



View over the Chiawa GMA.

■ Community to benefit from partnership park

A new 'partnership park' in the Lower Zambezi Valley may change the face of responsible tourism in Zambia. This new park, the first of its kind in Zambia, is currently being established by the Chiawa community and tourism operators in the Greater Chiawa Game Management Area (GMA), which borders the Lower Zambezi National Park. Private operators supporting the scheme include Chongwe River Camp, Baines' River Camp and the Royal Zambezi Lodge. The project, which is supported by the UNDP, aims to conserve the valley's diverse ecosystems and eradicate hunting in the area. The land in the Chiawa GMA will be managed by the trustees and used exclusively for ecotourism activities.

"The communities will now be direct beneficiaries of all ecotourism operations in the area as a result of the establishment of a community trust," says Chongwe's Chris Liebenberg. "All revenue earned from gate entry will go directly to the communities involved, and all operators will pay an annual bed levy, which will go towards the park's operational costs." If this pilot project proves successful, it should pave the way for similar projects in other parts of Zambia and Africa.