economy. Corbin and Singh (1993) recommended that a coastal community reliant on tourism for livelihood can have its income severely depleted by pollution, particularly visual forms such as beach litter. Windom (1992) explained that the greatest impact associated with visual pollution, such as beach litter, is not to organism, but economic loss associated with the reduction of amenities. Klein et al. (2004) suggest that beach quality has a major impact on the value of the coastal zone to both residents and visitors. This can be seen in high property values, development, tourism, employment and tax revenues. The great significance of coastal tourism of Wales illustrates the need for educational initiatives that link the recreational benefits, the economy and nature conservation goals in programme that highlights the need for sustainable and effective coastal management (Nordstrom et al., 2006).

Unexpectedly, Tudor and Williams (2006) found that beach awards were not a significant driving force in determining beach choice. Tudor and Williams (2006) discovered that recognition and awareness levels of the beach awards scheme were found to be poor. Approximately 58 per cent of interviewees stated they were aware of such scheme, with 27 per cent specifically naming the Blue Flag scheme. Forty per cent were unaware of these schemes and there was very little awareness of awards other than Blue Flag. The bulk of beach users were unsure whether the beach they were visiting had an award (Tudor and Williams, 2006). They further suggested that respondents did not place high priority on a beach having an award; they did put a high priority on the cleanliness of sand and water- which are essential parameters in the

attainment of such award. Gaining an award is recognition that a certain standard has been achieved, whether here nor there. What they are aware of is a clean beach. Therefore the value of these awards is that they act as a driver for local Authorities, water companies, regulators, and the public to strive to achieve clean, safe, well – managed beaches. Awards do not attract the public – clean beaches do (Tudor and Williams, 2006).

Recreational tourism is a means by which people seek psychological benefits that arise from experiencing new places and new situations that are of temporary destination whilst free from constraints of work and normal patterns of daily life. The demand for recreation and tourism facilities is likely to grow because of increasing personal income, leisure time, mobility and an overall trend towards more active and healthy life style (Asandi, 2008). Activities of tourism may have major impacts on the marine and coastal environment, the resources they host and the diversity of those resources. Impacts are due to inappropriate planning, irresponsible behaviour by tourists and operators and /or lack of education and awareness of the impacts. Sometimes decisions for tourism development are based only on potential economic benefit. Coastal erosion often affects coastal infrastructures that have been built for tourism purposes (Ardeson 1987).

Borobia (2006) concludes by saying tourism dependent economies suffer from the environmental degradation and the resulting decline in tourism cause in government revenues and income to local communities and businesses, gradually worsening conditions at the destination level. Furthermore recreation, when properly planned and

managed can minimize impacts on coastal environment and serves as a driving force in bringing sustainable tourism as a vehicle of development to local communities and destinations (Borobia, 2006). Tourism and recreation associated with “sea and sun”, is recognized as an essential component of domestic and international trade and a major contributor to economic growth. The costs associated with unplanned and /or poorly managed tourism can also be felt. Environmental quality and the natural resource base, which ultimately supports tourism development, are some of the concerns raised as losses in traditional and indigenous ways of life. Marine and coastal environment contain diverse habitats typically comprised of sand dunes, rocky shores, cliffs, beaches, estuaries and lagoons, wetlands, mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass beds. All such habitats are environmental assets that provide much of the basis for tourism activities that occur in coastal areas. Environmental degradation and change in coastal areas directly affect their sustainability and capacity to provide environmental service, such as acting as a buffer against erosion and storms, as well as serving as a source of marine recreation and food resources. Coastal ecosystems are interlinked, with their functions and resilience depending on dynamic relationships among species and physical and chemical interaction within the environment.

Coastal areas are exposed to environmental stress because of:

- Land-Based sources of pollution including discharge of untreated sewage and industrial effluent.
- Marine pollution including oil spills.
- Sedimentation as a result of erosion/ Erosion.

- Aquaculture activities along shorelines.
- Habitant destruction.
- Unplanned or ill-planned infrastructure and construction developments and non-regulated activities and
- Petroleum and gas exploitation.

The above mentioned activities indicate that practices at sea and on land can impact the marine environment and its water quality. Coastal tourism is susceptible to other factors, which include hurricanes and tsunamis, as well as man-made effects such as climate change and sea level rise.

Businesses and governments alike are gradually incorporating sustainability as one of the core values to drive the tourism industry forward, in an attempt to be more responsive to current market, environmental and community requirements. Centrally to this process are the adoption of voluntary initiatives such as environmental guidelines, code of conduct and certification schemes that encourage commitment to change. Numerous voluntary initiatives exist in developed and developing countries. Voluntary initiatives are also being recognized as effective tools supporting implementation of government programmes for integrated coastal zone management.

It is against this background that the Foundation for Environmental Education presents the Blue Flag programme.

1.2 THE BLUE FLAG PROGRAMME

The Blue Flag awards generate one of the biggest tourism industries, accounting for nearly 200 million jobs, and over 10 per cent of the world GDP. Predictions are by 2020, 1.5 billion international tourists will be spending US \$2 trillion a year at Blue flag beaches (Borobia, 2006). Tourism is recognized as one of the most important economic activities of coastal areas. Several regions of the World, notably those comprising Small Island Developing States such as the Caribbean and South Pacific, rely heavily on coastal areas and beaches to support tourism, recreational activities and to mobilize economies.

Although medium to long-term prospects for international tourism have steadily forecasted worldwide growth; the sector has to cope with instability factors such as extreme weather events, economic slowdown, political conflicts and currency fluctuations. In the face of instability, leisure activities tend to be the first affected when household budget are constrained. There is no doubt that the integrity and health of the coastal areas are of strategic importance to the development and long-term sustainability of the tourism industry.

The concept of Blue Flag was born in France. This programme started in 1985 when French coastal municipality awarded with Blue Flag for complying with quality sewage treatment and bathing water. Blue Flag is a trademark owned by Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) which consists of 65 organizations in 60 member states

in Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America. Certificates which refer to as awards are issued on an annual basis to beaches and marinas of FEE member countries. The awards are organized yearly on 5 June for Europe, Canada, Morocco, Tunisia and on 1 November for Caribbean, South Africa, New Zealand and other countries in the south Hemisphere (Borobia, 2006; Bachet, 2011). The Blue Flag programme was established so that international tourists coming into the country would know which areas would be best to visit for high quality beaches. The status is awarded to beaches that have the full package as a marker of excellence and safety. The standards in the programme are set high because it is an international award (Cape Times, October 2011). The Blue Flag is a voluntary eco-label awarded to 3650 beaches and marinas in 44 countries across Europe, South Africa, Morocco, Tunisia, New Zealand, Brazil, Canada and the Caribbean. The Blue Flag award works towards sustainable development of beaches and marinas through strict criteria. It is the initiative that also assesses the quality of recreational water. Blue Flag award encourages local authorities to provide clean and safe beaches for local populations and tourists (UNEP, 1996, FEE, 2004). The main objectives of the award are to improve understanding of the coastal environment and to improve incorporation of environmental issues in the decision-making processes of the local authorities and their partners.

The criteria include areas of environmental management, such as waste management and coastal planning and protection. During the European Year of the Environment (1987), the Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe presented to the European Commission the Blue Flag programme and it was launched as one of the

year's community activities. In the same year the Blue Flag was awarded to 244 beaches and 80 marinas in ten European countries. As the programme spread to regions outside Europe different sets of criteria were developed for beaches. In 2006 these criteria were combined into one international document which is now followed in all participating countries.

The blue flag programme in South Africa is also run by the international, non-governmental, non-profit organization the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). Implementation of the programme outside Europe began in South Africa in 1998 with the first Blue Flag awarded in 2001. Blue Flag has become a truly global programme due to the number of the participating countries. Environmental education has been and will continue to be a core value and characteristics of the programme. Education is targeted towards decision makers, tourists, managers, employees and local communities and can cover topics such as environmental practices, management systems, safety and nature interpretation. The Blue Flag programme unites stakeholders in the sustainable management and development of marinas and beaches, particularly from tourism and environmental sectors, and at local and national level. This is done through:

- The promotion of criteria dealing with water quality, environmental education, environmental management, safety and services.
- Education of beach visitors about good practices in the coastal environment.
- Education of those working directly with management of beaches and marine.
- Education of the whole community in protecting the coastal environment , and

- Encouragement of voluntary involvement in environmental action (FEE, 2004).

The programme has gradually broadened its objectives to improve the environmental management of coastal regions rather than just beaches and marinas. The strengths of the Blue Flag programme are due mainly to the principles and characteristics on which the programme operates. These are:

- Positive reinforcement, which highlights the achievements of the award-winning beach and marine.
- Broad participation, involving numerous local and national stakeholders on which all action depends.
- Voluntary action, implying that those who volunteer to join accept the responsibility for complying with blue Flag criteria.
- Independence operation, so that the award system cannot be influenced by local or financial interests.
- Adaptability of criteria, which are adopted internationally but which allow for expansion of the scheme to different regions reflecting specific environmental conditions (FEE, 2004).

The goal in the management of coastal system is to keep the resource suitable for all designated uses, both existing and future. In terms of recreational use of coastal marine waters, this goal translates into broad environmental objectives stating that: Environmental quality is suitable for recreational from an aesthetic, safety and hygienic point of view.

1.3 THE BLUE FLAG CRITERIA

Blue Flag beach criteria and explanatory notes BFP (2011 and 2012), awards for improving the coastal environment: the example of the Blue Flag (2006) outlined the two main elements related to Blue Flag programme which are criteria, control and monitoring. The criterion for Blue Flag awards is described below.

The award of a Blue Flag is based on compliance with 32 criteria. Most criteria are imperative whereas others are guidelines. All imperative requirements have to be met/ fulfilled, and compliance with the number of guidelines criteria is encouraged. The international criteria are designed to allow for small variations from region to region. If some of the imperative criteria are not fulfilled during the season or the conditions changes, the Blue Flag will be withdrawn. The international Blue Flag beach criteria must be understood as minimum criteria and the National programme can choose to have stricter demands. The two main elements related to the compliance with the Blue Flag programme are the criteria Control and Monitoring. Furthermore, length of season is another element that needs to be taken into account as compliance with the set criteria is required during the designated Blue Flag season. The official bathing season vary among countries, from year around to just seven months or only a few months (Borobia, 2006; Bachet, 2011). The Blue Flag season should be set when visitors are present on the beach and for the times of year that the can be met.

According to the Blue Flag beach criteria and explanatory note (Thomsen 2006) Blue flag award promotes sustainable development in freshwater and marine areas. This programme challenges the beach operators and Municipalities to achieve the high standard in the following categories:

1. Water quality.
2. Environmental Education and information.
3. Environmental Management.
4. Safety and services.

The Blue Flag criteria are revised and updated every 5 years.

1.3.1 WATER QUALITY

The Blue Flag Programme requires that the beaches achieve bathing water quality where the bathing water quality standards have been based on the most appropriate international and national standards and legislation. Furthermore, a Blue Flag beach must have at least one sampling site and this must be located where the concentration of bathers is the highest. Samples for microbiological and physical parameters should be taken and there must be no more than 30 days between samples during the Blue Flag season. The Blue Flag programme does not accept application from beaches, irrespective of the length of the Blue Flag season, where less than five samples have been taken. An independent person, officially authorized and trained to take the samples, must collect the samples. An independent laboratory must carry out analysis

of the bathing water samples. A bathing water profile must be compiled for every Blue Flag beach. A profile should include identification of potential sources of pollution, a description of the physical, geographical and hydrological characteristics of the bathing water, as well as assessment of the potential for cyanobacteria and algae formation. It is recommended that there should not be any discharge of industrial, urban waste water or sewage related discharges into the Blue Flag area or immediate buffer zone or surrounding area. In the event that there are discharge points in the area of the beach, these must be documented at the time of application.

1.3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Each beach must have at least one Blue Flag information board in place containing all the information as required by the criteria. Information about the Blue Flag programme and other FEE eco-labels must be displayed. The correct Blue Flag logo must be used, in accordance with FEE branding guidelines. Contact details for the local, national and international Blue Flag representatives should be posted. Environmental education activities must be offered and promoted to beach users. The planned environmental educational activities for the coming season must be included in the application, as well as the report on the activities carried out during the previous Blue Flag season (if applicable). There must at least five different activities offered in the community or municipality. The activities should focus on the environment, environmental issues, Blue Flag Issues or sustainability issues, at least some of the activities should be carried out at the beach and have direct focus on the beach environment.

1.3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Local Municipality or the beach operator should establish a beach management committee that should be in charge with ensuring compliance with all environmental management criteria. All relevant stakeholders at the local level should constitute the committee. The committee should co-operate with and support local municipality or the beach operator and could institute environmental management systems and conduct environmental audits of the beach and its facilities. The beach and surrounding areas including paths, parking areas and access to the beach must be clean and maintained at all times. Litter should not be allowed to accumulate causing these areas to be unsightly or hazardous. The local authority or beach operator must comply with regulations pertaining to issues relating to coastal zone planning, environmental management waste water legislation, environmental legislation and other legislation in order for the beach to receive or maintain the Blue Flag award. Facilities for the separation of recyclable waste material should be available at the beach. The recycling facilities should accommodate the collection and separation of as many different types of material as possible. The number of toilets/restrooms available at the beach must reflect the average number of beach visitors during peak season, the length of the beach and the number of location of major access point.

1.3.4 SAFETY AND SERVICES

The local authority should undertake an official risk assessment of the beach and an appropriate response strategy to the assessment must be put in place. The provision of life saving personnel/equipment at the beach is one such strategy. Lifeguards must have national or international qualifications. Certificates must be checked before the employment and it must be made available to the operator. The bathing areas patrolled by lifeguards should be clearly marked out. It is strongly recommended by the criteria that busy beaches and family beaches must have first aid stations with staff in attendance and the staff must have appropriate qualifications. First aid stations or the location of first aid equipment must be clearly sign-posted for easy location by beach visitors.

The emergency plan should cover a clearly identified procedure to facilitating efficiency in the case of emergency. The plan must specify who should be contacted in the case of a pollution incident. A responsible local person must be designated for this position. Beaches that support multiple activities must have management plans in place to prevent accidents and conflicts. Recreational use of the beach must be managed without negatively impacting the natural environment. The use of various activities must be separated and clearly marked and zoned. There should be a portable water source at the beach. This source can be in the restroom/toilet block or on the beach front but it must be protected from contamination by animals. The public must have access to Blue Flag beaches without being a client of a certain hotel or beach club. Visitors to the

beach should be safe while on the beach. It is recommended that all Blue Flag beaches must have facilities that allow access by the physically disabled granting them access to the beach and surrounding buildings as well as the restroom facilities. Access to the beach should be facilitated by access ramps adapted to users with various disabilities.

South Africa is the first country outside Europe to participate and win accreditation for some of its beaches. Blue flag awards in South Africa are managed by the Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa (WESSA), Department of Environmental affairs and Tourism (DEAT) and participating Municipalities. It is one of the programmes run under the Department of Environmental Affairs (coastal care). For the season of 2010/2011, 27 beaches were awarded Blue Flag status, with 9 new beaches receiving it in 2011, 22 have retained their accreditation. Five beaches lost their status as a result of non-compliance with the Blue Flag requirements in the 2005 season (Thomsen, 2006).

The international coordination is carried out by the FEE located in Copenhagen, Denmark. It is the administrative body that deals with the daily issues of the programme at an International level. It acts as a support and resource for the National Operators, deals with the future development of the programme as well as the exchange of information among countries and the arrangement of the international jury evaluations. An international jury meets twice a year to review the applications approved by the National juries and make decisions about status. The international jury takes the final decision regarding Blue Flag status.

The International Jury that awards the Blue Flag is composed of representatives from the following structures the United nation environmental programme (UNEP), United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNTWO), International Lifesaving Organization (ILS), European Environmental Agency (EEA), European Union for Coastal Conservation (EUCC), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Council of Marine Industries Association (ICOMIA) and the FEE Executive Board.

1.4 NATIONAL BLUE FLAG COORDINATION

The running of the programme at the various national levels is done through the FEE member organization in that country who acts as the National Coordination. The National Coordination should designate one person to be the official National Operator. They deal with daily management of the programme at the national level and manage contact with the international coordination.

The relevant stakeholders on the national level compose the national jury. They are:

1. Minister of Environment
2. Minister of Tourism
3. Environmental Organizations
4. Association of local authorities
5. National lifesaving federation
6. Environmental educational expert

7. Marina experts
8. FEE organization
9. Association of beach managers

1.5 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

Local governments and stakeholder groups play critical role in the Blue Flag programme. These include:

- Coordinating applications for the Blue Flag awards.
- Monitoring the bathing water quality sample results for beaches are in compliance with the Blue Flag criteria and take action if problem arises.
- Organizing litter collection and adequate forms of litter disposal.
- Organizing the collection of waste for recycling.
- Organizing the collection of hazardous waste for appropriate disposal.
- Ensuring that the criteria concerning safety provisions are met.
- Managing beaches to avoid environment deterioration.
- Maintaining beach in an aesthetically-pleasing form.
- Informing visitors about the need to protect the environment, safety precautions and available services.
- Incorporating environmental considerations into local planning.
- Improving environmental education and information activities.
- Flying the Blue Flag on awarded beach and displaying the relevant criteria and information.

- Publicizing the awarded sites and results of the Blue Flag programme locally.
- Taking down the Blue Flag in cases of non-compliance .

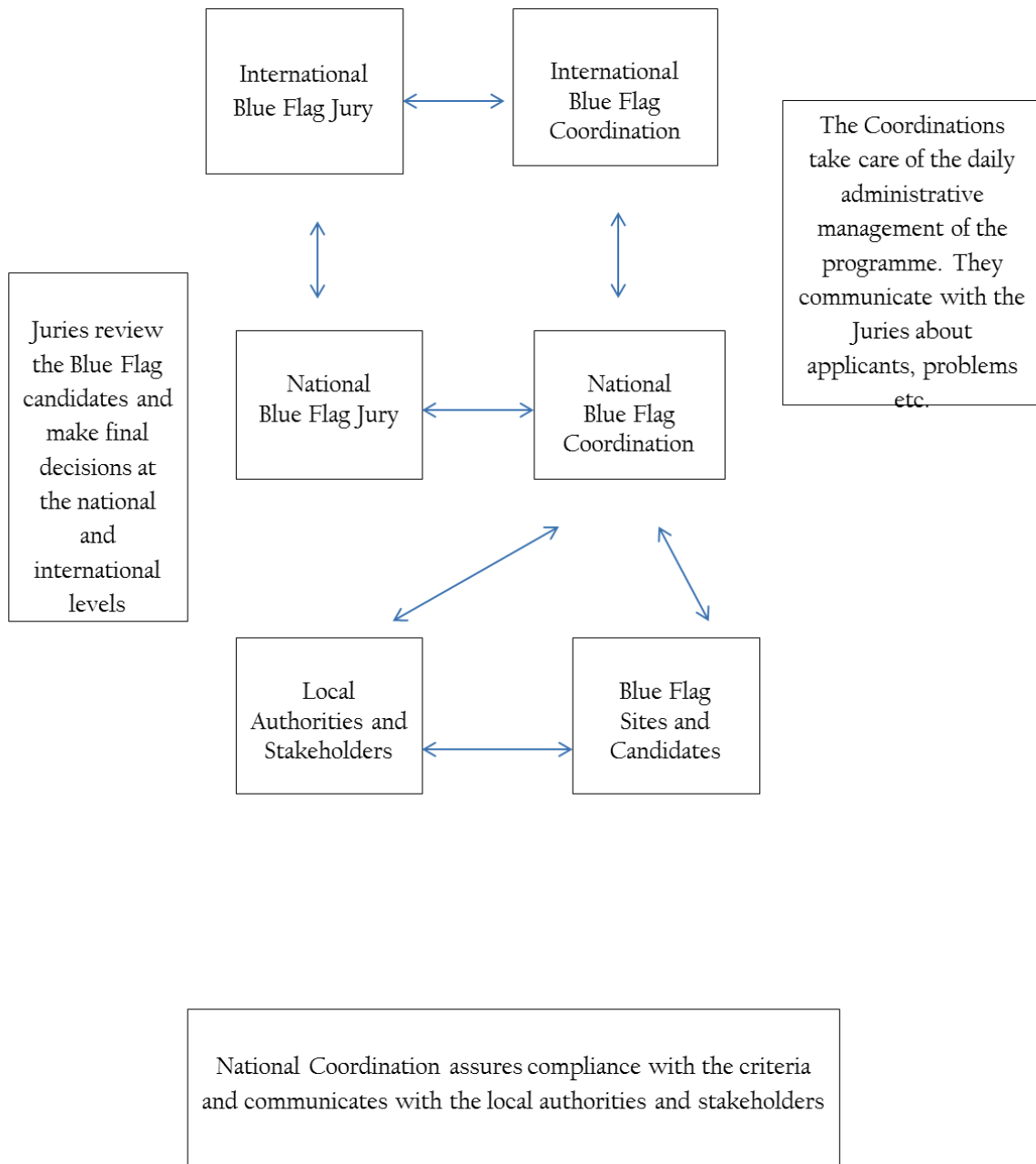


Figure 1: Flow diagram of the Blue Flag programme procedures and role players

1.6 APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The responsible Municipalities can apply for the Blue Flag awards for their beaches. The Municipality files the application form and sends it to the National Blue Flag operator with enclosed documentation, usually following consultations with local stakeholders. The national jury evaluates application for compliance with the Blue Flag criteria and gives an approval or rejection at the national level. In certain cases the National jury can recommend a dispensation. Approved application and dispensation cases are forwarded from the national jury to the international jury. The international jury carries out an evaluation and decides which beaches are awarded a Blue Flag for the season. During the season the site is monitored to assure it is in compliance with the Blue Flag criteria (Thomsen, 2006).

CHAPTER 2

2.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Blue Flag programme started in 1985 in France. It has been operating in Europe since 1987 and in areas outside of Europe since 2001 when South Africa joined the programme. To attain the award, beaches have to meet the 32 criteria as outlined above. Certain scenarios exist: Firstly, some of the beaches manage to get the Blue Flag award and then subsequently they do not sustain the status. There are different reasons that cause this, ranging from: criteria not being met due to unavailability of funds, support not given by the council and state organs, beach goers not maintaining the beach and business not supporting the programme.

2.2 AIMS

The study aims to investigate the effects of the Blue Flag award on environment and tourism at selected Eastern Cape beaches.

2.3 OBJECTIVES

- To assess the health, safety and environmental conditions of beaches who has attained Blue Flag status against those that have lost their Blue Flag status.

- To investigate the factors responsible for beaches to lose Blue Flag status.
- To assess the contribution made by beaches with Blue Flag award with regard to the socio-economic activities of the area.
- To assess the attitudes of the officials and councillors of local municipalities and provincial government or any organs of state towards the Blue Flag award to their beaches.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Blue Flag status indicates that the beach has complied with water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management and safety criteria (Blue Flag programme, 2006). In Britain Blue Flag beaches water quality is monitored by the environmental agency during bathing season and beaches managers are required to display the results on the beaches signage so that the public can see them and make informed decision about whether to enter in to the water (Fentinam, 2010). In Scotland the seaside awards programme assess beaches on the litter management, information provision, risk assessment and water quality. To achieve this, the site must meet all the strict criteria mentioned above and the highest European Union standard of bathing water. It is assumed that beach awards play in important role in attracting tourists. Thomsen (2001) claimed that an increasing number of tourists are therefore asking for Blue Flag status before choosing their holiday destination. It is assumed that 50% of German tourists consider environmental quality issues in choosing their destination for vacation (Thomsen, 2001). Beach awards are perceived to raise the public profile and

enhance the popularity of a certain beach. If a Blue Flag accreditation does not comply with the blue Flag criteria, the flag may be permanently or temporarily withdrawn from the beach. There is several degree of non- compliance

a) Minor no compliance when the minor non-compliance occurs and can be immediately rectified, the flag is withdrawn and the non-compliance is only registered in the control visit report and the beach is given 10 days to rectify.

b) Multiple non-compliance this relates to two or three non- compliance to the criteria and there is minor consequence to the health and safety of the beach. The flag is withdrawn and the beach is given 10 days to rectify the problem and the home page is updated accordingly

c) Major non- compliance is where the beach does not comply with one or several criteria and this result to of which can have consequences to the health and safety of the beach user or to the environment , as well as general perception of the beach and the programme is affected. The flag is withdrawn from immediately and for the rest of the season (Blue flag, 2012).

The reasons for the withdrawal of the flag must be posted clearly at the beach. The local authority or the beach operator must inform the National operator of re compliance with criteria and present appropriate documentation needed.

2.5 NATIONAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE BLUE FLAG STATUS FROM POPULAR MEDIA

The South African National and Provincial tourism Departments want all coastal municipalities to have beaches with Blue Flag status and that includes eThekweni beaches that were scrapped from the programme three years ago (Daily News 10 February 2011). In 2008 the Blue Flag was withdrawn from six Durban beaches largely because of water pollution, the reaction in the South African press mirrored that found in Europe when awards are lost. The Times (23rd March 2008) reported that the national Blue Flag rare are stating “the loss is very worrying and has massive repercussions for our tourism industry especially during time when thousands of people come to the city to enjoy themselves in the beaches. Durban’s sea water has the highest level of some toxic chemicals in the world according to the data released by the centre for scientific and industrial research. A tourism CEO stated that the impact could be quite serious because the removal of the Blue Flag has taken away the key marketing edge and it is the knock on an international level. Speaking at the national Blue Flag launch Deputy Minister Mabudafhasi warned that failure to prevent sewage and litter pollution along the coast would have disastrous environmental and economic implications for the country. If our oceans are polluted we will not achieve our economic growth and development targets, we will live in poverty as most of our communities are dependent on fish and our beaches will not be suitable for recreation (Daily Dispatch, 26 Oct 2011). The loss of a beach award or the closure of a Blue Flag beach has adverse publicity and in many cases translate into falling levels of tourism visitation and tourism income. In the

2009/2010 season in South Africa, five beaches had their Blue Flag status withdrawn mainly due to pollution of the bathing water. This includes four Durban beaches and Margate beach. The cost to Durban in lost tourism spending was estimated at approximately ZAR 100 million per annum, while the cost to lost tourist spending to Margate was estimated to be between ZAR17 Million and ZAR25 million per annum (The Mercury, 7 May 2008). Councillor Geoff Pullan said the DA and ANC had supported a recent motion in the council for the reinstatement of the Blue Flag system in eThekweni Beaches (Daily News, 10 February 2011). The Municipal Manager told the council that it will cost ZAR30 Million to belong to the Blue flag system again. The councillor believed that Umgababa, Umhlanga and Umdloti beaches would be able to apply for the Blue Flag pilot phase as their water quality still exceeded the criteria set by the programme. The Democratic Alliance has once called for the return of the Blue Flag award after the eThekweni Municipality's beach water testing results from June 2011 to July 2012 showed that almost 80 percent of the city's beach water fell short of the SA Water quality guidelines, with high concentration of the *E coli* and *Enterococcus* bacteria, which can cause cholera and gastro-intestinal illness (Independent on Saturday, 8 September 2012) .Kwazulu-Natal has eight, seven on the Hibiscus Coast and one at Umhlatuze on the on the north coast.(The New Age, 18 October 2012).

Cape Town continues to show case its world class shoreline after six beaches were again awarded the prestigious Blue Flag award. The Blue Flag beaches are Bikini, Strandfontein, Mhandi, Muizenberg, Camps Bay and Clifton Fourth. The other two were still waiting for the committee to decide Silverstroom and Llandudno (Cape Times,

October 2011). This programme was established so that the international tourists coming into the country would know which areas would be best to visit for high quality beaches. The status is awarded to beaches that have the full package as a marker of excellence and safety.

The declaration of two Blue Flag beaches in a national park is another tick in the right box for the national conservation agency SANParks in its quest to preserve biodiversity. Nature “s valley beach, in the De Vasselot part of the Titsikama section of the Garden Route National Park and Wilderness beach, in the Wilderness section of the park are the first in a South African protected area to gain certification in the international beach programme. (The New Age, 18 October 2012) Garden Route manager Jill Bunding – Venter said the two Blue Flag beaches were a reflection of the park cooperative governance approach. Western Cape is the province with most Blue Flag beaches, 28 at Cape Town, Overstrand, Hasequa, MosselBay, Eden District, Knysna, Bitou and Matzikama (The New Age, 18 October 2012).

The value of lost access to king’s beach, Humewood beach, Hobie beach and Wells beach, respectively were 44.73,ZAR,24.61,37.85,ZAR and 2.68 ZAR per person per trip and serves as a basis for determining the loss to Port Elizabeth of closure to its four blue flag status qualifying beaches. The loss was estimated at about ZAR55 million per annum.

Peter Rose director of Umhlanga Tourism said Blue Flag status, which is conferred minimum standards on beaches had marketing benefits and anything that offering this was good Daily News (10 Feb 2011). Research has shown that the investment that coastal municipalities and sustaining international quality assurances that Blue Flag accreditation brings pays off. Increasingly South Africa's domestic tourists are choosing Blue Flag beaches as their destination of choice and in so doing, mirroring trends that have been seen in other countries (Blue Flag Media Statement November 2011).

The Nelson Mandela Bay's tourism industry suffered three severe blows in recent months with closure of the Oceanarium at Bayworld as well as the Apple Express, and the loss of the beaches once-prized Blue Flag status (EP Herald, 19 April 2011). Five beachfront hotels (The Radisson Blu Hotel, the Paxton, Protea Hotel Marine, the Summerstrand Hotel and Garden Court) have banded together in a bid to reclaim the prestigious Blue flag status that Humewood Beach once sported. The lost its status in January, after the inspection done by WESSA discovered bottles and litter on the beaches 'sub-standard ablution facilities and the absence of security guards. These hotels teamed up and keen to work with the Municipality to ensure that the beach regain its Blue Flag status. The directors are prepared to upgrade the toilet facilities and they have already put money aside and they are looking at how they can upgrade the beach. The hotel directors believed that Port Elizabeth would benefit as a destination from the initiative. Van Oodtshoorn said the main reason the hotels decided to cooperate was the huge draw card Blue Flag beaches were for both national and international tourists (EP Herald, 19 April 2011). Only proper adequate budget allocations and accountable

political leadership hold the ability to transform our beachfront and, in so doing create the economic opportunity and jobs so desperately needed for the many thousands of unemployed in the metro (EP Herald, 4 April 2011).

Blue flag awards play a role in recreation user's beach visitation decisions and for this reason may be an important determinant of the recreational value of such beaches. Peter King tourism Buffalo city boss who has to fulfil his mandate under difficult circumstances said the tourism industry used the Blue Flag status as a positive attraction when marketing the region (Daily Dispatch, 8 January 2010). Buffalo city spokesperson Mr Ngwenya said considering the city "s lack of resources and the service providers' failure to deliver, the municipality needs to review the need for the Blue Flag (Daily Dispatch 8 January 2010). The secretary of the ratepayers association what had happened was disturbing and disrespectful to the community and they are calling for the security to be deployed to the beach to secure the area. (Daily Dispatch 28 Nov 2011).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STUDY AREA

Secondary data from the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) for all Eastern Cape beaches that participate to the Blue Flag awards will be used. This information will be analysed to why beaches do not retain their status. In doing so we will be comparing the ones with Blue Flag award, those who lost the Blue Flag award and those who applied but they did not get the Blue Flag award. The information will cover the following of each beach

- A. Water quality
- B. Safety and services
- C. Environmental management
- D. Environmental education and information

The secondary data will investigate objective 1, 2, and 3.

The information from Wildlife and Environmental Society of South Africa will be used to assess the conditions of the beaches. The information will relate to and give the reasons why beaches lose the Blue Flag status. The information is from the committee that adjudicate the awards. The information ranges from water quality, safety and services, environmental management and environmental education.

Primary data will be collected using semi-structured and structured interviews through questionnaires. The questionnaire will be administered to investigate objective 4 and objective 5. Five categories of data sources in this study constitute the sampling frame of the study. They are Municipal Councillors, Municipal officials, Business people, Tourism department, Community and Beach-goers/users. The information from beach users/goers is on their understanding of the blue flag programme and if it manipulates their decisions when choosing a beach to visit.

Questionnaires were used to assess the perceptions of businesses. Selected businesses next to the beaches were asked to answer the questionnaires. Tourism managers will be asked on the contribution of the Blue Flag award to the tourism of the area. Questionnaires were drawn for the Municipality officials (Municipal Manager, beach manager) and councillors. The questions is centred any role that is played by the municipalities as well as their perceptions in making sure that the beaches retain the blue flag award or to receive the award. Questionnaires will be administered to the four municipality Buffalo metropolitan Municipality, Ndlambe Local Municipality and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality.

3.1 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The Blue flag awards is a national programme with all the beaches in South Africa can participate. However the purpose of the study will be carried in the selected Eastern Cape beaches.

3.2 STUDY AREA

South Africa boasts more of the finest beaches in the world from pristine coastal stretch of Cape

We have beaches in the following provinces

1. Eastern Cape
2. KwaZulu- Natal
3. Western Cape
4. Northern Cape

The Eastern Cape boasts some of the world's best beaches and the coastline is a Mecca to all water sport enthusiasts and has a popular and thriving board-riding culture. Port Elizabeth and East London are surfing hotspots and the wild coast is famous for its landscape, furious sea and beautiful beaches. Port Elizabeth begins by a great curve of Algoa Bay, offer safe swimming and surfing. Kings beach is a favourite as well as Humewood beach. The study will concentrate on the beaches that have Blue Flag status, the ones who have not retained their status and those who have applied for the status in the Eastern Cape Province.

According to Blue flag media Statement (November 2011) Beaches in the Eastern Cape which received the blue flag status in 2011-2012 season are Humewood Beach in Port Elizabeth (Nelson Mandela Municipality), Dolphin beach in Jeffrey's Bay –Kouga

Municipality, Kariega beach in Kenton on Sea, Kelly's beach in Port Alfred both in Dlambe Municipality, Robberg 5th Beach - Plettenberg Bay and the Waves-Keerboomstrand both in Bitou Municipality. The beach that did not retain its status is Wells Estate in Port Elizabeth.

The following beaches have applied to run the pilot or developmental stage of Blue Flag award

1. Gonubie beach, East London- Buffalo city Municipality
2. Wells Estate, Port Elizabeth- Nelson Mandela Metro Municipality
3. Middle Beach, Kenton on-Sea – Dlambe Municipality
4. Cape St Francis –Kouga Municipality

Given all of the above, this study will concentrate on the following Beaches

- With Blue flag status- Kelly's Beach, Kariega Beach and Humewood.
- Did not retain the Blue Flag status but still run the pilot or developmental stage- Gonubie Beach and Well's Estate
- First time to be in the pilot or developmental stage- Middle Beach

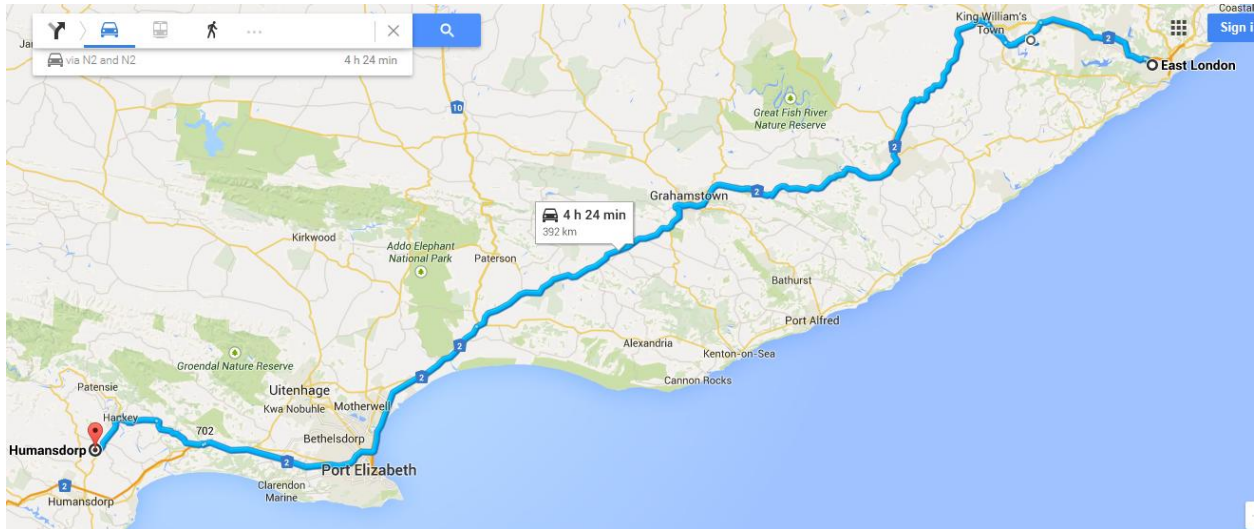


Figure1 : Map of Eastern Cape Beaches under study

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE BEACHES UNDER STUDY

3.3.1 GONUBIE BEACH

Gonubie is situated just 25km north-east of the city of East London on the Gonubie River. It is franked by an estuary and bluff on the north and a rocky headland on the south. This beach attracts visitors from all over South Africa and beyond. It has a very long scenic wooden board walk connecting it from the main parking lot all the way to the main beach, on the way it passes tidal pools and bush nature vegetation. Gonubie is connected to East London by the N2 freeway which make it just a twenty minutes' drive from the CBD.

3.3.2 KARIEGA BEACH

Kenton-on-sea is a holiday village situated between 2 rivers, the tidal Bushman and Kariega, with a proclaimed nature reserve. Kenton-on-Sea offers a picture perfect village setting for a fantastic family holiday. Kariega main beach is located in the holiday village of Kenton-on-Sea between Port Elizabeth and Port Alfred in the Eastern Cape. Kenton-on-Sea is on Indian ocean, where the two rivers open up to a sea front of unspoilt beaches with undulating dune fields as well as interesting rock formations.

Midway between Port Elizabeth and East London, Kenton-on-Sea is easy to reach along the coastal road between these two cities. This popular holiday destination beach is wide, with beautiful white sands and lots of space to walk the coastline. The parking area is perched above the beach offering wide view of the sea and surrounding area. Immediately behind the beach is a national reserve where one can take a leisurely walk.

3.3.3 KELLY'S BEACH

In the heart of the sunshine coast lies Port Alfred, one of the most important holiday destinations in South Africa. Port Alfred is an exclusive Eastern Cape real estate location offering golden beaches and a friendly seaside village. As Port Alfred function primarily as a holiday town, its facilities and attraction comprises many luxurious offering and relaxing activities. Popular attraction and facilities includes Kelly's beach. Kelly's

beach is a Blue Flag beach and is considered to be the one of the best beaches in South Africa.

3.3.4 HUMEWOOD BEACH

Humewood beach is a typical Eastern Cape sandy beach with good waves. Humewood beach is South Africa's oldest Blue Flag beach. The beach is situated on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth. The beach often has lifeguards on duty and is alive with water sports. There is even a tidal pool for the less adventurous swimmer. The beach forms part of the promenade which runs along the beachfront for quite a distance allowing walkways and paths linking the main beaches and facilities along the entire beachfront . Shops and restaurants are in easy access to the beach. There are many hotels within walking distance of this beach.

3.3.5 WELL'S ESTATE

Wells Estate is accessed by travelling along N2 towards Grahamstown and taking the St Georges strand turn off opposite St Georges strand. It is a large recreational centre approximately 25 km northward of Port Elizabeth. The complex provides camping facilities, an enclosed swimming pool, waterslide and a large area for recreational purposes. The facilities include life guards on duty throughout the season (November to April), first aid room, an educational centre and small outdoor theatre area with stands. The beach is sandy and wide and can be quite windy in the early summer, fortunately

the water is warm. The raised promenade provides good viewing of dolphins and whales. This is the first historical black beach in Nelson Mandela Metro (Port Elizabeth) to be awarded with Blue Flag status.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 CURRENT STATUS OF THE BEACHES UNDER STUDY

From the reports from WESSA, Gonubie Beach started to be part of the Blue Flag programme in 2005/2006 when they first receive the Blue Flag award. The beach also received the award in the following season which was 2006/7, starting in November and ending in April. Buffalo City Municipality lost the Blue Flag award for Gonubie beach in the 2007/8 season due to the water quality that was not acceptable. The results of the samples showed traces of *E. coli* which was above the acceptable limit. An investigation into the matter revealed that there was a sewage spill, but this was rectified and they applied for a special dispensation and was subsequently awarded Blue Flag status.

In the 2008/9 season there was a change in the procedure for water testing. Initially the Municipalities were allowed to use their own laboratories but some results showed that they were not trustworthy and the International jury required the samples to be tested by accredited laboratories. The samples were collected every two weeks during the season. The accredited laboratory closest to Gonubie is in Port Elizabeth and the Buffalo City Municipality never submitted the samples for testing. The manager that was interviewed was surprised by this since to take samples to Port Elizabeth for testing will not cost more than R1500. His opinion is that Buffalo City Municipality can afford this but that there is a lack of commitment from the management and the council. There

were also minor problems which were noticed by the inspection team that visited Gonubie Beach in that the infrastructure needed upgrading. Problems with the car park exist, the toilets need to be renovated as well as the board walk.

The information from WESSA reveals that Kelly's Beach received their first award in 2004/5 season and they managed to retain the status ever since. Similarly, Kariega Beach first attained the Blue Flag award in the 2010/11 season and since then never lost the award. Kariega beach has always met all the criteria as laid down by Blue Flag Committees.

Middle Beach has been in the pilot phase since the 2011/12 season and the beach has never received full status. A reason for this is that dog owners in the community use the beach to walk their dogs. Dogs are not allowed on Blue Flag beaches. Middle beach has good water quality and a good environmental programme and meet all other requirements as required by the Blue Flag criteria.

Humewood was one of the first three beaches in SA to be awarded the Blue Flag in 2001. Humewood had its Blue Flag withdrawn in January 2011 for the rest of the 2010-2011 season due to lapses in standards relating to three critically important areas of compliance for all Blue Flag beaches, namely, security, cleansing and lifeguarding. On the basis of plans to improve compliance in these areas, Humewood was able to re-qualify for the status the following season.

Wells Estate gained Blue Flag status for the first time in the 2005/2006 season, having being a pilot beach for a year before that. It also lost its Blue Flag in January 2011 for severe neglect of infrastructure and mismanagement. Since then the beach has not re-entered the programme as the infrastructure has yet to be repaired. The Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality intends doing so and applying for Blue Flag status again within the next two years.

Jeffery's Bay's Blue Flag Beach, Dolphin Beach joined the programme in the 2004/2005 season and the award was taken from them after the water quality was not acceptable. The water samples which were collected revealed that the water has unacceptable levels of *E. coli*. The award was withdrawn in 2006/7 and the municipality investigated the cause of the sewage spill. The investigation revealed that the sewage pump and other infrastructure had to be repaired. This was subsequently done and the Blue Flag was reinstated. From the 2007/8 season the beach never lost the award again. Cape St Francis bay have been in the developmental stage for the last three seasons and the information reveal that their water quality is of a good standard.

4.2 PERCEPTIONS OF THE BEACH AUTHORITIES

4.2.1 BUFFALO CITY METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality is the key urban centre of the Eastern part of the Eastern Cape. It consists of a corridor of urban areas, stretching from the port city of

East London to the east, through to Mdantsane and reaching Dimbaza in the west. East London is the primary node, whilst the King William's Town area is the secondary node. It also contains a wide band of rural areas on the either side of the urban Corridor. Buffalo city's land area is approximately 2,515 km², with 68km of coastal line (IDP 2010-2011). According to the Programme Manager: Amenities and the Assistant Programme Manager: Marine Services in the 2005/2006 season Gonubie first attained its Blue Flag Status in November 2005 after successfully completing the year's pilot phase and they have met all 32 criteria. In 2006/7 season Gonubie retain the Blue Flag award since at that time they have met all requirements. In 2007/8 Gonubie lost the status for that season due to unacceptable water quality. An investigation revealed a sewage spill within the Gonubie beach front area that affected the water quality reading taken at the Gonubie beach. The spill source was cleaned up. Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality applied for a special dispensation for Gonubie beach to the international jury and this was granted for the season of 2007/2008. This confirms the report received from WESSA. In 2008/9 season the Blue Flag status was lost again due to the failure with a courier company to successfully and timeously transport water samples out of town for testing. A courier company was used to collect the water samples from the municipality and to deliver them within a day to the laboratory for analysis. However, they only delivered the samples the following day and by that time those samples cannot be used anymore for testing. The requirement to test water fortnightly through an accredited laboratory within 24 hours was a new requirement and the only laboratory is in Port Elizabeth. Previously Buffalo City Municipality scientific services were doing the water reading and sample testing. When they failed again they applied for special

dispensation, but this time it was turned down by the international jury. The municipality decided not to make an application in 2009/10 for the pilot phase as the municipality wanted to make all necessary preparation for the following season. In 2010/2011 application was made for a pilot phase for the next two years to allow for application to full Blue Flag status for the season 2012/2013. This is presently underway with successful water readings to date.

Beach Management has submitted a report to the Municipality top management about the Gonubie beach, requesting an operational budget from the Council. The Municipality do not provide any financial budget for the Blue Flag programme. Buffalo City Municipality claims that they do not get any support from any governmental departments even though it has been evident that there is a benefit in having the Blue Flag award. The perception is that the Blue Flag is an achievement that indicates that the municipality is striving to provide beaches of good standard to the public. A Buffalo City official believes that the community should be the custodians of the beach area concerned and to behave in a manner that does not jeopardize the Blue Flag status

4.2.2 NDLAMBE MUNICIPALITY

Ndlambe Local Municipality is an administrative area in Cacadu District of the Eastern Cape with its capital as Port Alfred. It is a predominantly rural area with agriculture and tourism dominating the economy. It encompasses the following towns: Port Alfred, Kenton-on-Sea, Boknes, Bathurst and Alexandria (Ndlambe Municipality IDP

2010/2011). In the past season (2012/13) they had 2 full status and 3 pilot beaches. The beaches with full status are Kariega and Kelly's Beach. The following beaches were on pilot phase, Middle beach, Boknes Beach and Kleinemonde Beach. Since they started with the Blue Flag programme, they never had any beaches that lost the Blue Flag status.

The senior environmental conservationist who is managing the beaches reports that the Municipality is trying by all means available to keep their beaches and facilities to near Blue Flag status during the off season so that only minor maintenance etc. needs to be done before the opening of the next season. The Municipality does provide the budget for salaries and operational cost for the Blue Flag beaches. The budget that is provided by the municipality is not sufficient, but the municipality has a good relationship with the National Department of Environmental Affairs. Most of the cost of maintenance is covered by the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) under Working for the Coast. The Blue flag programme receives the full support from the Municipal Council. The Municipality is using casual employees during the season for picking up litter; cleaning of the toilets and making sure that everything is in order on the beaches and their salaries are paid through the funds from Working for the Coast. There are employees employed by the EPWP project. They have highlighted some of the problems that they encounter like vandalism, staff issues, budgetary constraints, general maintenance issues and the control of dogs on the beach.



Figure 2: Example of the environmental information centre in Kariega

A Manager in the Ndlambe Municipality tourism office declared that the Blue Flag programme has a positive bearing on international tourists. Tourism has reduced the number of the unemployed in the area. It has been evident that more vacant plots are being bought now by the visitors to make their holiday homes. The manager has reported that international tourism has increased since the beaches have received the Blue Flag award. She stressed that their beaches have been in good condition and they are trying by all means to meet all Blue Flag requirements even during the off season. Both the Manager: Tourism and the senior environmental conservationists have alluded

to the fact that the community has to buy into the concept and develop a sense of pride for something which should be treasured and respected.

4.2.3 NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality is one of the eight Metropolitan municipalities in South Africa. It is located on the shores of Algoa Bay in the Eastern Cape Province and comprises of the city of Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage, Despatch and surrounds (Nelson Mandela IDP 2010/2011). It has a population of 1,005,776 in 260,798 households (Nelson Mandela Municipality IDP 2010/2011). Nelson Mandela Bay is a preferred destination for visitors because of its beautiful coastline comprising 40 km of magnificent beaches i.e. King's beach, Hobie beach, Humewood, Wells Estate, Summerstrand Beach, Blue Waters, New Brighton and Pollock Beach. With its perfect combination of warm water, calm sea and fair breezes, it is one of the best sailing venues in the world and a mecca for all beach and water sport enthusiasts. Water temperatures vary between 18 and 21 degrees Celsius during summer and 14 to 19 degrees Celsius during winter. The sea conditions are generally calm in the bay, except when the south-easterly wind is blowing. Most beaches are patrolled by fully trained professional lifeguards during the summer season.

Mr Fernando Cain who is the Assistant Director: Beaches and Resorts was interviewed. In the interview he mentioned that only one beach still had the award (Humewood). The following beaches lost their award: King's Beach lost the status due to environmental

issues and storm water run-off, Hobie Beach lost the status to the fact that there are lot of infrastructure problems and too many events that take place and Wells Estate lost it due to a high influx of people and infrastructure challenges within the beach area. The municipality is trying by all means this year to do various upgrades at the beaches so that they can regain their status. Municipal council provide limited budget for all beaches but they do not have a budget item specifically for the Blue Flag programme. There are major infrastructure problems within the municipality and the council do not take Blue Flag awards as a priority.

The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality do not receive any support from any organ of state be it provincial or national government department for the Blue Flag award, Mr Cain reported. The municipality is not sure about the tourism relationship with the Blue Flag award. Mr Cain said that his perception is that there is no difference with regards to the influx or usage of the beach since the beaches lost their Blue Flag award. The manager highlighted the following problems that they face: high influx, public indecency, petty theft, litter and alcohol abuse and verbal abuse towards staff members.

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality is in the process of enforcing their bylaws and increasing the security on the beaches. It is evident that the community is playing some role in ensuring that the beaches are of a good standard as they have had some random voluntary beach clean-up. They also observe the national and international environmental calendar. From time to time the municipality have some feedback cards

that they distribute to the public for their comments and they receive public feedback from them.

4.2.4 KOUGA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

Kouga local Municipality comprises Jeffery's Bay and Humansdorp. The Manager: Solid Waste and Environmental Services (Ms. Gcobisa Dadamasi) reported that she had been granted permission from the Director: Community Services' office to accept an interview. Ms. Dadamasi reported that Kouga has one beach that have Blue flag award (Dolphin beach) and one beach that is in the pilot stage (Cape St Francis). The manager revealed that in December 2011 Dolphin Beach once lost its award due to a sewage spill that was immediately rectified. The Municipality provided the budget to change all pipes in the sewage treatment plant to prevent any future spillages.

The Kouga Municipality and its council do support the Blue Flag programmes and they do provide a budget for the Blue Flag programmes but it is not sufficient. The Municipality makes an application to the Department of Environmental Affairs for additional funding which assists the municipality under the coast care project. They are utilising the Working for the Coast project funds supplement their budget, Ms. Dadamasi reported.



Figure 3: Workers employed under working for the coast care projects and assisting in the Blue Flag Beach.

Municipalities believe that having a Blue Flag award helps them in getting more tourists and this boosts the economy. They receive more visitors during the summer and Easter holidays. They believe that visitors go to the beaches which are safe and clean. One of the problems they encountered was the ramps for the disabled, and the municipality rectified that through the coast care projects. The community normally assists with voluntary cleaning of beaches, with schools sending students and some local groups of the community assisting.

4.3 CHALLENGES THAT FACE MUNICIPALITIES

From the interviews conducted the following challenges are evident:

1. Not receiving the necessary support required from the council.
2. Not receiving the support from the organs of state (Provincial and National Government).
3. Budgetary constraints.
4. Cleaning of the beaches.
5. Alcohol abuse.
6. Public indecency.
7. Lack of policy and security.
8. Control of dogs.

4.4 PERCEPTIONS OF BEACH USERS AND DEPENDANTS

4.4.1 BUSINESSES

Several businesses were visited and the owners or managers were interviewed in all four municipalities. The business owners or managers were very willing to assist the research and they answered questionnaires. The businesses vary from different types of businesses accommodation (Bed and Breakfast & Hotels) and food outlets. The

businesses that were visited are those that are close to the beach and are directly affected by the beach users.

All business owners are aware of the Blue Flag; they acknowledge the presence of the Blue Flag in their areas. Most of the businesses were in agreement that the presence of the Blue Flag in their areas increases the number of tourists - both domestic and international. There is an overwhelming opinion of the majority of business owners that the Blue Flag gives the town or the municipality a good reputation, and is a good advert for the community. If the Blue Flag increases tourists it also decreases the unemployment rate in the community because more people are employed. The businesses from Buffalo City (Gonubie beach) confirm that they lost income since the Blue Flag award was withdrawn from the city due to the sewage spillage. The business owners from East London could not confirm the exact amount that is lost due to the absence of the Blue Flag award in East London.

Two hotel owners in Port Elizabeth said that even if the beach does not have the award their businesses are always full during the season. They also stated that possibly the fact is that their hotels are the best in Port Elizabeth and most visitors required the comfort that they provide.

Most of the businesses see themselves as role players in making sure that the municipality receives and retains the Blue Flag awards. Their role starts with making sure that their rates are paid, and to ensure that the municipality keeps the area in good

condition. They also use their structures (NAFCOC) in assisting with the cleaning of the beach, and they have voluntary beach cleaning. In these municipalities most of the business owners take the Blue Flag as the tool that improves the water quality, hygiene, safety and security on the beach.

The business owners claim that the government is not doing enough in making sure that the beaches receive and retain the Blue Flag. Some of the businesses lost total trust in the government as they claim that government departments and municipality do not make the necessary effort for beaches to receive or regain the award. The perception from the businesses is that the government should increase policing in the areas, so that the community could feel safe.

4.4.2 BEACH USERS

Research has been conducted with beach goers during the 2013 festive season, and several beaches were visited and questionnaires distributed to beach users. There were some challenges that the researcher faced, as many beach users were not interested in answering the questionnaires, claiming that they were on holiday. Nevertheless, questionnaires were answered as planned. Beaches were visited in all four Municipalities, trying to find the reasons for choosing the beach they visit. The researcher received the following information from these visits:

The researcher found that 58% of the people that he interviewed were aware of the Blue Flag beaches and they have been informed and read about these beaches (Fig. 4). There is a popular view among them that when a beach has the Blue Flag award, it influenced the public in choosing which beach to visit.

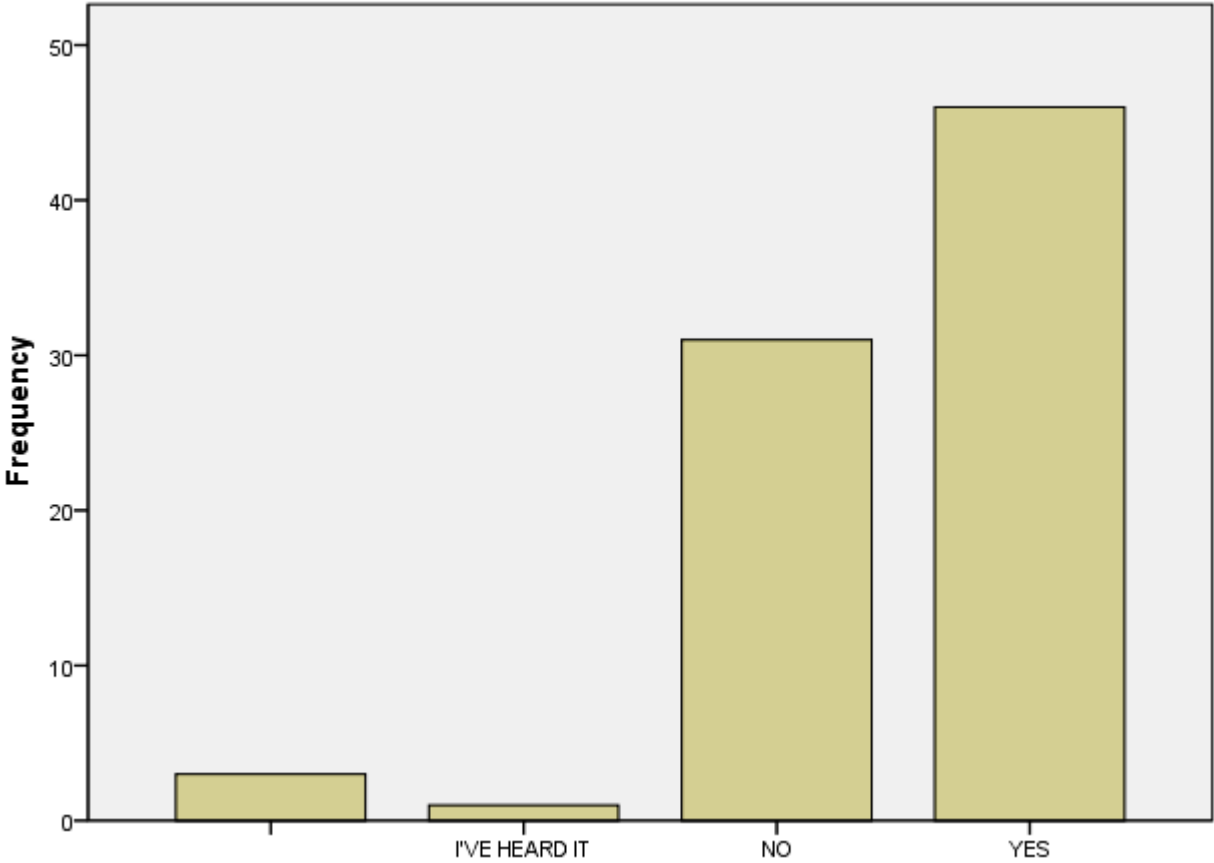


Figure 4: Perceptions of the public regarding awareness of Blue Flag beaches

Some of the public is aware of the term 'Blue Flag', and there are those who do not know about the Blue Flag beaches (Fig. 5). There are a few community members who once heard about the term, but do not know the meaning of the Blue Flag. The researcher was informed that the public choose to visit a beach because of the award,

and even those who do not know the term, but the characteristics and features of the Blue Flag awards influence them to choose the Blue Flag beaches. Most of the visitors look for the beach that has clean bathing water.

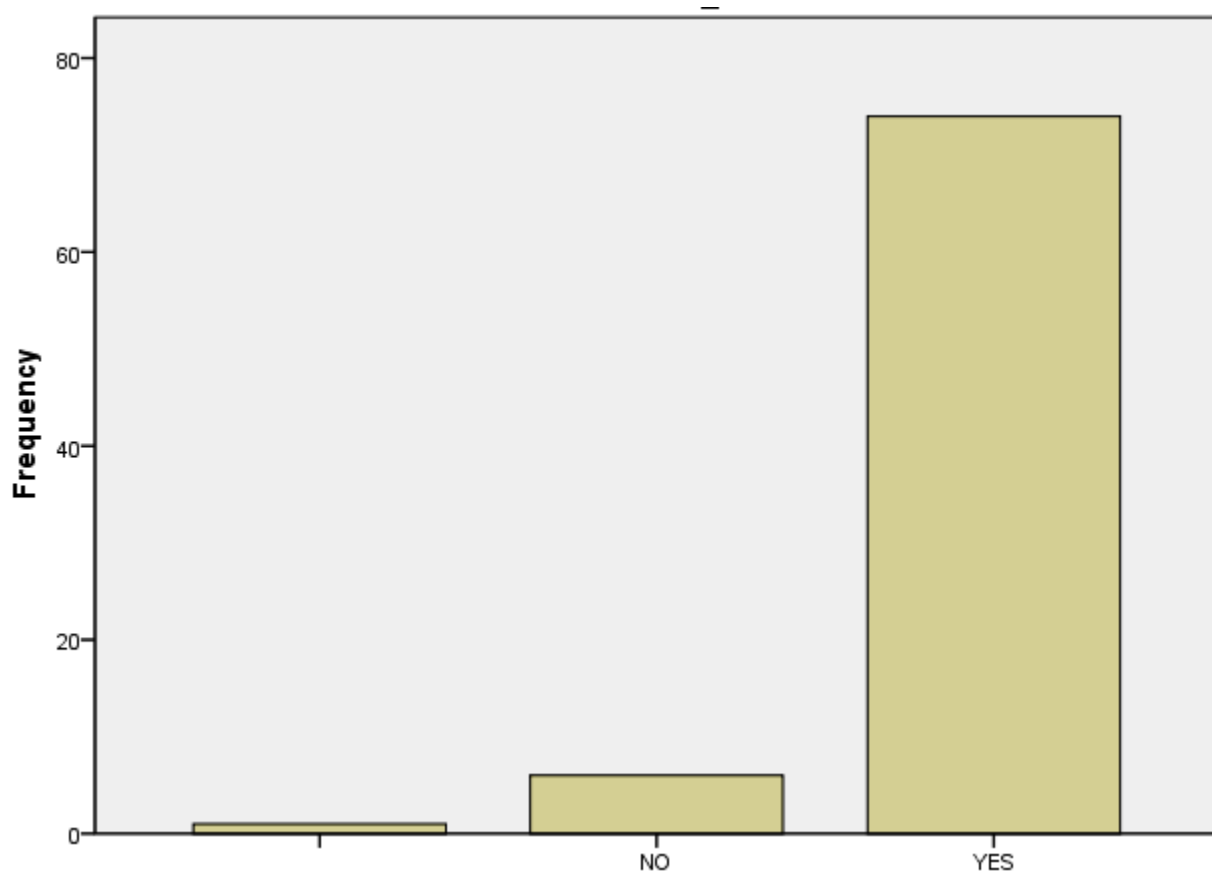


Figure 5: Perceptions of knowledge of Blue Flag award in choosing a beach for recreation

The visitors have indicated to the researcher that they prefer a beach that provides all the services when they are on a beach, e.g. enough and clean ablution facilities and showers to remove sand after bathing. They have highlighted that they are looking for the beach that is properly maintained where all these facilities are in good working order. The visitors/beach users also indicated that they prefer a beach that is safe,

which means where there are lifesavers for the swimmers, and where there is visible policing. They believe if there are police around there will minimal criminal activity in the area. The graph below indicates that safety is the priority of the beach users (Fig. 6).

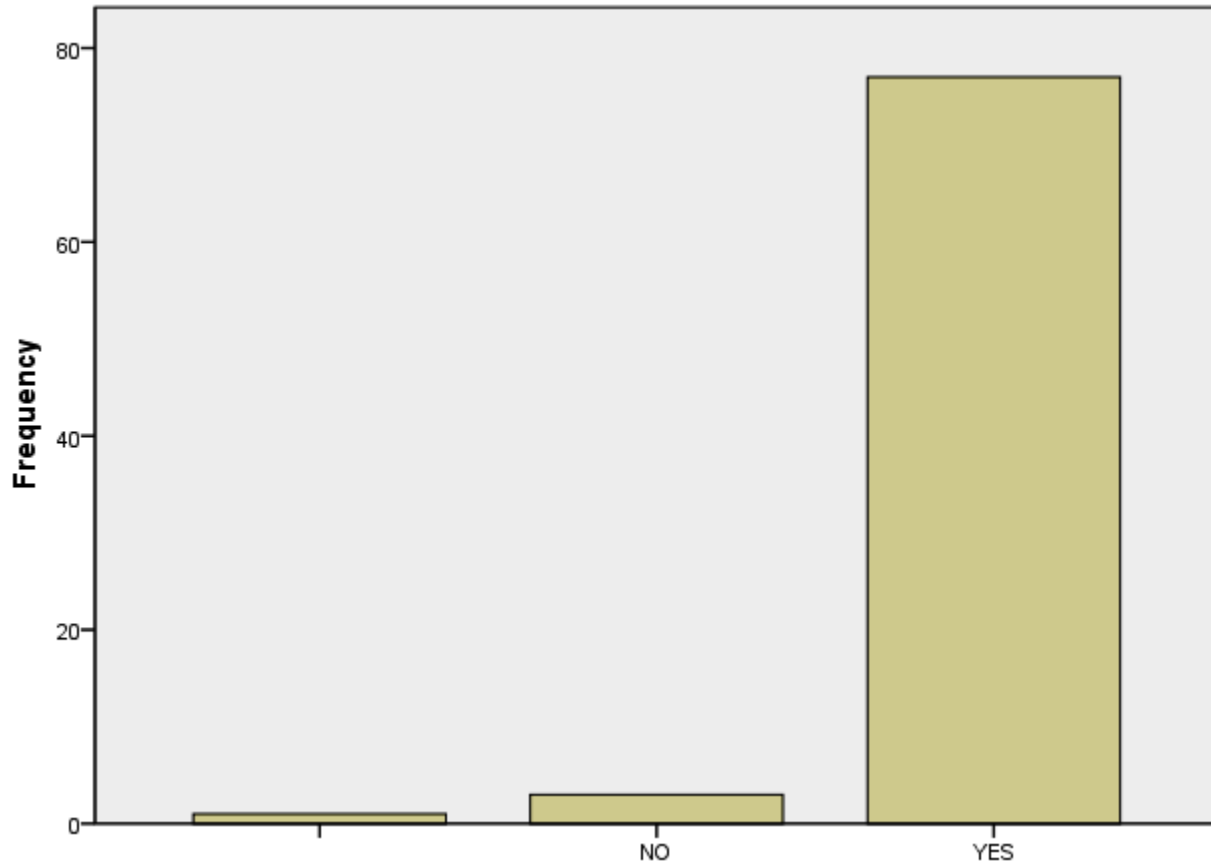


Figure 6: Safety as a priority at a beach

The beach users/goers have agreed that there is a role that the public can play in making sure that the beach receives or retains its status of the Blue Flag award (Fig. 7). They have highlighted some activities that the public should observe in assisting the municipalities/beach managers in retaining or receiving the Blue Flag awards. The following activities were mentioned: Keep the beach clean and promote the cleanliness of the beach; the public should assist in educating beach users/goers about the

cleanliness of the beach, and should comply with the law so as to keep the beach safe. It is the duty of the users to report any criminal activities on the beach and to encourage safety on the beach. The users also claim that the local schools and community can have regular clean-up campaigns as to raise awareness of the communities about the use of the beaches. There are a few of the public who were not sure if there is any role to play on the beach; they were of the opinion that the municipality had to maintain the beach, and nothing was required from their side as beach users/goers. Some of the beach goers claim that it is the responsibility of the government to make sure that the beach meets the requirements.

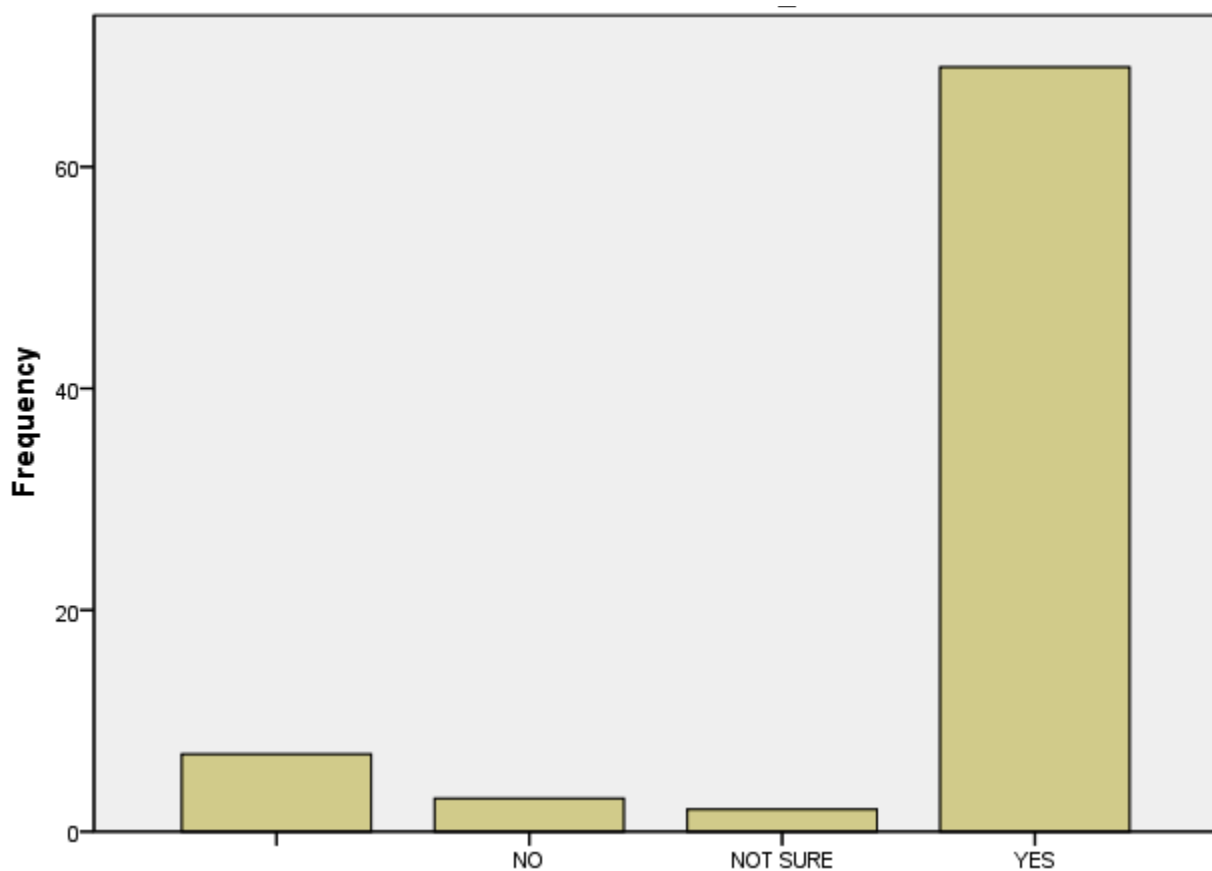


Figure 7: Perceptions of the public as role player in the status of beaches

Most of the beach users/goers reported that they can recommend the beach they visited because the beaches had clean water and were safe. They were of the opinion that these beaches have the facilities that most of the visitors need. They claim that when they visit the beach they had clear requirements, and most of these beaches met their requirements. They are proud of these beaches, and that is why they can recommend them. There are a few beach goers/users who claim that they cannot recommend the beach because they were not satisfied with some facilities.

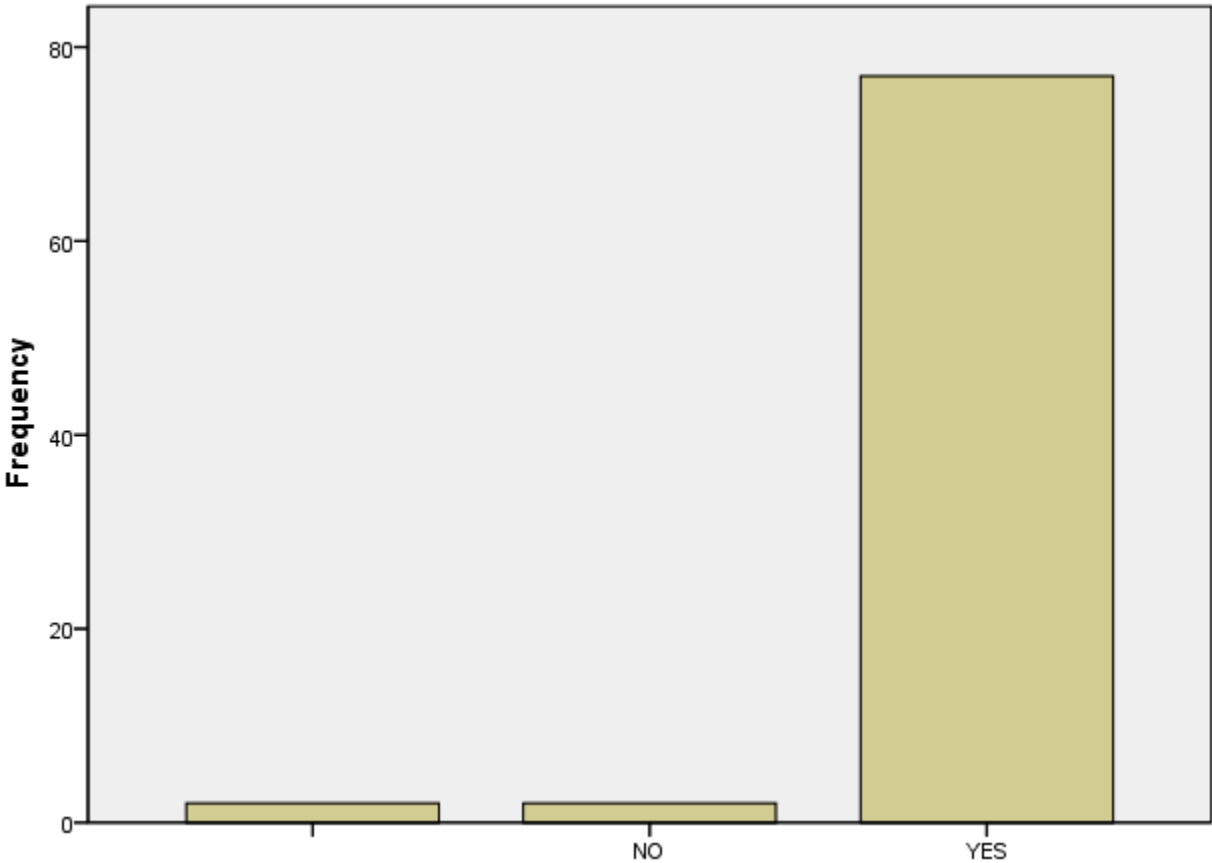


Figure 8: Perceptions of beach users and if they will recommend to the Blue Flag beach they visited.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Studies have tried to estimate the cost associated with reduced water quality and withdrawal of the Blue Flag award in Margate, KwaZulu-Natal, based on travel costs and contingent behaviour (Nahman and Rigby 2008). Costs associated with the hypothetical loss of Blue Flag awards range between 17 and 25 Million ZAR per annum. Le Roux et al. (2005) suggest that the Kongweni estuary in Margate, a popular east coast town in South Africa's Kwazulu-Natal province, provides significant recreational services, and it is estimated that Margate receives 145,000 visitors per annum, with an average expenditure per visitor estimated at 2000, ZAR per trip. Tourism is thus worth at least 290 Million ZAR per annum to the local economy, excluding multiplier effects. The Blue Flag programme 2006, cited in Nahman and Rigby 2008, suggests that Margate Beach was one of the 14 beaches in South Africa that had been awarded Blue Flag status, signalling compliance with criteria, covering water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management and safety. Blue Flag status is intended to serve as an important quality signal, and is therefore a possible determinant of the popularity, and hence recreational value, of such beaches.

This study sets out to investigate a variety of issues affecting the Blue Flag in the Eastern Cape beaches which include the following: the involvement of the municipality and any state organ in Blue Flag awards; the contribution that is made by the Blue Flag in relation to the business and tourism, and a look at the standards of beaches in relation to the environmental management.

A Blue Flag award indicates that the beach has complied with water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management and safety and security criteria (Blue Flag programme, 2006). A new application is being submitted every year where municipalities need to indicate that they fulfil all 32 criteria needed to be awarded the Blue Flag award, as well supply proof of certain criteria from the previous season, such as water sample results and environmental education activities done and planned for the next season. The study has managed to find that the municipalities do know and understand the Blue Flag awards. All Municipalities confirm that the offices are managed by staff that understands the Blue Flag award. All municipal councillors do not have a problem with the Blue Flag and therefore they support the officials when they make application for the Blue Flag award. In all four Municipalities they think they meet the requirements to be in the pilot phase of the Blue Flag award. The research noticed that in all municipalities they have a qualified manager and his/her assistants to make the effort for the municipalities' beaches to receive the awards.

The municipalities want their beaches to meet the requirements but they do not have enough funding for the beaches. It has been raised that the municipal councillors do not take the award seriously because it is not a tangible thing to have a Blue Flag on the beach. They informed the researcher that their perceptions are that the Blue Flag only help a few individuals. The municipal councillors would like to spend money on things that they can showcase for election purposes. It has been evident that the municipal

councillors only support the Blue Flag in the boardroom, or on paper, but they do not provide the necessary support to the officials to succeed in their efforts.

Municipal officials also informed the researcher that the community does not care for, or want to own the resources. The communities are the ones who vandalise these resources. The research noticed that there is a problem with some community members who are not aware, or who do not like to see development in the areas. One of the municipalities stated that there was a change in one of the requirements where they are expected to take water samples to the accredited laboratory, but they are far from that laboratory. Initially the municipality laboratory was accepted, and the results of samples were accepted. Some of these municipalities also highlighted the issue of sewage spills that sometimes affects them as the municipality infrastructure deteriorates. Other problems that were highlighted by the manager were public indecency, alcohol abuse on the beach, and verbal abuse towards municipal staff, and litter.

The municipal officials have agreed that having the Blue Flag beach has positive impacts on the municipality. It has an influence on tourism, especially foreign tourists, because they want to visit a beach that meets the standards of the Blue Flag. Blue Flags ensures that beaches have world class facilities for tourism and the residents around the area. These beaches are regarded by the visitors as safe beaches. In one of the municipalities it was said that the impact of the Blue Flag award is tangible.

The municipal officials and councillors believe that there is a role that the community should play in making sure that the municipality receives or retains the Blue Flag award. They have highlighted the following: The public can do random voluntary beach clean-ups. It has been also said that the public should buy into the concept and develop a sense of pride for the beaches.

Some of the municipalities informed the research of the indirect funding that they receive from the National Department of Environmental Affairs, through the following projects: working for the coast, coast care, beach cleaning and other projects. The National Department appoints the companies to execute the project on their behalf. Most of these projects are implemented on the coast and they assist the municipalities in making sure that the beaches are clean. They also use these projects in the infrastructure upgrade. These municipalities are also helped by these projects by litter pickers that are employed by them to clean the beaches during the festive season. The senior official from the National Department of Environmental Affairs confirmed that they have these projects. These projects are for three cycles, which the municipality is assisted to apply for, from the national government.

In 2010/2011 Dolphin beach in the Kouga Municipality lost the Blue Flag award due to the sewage spillage for which they applied for dispensation after they had managed to get funding to change all the pipes at the waste water treatment plant. The application was approved and they never lost the status again, unlike Gonubie which lost the status in 2008/2009 season (also due to a sewage spill) but they never regained it. It is only for

the past two years that they have applied for the pilot phase of the project. Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality have highlighted the following problems that contributed to their beaches losing the Blue Flag award: Environmental management problems, infrastructural challenges, high influx of people on the beaches which resulted in crime or security being compromised, and storm water run-off on Kings Beach.

One of the major reasons for interviewing the beach users was to get information on the choice of beaches that they visit, and the reason for their choice. It has been evident that some of the beach users are aware of the Blue Flag award, and some are not aware, but all the beach users choose the beach that meets the standards of the Blue Flag. In the interviews it has been evident that all users like to visit the beach that is clean, that has clean bathing water, and the beach that has enough life savers. The beach users would like to see themselves in a safe environment when they visit the beach. They have highlighted that they want to see the police around (visibility of the police). The beach users also expressed that the beaches they would like to visit should be the beaches that they can recommend to other beach users. The beach users stressed that they visit the beaches that have enough facilities; drinking water, and ablution facilities, including showers. The beach users/goers have suggested that they have a major role to play in making sure that the beach receives or maintains the awards. Their role starts in making sure that they do not litter the beach, and they should use the facilities provided.

The business community has been approached for its views with regards to Blue Flag awards and they have made it clear that the business owners/ managers are aware of the Blue Flag award. They have stated clearly that the Blue Flag awards have contribution to their businesses. Business owners also emphasised that their businesses are affected when international tourists do not visit the nearby beaches when they are concerned about the safety and the cleanliness of the beach.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATION

The research has revealed that there is a problem with municipalities in making sure that all their beaches receive and retain the Blue Flag award. In most of the municipalities there is no budget for the Blue Flag, and in some the budget for the amenities is not enough to make sure that all Blue Flag needs are met. The way things are done raises the concern of whether the councillors are aware of the Blue Flag and its benefits. Some of the municipalities' officials are not aware of the programme and they need to be educated on the importance of the programme in the municipality. Municipalities should also provide funding for the water samples that should be collected every two weeks during the Blue Flag season, and be analysed by the accredited laboratory.

Municipalities should budget for the Blue Flag awards as it has shown that it is of benefit to the municipality. The officials should also give a presentation to the councillors so that they understand the Blue Flag award and its benefit to the community at large. The municipality should make sure that their facilities are in good order and comply with the requirements of the Blue Flag award. The infrastructure should be monitored, as some of the municipalities lose their awards due to the old infrastructure that causes problems to the requirements of the Blue Flag. The municipal managers should also make a point that when they have an award they always maintain the standard as required by the Blue Flag.

Some municipalities are sourcing funding from the national government to make sure that their beaches receive and retain the Blue Flag awards. All municipalities should be encouraged to use all relevant sources of funding that are available to them to make sure that the beaches are in good condition. Municipalities should forge some links with the provincial and national departments that provide funding for the relevant projects e.g. working for the coast and coast care projects. One of the key findings are that Municipalities that source funding elsewhere for the Blue Flag award are more successful in retaining the award. The municipality should also run a project which educates the community in environmental issues.

The businesses have confirmed that they receive benefits in having the Blue Flag in their areas. It has been evident that the Blue Flag makes a contribution to the economy of the area, with an increase in tourists. Business owners need to be encouraged to assist in making sure that the beaches receive and retain the award. This sector can also engage the municipalities to make sure that the municipalities provide enough funding for the Blue Flag.

There is a need to educate the public about the Blue Flag as some members were not aware of the programme, but they in inadvertently visit beaches that are clean and safe. The general public or beach users are of the opinion that when the beaches have the Blue Flag more people are employed as there are more tourists in the area or more visitors to the beach. Beach users confirmed that there is clean bathing water and enough services on the Blue Flag beaches, which means they need to keep the

services in good order and that there is no vandalism on the beaches. Beach users need to be educated, as some of them bring dogs to the beach and some drink alcohol on the beach and that is against the Blue Flag beach requirements. The public have to be encouraged to keep the beaches clean and make sure that the facilities are left in good order. Beach users have to be encouraged to report crime that occurs in their surroundings while they are on the beach so that users can be safe.

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APPENDIX A

Interview guide to Municipalities/ Government Departments

1. Name of the Municipality?

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2. Name of the town?

.....

3. Name of the respondent?

.....

4. Position of the respondent?

.....

5. How many beaches have a Blue Flag award in this Municipality?

.....

6. Which are those beaches?

.....

7. Do you have beaches that lost the award?

.....

8. What was the reason for those beaches losing the award?

.....

.....

.....

9. What is the municipality doing to regain the award?

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.....
.....

10. Does the Municipality have any budget for the Blue Flag award?

11. If yes, how much is the budget?

12. Is the budget sufficient?

.....
.....

13. If no, what is the reason for them not to have the budget for the Blue Flag awards?

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.....

14. Is the Blue Flag award supported by the Mayoral committee/ councillors?

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.....

15. Has the municipality received any support from the Provincial/National government?

.....

16. If yes, what kind of support?

.....

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.....

17. Is there any benefit in having the Blue Flag award in the Municipality?

.....

18. What is the benefit?

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.....

19. Does Having the Blue Flag award have any impact on tourism in the area?

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20. If yes, can you elaborate?

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.....

21. Which problems do you encounter in making sure that your beaches receive or maintain the awards?

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22. What is the municipality's plan to solve those problems?

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23. What do you think is the role of the community (including NGO'S) in making sure that the beaches receive or retain the award.

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APPENDIX B

Interview guide for the beach goers/users

1. Name of the respondent?

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2. Age of the respondent

3. Gender on the respondent? Male Female

4. Are you employed? Where?

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5. Which beach do you go to and why?

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.....

6. Do you know the term: Blue Flag beach?

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7. Do you think that having beach awards has any influence on people choosing the beach to use or visit?

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8. Does this beach have clean bathing water?

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9. Does this beach have enough necessary services e.g. toilet, showers?

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10. How is the general cleanliness of this beach (waste management)?

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.....

11. Is the beach safe?

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.....

12. Can you recommend this beach to your friends? Why?

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13. Is there any role that should be played by the public in Blue Flag awards?

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13. Do you think that you have a role to play to make sure that the beach receives or retains the award?

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APPENDIX C

Interview guide to business

1. Name of the business?

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2. Name of the respondent?

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3. Position of the respondent in the business?

.....

4. Is there benefit of having the Blue Flag award?

.....

5. What is the benefit?

.....

.....

6. Do you think government is doing enough to maintain or receive the awards?

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7. What is the role of business in making sure that the beach receives/maintain the award?

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8. Do you think is the good idea to have these awards?

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