



The Gambia: a Decision-Making exercise

How does the Gambia measure up?

The Gambia is ranked 155th out of 177 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index

Table 1 Ten development indicators for 2002/3.

	The Gambia	United Kingdom
Surface area (square km)	11,300	242,900
Population total	1 . 4 mil	59 . 3 mil
Annual population growth	2 . 3%	0 . 1%
Life expectancy (years)	53 . 4	77.5
Under-5 mortality rate per 1000 children	126	7
% GDP value added by agriculture	28	1
% GDP value added by industry	14	26
% GDP value added by services	58	73
High-technology exports as % of manufactured export	2 . 1	31 . 4
Paved roads as % of total	35 (1999)	100

What needs to be done?

The Gambia's Millennium Development Goals....by 2015:

- eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
- achieve universal primary education;
- promote gender equality;
- reduce child mortality;
- improve maternal health;
- combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases;
- ensure environmental sustainability;
- develop better communications, fair trade, debt relief, youth employment.

To help meet these goals....

The Government of the Gambia in collaboration with the World Bank is proposing to implement **The Trade Gateway Project**. This aims to:

- encourage local and foreign investment
- encourage export-orientated production
- increase employment

This would be done by setting up a Free Enterprise Zone (FEZ), where such benefits as tax breaks and exemption from import/export tariffs would be available.

The types of industry expected include:

- light assembly, e.g. electronics, computers
- agricultural export
- food and fish processing
- packaging and assembly e.g. pharmaceuticals

The basic infrastructure required for the FEZ:

- land suitable for building
- roads
- power
- telecommunications
- water supply
- sewerage
- solid waste disposal

Some existing environmental issues in The Gambia

- **Water resources.** Rainfall has declined in recent years, whereas the growth in tourism has increased extraction from boreholes. This may lead to salt water intrusion into groundwater near the coast and a reduced water table in many small village wells.
- **Forests.** Before independence, The Gambia was densely forested. Decreased rainfall, growing population, land clearance and bush fires have severely reduced forest cover and re-generation.
- **Coastal erosion.** The Gambia experiences serious coastal erosion (up to 4m annually) and is at risk of further damage as sea levels rise due to global warming. This is a problem for tourism.

Environmental assessment

A full environmental impact assessment is crucial to allow for sustainable development taking into account the importance of tourism in The Gambia.

World Bank Environmental Policy

- "The Bank does not support projects that involve the significant conversion or degradation of critical natural habitats."
- "Wherever feasible, projects are sited on lands already converted."
- "For those cases where no feasible alternatives for the project and its siting in natural habitats exist, a comprehensive analysis demonstrates that overall benefits from the project substantially outweigh the environmental costs."

Fig 1 The Gambia - Africa's smallest country.

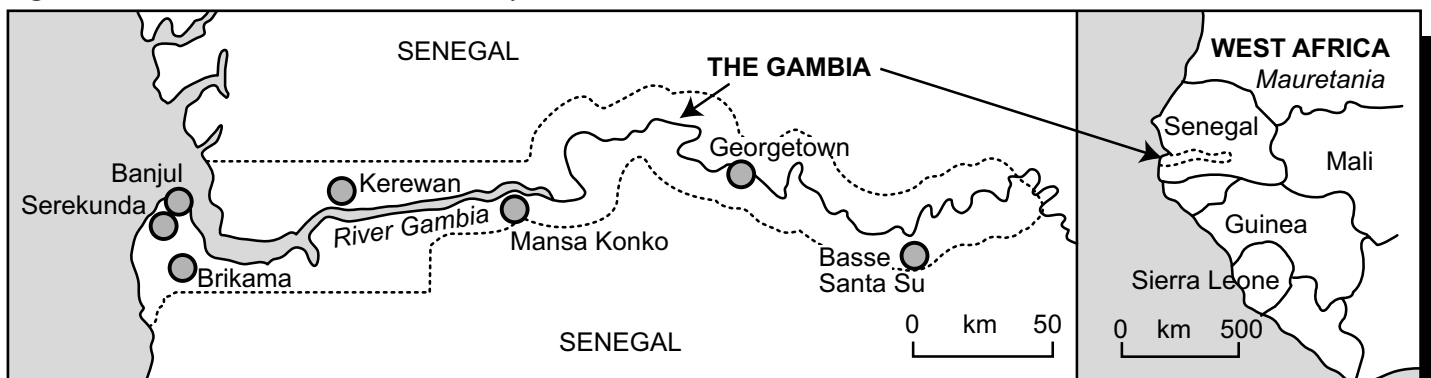
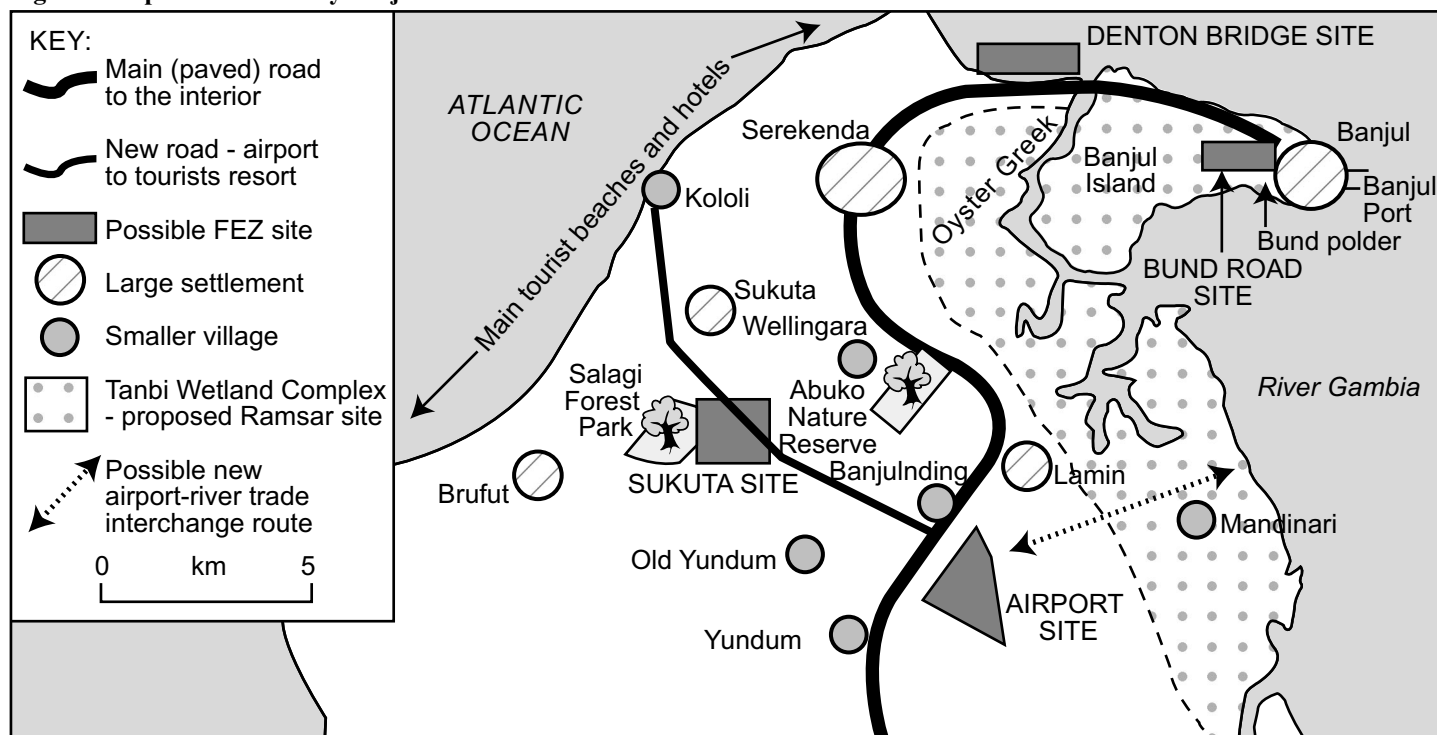


Fig. 2 Four possible Gateway Project FEZ sites.

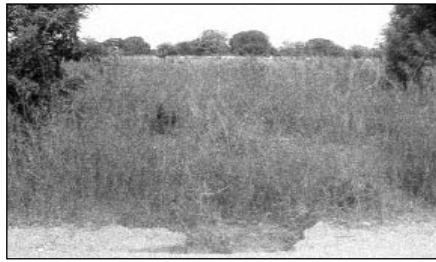


Site	Description	Infrastructure	Environment	Occupation/ownership
Denton Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7km from Banjul port. • Flat, just above sea level, dunes, lagoons, marshes, grassed woodland. • Will need much site preparation to support heavy structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to Banjul-Serekunda highway. • Local water and electricity supply can fall short of demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within ecologically sensitive Tanbi Wetland complex; large bird population and rich in fish and invertebrates. • Subject to shoreline retreat; could affect site within 25 yrs. • Popular starting point for tourist trips into the wetlands, especially for birdwatching, and out to sea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No permanent housing settlements: some fish-processing plants, a little seasonal farming. • Site owned by government and ports authority.
Bund Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2km from Banjul port. 34 hectares. • Flat, swampy site, 50m from the coast, scrub and mangrove patches. • Will need much ground preparation to support heavy structures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next to Banjul-Serekunda highway, which may need widening. • Only major available site for activities closely related to the port. • Water and electricity issues as for Denton Bridge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoreline retreat means site could be threatened within 14 years unless protected. • Part of Tanbi Wetland complex, but part of area proposed is seriously degraded with rubbish dumps and effluent. • Popular site for bird-watching and the start of eco-tours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part already urbanised and plans allow for further development along the road. • Some temporary settlement, but legally this is state-owned land
Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 162 hectares, flat, well-drained, 30m above sea level. • Shrubs, grass savannah; no difficulties with site preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gambia Civil Aviation Authority has plans for airport expansion. • Power and other utilities, e.g. waste treatment, already exist on edge of zone. Electricity supply to the airport is given top priority • Roads are generally good, mostly dual carriageway to Banjul; new road to coastal tourist belt. • Possibility of trade interface with the River Gambia at Mandinari for trans-shipment of goods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original forest cover now lost, cleared for farming, timber (mostly illegal felling) or by wild fires. • However, good potential for restoration of ecology if area not developed. • Clearing of existing woodland/ grassland would lead to habitat loss and fragmentation. • Tanbi Wetland complex could be affected by development towards Mandinari. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No settlements; firewood collection and some cultivation in the rainy season. • Site owned and fenced off by the Civil Aviation Authority.
Sukuta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat, well-drained, open tree-shrub savannah, suitable for building. • Located east of the Salagi Forest Park, incorporating about 80% of the farmland of people from local villages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new airport - coast road cuts the site into two unequal parts. This could encourage development. • Site is on a well-field; water from boreholes treated locally but most goes to larger towns, not local villages. • Electricity supply subject to power cuts (as elsewhere in the country). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guinea savannah woodland largely destroyed by felling and bush fires; cattle grazing also inhibits re-growth. • Development would occupy land with good reforestation potential, but the site at present has rather limited ecological value. • Water table in traditional farmers' wells has been lowered by borehole extraction; development could increase groundwater pollution risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the site is cultivated, e.g. groundnuts, mango orchards, vegetables, sheep-raising. Produce sales to local markets and hotels have improved local people's lives. • Probably high levels of compensation required for loss of farmland; disputes likely.

Fig. 3



Most Gambian roads are earth or gravel surfaced and liable to damage, especially in the rainy season.



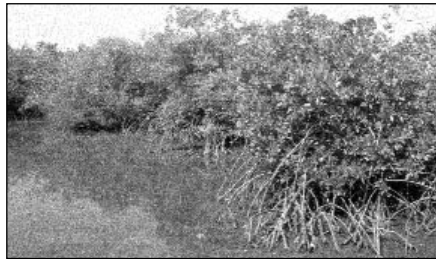
Scrub and savannah, the result of forest clearance and grazing, is typical of the landscape at the Airport site.



The Abuko Forest Nature Reserve is an environmentally sensitive remnant of the Gambia's original forest cover. It could suffer from climate change and falling water tables.



Intensive, small-scale farming for fruit and vegetables, typical of land use at the Sukuta site, supporting a large number of villagers.



The mangroves of the Tanbi Complex, designated a Ramsar (protected wetland) site, are a rich but sensitive ecosystem. The root systems also help consolidate coastlines and estuaries. Bund Road and Denton Bridge sites are close by.



Evidence of severe coastal erosion along the main hotel strip fronting the Atlantic Ocean. The impact of an infrastructure and tourism could be significant.

Photography by kind permission of Dr. Margaret Mackintosh.

The Decision-making exercise.....

A World Bank employee has visited The Gambia and helped produce an environmental impact assessment (EIA) on this project.

Shortly afterwards, (s)he receives this email from their line manager:

Memo,

Thanks for your very detailed EIA report on this project - well done!

Could you now please:

- select and justify one of the four proposed sites for the first phase of development;
- assuming this development is successful, identify a second site for expanding the project in future years, again with your reasons.

It would be helpful if you could set out your report in table form.

Please take full account of:

- The Gambia's overall level of development and current state of the environment;
- the country's Millennium Development Goals and our own Environmental Policy.

Secondly I'd like your comments as to whether a FEZ approach is in fact a good way to meet the needs of a less developed country such as The Gambia.

Could you suggest a couple of alternative projects we might propose to The Gambian government, and why?

Then prepare your report responding to the email. This should include:

- The table asked for comparing the sites by using the full range of information provided. You might decide:
 - to describe and evaluate all aspects of each site in turn;
 - or compare all four under headings such as infrastructure, social impact, etc.

Whatever layout you use, your decisions on the two chosen sites and your reasons should be clearly stated.

- For the second task, you will need to carry your thinking on from here and propose an alternative to the FEZ approach which you feel might be of more benefit to the country. It will be useful if you can draw on your knowledge of Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) in general here to support your case. You could propose two schemes in outline or one in more detail.

Resources

World Bank Trade Gateway Project; Environmental Impact Assessment Study - Vol 1, Final Report www.worldbank.org.

Websites:

- www.gambianet.com
- www.visitthegambia.gm
- www.cia.gov
- www.lonelyplanet.com

Acknowledgements

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