

WBSDI Overview

The Walvis Bay Spatial Development Initiative

The Walvis Bay Spatial Development Initiative (WBSDI) was initiated in 2000/2001 by the Governments of Namibia and South Africa as a bilateral initiative to be funded by the two countries. It closely mirrors the Maputo Corridor which stretches from Gauteng in South Africa to the port of Maputo. Spatial development framework is a strategic methodology for the development of outward oriented and competitive economies in the region.

WBSDI is one of several other spatial development initiatives on the African continent. The Department of Trade and Industry of South Africa is responsible for the SDI programme under its bilateral programmes (and hence the funding of the SDI's) and project management of the spatial development initiatives falls under the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) under an agency arrangement.

The geographic scope of the WBSDI was initially the Trans-Kalahari Highway (100 kilometres either side of the highway) from Walvis Bay to Gobabis on the Botswana border. It is part of the Coast to Coast corridor from Walvis Bay to Maputo, since it then links up with the Platinum Highway in North-West province of South Africa and onto the Maputo Corridor to the port of Maputo in Mozambique. Projects for investment promotion were identified in that corridor with the objective to hold an investment conference in 2004. By the projected time of the conference, there were 48 projects and concepts that had been developed within the context of the spatial development framework.

The Namibian and South African Heads of State then decided at the November 2006 Bilateral Meeting to give fresh impetus to the process and put time lines to it. The two countries agreed to co-host an investment conference in Namibia in late 2007. The holding of the investment conference in October 2007 is thus a product of the earlier process and the ongoing stewardship of the process by the two Presidents and their respective ministries of trade and industry (Namibia and South Africa).

The WBSDI has since been expanded to include the Trans-Caprivi Highway which proceeded from Walvis Bay to Katima-Mulilo and the Trans Kunene which proceeds from Walvis Bay to Ruacana, with Walvis Bay as the nodal point. A significant policy decision was that taken by the Government of Namibia in early 2007 to hold an International Investment Conference for all of Namibia, not just limited to the geographic scope of the SDI, this meant intensive engagement with all 13 regions in the country to generate projects. There are currently over 50 projects in different sectors and in varying stages of development and review to be listed on the website and published. The development and review process is meant to produce projects that will whet the appetites of the investment community.



