TOWARDS BLUE FLAG STATUS AT EASTERN BEACH IN EAST LONDON, SOUTH AFRICA: CURRENT CONTEXT AND FUTURE PLANS

by

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Towards Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach in East London, South Africa: Current context and future plans

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

25 February 2022

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"Acknowledging the good that you already have in your life is the foundation for all abundance"
(Eckhart Tolle, 2018:1).

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ABSTRACT

The Blue Flag award has become a prevalent tool for beach management worldwide. It applies environmental law and focuses on sustainable management of beaches. The literature reveals that Blue Flag beaches grant visitors assurance of compliance with approved international standards of safety, quality and acceptable user regulations. South Africa was accorded accreditation rights, 20 years ago, to pursue this status as a sustainable ecological approach. Yet, a research gap exists with fragmented environmental legislation and policies which continue to afflict certain regions, such as Eastern Beach in the Eastern Cape. This has complicated conservation efforts and reached a critical stage, requiring urgent attention to sustainable and optimal management plans. In addition, very little research exists to investigate beach management with a focus on Blue Flag beaches in South Africa. The main focus of this study was, therefore, to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status. This empirical research followed a qualitative approach via virtual semi-structured interviews with twenty participants who were tourism public and private stakeholders. Data was analysed using thematic analysis.

Findings reveal that organisations are involved in planning and management of land activities to achieve Blue Flag status and are promoting environmental awareness amongst the public. They promote engagement, economic returns and infrastructure investment, while they plan for tourism projects, create environmental public awareness and support tourism projects. The results revealed that having Blue Flag status would improve the quality of the water, the beachfront, and environmental education and training. Current conservation-related plans include infrastructural development, such as sewerage pipe replacement and environmental cleaning campaigns. Participants highlighted the need for enhanced collaboration on conservation initiatives; management of pollution and land activities; public awareness and voluntary conservation initiatives. This study also considered current compliance of Eastern Beach with the Blue Flag criteria. Findings showed that this beach is currently not complying with the Blue Flag ecolabel criteria of environmental education and information, water quality, environmental management, and safety and services. Stakeholders confirmed that there is lack of control in managing people, which leads to overcrowding at Eastern Beach. Alcohol usage is an additional challenge, which can endanger other beach users, especially children. Participants made reference to safety and security, expressing that beach users do not feel safe to use the

beach at night. This study provided improvement plans, which could assist Eastern Beach in working towards Blue Flag status. The Blue Flag status framework was developed from this research, and it sets the context to assist stakeholders involved at Eastern Beach, to move towards attaining Blue Flag status. The goal is to take this beach into the desired future. The attainment of the status, effective implementation, and use of ICZM, as well as the triple bottom line benefits of sustainability, portray the desired future for Eastern Beach. Findings provide guidance to stakeholders towards attaining the status, which can have positive socio-economic and ecological impacts on Eastern Beach and its surroundings.

KEY TERMS:

Blue Flag criteria, Blue Flag ecolabel, coastal tourism, framework, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, sustainable tourism development, tourism public and private stakeholders.

OKUCASHUNIWE

Umklomelo weBlue Flag usuyithuluzi elivamile lokuphatha amabhishi emhlabeni wonke. Usebenzisa umthetho wezemvelo futhi ugxile ekuphathweni okusimeme kwamabhishi. Izincwadi zembula ukuthi amabhishi e-Blue Flag anikeza izivakashi isiqinisekiso sokuthobela izindinganiso zamazwe ngamazwe ezigunyaziwe zokuphepha, izinga eliphezulu kanye nemithethonqubo eyamukelekayo yabasebenzisi. INingizimu Afrika yanikezwa amalungelo okugunyazwa, eminyakeni engama-20 edlule, ukulandela lesi simo njengendlela esimeme yezemvelo. Nokho, likhona igebe locwaningo ngemithetho ehlukene yezemvelo nezinqubomgomo ezisaqhubeka nokuhlukumeza izifunda ezithile, njenge-Eastern Beach eMpumalanga Kapa. Lokhu kuye kwenza nzima imizamo yokongiwa kwemvelo futhi kwafinyelela esigabeni esibucayi, okudinga ukunakwa okuphuthumayo ezinhlelweni zokuphatha ezisimeme nezifanele. Ukwengeza, luncane ucwaningo olukhona lokuphenya ukuphathwa kwamabhishi ngokugxila emabhishi eBlue Flag eNingizimu Afrika. Okugxilwe kakhulu kwalolu cwaningo, ngakho-ke, bekuwukuphenya imibono yababambe iqhaza emphakathini nabazimele ababambe iqhaza ekuphathweni kwe-Eastern Beach, mayelana nesimo samanje nezinhlelo zesikhathi esizayo zokuthola isimo se-Blue Flag. Lolu ucwaningo olusekelwe ekuqapheliseni nasekukalweni kwezimo lulandele indlela yokuqoqa nokuhlaziya imininingwane okungeyona eyezinombolo ngokusebenzisa umhlangano lapho oxoxisana naye ebuza imibuzo evulekile nabahlanganyeli abangamashumi amabili ababengababambiqhaza bomphakathi nabazimele kwezokuvakasha. Imininingwane yahlaziywa kusetshenziswa indlela yokuhlaziya imininingwane ehlanganisa ukufunda ngeqoqo lemininingwane.

Imiphumela yembula ukuthi izinhlangano ziyabandakanyeka ekuhleleni nasekulawuleni imisebenzi yomhlaba ukuze kuzuzwe isimo seBlue Flag futhi zigqugquzela ukuqwashisa ngemvelo emphakathini. Bakhuthaza ukuxoxisana, izinzuzo zezomnotho kanye nokutshalwa kwezimali kwingqalasizinda, kuyilapho behlela amaphrojekthi wezokuvakasha, baqwashisa umphakathi ngemvelo futhi besekela amaphrojekthi ezokuvakasha. Imiphumela iveze ukuthi ukuba nesimo seBlue Flag kuzothuthukisa izinga lamanzi, ugu lolwandle, imfundo nokuqeqeshwa kwezemvelo. Izinhlelo zamanje ezihlobene nokongiwa kwemvelo zihlanganisa ukuthuthukiswa kwengqalasizinda, njengokushintshwa kwamapayipi endle kanye nemikhankaso yokuhlanza imvelo. Abahlanganyeli bagqamise isidingo sokubambisana okuthuthukisiwe ezinhlelweni zokongiwa kwemvelo; ukuphathwa kokungcola kanye nemisebenzi yomhlaba; ukuqwashisa umphakathi kanye nezinhlelo

zokuzithandela zokongiwa kwemvelo. Lolu cwaningo luphinde lwacubungula ukuhambisana kwamanje kwe-Eastern Beach nemibandela ye-Blue Flag. Okutholakele kubonise ukuthi leli bhishi okwamanje alihambisani nenqubo yamamaki abekwe emaphaketheni omkhiqizo e-Blue Flag yemfundo yezemvelo nolwazi, izinga eliphezulu lamanzi, ukuphathwa kwemvelo, nokuphepha nezinsizakalo. Ababambisene nabo bakuqinisekisile ukuthi kukhona ukuhluleka ukulawula abantu, okuholela ekutheni kugcwale abantu kakhulu e-Eastern Beach. Ukusetshenziswa kotshwala kuyinselele eyengeziwe, engafaka engozini abanye abasebenzisi bebhishi, ikakhulukazi izingane. Abahlanganyeli bakhulume ngokuphepha nokuvikeleka, bezwakalisa ukuthi abasebenzisi bebhishi abazizwa bephephile ukusebenzisa ibhishi ebusuku. Lolu cwaningo luhlinzeke ngezinhlelo zokuthuthukisa, ezingasiza i-Eastern Beach ekusebenzeleni isimo seBlue Flag. Uhlaka lwesimo seBlue Flag lwasungulwa kusukela kulolu cwaningo, futhi lubeka umongo ukusiza ababambiqhaza abathintekayo e-Eastern Beach, ukuze bafinyelele esimeni seBlue Flag. Inhloso wukuyisa leli bhishi ekusaseni elilifisayo. Ukufinyelelwa kwesimo, ukuqaliswa ngempumelelo, kanye nokusetshenziswa kwe-ICZM, kanye nezinzuzo eziyisisekelo ezintathu zokusimama, kubonisa ikusasa elifiselekayo le-Eastern Beach. Okutholakele kunikeza isiqondiso kubabambiqhaza ekufinyeleleni isimo, esingaba nomthelela omuhle kwezenhlalo-mnotho kanye nemvelo e-Eastern Beach nasezindaweni ezizungezile.

AMAGAMA ASEMQOKA:

Blue Flag criteria - Inqubo yeBlue Flag, *Blue Flag ecolabel* - amamaki abekwe emaphaketheni omkhiqizo weBlue Flag, *coastal tourism* - ezokuvakasha zasogwini, *framework* – uhlaka, *Integrated Coastal Zone Management* - Ukuphathwa Kwezindawo Zasogwini Okudidiyelwe, *sustainable tourism development* - ukuthuthukiswa kwezokuvakasha okusimeme, *tourism public and private stakeholders* - ezokuvakasha zababambiqhaza bakahulumeni nabazimele

KAKARETSO

Moputso wa Blue Flag o fetohile sesebediswa se tlwaelehileng bakeng sa tsamaiso ya mabopo lefatsheng ka bophara. O sebedisa molao wa tikoloho mme o tsepame hodima tsamaiso ya nako e telele ya mabopo. Dingolwa di supa hore mabopo a Blue Flag a fa baeti netefaletso ya tatelo ya maemo a amohetsweng a matjhaba a polokeho, boleng le melawana e amohelehang ya mosebedisi. Afrika Borwa e fuwe ditokelo tsa ho ananelwa, dilemong tse 20 tse fetileng, hore e lelekise boemo bona jwalo ka katamelo ya nako e telele ya tsa tikoloho. Empa, hona le dikgeo tsa dipatlisiso tse amanang le melao ya tikoloho le dipholisi tse sa fellang tse tswelang pele ho ama dibaka tse itseng, tse jwalo ka Eastern Beach ho la Kapa Botjhabela. Hona ho thatafaditse diteko tsa poloko ya tikoloho ha ba ha fihlela maemo a tlokotsi, a hlokang ho sebetswa ka potlako ho merero ya nako e telele le tsamaiso e sebetsang ka nepo. Ho feta moo, hona le dipatlisiso tse fokolang haholo ho ka fuputsa tsamaiso ya mabopo ka tsepamiso hodima mabopo a Blue Flag Afrika Borwa. Kahoo, tsepamiso ya mantlha ya phuputso ena e bile ho fuputsa maikutlo a baamehi ba setjhaba le ba poraefete ba amehang ho tsamaiso ya Eastern Beach, mabapi le boemo ba hajwale le merero ya nako e tlang ya ho fumana boemo ba Blue Flag. Patlisiso ena e entsweng ka mokgwa wa dipotso le ho boha e latetse katamelo ya bongata e entsweng ka dinthaviu tse ne di batla di hlophisitswe ka bankakarolo ba mashome a mabedi, bao e neng e le baamehi ba setjhaba le ba poraefete ba tsa bohahlaudi. Datha e manollotswe ka tshebediso ya manollo ya ditema.

Diphetho di supa ha dikhamphani di kentse letsoho therong le tsamaisong ya mesebetsi ya lefatshe ho fumana boemo ba Blue Flag hape di matlafatsa tsebo ka tsa ditoloho hara setjhaba. Di matlafatsa kopano, dipoelo tsa moruo le tsetelo ho meaho le ditsela, ha di ntse di etsa merero bakeng sa diprojeke tsa bohahlaudi, di theha tsebo ya setjhaba ka tsa tikoloho le ho tshehetsa diprojeke tsa bohahlaudi. Diphetho di bontsha hore hoba le boemo ba Blue Flag ho ka ntlafatsa boleng ba metsi, lebopo, le thuto le thupelo ya tsa tikoloho. Merero ya hajwale ya diprojeke tse amanang le poloko ya tikoloho e kenyeletsa ntshetsopele ya meaho le ditsela, jwalo ka puseletso ya dipeipi tsa dikgwerekgwere le matsholo a ho hlwekisa tikoloho. Bankakarolo ba totobaditse tlhloko ya tshebedisanommoho e eketsehileng ho mesebetsi ya tshireletso ya tikoloho; taolo ya tshilafatso ya lefatshe le mesebetsi ya lefatshe; temoso ya setjhaba le matsholo a boithaopo a tshireletso ya tikoloho. Phuputso ena e boetse e lekotse tatelo ya hajwale ya Eastern Beach ho ditlhoko tsa Blue Flag. Diphetho di bontshitse ha lebopo lena hajwale le sa latele ditlhoko tsa Blue Flag tsa ecolabel tsa thuto ya tsa tikoloho le tlhahisoleseding,

boleng ba metsi, tsamaiso ya tikoloho, le polokeho le ditshebeletso. Baamehi ba netefaditse hore hona le tlhokeho ya taolo tsamaisong ya batho, e lebisang ho kgobokano e mpe lebopong la Eastern Beach. Tshebediso ya tahi ke bothata bo bong, bo ka lebisang ho dikotsi ho basebedisi ba bang ba lebopo, haholo bana. Bankakarolo ba buile ka polokeho le tshireletseho, ba hlalosa hore basebedisi ba lebopo ha ba ikutlwe ba bolokehile ho ka ya lebopong bosiu. Phuptso ena e fane ka merero ya ntlafatso, e ka thusang Eastern Beach ho sebeletsa ho fumana boemo ba Blue Flag. Moralo wa boemo ba Blue Flag o hlahisitswe ho tswa phuputsong ena, mme o theha tema e tla thusa baamehi ba amanang le Eastern Beach, hore ba sebeletse ho fumana boemo ba Blue Flag. Maikemisetso ke ho isa lebopo lena bokamosong bo labalabetsweng. Phihlello ya boemo, tshebetso e nepahetseng, le tshebediso ya ICZM, hammoho le melemo e menahaneng hararo ya motheo ya tshwarello ya nako e telele, di supa bokamoso bo batlehang bakeng sa Eastern Beach. Diphetho di fana ka tataiso bakeng sa ho fihlella boemo bo ka bang le ditlamorao tse molemo ntlheng tsa moruo wa setjhaba le tikoloho ho Eastern Beach le dibaka tse e potileng.

MANTSWE A BOHLOKWA:
Makgetha a Blue Flag, leibole ya tikoloho ya Blue Flag, bohahlaudi ba mabopong, moralo, Tsamaiso e Kopaneng ya Sebaka sa Lebopo, ntshetsopele e tswellang ya bohahlaudi, baamehi ba tsa bohlaudi ba setjhaba le poraefete

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCET	Buffalo City Environmental Trust
BCMDA	Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency
BCMM	Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
BFSA	Blue Flag South Africa
BKCCA	Border- Kei Chamber Call to Action
BKCOB	Border-Kei Chamber of Business
BWD	Bathing Water Directive
CAP	Coastal Awareness Programme
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CES	Coastal and Environmental Services
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DEDEA	Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
DMS	Development Management Services
ECDC	Eastern Cape Development Corporation
ECDED	Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development
ECPTA	Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency
ECSECC	Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council
EPWP	Environmental Public Works Programme
FEE	Foundation for Environmental Education
GGD	Good Green Deeds
IBP	Integrated Beach Programme
ICZM	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
ICMA	Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008
IDC	Industrial Development Corporation
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IG	Interview Guide
NDP	National Development Planning
NDT	National Department of Tourism
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998
NFSD	National Framework for Sustainable Development
NTSS	National Tourism Sector Strategy
OPCWE	Operation Phakisa Chemicals and Waste Economy
RO	Research Objective
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs

SEDA	Socio-Economic Development Agency
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Statistics South Africa
TBL	Triple Bottom Line
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHE	United Nations Conference on the Human Environment
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WCED	World Commission on Environment & Development
WESSA	Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa
WftC	Working for the Coast
WTO	World Tourism Organisation
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"Central to the ideals of the Blue Flag ecolabel, is the aim of connecting all
stakeholders with their surroundings and encouraging responsible
management, while learning more about environmental sustainability" (United
Nations Environment Programme, 2009:1).

1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Blue Flag award has become a prevalent tool that is used for beach administration throughout the world, and its adoption directly responds to the principles of environmental law (Coetzee, 2016; Klein & Dodds, 2017; World Commission on Environment & Development, 1987). This programme is set to bridge the gap between recreation and conservation and is referred to in recent literature as the beach management tool of choice (Lucrezi, Saayman & Van der Merwe, 2016). The Blue Flag award programme started in Europe in 1987, along the French coastline, as an environmental trademark to stimulate improved beach management and boost tourism (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006).

The Blue Flag ecolabel is described globally as a voluntary ecolabel applicable to beaches, marinas, and boating tourism operators (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Wildlife & Environment Society of South Africa, 2019). Important environmental, educational, safety and accessibility criteria should be met annually at a beach, in order for it to qualify for the Blue Flag award status (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006; Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, 2019). The purpose of the Blue Flag award programme that was adopted by the European Union in 2006, is to encourage beaches to abide by the Bathing Water Directive (BWD) (European Environment Agency, 2021). This is a blueprint that is concerned about the certification of natural resources and advancement of ecological trustworthiness of tourist destinations (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, 2019).

South Africa is the first country outside of Europe to be approved for Blue Flag accreditation along its coastlines, starting in 2001 (Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, 2019). The award and management process of the Blue Flag programme in South Africa is executed through the partnership between the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA), Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), National Department of Tourism (NDT) and participating coastal municipalities (with their public and private

stakeholders) (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; National Department of Tourism, 2016a; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). The country adopted this programme to ensure that its beaches can be promoted for their sustainable management, international standard of cleanliness, safety and environmental responsiveness (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020, 2020; National Department of Tourism, 2016). The Blue Flag programme considers beaches meeting 33 Blue Flag criteria, grouped under four headings: environmental education and information; water quality; environmental management; and safety and service (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, 2019). It is vital that beach management or municipal representatives ensure that the quality of swimming water is kept to the internationally recognised standard (McKenna, Williams & Cooper, 2011). The standard of swimming water should be in line with the Blue Flag requirements regarding the microbiological parameters for Escherichia coli (faecal coli bacteria) and intestinal enterococci (streptococci) (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006). The award of the Blue Flag ecolabel is given to all beaches that pass the criteria for a specific year (measured in February every year). It is imperative that post the award, beaches continue to conform to the set standards of the Blue Flag status (McKenna, *et al.,* 2011; Silwana, 2015).

Currently, sustainable development reinforces legislation in the country through the Bill of Rights (Constitution), national acts, Agenda 21 and industry policies and strategies (Slatter & Mearns, 2018). To address sustainable development prominence in South Africa, there should be stability between socio-economic and ecological values of all developments (Ferreira & Perks, 2016; Hall, 2009; Keyser, 2009; National Department of Tourism, 2016a). Despite the country transiting from its apartheid restraints in the 1990s and instituting a sustainable tourism development approach, environmental problems continue to accrue (Acheampong, 2015; Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2000). Apart from the White Paper on the Sustainable Development and Promotion of Tourism (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996), other approaches and acts were introduced as guidelines to a sustainable future. The national government presented the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA). The Blue Flag award programme was also announced and adopted in 2001, to play the imperative role of encouraging beaches to correspond with the BWD plan (Slatter & Mearns, 2018). The Integrated Coastal Management Act (ICMA) 24 of 2008 also became constitutionalised to strengthen sustainable development and management of all beaches (National Department of Tourism, 2016a). The NDT (2016a) has largely implemented adequate tourism policies and procedures, including the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) in 2011, to better

respond to the general environmental and coastal zone management problems. Based on these legislative policies, acts, measures and guidelines, South Africa is making an effort towards attaining a sustainable future.

Despite these efforts, the results of exclusion still exist, with fragmented environmental legislation and policies that have failed to promote the attainment of the Blue Flag award on several beaches in the Eastern Cape province (Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency, 2016; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). With South Africa having 48 Blue Flag beaches, the Eastern Cape province has only seven of these award beaches (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). However, the province's coastline is rich with natural coastal biodiversity and great beauty. The inadequate conditions of non-Blue Flag award beaches, including Eastern Beach, currently call for urgent attention to be drawn to coastal development and coastal zone management practices (Du Preez, Lee & Hosking, 2011; Silwana, 2015). Several authors confirm that there are costs associated with unplanned and poorly managed beaches in the country and the Eastern Cape province is included (Buckley, 2002; Du Plessis, Saayman & Van der Merwe, 2015; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). Corruption is another widespread problem in several parts of the country (Skenjana, Ngamlana, Mabhula, Mgwebi, Sokupa, Kimemia & Afesis-corplan, 2017). Its effects are limiting ethical project developments, management and service delivery, while undermining good governance systems (Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency, 2016; Carrier, 2008; Cousins, 2011; Pillay, 2014).

A beach is viewed by marine experts as an ecological, climatical, and environmental exploration resource; while for visitors and tourists it is a preferred natural resource for leisure and recreation (Lucrezi *et al.*, 2016; Pilkey, Neal, Kelley & Cooper, 2011). Beach administrators, management and other public and private stakeholders perform a key function in managing beaches aiming towards Blue Flag status (Silwana, 2015; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). A research gap exists in the context of Eastern Beach, since it has potential but is not currently ranked as a Blue Flag beach. The benefits associated with Blue Flag status for Eastern Beach are hence, at present, missed opportunities from an economic, social and environmental perspective. Beach award programmes have been globally utilised as a coastline management tool and noted to promote ecological sustainability for all users (Pencarelli, Splendiani & Fraboni, 2016). The condition of the beach influences the value of the beach for both residents and visitors (Klein & Dodds, 2017). The importance of beaches in the spectrum of tourism economies is widely known and beaches are referenced as vital assets and amenities for residents and visitors (Tudor & Williams, 2006.

Tourism in South Africa focuses on high-quality marinas and beaches, which are vital to the local tourist economy (Lucrezi & Van der Merwe, 2015). To maintain a beach is an environmental investment, which generates economic returns for tourist destinations (Du Preez *et al.,* 2011). Having Blue Flag status can result in positive impacts for the local population and conserve the beach for sustainable enjoyment by both residents and visitors (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014; Miller, 2016). In addition, having a better managed Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) approach for Eastern Beach, can also provide a long-term strategy and a roadmap for sustainable environmental management in East London. The next section outlines the research problem.

1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Sustainable tourism development is considered as a guiding principle with the potential to bring stability regarding socio-economic and ecological principles to all developments in South Africa (National Department of Tourism, 2017). The Blue Flag award programme was introduced in South Africa eighteen years ago. However, after 26 years of freedom since the apartheid regime ended in 1994, the results of sustainable tourism development and Blue Flag award programme still show exclusion, with fragmented environmental legislation and policies that have not successfully promoted tourism in several coastal areas, including the Eastern Cape province (Acheampong, 2015; Booyens, 2007; Cousins, 2011).

The key challenge for the **Eastern Cape province** has been the lack of consistent implementation of sustainable tourism development strategies by all destination managers (Operation Phakisa, 2014; Tichaawa & Samhere, 2015). The Eastern Cape province is identified as one of the poorest in South Africa (Tichaawa & Samhere, 2015). Sustainable developmental initiatives require more attention from socio-cultural, economic and ecological perspectives. The province is generally experiencing slow economic decline, job losses and increased dependence on social grants and subsidies to meet the needs of an increasingly poor community (Acheampong, 2015, Operation Phakisa, 2014; Tichaawa & Samhere, 2015). Moreover, the Eastern Cape province is not excluded from recent corruption scandals faced by the country in general, which are seriously limiting the management and development of financial prudence, while undermining good governance (Carrier, 2008; Pillay, 2014). Resilient management actions, aimed at facilitating partnerships between the public and private sector, are required in order to drive a sustainable tourism development framework in the Eastern Cape province.

The province hosts **East London city**, the second biggest city in the Eastern Cape (after Gqeberha, once known as Port Elizabeth), which still suffers from past historical

infrastructure backlogs and slow growth with respect to tourist resources, especially on the shoreline (Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency, 2016; Cousins, 2011). The city is generally characterised by high levels of unemployment, excessive poverty and rapid population growth (Pebane, 2016). Deprived tourism development and management practices for East London city are leading to numerous ecological impacts and degradation along the coast, including **Eastern Beach** (Arcus Gibb Engineering & Science, 2010; Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2018; Operation Phakisa, 2014). The lack of a proper ICZM strategy weakens the ability to maintain Eastern Beach as a pristine beach of choice (Operation Phakisa, 2014). In its Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the city confirms that negative impacts accumulate; these include illegal littering and disposal of dry and wet waste on the land and coastline of Eastern Beach (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2018).

An increase in the intensity of the adverse negative impacts causes a deterioration of conditions at this tourist attraction, which demotivates tourists and visitors, creates discontentment among the hosts and hinders the tourism potential of this destination (Operation Phakisa, 2014; Tichaawa & Samhere, 2015). Issues facing the Eastern Beach have reached a critical stage and the situation has created an urgent need for long-term management planning, developmental strategies and management practices as guided by the constitution (Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council, 2017). Eastern Beach is one of the natural tourist attractions where spatial tourism development has largely excluded sustainable development (Miller, 2016). Spatial tourism development is referred to as a kind of development that is considered for a coordination of socio-economic development, by preventing environmental problems and simultaneously protecting the natural and cultural environment (Risteski, Kocevski & Arnaudov, 2012).

Existing research has concentrated on the effects of Blue Flag status on tourists when selecting beaches to visit (Du Plessis *et al.,* 2015; Silwana, 2015). Some studies have focused on the public responsiveness, financial impacts and activity profiles of Blue Flag beachgoers (Klein & Dodds, 2017; Lucrezi *et al.,* 2016; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). Very little research exists to investigate beach management with a focus on Blue Flag beaches in South Africa (Silwana, 2015). There is also a lack of empirical research on the perceptions of public and private stakeholders regarding ICZM at Eastern Beach. This empirical research aimed to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status.

Finally, there is limited detail regarding Eastern Beach's current management procedures for the improvement of sustainability, and the roles being played by public and private tourism stakeholders involved in Eastern Beach (Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council 2017).

The following section presents the research objectives that arose out of the currently perceived insufficient academic literature and knowledge within this subject area, and which guided this investigation.

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. Primary research objective

The main focus of this study was to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status.

1.3.2. Secondary research objectives

To achieve the primary research objective and address the research problem, the following secondary research objectives were identified:

1. To discover the awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status

2. To understand current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status

3. To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria

4. To ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach

5. To ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach

In addition to the above five secondary research objectives, which related to the primary research conducted, the researcher also conducted a literature review. The literature review provided a critical understanding of the best practice principles and examples of Blue Flag beaches in the Eastern Cape, and the challenges faced by public and private stakeholders regarding ICZM in South Africa.

1.4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section includes a brief introduction to the research paradigm, research design and methods, sampling, data collection, data analysis and considerations of validity and reliability. These are dealt with fully in Chapter Three. This study is an empirical

investigation that is predominantly qualitative, with the semi-structured interviews containing a few closed questions.

1.4.1. Paradigms

Paradigms are referred to as researchers' philosophies, which are concerned with initial ideologies that suggest exactly where the researcher is originating from, to building meaning rooted in data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This qualitative study considered the paradigm of constructivism/interpretivism. This approach allows individuals to have many subjective interpretations of their own world (Creswell, 2014). The purpose is to know human lived experiences, participants' interpretations, based on their perceptions, beliefs and value systems (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Queiros, 2020). Through a predominantly open-ended research instrument, the researcher brought his own personal knowledge into this study. The researcher also interrelated with participants and inductive findings were revealed from that interaction (Creswell, 2014; Queiros, 2020). This approach also enabled collecting of data in the participants' own settings, identifying themes from the data and interpreting these (Coles, Duval & Shaw, 2013; Queiros, 2020).

1.4.2. Research design and methods

The research design for the current study is qualitative and focuses on meanings and interpretations of public and private stakeholders' perceptions. However, where appropriate a few closed questions are included in the interview guide. For the purpose of this study, participants were required to respond to the criteria for the Blue Flag Programme, specifically concerning Eastern Beach. The *yes, no* or *not sure* closed questioning was used by the researcher to allow a standardised analysis of data, based on the set and categorised criteria. These questions were partially used to establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria, to help to achieve Secondary Research Objective 3 of the study. The research was also empirical because it relates to reasoning, opinion and leading to scientifically grounded findings (Neuman & Robson, 2009). Research designs incorporate a series of research methods utilised to gather and examine the data collected in order to formulate conclusions (Creswell, 2014; Walliman, 2011). The following sections outline the research methods that were used.

1.4.2.1. Literature sources

The researcher utilised existing studies to formulate the background to the study from the literature review, to help shape the research objectives, and in the development of the interview guide. Sources used included published journals in travel and tourism management, travel magazines, newspapers and government/semi-government/non-

government/private agency publications. Acts such as NEMA of 1998, ICMA of 2008 and other case law publications were also consulted. Articles, academic theses, web portals and publications from government organisations such as the Department of Environmental Affairs, the National Department of Tourism, Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency (BCMDA) and the Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development (ECDED) were also studied. Furthermore, the researcher reviewed literature from sources published by non-governmental organisations including trusts and enterprises of different tourism establishments. Theory obtained from the literature review was later compared to the researcher's own findings.

1.4.2.2. Research instrument for primary data collection

The researcher utilised empirical examination, which involved interviews, to gain direct insights from participants based on real experiences. Primary data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews with public and private tourism stakeholders via virtual/online platforms. Semi-structured interviewing is an approach of qualitative data collection that entails a sequence of questions that are open-ended; they are framed around the research area that the investigator intends to cover (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007).

The interviewed stakeholders held public and private representative roles for tourism planning, development and management of the Eastern Beach. Public stakeholders included representatives from BCMM, BCMDA, Border-Kei Chamber of Business (BKCOB), Coastal and Environmental Services (CES), Buffalo City Environmental Trust (BCET), Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs (DEDEA), Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA), Great Kei Municipality and Walter Sisulu University. Private stakeholders included representatives from accommodation establishments (hotels), local restaurants, local tourist attraction offices, tour guiding agencies, members of transport and travel trade, media and private consulting organisations. Selected participants played direct management roles (as Team Leaders, Strategic Business Managers, Organisational Supervisors, Front Office Managers, General Managers, Executive Heads of Departments and Chief Executive Officers/Chief Information Officers/Chief Financial Officers), in the management of beach attractions including Eastern Beach. Each participant gave consent to participate in this study.

Primary data collection for the present research was done in the form of virtual semi-structured interviews, based on an interview guide (the research instrument), which was developed by the researcher. The pilot test for this research was conducted virtually with two participants on the 21st of September 2020, prior to the actual interviews. Each pilot

interview lasted between 45 to 60 minutes and was recorded by the researcher. Open-ended questions were not pre-categorised and gathered more information, allowing the participants to elaborate on certain points. The interviews also had a few closed questions.

1.4.3. Sampling procedure

The population comprised public and private stakeholders who play a direct role in the management of beach attractions including Eastern Beach and in the drive towards achieving Blue Flag status. A list of 52 private and public tourism enterprises was obtained from the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality website. The researcher used a stakeholder purposive sampling method to target a total of 20 stakeholders who were purposely chosen from the list. This sampling method involves discovering and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are knowledgeable about or experienced regarding a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Patton, 2002).

1.4.4. Data collection

Data collection was done via semi-structured interviews, which were conducted virtually from the 1st of October to the 20th of November 2020, via Microsoft Teams with public and private stakeholders, who were based in East London. With each stakeholder to be interviewed, the researcher explained the rationale of the investigation. Twenty interviews were conducted, ten of those were with public and another ten were with private stakeholders. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. The researcher predominantly made use of Microsoft Teams Technology to conduct interviews with participants. The researcher and participants were remotely located (due to COVID-19 lockdown, social distance restrictions and travel restrictions to reduce the rate of local transmissions). No translator was necessary for these interviews as participants had a good grasp of English.

1.4.5. Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse primary data collected from the virtual semi-structured interviews with public and private stakeholders. Maguire and Delahunt (2017:3352) define thematic analysis as a process of identifying main themes emerging from the data.

The researcher followed the steps below to analyse the data:
  a) **Transcribing sound files into word documents**. Interviews were recorded and permission was granted by each participant before the recordings took place. Sound files were transcribed into word documents. An external transcriber was utilised from a company called Top Transcriptions. Transcription involved the action of providing a

written account of spoken words from the virtual semi-structured interviews. Each participant received an identifier code and interviews were transcribed using such codes. The transcriber was able to hear participants' names on the recording but had signed a Confidentiality Agreement.

b) **Data coding**. This involved selecting, extracting and transforming data in order to abstract the main themes.

c) **Data cleaning**. This is an important part of producing records to ensure that data is clear and concise.

d) **Determining the explanations** that arose from the data analysis and how they could be confirmed.

The following section explains the validity and reliability methods for the current research.

1.4.6. Validity and reliability

It is imperative to consider the validity and reliability of the research for both qualitative and quantitative studies (Veal, 2006). This investigation considered the following measures of validity and reliability, which are more appropriate to qualitative studies. These included member checking, clarification of bias and ensuring trustworthiness. To ensure reliability for this research, consistency and replicability measures were applied. These measures are outlined in Chapter Three.

1.5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

A conceptual framework refers to the different concepts used to build a baseline of a study, and indicates how these concepts link (Jabareen, 2008). Figure 1.1 is the conceptual framework that was developed from the literature and depicts the researcher's map of concepts considered at the outset of the study. It depicts how each section is related to the other parts of the study, as well as providing explanations of key concepts. All the key concepts are briefly explained in the section that follows the conceptual framework.
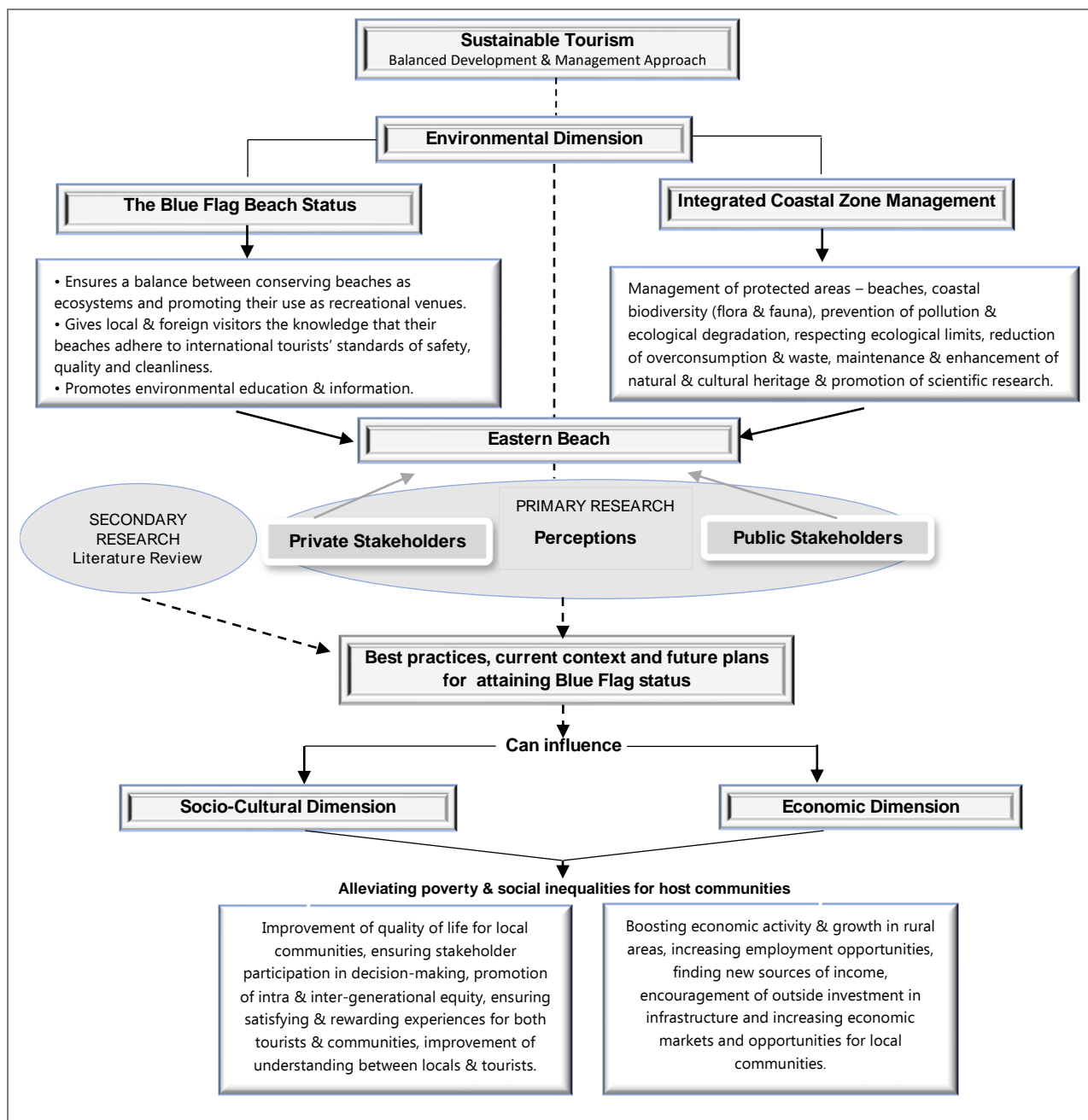
Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework for the current research

Sustainable tourism development has widely gained popularity globally due to its fundamental role in support of principles of environmental law (Coetzee, 2016; World Commission on Environment & Development, 1987). This approach is increasingly acknowledged as a theoretical context for a type of expansion that accepts interdependence between monetary growth, community equity and ecological integrity (Department of Environment Affairs, 2014; Elkington; 1997). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2015:1) defines sustainable tourism development as considering current and future economic, social and environmental impacts. By South African Constitution, sustainable tourism development in East London requires an

integrated, balanced development and management approach to these impacts. The goal is to ensure that any tourism growth is ultimately beneficial for both current and future generations (National Department of Tourism, 2017; Department of Environmental Affairs, 2018).

In South Africa, tourism certification through ecolabels is beneficial towards the promotion of tourism and to encourage sustainable tourism development (Mahony, 2007:1). For this reason, the country adopted **the Blue Flag Beach status**, which has been identified as a substantial factor that supports sustainable development standards at the coast (Pencarelli *et al.*, 2016). This programme helps coastal tourist destinations by ensuring the safety of marine water and marine life, and better management of beach attractions (Slatter & Mearns, 2018). From the Eastern Cape, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, 51 Blue Flag beaches are found (Schernewski, 2000; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). Beaches with already awarded Blue Flag status continue to show a balance between conserved ecosystems and high-quality recreational venues (Graci & Dodds, 2015). The Blue Flag status gives beach users knowledge that their beaches adhere to the international tourists' standards of safety, quality and cleanliness (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006). This ecolabel adopts the promotion of environmental education and information, while influencing the economic, social and environmental impacts of sustainable tourism (Blue Flag South Africa, 2019; Duglio & Beltramo, 2016).

The Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008 theorises that the overall goal of **Integrated Coastal Zone Management** is to advance the quality of life of host populations, who rely on shoreline resources, while retaining the natural diversity and productivity of coastal ecosystems. ICZM is a practice that unites government and the community, and public and private interests, for the protection and development of coastal ecosystems (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2011; South African Institute of International Affairs, 2015). ICZM is also an important developmental and management process that incorporates the values of all tourist destination stakeholders (Coetzee, 2016).

South Africa's beaches, as elsewhere in the world, are associated with recreational activities (Ebomah, Sibanda, Adefisoye, Nontongana, Nwodo & Okoh, 2019). Coastal ecosystems have rich biodiversity, which mostly comprise sand dunes, rocky shores, cliffs, beaches, estuaries and lagoons, wetlands, mangroves, coral reefs and seagrass beds (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006). **Eastern Beach** is located close to the East London aquarium, and opposite the Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. Although the

city has other beaches, Eastern Beach is considered to be the most popular beach in East London (Travel Ground, 2021).

The **Economic Dimension** of sustainability is viewed as the capability of an economy to sustain a specified level of economic boost for the country (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2015). This dimension of tourism development is traditionally defined based on wealth contribution (Hammer & Pivo, 2016). Economic impacts for East London can be measured in terms of job opportunities, per capita income, tax base and GDP (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). Subsequently, host communities of East London can mostly benefit under this dimension, through improved standards of living. The economic impacts of sustainable tourism have the potential to increase employment opportunities for East London host communities (Koven & Lyons, 2010).

Sustainable development of tourism has the potential to transform the social attractiveness of East London. The **Social Dimension** of sustainability involves communal fairness, social capital, civic development and social responsibility (Niñerola, Sánchez-Rebull & Hernández-Lara, 2019). The meaning of social sustainability is broad and can be summarised as the maintenance of the quality of life and the ability of a country, organisation or sector to advance social developments. The social and cultural implications of tourism need to be carefully deliberated, since they can either bring assets or disadvantages to East London and its host communities (Blahna & Ryan, 2017).

The **Environmental Dimension** of sustainability would include the preservation of sensitive marine areas and habitats in a destination like East London (Department of Environmental Affairs 2012). The generation and proper management of revenue from park fees and other recreational entrance fees in East London can result in significant returns for the preservation and management of biologically sensitive areas (Republic of South Africa, 2014) such as Eastern Beach, Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park and East London Nature Reserve. These are known to attract both host communities and visitors, and the environmental dimension of sustainability promotes the preservation of these resources. However, if tourism development is poorly planned, negative consequences may accrue. The physical pressure on the environment can be greater than the environment's ability to cope with the usage (Goffi, Cucculelli & Masiero, 2019; National Department of Tourism, 2017; Zamfir & Corbos, 2015). Overcrowding in coastal destinations is common, but it becomes a concern when there is a lack of crowd control measures, which can result in affecting and exceeding the limits of acceptable change (Keyser, 2009; Zamfir & Corbos,

2015). It is imperative that natural resources at Eastern Beach are sustainably managed in the best interests of the public and the economy (National Planning Commission, 2012).

Natural resources such as Eastern Beach are common pool resources that involve the participation of **private and public stakeholders** (Celliers, Breetzke, Moore & Malan, 2009). It is noted that both public and private stakeholders can occasionally act as the pioneers in new tourism developments which later boost local investments in a destination (Inskeep, 1991). Private stakeholders play a key role in the re-engineering of space for recreational activities, products and services, although they are more focused on profit-oriented developments (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Fyall & Wanhill, 2005). Private stakeholders focus on development based on construction; special events, entertainment and group activities; and products (such as services and hospitality). Some of the products, spaces and activities under the private sector include theme parks, shopping centres, resorts, golf courses, theatres, souvenir shops and tourism agencies (Gunn, 1994).

Public stakeholders play a vital role within the tourism industry and are known for their involvement in the management of local planning, infrastructure developments, implementation and monitoring of tourist destinations (Cooper *et al.,* 2005; Maiden, 2008). For the purpose of this study, both public and private stakeholders were considered.

To achieve the required level of sustainable tourism development in a destination, a holistic incorporation of all stakeholders is critical (Colbert & Kurucz, 2007; Du Plessis, 2005; United Nations Environmental Programme, 2002). Sustainable tourism expansion and ecological management through Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach can have positive impacts. Public and private stakeholders have a huge role to play towards ensuring that local communities do benefit from tourism activities (Akotia, 2014). While sustainable restoration strategies are not meant to only concentrate on the environmental impacts, Veiga, Santos, Aguas and Santos (2018) report that broader issues of social and economic sustainability cannot be omitted. They may include:

- the involvement and governance of tourism in the area;
- tourism that should be able to create jobs for host communities, thus refining the **quality of life and alleviating social inequalities**;
- the acknowledged global guidelines in tourism that should be positively utilised towards the management and monitoring of impacts across various tourist activities and set required limits of acceptable change at a tourist attraction; and

- the informative and teaching programs to enhance the administration of the protection of environmental and cultural resources.

Hence, while this research focuses on the environmental dimension of sustainability, it is anticipated that the current context and future plans emerging from the research could have positive bearing on the socio-cultural and economic dimensions of sustainable tourism. The significance of the current study is presented next.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study provides insight regarding the current status of Eastern Beach and the beach in the future. While this research was aimed at determining current plans and context, findings revealed insights on how ICZM is utilised by stakeholder organisations involved at Eastern Beach. In addition, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge regarding the imperative balance of social, economic and environmental aspects around coastal tourist attractions, particularly the beaches. While it has confirmed that several negative impacts do indeed prevail on this coastline, the current plans and recommendations of public and private stakeholders reveal a will and intent to address these and move towards Blue Flag status. Moving forward, the findings of this research can provide guidance to stakeholders – providing a holistic picture of the different initiatives underway by different stakeholders, highlighting common ground, and most importantly, revealing the intent that prevails amongst stakeholders to improve Eastern Beach. Using the Blue Flag conceptual framework, the attainment of the Blue Flag status would be a victory for the impoverished Eastern Cape and serve as an example that, in spite of challenges, the environment can be conserved, and high-quality beaches can be made available to locals and tourists to enjoy.

1.7. STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This research is divided into five chapters, which include the introduction, literature review, research design and methodology, results and analysis, as well as the conclusion.
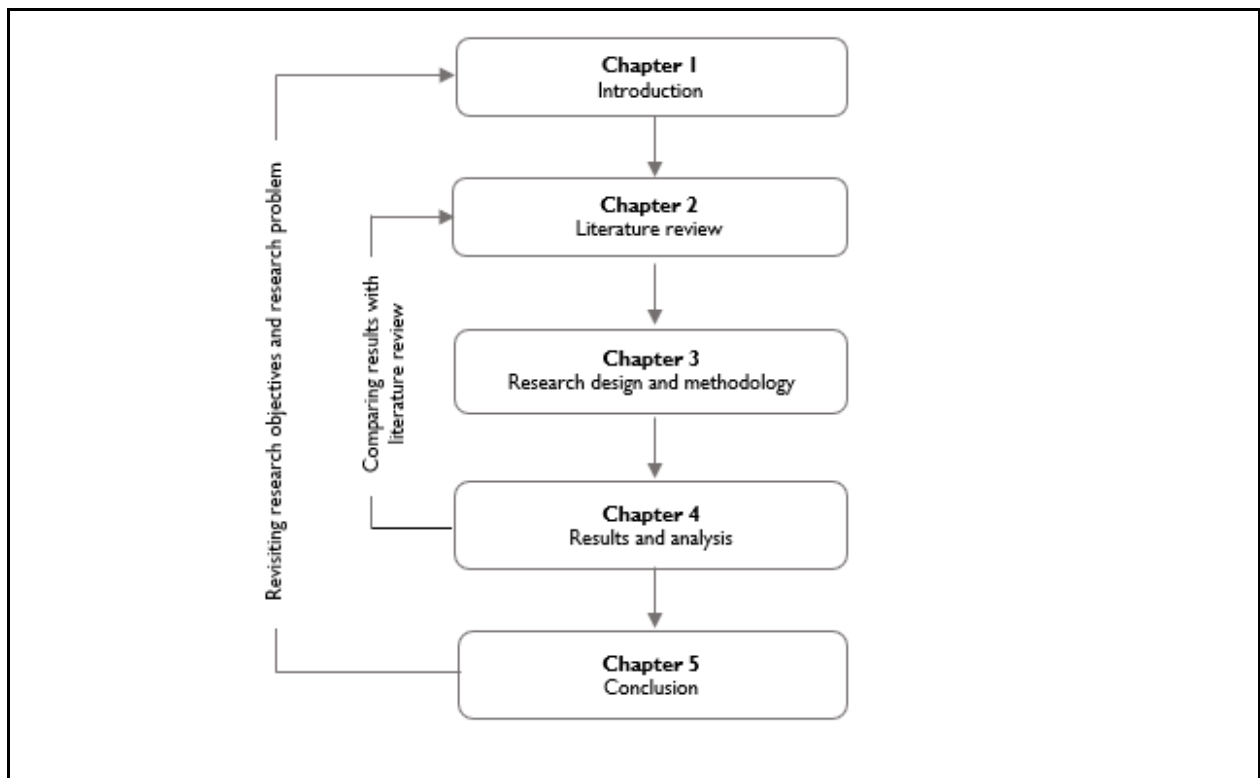
Figure 1.2: Structure of the dissertation

Chapter One: This chapter provides an introduction and the background to the research. It discusses the research problem and the research objectives. A brief review of the research design and methodology is also provided. The conceptual framework of this research is presented in this chapter and key concepts are explained.

Chapter Two: This chapter reviews literature on key concepts used in this current research. Tourism and sustainable development concepts, including the associated dimension of tourist destinations, are unpacked. The literature review also draws a link to Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Blue Flag Beach models. Different tourism destination stakeholders responsible for beach management are considered in this chapter. Management challenges and problems associated with ICZM and the Blue Flag award programme are researched, while presenting best practice examples and case studies in the South African context.

Chapter Three: This chapter provides the research design and methodology followed. It focuses on the research paradigm, research design, research methods, sampling technique, data collection instrument, data analysis, and measures of validity and reliability. Ethical considerations are also discussed.

Chapter Four: This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of results collected from the semi-structured interviews. The results per research objective are presented in the form

of bar graphs and tables, and then analysed using quotations to substantiate key findings. Results are compared with the literature review, where possible. A detailed summary is presented at the end of the chapter. This chapter also includes the Blue Flag status framework, which was developed from the main research findings for Eastern Beach. The purpose of the framework is to provide a holistic picture of current and future plans, which could be considered by beach stakeholders when working towards Blue Flag status at this beach.

Chapter Five: This final chapter provides conclusions regarding this research. The research objectives and research problem from Chapter One are revisited. The contribution of the research, limitations and suggestions for future research are discussed in this section of the study.

1.8. CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

Chapter One sets the scene for the dissertation. It concisely highlighted the importance of the Blue Flag ecolabel globally and from a South African perspective. This chapter further presented that to maintain a beach is an environmental investment, which generates economic returns for tourist destinations. It further displayed that having Blue Flag status can result in positive impacts for the local population and conserve the beach for sustainable enjoyment by both residents and visitors. In addition, having a better managed Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) approach for Eastern Beach, can also provide a long-term strategy and a roadmap for sustainable environmental management in East London.

This chapter then presented the research gaps, which exist in the context of Eastern Beach. After highlighting the gaps in the wider Eastern Cape, it further highlighted the challenges at Eastern Beach, which have reached critical stages, calling for urgent attention for sustainable and optimal management plans from public and private stakeholders. It was presented in this introductory chapter that very little research exists to investigate beach management, with a focus on Blue Flag beaches in the country. The primary research objective was then presented, namely, to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status. This was followed by the secondary research objectives.

A brief overview of the research design and methodology followed when conducting this empirical research was provided in this chapter. It outlined the research approach

(qualitative research) and the research instrument for primary data collection (virtual semi-structured interviews). The sampling procedure adopted to draw a sample of 20 targeted and interviewed stakeholders was also presented in this section. The method of data analysis used (thematic analysis) was briefly discussed, while measures to ensure reliability, consistency and replicability were also highlighted.

The conceptual framework of the study was then presented, which depicted how each section relates to the other parts of the study. The conceptual framework highlighted how sustainable tourism expansion and ecological management, through Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach can potentially have positive impacts. The key concepts within this framework that are central to this study, were then briefly explained. Finally, the significance of this research was discussed, followed by a brief outline of each chapter.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

"Surely, if we could move closer to achieving multilateral
goals of sustainability, the world would be a better place
as we frequently fall short on all its three aspects. It may
be easier to recognise Blue Flag award potential, best
practise and spin-offs which can motivate us to take
necessary policy actions" (Hall, 2000:6).
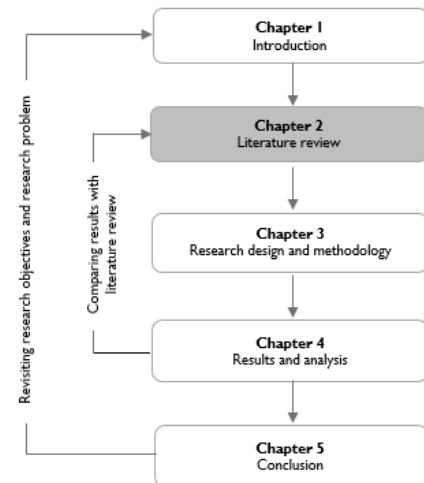
2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a literature review on the concepts pertinent to this study. As indicated in Figure 2.1, this chapter starts by reviewing sustainable tourism development in the global context and in South Africa. It further interprets the associated dimensions of sustainability, namely, economic, socio-cultural and environmental, also known as the Triple Bottom Line (TBL). Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is explained in this chapter as well as the destination stakeholders associated with it.

The Blue Flag award in a global context and as an imperative international ecolabel for beach management is then presented. The Blue Flag award in the South African context is explained and linked to best practice principles. This chapter also presents Blue Flag criteria and guidelines adopted by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). Examples of Blue Flag Beaches in South Africa are then presented. In addition, general challenges and problems associated with the Blue Flag Beaches globally and in South Africa are considered.
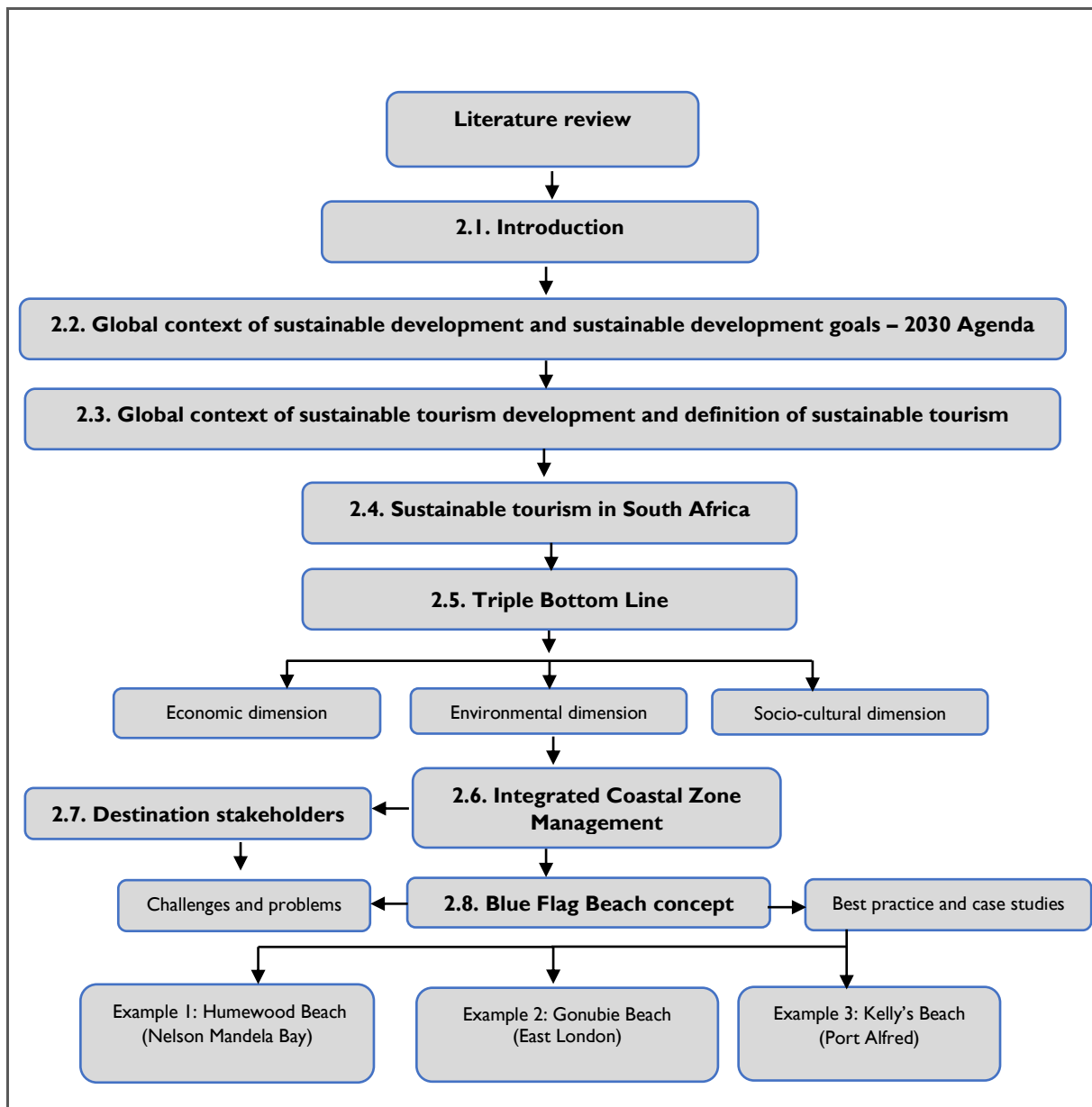
Figure 2.1: Outline of Chapter Two

2.2. GLOBAL CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS – 2030 AGENDA

Sustainability is not a new notion: it has been on the agenda for administrations, non-governmental organisations and private stakeholders for the past three decades (Stoddart, 2011). It is believed that there is no development without sustainability or sustainability without development (Klarin, 2018; Sachs, 2010). Sustainable development is traced back to the Biosphere and the Ecological Aspects of the International Development Conference, which was held in Washington in the 1960s (Brodhag & Taliere, 2006; United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2019). The Paris Biosphere and the Ecological Aspects of the International Development Conference on Sustainable Development was held also in Washington in 1968, followed by the United Nations Conference on the Human

Environment (UNCHE) in 1972 in Stockholm (Boudes, 2011, UNCHE, 1992, United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2019). Both conferences put emphasis on the need for sustainable development to be prioritised as an important global phenomenon.

In 1987 a report was published by the Bruntland Commission on 'Our Common Future'. This report links the issues of economic development and environmental stability (Emas, 2015; United Nations General Assembly, 1987). Resolution 44/228 of 22nd December 1989 was adopted when the nations of the world called for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to take a balanced and integrated approach to environment and development questions (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992).

Therefore, sustainable development became a significant focus area for both developing and developed nations (Klarin, 2018). The concept of sustainable development is defined by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (1987:43) as development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In addition, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development formulated the Agenda 21 Policy for the environmental and sustainable protection of resources (Stoddart, 2011; United Nations, 1992). The importance of Agenda 21 was to address problems of today and their challenges for the next centuries. This policy also reflected a global agreement and political commitment at the highest level on development and environmental protection (Emas, 2015; Stoddart, 2011). The need for a significant flow of new and additional resources to developing nations was presented by the Agenda 21 Policy. This need was highlighted in order to ensure that incremental costs for actions that countries had to undertake when dealing with global problems and accelerating sustainable development are not overlooked (Brown-Santirso, 2006; United Nations, 2010).

The Agenda 21 Policy was subsequently proposed as an environmental management idea in 1993 (Brodhag & Taliere, 2006). In 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were framed for the next 15 years. The SDGs are discussed in the next section.

- **Sustainable Development Goals – 2030 Agenda**

In 2015, the heads of states, governments and representatives met to decide on the new SDGs (United Nations, 2018). A historic conclusion was the adoption of an inclusive 2030 Agenda and goals were set. The 2030 Agenda for SDGs includes 17 goals and 169 targets. Through this Agenda, 193 member states guaranteed to ensure sustained and inclusive economic development, social inclusion, and environmental protection, fostering peaceful

and inclusive societies through a new global partnership (Elder, Bengtsson & Akenji, 2017; United Nations, 2018). The SDGs – 2030 Agenda is defined by the United Nations (UN) (2018:7) as "a transformative agenda that places equality and dignity front and centre and calls for a change in our development pattern while respecting the environment". It is a world-wide promise, a framework of a strengthened global partnership that takes into account the prevention of natural disasters, and climate change mitigation and adaptation (Akenji, Elder, Bengtsson, Olsen & King, 2018). The 2030 Agenda exists to prevent poverty, reduce inequality, promote inclusive economic growth with decent work for all, creating sustainable cities and addressing climate change. In addition, the 2030 Agenda represents key principles, which include universality, leaving no one behind, interconnectedness and indivisibility, inclusiveness and multi-stakeholder partnerships (Elder *et al.*, 2017).

Over time, sustainable tourism development also received attention and is discussed in the following section.

2.3. GLOBAL CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The discussion of sustainable tourism development dominates the current literature, as the agenda that helps the tourism industry to operationalise sustainability goals (Niñerola *et al.*, 2019; Sharpley, 2020). Its aim is closely related to that of sustainable development, since it focuses on strengthening local, regional and international tourism by meeting the needs of contemporary generations, without compromising the capability of upcoming generations to meet their own desires (León-Gómez, Ruiz-Palomo, Fernández-Gámez & García-Revilla, 2021; Sharpley, 2020). Views about sustainable tourism development have evolved since the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, which was first published in 1993, with its opening paper defining the subject and outlining its roles (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). Subsequently, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, United Nations Environmental Programme and World Tourism Organisation adopted the Charter for Sustainable Tourism Development in 1995, from the first World Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Spain (Guo, Jiang & Li, 2019; Rasoolimanesh, Ramakrishna, Hall, Esfandiar & Seyfi, 2020). Post 1995 and up to the present, ecological awareness and anxieties globally grew rapidly, resulting in considerable research conducted in the sustainable tourism development context (Liu, Zhang, Wang & Xu, 2018; United Nations Environmental Programme, 2005; United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2015).

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) perceive sustainable tourism development as an approach that

takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities (Pivcevic, Petric & Mandi, 2020). New challenges and opportunities for sustainable tourism development arose by the twenty-first century, including environmental issues and growing concerns about social justice and income fairness (Milano, Novelli & Cheer, 2019; Pivcevic *et al.,* 2020). In the competitiveness of tourist destinations, sustainability has become a key variable and a primary objective for public managers of tourist resources (Liu *et al.*, 2018; Milano *et al.*, 2019). It is, however, globally noted that making tourism sustainable is not simple, due to the imprecise nature of the sustainability concept. Several scholars have defined the concept of sustainable tourism development in the academic literature.

- **Definition of sustainable tourism**

Interest in sustainable tourism has increased over the years, after many scholars, administrative and non-governmental organisations have shown interest in it (Pivcevic *et al.*, 2020). It lies on the intersection of activities that are environmentally appropriate, socially acceptable and economically viable (Liu *et al.*, 2018; Pan, Gao, Kim, Shah, Pei & Chiang, 2018). The concept of sustainable tourism development is referred to as an approach that helps to protect the environment, communities, and attracts financial spin-offs from tourism (Duc, 2009). The World Tourism Organisation (2002) contextualises sustainable tourism as a kind of tourism that increases the value of both local people and the traveller, cultural heritage and the environment, while providing holiday experiences that benefit host communities. Sustainable tourism development is the type of tourism that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions, while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future (Gourdon & Cernat, 2007). It is a development that is leading in the management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and environmental needs can be rewarded, while preserving cultural integrity, biological diversity and life (Yoopetch & Nimsai, 2019).

The UNWTO (1993) theorises that the development of sustainable tourism replies to the current needs of both visitors and local residents, while protecting the increase of industry opportunities at a destination. It is viewed as a key model and an administrative principle for evolving tourism activities (León-Gómez *et al.*, 2021), and a medium by which negative tourism impacts can be attended to and long-term feasibility can be ensured (Liu, 2003). Therefore, the meaning of sustainable tourism can be summarised as tourism that supports any type of development, and which maintains the socio-economic and environmental balance (Coetzee, 2016).

Sustainable tourism has now become the recommended developmental approach, including environmental governance, and being   stressed in international law as well as in regional and national legal systems (Coetzee, 2016). The following section presents sustainable tourism in the South African context.

2.4. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

As a result of the past apartheid system, South Africa was politically excluded from the sustainable developmental strategies (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014). Post the introduction of sustainable tourism development in 1995, much attention has been paid to environmental law with respect to the balance required in the socio-economic and ecological dimensions of all approved developments (Coetzee, 2016). The rationale behind this move was to ensure that there are long-lasting benefits for all South Africans with respect to the social, economic and environmental spin-offs of tourism development (National Department of Tourism, 2016b). Sustainable tourism development achieved the status of being a superior goal to strengthen the country's tourism industry (Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism, 2000). It was endorsed through the establishment of the Bill of Rights in 1996, as part of the right for the society to settings that are not harmful to their wellbeing (Coetzee, 2016; Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The national government then introduced the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA), as well as the Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008 (ICMA), to supplement the South African Tourism White Paper (South Africa, 2016). The promotion of sustainable tourism development through the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS), has been acclaimed as a vital strategy to generate economic improvements, social developments and alleviate poverty (National Department of Tourism, 2011). In 2008, the national government approved the National Framework for Sustainable Development (NFSD), which was aimed to correct the failed system and presented a progressive strategy and new kind of thinking (National Department of Tourism, 2017). The NFSD was developed to be a guideline to simple sustainability implementation in the country's social and economic resources, due to underlying problems noted (Ferreira & Perks, 2016). South Africa also announced its first NTSS in 2011 as a ten-year strategy for the period 2010 to 2020. During this time, there were several reviews to determine what changes should be made in response to the changing domestic and international environment and based on lessons learnt from the implementation process (National Department of Tourism, 2011). There was a need for the NTSS to be reviewed in 2016 and the period of the strategy was amended to run from 2016 to 2026. Important emerging global trends in the market were

considered in the reviewed strategy, as well as South Africa's competitive advantage, strengths and limitations (National Department of Tourism, 2017).

Through the implementation of a sustainable tourism development policy, South Africa's developmental strategies have assisted in the reduction of social variations and poverty (Coetzee, 2016; South Africa, 2016). Wratten (1995:25) maintains that "poverty is based on the outcome of an unfair structured political and commercial system, which aimed to discriminate against the deprived people". Aware that the country did not make satisfactory progress in the elimination of poverty and social inequalities after twenty years of independence, national government executed the National Development Plan (NDP) in 2013 (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014; National Department of Tourism, 2016b). Despite the existence of the NDP for the past nine years, the distribution of income and wealth in South Africa is still among the most unequal in the world, and many households still have unsatisfactory access to clean water, healthcare, energy and education (Du Plessis & Nel, 2015; National Department of Tourism, 2016b). There are still high numbers of shacks and homeless people, a high unemployment rate, casual labour, poor infrastructure and a stringent lack of access to basic services for citizens (Chifon, 2010; Coetzee, 2016).

Without a doubt, the success of political transformation and sustainable tourism development unlocked tourism potential in the country (Ferreira & Perks, 2016). Tourism is now a vital contributor to the national economy (National Department of Tourism, 2021). It is seen as a crucial industry for national restoration and a catalyst for both financial and social development (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2017). As a tertiary industry that links transport, consumer retail, financial services and other network industries, tourism's indirect financial contribution is significant (Sucheran & Arulappan, 2020). The industry directly reported three per cent of the Gross Domestic product and nine per cent of direct contribution. Over 725 000 direct jobs were supported by this industry, while an additional 1,49 million jobs were recorded as indirect jobs (Statistics South Africa, 2018; World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). Inbound tourism generated about R82,5 billion in direct foreign spend (R126,7 billion total), contributing an equivalent of 9,2% of total national exports. This made tourism the second most important export sector in the economy in 2018 (Statistics South Africa, 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced an unprecedented crisis to the global economy (NDT, 2021). Tourism was one of the first economic sectors to be deeply impacted by the pandemic with measures to contain its spread including restrictions on movement (Dube,

Nhamo & Chikodzi, 2021). Foreign arrivals dropped by 71% from over 15,8 million in 2019 to less than 5 million in 2020 (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The National Department of Tourism (NDT) issued a Tourism Recovery Plan in March of 2021 in response to the impact of COVID-19. The plan acknowledges the need for coordinated actions to mitigate the impacts of the crisis and sets the industry on the best path to recovery, transformation, and long-term sustainability (National Department of Tourism, 2021).

The subsequent section describes the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) of sustainability and its application towards sustainable tourism development. The three applicable dimensions of TBL to sustainability are also discussed.

2.5. THE TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The TBL phrase of People, Planet and Profit, was devised by Elkington in 1997, and it has become an influential approach all over the world (Correia, 2019; Svensson & Wagner, 2015). Several studies confirm that this model has been used to set long-term strategies for industries and companies to make a transition to sustainability and to expand the notion of organisational performance (Correia, 2019; Deng, 2015; Kudlak & Low, 2015; Schulz & Flanigan, 2016; Stoddard, Pollard & Evans, 2012). For industries and companies to adopt sustainability, three important dimensions must be considered, and they include environmental quality, social equity, and economic benefits (Elkington, 1997). It appears that the most difficult aspect of implementing TBL is associated with developing meaningful economic, social and environmental indicators (Schulz & Flanigan, 2016; Stoddard *et al.*, 2012). Correia (2019:18) confirms that the concepts of TBL, sustainability, sustainable development and sustainable tourism are closely linked. Hence, sustainable tourism is viewed as the best approach and a viable tool to maintain and enhance a destination's competitiveness (Kudlak & Low, 2015).

The link with TBL becomes clear when the impact of sustainable tourism is assessed. When assessing sustainable tourism impact, it is important to consider the question: "What should the tourism and recreation industry sustain?" (Stoddard *et al.*, 2012). There must be clear indicators that can be monitored to determine if existing policies are facilitating sustainability, taking into consideration the context in which they exist (Svensson, Høgevold, Ferro, Varela, Padin & Wagner, 2016). When developing suitable indicators for sustainable tourism development through the TBL, it has been recognised that there is a need to tailor these indicators. This need is brought by different tourist market segments, which can generate varying social and environmental dimensions on destinations (Dahl, 2012; Stoddard *et al.*, 2012). Sustainable tourism can enhance economic development in

neglected tourist destinations (Duglio & Beltramo, 2016). It can revitalise local markets, bringing prosperity back to societies (Alhaddi, 2015), while ensuring that the environment is protected from pollution and degradation (Slivar, 2018). Every destination or country requires different sustainable tourism strategies, due to different challenges and situations (Miller, 2016).

Sustainability is labelled as a corporate idea and needs an accountancy method that has a holistic consideration not only of the traditional financial bottom line, but also focuses on the assessable pointers that measure socio-cultural and conservation dimensions (Goffi, *et al.,* 2019; Ferreira & Perks, 2016; Miller, 2016). Figure 2.2 depicts the three dimensions of the TBL, namely planet (environment), profit (economics) and people (host communities) (Elkington, 1997), each of which is discussed in turn in the next sections.
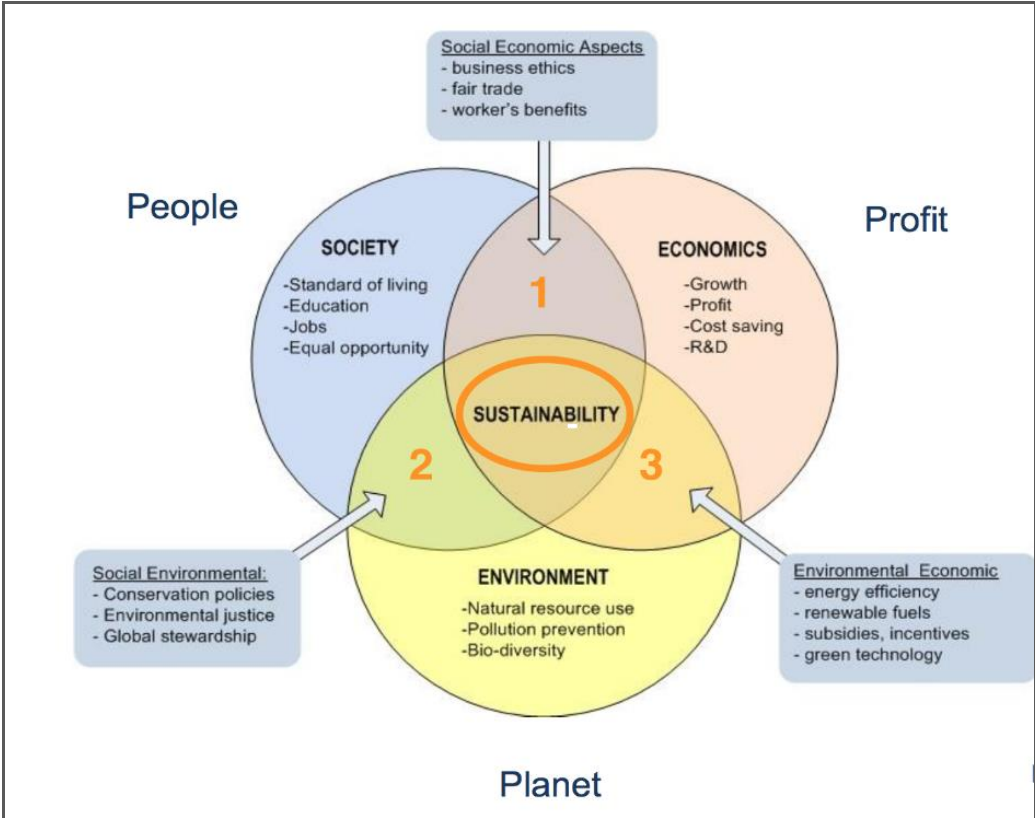
Figure 2.2: The Triple Bottom Line of sustainability (Elkington, 1997)

2.5.1. Economic dimension

The economic dimension of sustainability is viewed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2015:138) as the capability of an economy to provide a well-defined level of fiscal production. The economic development of tourism is traditionally defined based on wealth contribution (Hammer & Pivo, 2016). These influences can be measured in terms of employment, per capita income, tax base and Gross Domestic Product (World Travel &

Tourism Council, 2018). The economic dimension of sustainable tourism has the potential to increase employment opportunities at a destination, mainly for the host communities (Koven & Lyons, 2010). However, this economic dimension can also have negative impacts (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018). Tourism jobs can be low paying, often at minimum wage or less and seasonal, causing under-employment or unemployment during off-seasons (Kreag, 2001). Employment in this industry can be outsourced or imported instead of employing local residents for typical skills, if local labour is unavailable. The socio-cultural dimension is discussed next.

2.5.2. Socio-cultural dimension

The socio-cultural dimension refers to the effects of direct contact of hosts with tourists (Ramkissoon, 2020). It is also concerned with the financial support required for the conservation and preservation of cultural heritage, which can result in cultural pride, rejuvenation of traditional values and customs (Smith, 2015). This dimension incorporates social fairness, social wealth, civic development, and social duty required in tourist destinations (Niñerola, *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it becomes very important as a mechanism that helps to keep cultural elements strengthened, through the building of institutional infrastructure (Niñerola, *et al.,* 2019; Smith, 2015).

Attention should always be given to this dimension, since its negative impacts can lead to disadvantages for host communities (Blahna & Ryan, 2017). Disregarding social responsibility may lead to negative consequences such as deprived sustainable performance and progress in a tourist destination (Goel, 2010). There are diverse values that result from the influx of tourists into a destination and these values should be positively maintained to avoid the commodification of culture for host communities (Keyser, 2009; National Department of Tourism, 2016b). Unfortunately, there are a large number of socio-cultural costs on host communities (Deery, Jago & Fredline, 2012). The negative social impacts include social change, changing values, increased crime and gambling, changes in moral behaviour, changes in family structure and roles, problems with tourist host relationship and the destruction of heritage (Ferreira & Castro, 2021). The environmental dimension is discussed in the next section.

2.5.3. Environmental dimension

Sustainable tourism in South Africa is known for its direct contribution to the conservation of sensitive areas and habitats (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2012). The relationship of tourism with the environment is also noted to be complex. The management of the environmental dimension is concerned with the revenue that is generated through entrance

fees to parks and other recreational natural and sensitive sites (National Planning Commission, 2012). These special fees are aimed at minimising resource over-usage and the improvement of user-friendly conservation activities for all users. The revenue is considered as a way to raise awareness of environmental values and is used as a tool to finance the conservation of natural areas and increase their monetary importance (Kapur, 2018). This dimension is noted to have positive contributions to government revenues through indirect ways that are not connected to specific parks or conservation areas (Venkatesh & Raj, 2016). Visitor fees, income taxes, taxes on sales or rental of recreation equipment, and license fees for activities such as rafting, and fishing can deliver funds required to manage natural resources by governments (Kapur, 2018). Such funds can be utilised for inclusive conservation programs and activities, such as park ranger salaries and park maintenance (Rath & Gupta, 2017).

However, if not properly planned, tourism can have damaging effects on biodiversity and pristine environments, which can lead to the misuse of natural resources such as fresh water, forests and marine life (Goffi *et al.,* 2019). Fresh water is one of the most critical natural resources. Poorly planned tourism development can result in negative impacts due to unmanaged levels of visitor use and irresponsible tourism behaviour. Negative environmental dimensions are common when levels of visitor use in a destination or attraction are greater than the environment's ability to cope with the usage and the environment then begins to degrade (Goffi *et al.,* 2019; National Department of Tourism, 2018; Zamfir & Corbos, 2015). Host communities are often directly dependent on the natural resources and are the first to suffer when environmental resources are degraded (Veiga *et al.,* 2018).

Negative environmental impacts of tourism can be seen from the air pollution caused by an increase in carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions, related to transportation (Rath & Gupta, 2017). This dimension is also concerned with noise pollution from airplanes, cars, and buses, as well as recreational vehicles, which is noted to be a growing problem world-wide (Mason, 2002). The increase in this form of pollution is causing annoyance, stress, and even hearing loss for humans or distress to wildlife, especially in sensitive areas (Goffi *et al.,* 2019; Rath & Gupta, 2017). It has been noted that in destinations that provide many recreational activities and natural attractions, land pollution in the form of waste disposal is a serious problem that is impacting rivers, scenic areas, and roadsides. Visitors on excursions often leave garbage, and even camping equipment (Rath & Gupta, 2017). These visitor actions

degrade the environment, predominantly in remote areas where waste collection is a challenge (Christou, 2018).

Resulting from the construction of accommodation establishments and recreational facilities, tourism is directly leading to increased sewage pollution. The wastewater that is generated often lands in seas, rivers and lakes, and damages flora and fauna (Rath & Gupta, 2017). There is a negative impact of sewage runoff into coral reefs, as that leads to the growth of algae, making it difficult for marine animals to feed and they die. Regarding environmental restoration, all critical environments that have been degraded due to visitor actions should be rehabilitated to the highest possible level of productivity and biodiversity (Ameersingh, 2016; South Africa, 2016). On the coast, Integrated Coastal Zone Management is a problem-solving programme globally (United Nations Environment Programme, 2009). In South Africa, the Department of Environmental Affairs introduced Coastal Management Programmes to bring together public and private sectors for an effective implementation of the ICZM (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014). The concept of ICZM is discussed next.

2.6. INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

The development and use of natural resources along the coast should be managed to protect the best interests of the public and economy, while ensuring ecological sustainability (McLean & Glazewski, 2009; South Africa, 2016). ICZM has become a key model for sustainable development in coastal areas (Billé, 2016). It has emerged in different contexts yet carries similar definitions and has been adopted for various purposes (Ameersingh, 2016; Department of Environmental Affairs, 2019; Phillips & Jones, 2005; Pickaver, 2010). The next sections will define ICZM and contextualise it within the South African perspective.

2.6.1 Defining of Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Although there are differences between ICZM and Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) terms, they are known to be used interchangeably. Harvey and Caton (2003:106) view these concepts as approaches which support broad planning, assessment, and management of coastal ecosystems, while considering cultural perspectives, conflicting interests, and practices. ICZM is described by Phillips and Jones (2005:517) as a tool used to manage coastal resources and to accommodate increasing coastal tourism pressures with minimal negative impacts. The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) (2009) views it as a mechanism that promotes the use of adaptive philosophies of co-operative governance, to accomplish justifiable coastal developments. The UNEP (2009) summarises

ICZM as an approach that uses a variety of policy and planning instruments, to deepen integration and management of coastal zones effectively.

2.6.2 Integrated Coastal Management Act and ICZM in South Africa

Integrated coastal management has been developed over the past few decades to address multiple-use conflicts, plan for new uses, protect vulnerable ecosystems and marine biodiversity (Sowman & Malan, 2018). In South Africa, Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) was constitutionalised and the Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008 (ICMA) was introduced in 2009 (Scott & Sowman, 2012). The ICMA is classified as an adaptable multi-sectoral and governmental method that has proved to strike a balance between the development, use and protection of coastal surroundings (South African Institute of International Affairs, 2015). Post the adoption of the ICMA, the country's approach towards coastal management transformed from being a conservation-focused and bureaucratic approach, into a more human inclusive development which is based on sustainable development goals (South African Institute of International Affairs, 2015). In addition, the ICM Act was later amended to ICM Act 36 of 2014, to clarify responsibilities for the organs of state, with refence to coastal areas (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2019).

The ICMA has since been a baseline for ICZM and sustainable coastal development in South Africa (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2019; South African Institute of International Affairs, 2015). ICZM relates to the effective conservation and utilisation of the coast, as a dynamic ecosystem at the interface between land and sea (Ameersingh, 2016). According to Ahmed (2010:1), ICZM Is essentially about conflict resolution, as it takes place in a limited coastal space and water, where the amount of useable land and other resources available is limited, and where an excess of interests converge and relate. The overall aim of the ICZM is to ensure that development in the coastal zone is regulated to protect intrinsic environmental features and ecological processes of the coast (Glavovic, 2006). This management approach considers both the ecological and socio-economic issues associated with development (Clark, 1995). The NDT (2017:32) therefore describes ICZM as a system which ensures that the development and utilisation of natural resources within the coastal zones is socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.

Even though ICZM has been widely known as an effective coastal and environmental management process for conservation and sustainability, it is still not widely applied in several parts of the country (South African Institute of International Affairs, 2015). The

reason behind its limited execution is that ICZM is a complex governmental-led agenda. It is a process which requires multiple management steps (Quesada, Klenke & Mejía-Ortíz, 2018) which include planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation methods (Slivar; 2018). To effectively implement ICZM, legal and managerial boundaries of coastal zones must be established by government (Ameersingh, 2016). In South Africa, lawful efforts have been made to enhance the standard of life of host communities who depend on coastal resources.

By constitutionalising the ICM Act and formulation of ICZM in South Africa, sustainable development and management of all beaches on the country's coast became strengthened and widely protected (South Africa, 2016). Hence, NDT (2017) recently declared that the new ICM Act 36 of 2014 should be used to encourage new growth areas in the ocean economy. ICZM incorporates the values of all tourism destination stakeholders and is viewed as a fundamental background for the Blue Flag ecolabel (Geldenhuys & Van der Merwe, 2014; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). Co-operative efforts are imperative to create and sustain collaboration between stakeholders to further sustainable tourism development. Collaboration in tourist destinations has been widely accepted but is still one of the key stumbling stones of sustainable coastal tourism development (South African Institute of International Affairs, 2015). If a beach omitted an ICZM programme, it is most likely that public awareness regarding the complexities of the coastal area and active participation in the management of the coast, becomes disjointed too (Republic of South Africa, 2008). The DEA further launched the Good Green Deeds (GGD) campaign, to support the environmental protection initiative along the Eastern Beach coast (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2019).

2.6.3   Good Green Deeds Campaign

The Good Green Deeds Campaign is an initiative of the Department of Environmental Affairs, which supports the Operation Phakisa Chemicals and Waste Economy (OPCWE) programme (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2018). This campaign was launched in 2019 by the President of the Republic of South Africa at the East London International Convention Centre, and the Good Green Deeds Campaign programme was presented at the Sisa Dukashe Stadium in Mdantsane, East London. The OPCWE and GGD are secured by the inputs and contributions of local, provincial and national government and their relevant agencies, business, non-government organisations, academia and research institutions including higher learning institutions, and aim to reduce the environmental footprint. These initiatives promote environmental sustainability through the planting of trees, and the beach clean-up at the Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park and

Eastern Beach (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2018; Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2018).

2.7. TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS

The inclusion of tourism stakeholders in tourism development is critical and when it is excluded, sustainable tourism development is not possible (Abdulla, 2013; Gunn, 1994; Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002). The role of these tourism stakeholders is not limited to their co-decision-making on the type of development to be done but also extends to their contribution in terms of ecological and management knowledge to apply both ICZM and the Blue Flag programme (Abelshausen, Vanwing, De Donder, Buffel & De Backer, 2013; Slivar, 2018). The involvement and co-operation of all stakeholders is vital to evaluate shared goals and to avoid conflicting perspectives in tourism development (Abdulla, 2013; South African Institute of International Affairs, 2015). Stakeholders involved in tourism cover a holistic function which includes data gathering, preparation, decision-making, administration and monitoring of tourist destinations (Slivar, 2018).

Figure 2.3 depicts the inter-relationships between different stakeholders in tourism, namely the tourist, private sector (tourism sector organisations), community and government (Zibert, Koscak & Prevolsek, 2017). The environment in tourism theory is, however, not classified as a stakeholder but forms part of the network with non-governmental organisations (Zibert *et al.,* 2017). This study focuses on private stakeholders, and public stakeholders which form part of government (represented by the red squares in Figure 2.3). These two stakeholders have a direct relationship with each other, as well as with the destination, which in this case is Eastern Beach.
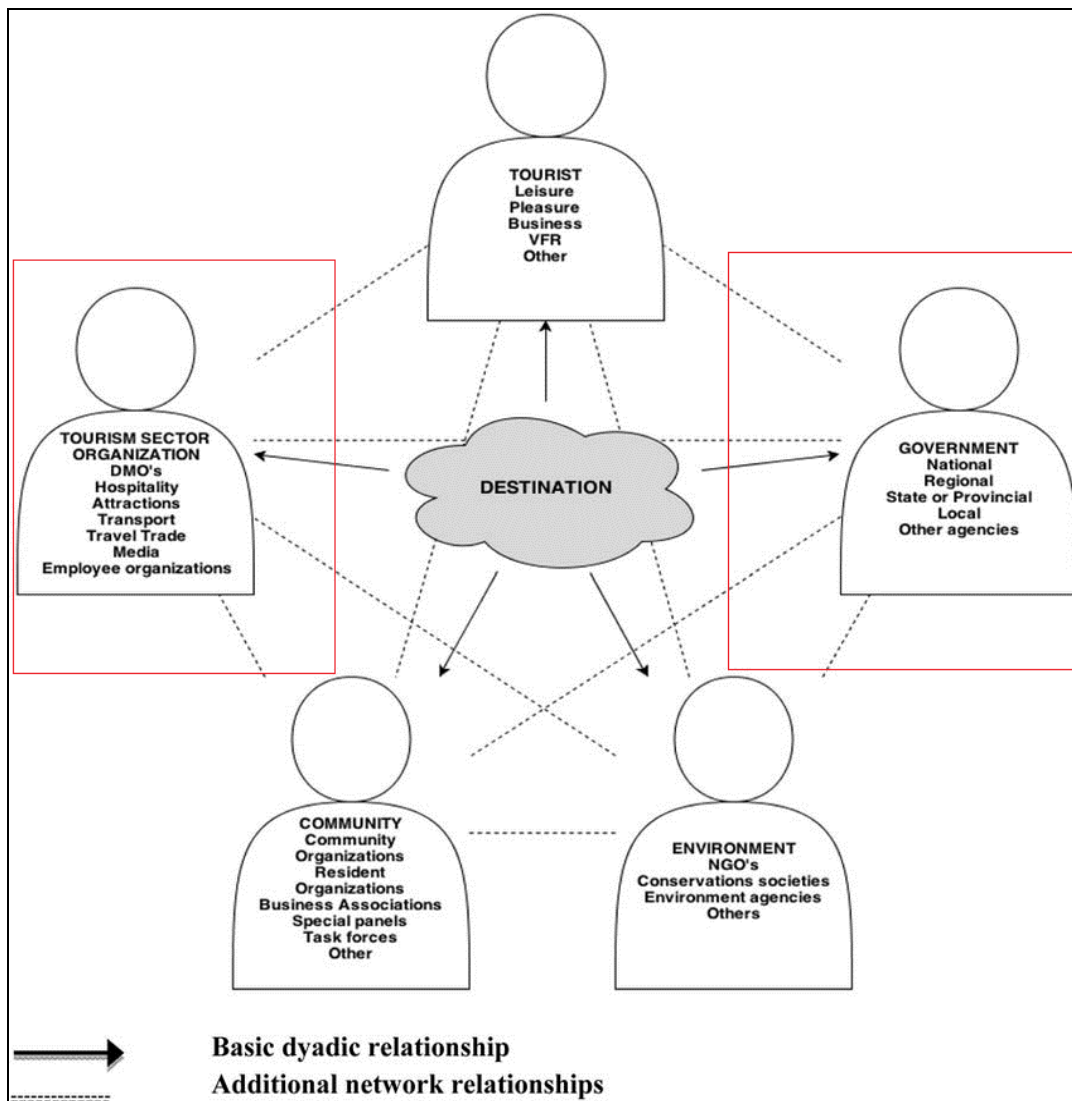
Figure 2.3: Tourism stakeholders (Adapted from Zibert, Koscak & Prevolsek, 2017)

The Eastern Cape Provincial government endorsed public stakeholders at local government level to have a greater involvement in tourism (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2012). Several Local Tourism Organisations exist in the province and districts have been developed to form District Tourism Organisations (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2014). Due to the important role those private stakeholders play in sustainable tourism in the province, the Broad Stakeholder Forum exists to improve the engagement within the local tourism sphere in East London (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2019). The involvement of both major public and private stakeholders in coastal tourism developments permits good governance and timeous participation in transparent tourism decision-making processes (De Juan, Gelcich, & Fernandez, 2016; Glavovic, 2006; Tichaawa & Samhere, 2015). The Border-Kei Chamber of Business (BKCOB) manages a close relationship and planning initiatives amongst tourisms' different stakeholders in East London, for the benefit of Eastern Beach (Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council, 2017).

2.8. THE BLUE FLAG BEACH AWARD

This section deals with the Blue Flag award in the global context, then in the South African context. The Blue Flag criteria guidelines, process, noncompliance, followed by examples of the Blue Flag beaches in the Eastern Cape, the Blue Flag challenges and problems will be discussed in this section.

2.8.1. The Blue Flag award in global context

As the tourism industry continues to evolve, the need for ecolabels that are internationally recognised is growing (Sucheran & Arulappan, 2020). The Worldwide Ecolabel Index for 2014 indicates that there are over 430 ecolabels documented, and 128 of these apply to the tourism industry (Arulappan, 2016; Ecolabel Index, 2016). The Ecolabel Index (2016) posits that popular international tourism labels include Bio Hotels, Blue Flag, Earth Check, Eco Hotels Certified, Green Globe Certification, Green Key and the International Eco Certification Programme. Ecolabels in the tourism industry are fundamentally useful and are applicable to a wide range of its sectors, such as travel management companies, tour operators, hotels and resorts, beaches and marinas, airlines, and other transportation services (Arulappan, 2016).

The Blue Flag award programme was started in Europe along the French coastline, to ensure that beaches abide by the Bathing Water Directive (BWD) plan and guidelines, to balance beach conservation and in doing so to protect ecosystems as recreational venues (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2019). The Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) introduced the Blue Flag award programme in 1987. . The Blue Flag programme is a valued instrument within the Integrated Environmental Management toolbox for sustainable tourism (Veiga *et al.*, 2018). It is an ecolabel that plays two important roles; firstly, to guide the industry for the improvement of its performance by supporting operational guidelines; and secondly, to perform as a communication stimulus for beach users to identify products and services that meet and exceed a set of defined acceptable criteria (United Nations Environment Program, 2002; United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2006). In addition, the Blue Flag award is conceptualised as a high-class ecolabel that stimulates high quality beach attractions, invites international visitors and contributes to local economic growth (Schernewski, 2000). It accounts for nearly 200 million job opportunities, and over 10% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2019).

Before the year 2020, predictions highlighted that about 1,5 billion international tourists would be spending about US $2 trillion a year at Blue Flag destinations (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2019). However, the tourism industry was most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting economies, livelihoods, public services and opportunities (Dube, 2021; United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2021).

Blue Flag awards, however, remain a key factor to assist in turning sustainable development philosophy into practice within the coastal management context (Pencarelli *et al.*, 2016). Other authors declare that a Blue Flag award programme has the potential to mitigate negative coastal environmental impacts through promoting sustainable tourism development (Geldenhuys & Van der Merwe, 2014; Slatter & Mearns, 2018; United Nations Environment Programme, 2009; United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2015). In a holistic way, the Blue Flag award programme has been a main focus for coastal management that intends to improve the environmental quality of beaches and marinas (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2015).

2.8.2. Blue Flag award in South Africa

The country was the first to adopt the Blue Flag certification ecolabel outside of Europe in 2001, giving some of its beaches the most recognised international standard of quality and safety (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Lucrezi & Van der Merwe, 2015). The Blue Flag award benefits tourism and encourages responsible, as well as sustainable, tourism development (National Department of Tourism, 2017; Slatter & Mearns, 2018; South Africa, 2016). This programme is promoted nationally to support the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) policy, Act 24 of 2008, to strengthen sustainable development and management of all beaches (South Africa, 2016). Even so, since the Blue Flag award is moderately new in South Africa, it may take some time for tourists and locals to perceive its value and associated improvement in beach quality standards (Nahman & Rigby, 2008).

Literature indicates that ecolabels have been adopted by the country to certify natural ecosystems that comply with certain sustainability criteria (National Department of Tourism, 2018). The Blue Flag status assures local visitors and overseas tourists of the quality of the beach and that the beach complies with the internationally approved standards of safety and other acceptable user policies and regulations (Klein & Dodds, 2017; National Department of Tourism, 2018; Silwana, 2015; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). The Blue Flag beaches continue to increase the attractiveness of South Africa as an internationally preferred leisure and coastal destination (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). While there are numerous functional ecolabels in the country that are tourism

specific, this research focuses on the Blue Flag ecolabel due to the critical role it plays in boosting both international and local visitor arrivals in South Africa (Geldenhuys & Van der Merwe, 2014; Slatter & Mearns, 2018).

The country has a considerable number of beaches which have been granted the Blue Flag status and these beaches present best examples of what is expected of a Blue Flag beach (Lucrezi *et al.*, 2016; Slatter & Mearns, 2018). To date, three provinces, being the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, have a total of 48 Blue Flag beaches (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). Recent studies conducted on two Blue Flag beaches (Jeffrey's Bay Beach and Margate Beach) indicate that user awareness is vital to sustain the status of the Blue Flag beach. With reference to these beaches, both local and foreign visitors interviewed had little awareness on whether the beaches visited were Blue Flag beaches or not. Interestingly, despite a considerable number of studies which confirmed that Blue Flag status assists tourists in choosing a coastal destination to visit, interviewed beach users did not consider the status of the beach prior to their holiday (Nahman & Rigby, 2008). This ecolabel consists of several criteria and guidelines that beach administrators, managers and municipalities should pass for their beaches to be awarded Blue Flag status. The criteria and guidelines are discussed next.

2.8.3. Blue Flag beach criteria and guidelines

The Blue Flag ecolabel has mandatory criteria as well as guideline criteria (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006). The imperative criteria for Blue Flag beaches include environmental education and information, water quality, environmental management, and safety and services (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006; Slatter & Mearns, 2018; Wildlife & Environment Society of South Africa, 2020). Foundation for Environmental Education is a non-governmental organisation that is working towards sustainable development through environmental education programmes which include the Blue Flag ecolabel, Green Key, Eco-Schools, Young Reporters for the Environment and Learning about Forests (United Nations, 2018). The Foundation for Environmental Education is responsible for setting the Blue Flag criteria, which are evaluated over time, to encourage participating stakeholders to continue working on the mandatory criteria for the Blue Flag status (Aliraja & Rughooputh, 2009; Nahman & Rigby, 2008).

When coastal recreation is properly planned, it can serve as a driving force to minimise negative impacts while promoting the sustainability benefits that have been constitutionalised by the government of the Republic of South Africa (Lucrezi *et al.*, 2016). There is a growing duty towards controlling the coastal natural ecosystems. In addition,

stakeholders in the tourism industry are pressurising for high quality natural environments. The success of coastal environmental protection plans depends on the active cooperation of government stakeholders, private sector, conservation organisations and local communities (Slatter & Mearns, 2018). The following sections unpack the compulsory Blue Flag criteria, starting with the environmental education and information criteria.

2.8.3.1. Environmental education and information

To pass this category of the Blue Flag criteria, beach administrators should ensure that each beach has at least one Blue Flag information board displayed, which encompasses all the necessary information as stipulated by the environmental education and information criteria (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). Some beaches are regarded as long beaches, and if that is the case, it is recommended that there is an information board at least every 500 meters. These information boards must be based on the set national standards in terms of content (information written) and their design. Table 2.1 explains the six environmental education and information criteria that are applicable during the Blue Flag application process.

Table 2.1: Environmental education and information criteria (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020)

Criterion 1: Information about the Blue Flag programme and other FEE ecolabels must be displayed.	Information about the Blue Flag programme must be displayed on the Blue Flag information board. The correct Blue Flag logo must be used, in accordance with the FEE branding guidelines. The essence of each of the four categories of the Blue Flag criteria must be explained in this information. The length of the Blue Flag season must also be included.
Criterion 2: Environmental education activities must be offered and promoted to beach users.	Environmental education activities promote the aims of the Blue Flag programme by: - increasing the awareness of, and care for, the local environment by recreational users and residents - training personnel and tourist service providers in environmental matters and best practice methods. - encouraging the participation of local stakeholders in environmental management within the area. - promoting sustainable recreation and tourism in the area. - promoting the sharing of ideas and efforts between the Blue Flag programme and other FEE programmes.
Criterion 3. Information about bathing water quality must be displayed.	Bathing water quality information must be displayed on the Blue Flag information board. It is recommended that a table or figure with easily identifiable symbols that correspond to the results be used. The information should also clearly explain how the water quality results relate to the imperative criteria for water quality, with specific reference to sampling frequency and the conditions under which Blue Flag status can be withdrawn.
Criterion 4. Information relating to local eco-systems and environmental phenomena must be displayed.	The aim of this criterion is to ensure that beach users are well informed and educated about relevant environmental phenomena (including valuable cultural sites/communities), local ecosystems and any sensitive areas in the surrounding environment so that they are encouraged to learn about and experience the environment in a responsible way.
Criterion 5. A map of the beach indicating different facilities must be displayed.	A map showing the boundaries of the Blue Flag beach area and the location of key facilities and services must be posted on the Blue Flag information board. The map should be of good quality, easy to read and properly orientated. Pictograms should preferably be used. The required map elements (where

	applicable) should show the location of: - *"You are here" pointers - lifeguards or lifesaving equipment - the area patrolled (for beaches with lifeguards) - first aid equipment - telephones - toilets (including toilets for disabled people) - drinking water - car and bicycle parking areas - authorised camping sites at/near the beach - recycling facilities - location of water sampling point(s) - access points and access for disabled persons - zoning (swimming, surfing, sailing, boating, etc.) where applicable, nearby public transport - footpaths - demarcation of Blue Flag area - location of other information boards - rivers and inflows - local landmarks (where applicable) - storm water outlets - nearby natural sensitive areas, etc. - direction (North) - scale bar.*
Criterion 6. A code of conduct that reflects appropriate laws governing the use of the beach and surrounding areas must be displayed.	The code of conduct should address the activities of beach users and their conduct on the beach. The beach code of conduct must be displayed on the Blue Flag information board. The information could furthermore be posted at other locations, e.g. at all major entrance points, near to the issue concerned (i.e. a No Diving sign on a pier) or as information at the relevant sites. Internationally recognised symbols, e.g. pictograms should be used wherever possible.

2.8.3.2.   Water quality

Under this category of the Blue Flag criteria, the FEE endorses that all beaches applying for the Blue Flag status are required to achieve exceptional bathing water quality, which is based on international and national standards and regulations (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). The bathing water quality standards are binding and must be adopted, unless firmer national standards are already present, and these may include testing for total coliform bacteria (Graci & Dodds, 2015). Table 2.2 clarifies the required criteria for water quality compliance for Blue Flag beaches.

Table 2.2: Water quality criteria (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020)

Criterion 7. The beach must fully comply with the water quality sampling and frequency requirements.	A Blue Flag beach must have at least one sampling site and this must be located where the concentration of bathers is highest. In addition, where there are potential sources of pollution, e.g. near streams, rivers or other inlets, storm water outlets, etc. additional samples must be taken at these sites to provide evidence that such inflows do not affect bathing water quality.
Criterion 8. The beach must fully comply with the standards and requirements for water quality analysis	An independent person, officially authorised and trained for the task, must collect the samples. An independent laboratory must carry out the analysis of the bathing water samples. The laboratory must be nationally or internationally accredited to carry out microbiological and physical-chemical analyses.
Criterion 9. No industrial, wastewater or sewage-related discharges should affect the beach area.	A bathing water profile must be compiled for every Blue Flag beach. A bathing water profile includes 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.
Criterion 10. The beach must comply with the Blue Flag requirements for the microbiological parameter Escherichia coli (faecal coli bacteria) and intestinal enterococci (streptococci)	For the evaluation of an applicant beach the Blue Flag programme requires 95th percentile compliance of the above limit values. This is in accordance with the EU Bathing Water Directive 2006 as well as the recommendation of the World Health Organisation. The percentile has to be calculated for each parameter and also met for each parameter.
Criterion 11. The beach must comply with the Blue Flag requirements.	Water quality can also be affected by physical and chemical parameters such as oil and floatables: - There must be no oil film visible on the surface of the water and no odour detected. On land the beach must be monitored

| | | for oil and emergency plans should include the required action to take in case of such pollution. |
| | - | There has to be an absence of floatables such as tarry residues, wood, plastic articles, bottles, containers, glass or any other substance. |

2.8.3.3. Environmental management

Environmental management is another mandatory category of Blue Flag criteria, and it focuses on:

- growing the awareness of, and care for, the local natural environment by recreational users and residents;
- educating personnel and tourist service providers in environmental matters and best practice methods;
- fostering the involvement of local stakeholders in ecological management within the area;
- helping sustainable recreation and tourism in the area; and
- promoting the sharing of ideas on and efforts towards the Blue Flag status (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020).

The environmental management activities should take place at the beach and be directed at protecting the beach environment. These functions urge local authorities/beach operators to play an intensive ecological role with a team of stakeholders around beach attractions (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). Table 2.3 presents the environmental management category of the Blue Flag criteria.

Table 2.3: Environmental management criteria (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020)

Criterion 12. The local authority/beach operator should establish a beach management committee.	The beach management committee should be charged with ensuring compliance with all environmental management criteria, including Marine Protected Areas requirements if appropriate. The committee should consist of all relevant stakeholders at the local level. Relevant stakeholders could be a local authority representative, hotel manager, beach manager, lifeguard, educational representative, local NGO, and other stakeholders such as community representatives, special user groups, Marine Protected Area representative, etc.
Criterion 13. The local authority/beach operator must comply with all regulations affecting the location and operation of the beach.	Regulations pertaining to issues relating to coastal zone planning, environmental management, waste-water legislation, environmental legislation, and others must be met for the beach to receive and maintain Blue Flag status. The applicant must assure that the facilities and activities under its responsibility comply with these guidelines and/or regulations. The management of the beach location, facilities, beach operation and immediate surrounding area must comply with official development plans and planning regulations. The legislation may include regulations for land-use planning, sewage/industrial waste effluent discharge, environmental health regulations, conservation plans, operations licenses and permits, etc.
Criterion 14. Sensitive area management.	Some sites at/near the Blue Flag beach may be very sensitive and require special management. In these cases, the beach operator is strongly encouraged to consult an appropriate conservation organisation or expert for advice on how to manage these sites. Where areas require special management, at the time of application, the applicant must provide confirmation that this consultation has taken place and that a management plan will be implemented.
Criterion 15. The beach must be clean.	The beach and surrounding areas including paths, parking areas and access paths to the beach must be clean and maintained at all times. Litter should not be allowed to accumulate causing these areas to become unsightly or hazardous. The beach must comply with national guidelines or legislation concerning litter and waste management. Beach cleaning may be mechanical or manual, depending on the size, appearance, and sensitivity of the beach and its surroundings. In high use areas, where possible, occasional mechanical sieving and deep cleaning of the sand should be done to remove small particles such as cigarette butts, etc
Criterion 16. Algal vegetation or natural debris should be left on the beach.	Algal vegetation is generally accepted as referring to seaweed. Seaweed and other vegetation/natural debris are natural components of both freshwater and marine ecosystems. These ecosystems must be considered as living and natural environments and not only as a recreational asset to be kept tidy. Thus, the management of seaweed or other vegetation/natural detritus on the shore should be sensitive to both visitor needs and biodiversity.
Criterion 17. Waste disposal bins/containers must be available at the beach in adequate numbers and they must be regularly maintained.	Waste disposal bins or litter-bins (preferably with covers) should be of a suitable design and appearance as well as functionality. It is recommended that bins made of environmentally friendly products are used, e.g. bins made of recycled composite plastics or wood.
Criterion 18. Facilities for the separation of recyclable waste materials should be available at the beach.	In the event that the community has a local recycling facility then containers must be made available at the beach for these materials, e.g. glass, cans, plastic, paper, etc. The receptacles should be properly designed and managed for the type of waste received, should be emptied regularly, and be well placed for accessibility.
Criterion 19. An adequate number of toilet or restroom facilities must be provided.	The number of toilets/restrooms available at the beach must reflect the average number of beach visitors during the peak season, the length of the beach and the number and location of major access points.
Criterion 20. The toilet or restroom facilities must be kept clean.	The toilet/restroom facilities must be kept clean at all times. The frequency of checking and cleaning the facilities must reflect the intensity of use. Beaches with a high number of daily visitors

	must have their facilities checked and cleaned every day or several times a day.
Criterion 21. The toilet or restroom facilities must have controlled sewage disposal.	Sewage or effluent from the toilets must not enter the ground or the water untreated. In villages, communities, or in a municipality with sewage treatment facilities, the toilet facilities must be connected to the municipal sewer.
Criterion 22. On the beach there will be no unauthorised camping or driving and no dumping	Unauthorised camping, driving and dumping must be prohibited on the beach. There must be information about these restrictions displayed at the beach
Criterion 23. Access to the beach by dogs and other domestic animals must be strictly controlled.	On Blue Flag beaches, dogs and pets are permitted in the parking areas, on walkways and promenades in the back-beach area only - if permitted by the beach authorities as well as local and national legislation. Animals in these areas must be controlled. It is recommended that a Dog-Free Zone be created to prevent dogs and other animals from entering the main beach and swimming area - this excludes guides dogs for the visually impaired.
Criterion 24. All buildings and beach equipment must be properly maintained	Consideration should be given to the appearance of buildings and structures at the beach. They should be well integrated within the natural and built environment, should adhere to design standards and meet environmental and aesthetic requirements.
Criterion 25. Marine and freshwater sensitive habitats (such as Coral reefs or sea grass beds) in the vicinity of the beach must be monitored.	If there is a sensitive habitat (such as coral reef or sea grass beds) located within 500 metres from any part of a Blue Flag beach, a monitoring programme must be established to monitor the health of the habitat (coral reef or sea grass beds) at least once a season.
Criterion 26. A sustainable means of transportation should be promoted in the beach area.	The Blue Flag programme encourages the promotion of alternative means of transportation, e.g. beach shuttles, bicycle rental or free bicycles. Such initiatives should be given particular attention in communities with high traffic densities in the beach area or where the beach is located in a sensitive area.

2.8.3.4. Safety and services

All beaches that apply for the Blue Flag ecolabel must ensure that they meet all safety measures, in accordance with the national legislation regarding beach safety. Whether a beach receives a high or low number of visitors, upon its application for Blue Flag status, it must be patrolled by an acceptable number of lifeguards which are recommended based on the risk assessment of the beach. The beach should be able to increase the demand for lifeguards based on the increase in visitor usage, especially during peak seasons. It is recommended that a beach has a minimum standard number of lifeguards, which is at least two in every 200 meters. This is mandatory for beaches that have not undertaken a risk assessment (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). Table 2.4 below sets out the criteria for the safety and services Blue Flag category.

Table 2.4: Safety and services criteria (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020)

Criterion 27. Appropriate public safety control measures must be implemented.	The beach operator must ensure that safety measures comply with the national legislation regarding beach safety. Moreover, it is strongly recommended that the beach operator undertakes a safety risk assessment for each designated bathing area. This safety risk assessment is to be carried out by the appropriate national authorities or where applicable by a Full Member organisation of the International Life Saving Federation (ILS).
Criterion 28. First aid equipment must be	The first aid may be available by means of a) a lifeguard on site,

	and/or b) an attended first aid station with trained personnel, and/or c) equipment located in a shop or other beach facilities at the beach, and/or d) directly available to the public on the beach.
Criterion 29. Emergency plans to cope with pollution risks must be in place	The emergency plan should cover a clearly identified procedure, facilitating efficiency in the case of an emergency. An emergency could result from oil spills, hazardous/toxic waste spills entering the beach from the sea, discharge of storm water, hurricanes, algal blooms that could be dangerous, etc. An emergency in this context would be defined as an event which leads to a large-scale impact on the beach or bathing water.
Criterion 30. There must be management of different users and uses of the beach so as to prevent conflicts and accidents.	Beaches that support multiple activities must have management plans to prevent accidents and conflicts. This must include zoning for swimmers, surfers, wind surfers and motor craft. At the same time, recreational use of the beach must be managed without negatively impacting the natural environment, the biodiversity of the beach and with consideration for aesthetic issues.
Criterion 31. There must be safety measures in place to protect users of the beach.	The public must have access to Blue Flag beaches without being a client of a certain hotel or beach club. Access to the beach should preferably be free, although at some beaches public access is provided through charging a small and reasonable fee.
Criterion 32. A supply of drinking water should be available at the beach	There should be a potable water source at the beach, e.g. from a fountain, pipe, tap, etc. These water sources can be in the restroom/toilet block or on the beachfront, but it must be protected from contamination by animals.
Criterion 33. At least one Blue Flag beach in each municipality must have access and facilities provided for the physically disabled.	It is strongly recommended that all Blue Flag beaches have facilities that allow access by the physically disabled granting them access to the beach, surrounding buildings, and the restroom facilities. It is a Blue Flag requirement that at least one beach in every municipality must provide these facilities. It is a Blue Flag recommendation that at this beach, if possible, there is access to the water.

2.8.4. The Blue Flag application process

It is imperative for coastal municipalities to have sufficient funds for this voluntary ecolabel, since it is noted to be an expensive and lengthy requirement (Ariza, Jimenez, & Sarda, 2008); McKenna *et al.*, 2011). The Blue Flag is granted once a year for the beach season (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006 McKenna *et al.*, 2011; Williams & Micallef, 2009). The South African Blue Flag season is from November to April annually and the flag must fly during the entire season at the accredited beach (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). The flag symbolises the existence of the Blue Flag programme that is being run and is a sign of compliance (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006). The Blue Flag is taken down if compulsory criteria are not met during the next accreditation and award season. The FEE checks the Blue Flag accredited beaches annually from the beginning of February, to ensure that through its criteria and guidelines, beaches maintain the symbol of excellence (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2007). There is a very clear process of applying for this ecolabel.

As shown in Figure 2.4, the first step involves the completion of the mandatory Blue Flag application form by beach management stakeholders. The second step involves the submission of the application to WESSA, followed by the third step that involves water

site/beach inspection by WESSA. During the third step, the beach applying for the Blue Flag award must pass the water inspection process carried out by WESSA. Once the 33 mandatory criteria have been met, the Blue Flag application moves to the next step. On the fourth step, the application is referred to the National Jury for evaluation. On the fifth step, recommendations from the National Jury are sent to the International Jury for a final decision. Once the beach is approved by the International Jury, the site/beach gets awarded the Blue Flag status and that is the last step of the Blue Flag application process (Wildlife & Environment Society of South Africa, 2019).
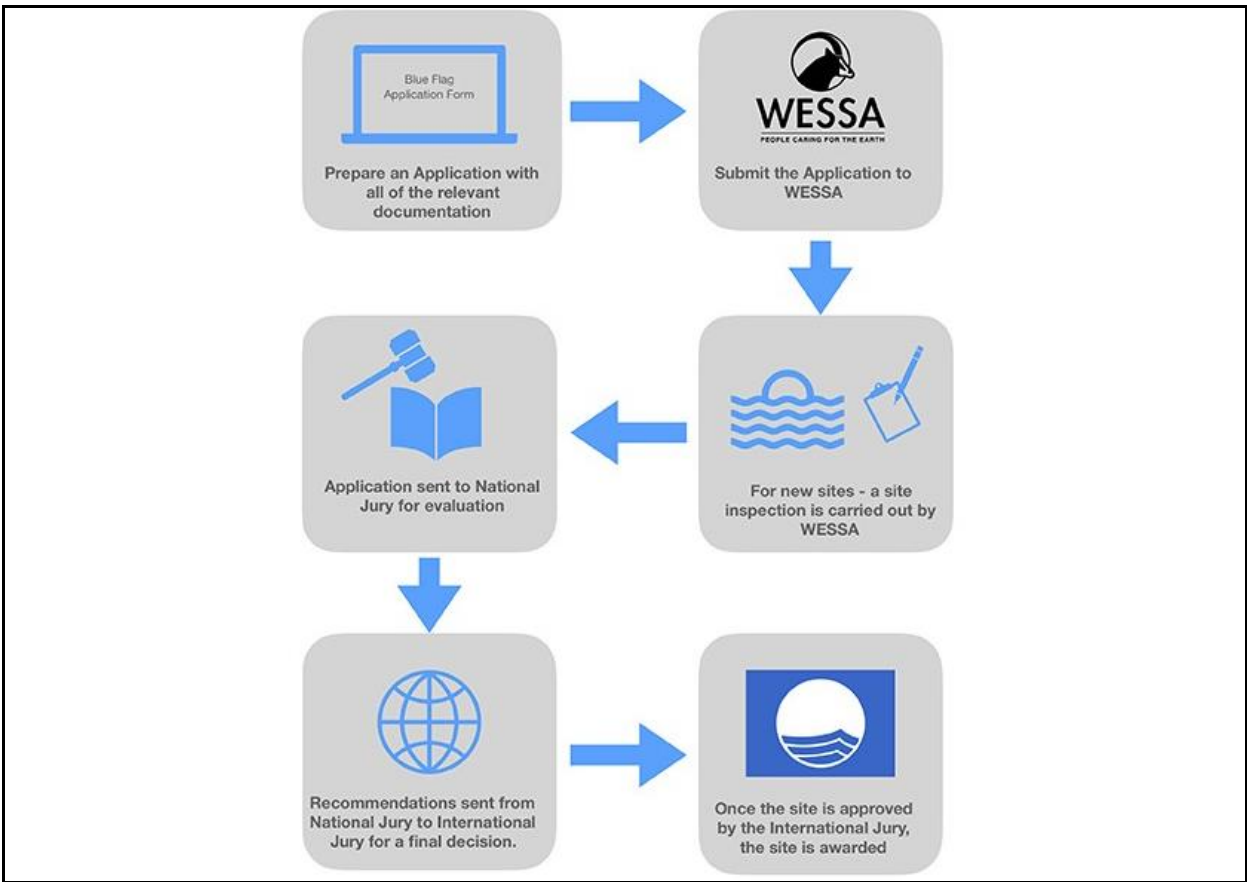
Figure 2.4: Blue Flag application process (Wildlife & Environment Society of South Africa 2019)

In addition, should the beach not meet all criteria and fail to be granted a Blue Flag status, but is still working formally towards the accreditation process, it is legally named as a candidate beach (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006; Klein & Dodds, 2017). Failure to comply with these standards results in the temporary or permanent withdrawal of the award (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020).

2.8.5. Degrees of noncompliance for Blue Flag Beaches

There are a few degrees of noncompliance that the Blue Flag programme recognises, for example: If a Blue Flag beach does not comply with the Blue Flag criteria, the Blue Flag status is temporarily or permanently withdrawn (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). These degrees of noncompliance include a minor noncompliance, multiple noncompliance as well as major noncompliance. They are briefly discussed below:

- **A minor noncompliance** refers to a minor issue that can either affect health and safety of beach users or the environment itself (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). It is possible that when a minor noncompliance occurs and it is believed that it can be corrected, Blue Flag authorities do not have to withdraw the status. In that case, correct processes must be followed, and the noncompliance should be registered in the control visit report.

- **Multiple noncompliance** is noted when there is noncompliance on two or three criteria, which signals a problem that causes minor consequence to the health and safety of beach users or to the natural environment (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). A period of ten days is then usually given to beach management, to provide an opportunity to correct the underlying problems and again comply fully with the criteria. Such changes must be updated in the homepage of the Blue Flag beach as per the normal standard set by the Foundation for Environmental Education (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020).

- **Major noncompliance** is described as a degree of noncompliance where the beach does not comply with one or several criteria resulting in severe negative impacts on the health and safety of beach users, the environment, as well as on the general perception of the beach (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). When this type of noncompliance occurs, the flag is withdrawn instantly and for the rest of the season (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006). The homepage site as well as information board get updated to indicate that the Blue Flag status has been withdrawn for that beach.

2.8.6. Blue Flag examples

As previously highlighted in Chapter One, the Eastern Cape province is home to only six Blue Flag beaches since the adoption of the programme in 2001 (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). There are currently no ranked beaches in East London and Eastern Beach did not feature in the list of pilot beaches which was drawn up in 2017 (Business Tech, 2020). Eastern Beach last applied ten years ago and was not approved to obtain Blue Flag status (Dispatch Live, 2019). The following are the best examples of Blue Flag beaches found in the Eastern Cape.

2.8.6.1. Example 1: Humewood Beach, Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

Nelson Mandela Bay is a preferred destination for visitors in the province, due to its beautiful 40-kilometre coastline and magnificent long beaches (King's, Hobie, Humewood, Wells Estate, Summerstrand, Blue Waters, New Brighton and Pollock beaches) (Nelson Mandela Bay Tourism, 2019). Humewood Beach is one of South Africa's oldest Blue Flag beaches and one of the first three beaches that obtained the Blue Flag status in 2001 (Figure 2.5). It is situated between King's Beach and Hobie Beach along the main beachfront (Nelson Mandela Bay Tourism, 2019). As a result of the Blue Flag award, this beach is famous for its quality waters and is responsive to the ever-increasing tourist demands and expectations for a healthy environment (Du Preez, Lee & Hosking, 2011; Silwana, 2015).

Research suggests that investments made by coastal municipalities to meet and sustain international standards of the Blue Flag are worthwhile (Brand South Africa, 2016; Silwana, 2015). The Chief Executive Officer of beaches and resorts in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality proclaimed that the Blue Flag has been a marketing asset for the city (Silwana, 2015). The municipality has additionally boosted safety and security around the beach area, and lifeguards are always on duty during the Blue Flag season (Brand South Africa, 2016). Beach managers have a responsibility to observe the national and international environmental calendar, to ensure that the community is also playing a role in voluntary clean-up projects at this beach (Brand South Africa, 2016; Silwana, 2015).

Figure 2.5: Humewood Beach in Nelson Mandela Bay (Nelson Mandela Bay Tourism, 2019)

2.8.6.2. Example 2: Dolphin Beach in Jeffrey's Bay, Kouga Municipality

Dolphin Beach, pictured in Figure 2.6 is in Jeffrey's Bay and is part of the Kouga Municipality. This is one of the preferred Blue Flag beaches in the province; it obtained its status in 2009. The status has increased the number of tourists to the beach, and this has

boosted the municipal economy (Silwana, 2015). Local and international visitors mostly visit this beach during the summer and Easter holidays. It is noted for its safe and clean water. As with other beaches, a few problems were experienced in the past concerning Blue Flag compliance. Dolphin Beach lost its status in 2011, due to a sewage spill that affected the sea. Contingency measures were put in place, municipal management set aside budget to change all the sewage pipes in the sewage handling plant, to avoid future discharges.

There was also a need to upgrade the wheelchair ramp for the disabled visitors and that issue was immediately rectified within the same season. As part of coastal environmental initiatives, the local community regularly help with voluntary cleaning of the beach. The municipality and its council confirm that a Blue Flag budget is set annually but this is deemed insufficient. When required, the municipal management utilises the Working for the Coast (WftC) funds to supplement their budget (Silwana, 2015). This is a coastal management programme which is a subsidiary of the Department of Environmental Affairs. It was established to help in dealing with coastal management challenges in the country and in line with the ICM Act 28 of 2008 (Department of Forestry, Fisheries & the Environment, 2018; Republic of South Africa 2008). The programme is also linked to the Expanded Public Works Programme, which is responsible for street cleaning and greening, waste management, rehabilitation of degraded areas and bioremediation of polluted rivers (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2020; Silwana, 2015).

Figure 2.6: Dolphin Beach in Jeffrey's Bay (SafariNow, 2020)

2.8.6.3.   Example 3: Kelly's Beach, Port Alfred, Ndlambe Municipality

The town of Port Alfred is located on the sunshine coast and is well known for its holiday homes, recreational experiences, and clean beach water (Travel Ground, 2021). This beautiful town is situated in Ndlambe Municipality. As a preferred holiday destination, the beach has a variety of facilities and attractions that draw foreign and local visitors, including

residents, throughout the year (Silwana, 2015). Kelly's Beach, which is illustrated in Figure 2.7 is located in Port Alfred. It received its first Blue Flag status in 2010 and is perceived positively by locals and tourists (Ndlambe Municipality, 2011). The 400-metre-long beach is situated 1,5 km from the Kowie River estuary mouth (Travel Ground, 2021). Silwana (2015:43) indicates that the Blue Flag status at this beach attracts international tourists to the region. The municipality practises sustainable tourism, and the Blue Flag award enables better management of land and sea resources (Ndlambe Municipality, 2011). Further to the ecological benefits, there has also been a reduced number of unemployed residents in town (Silwana, 2015).
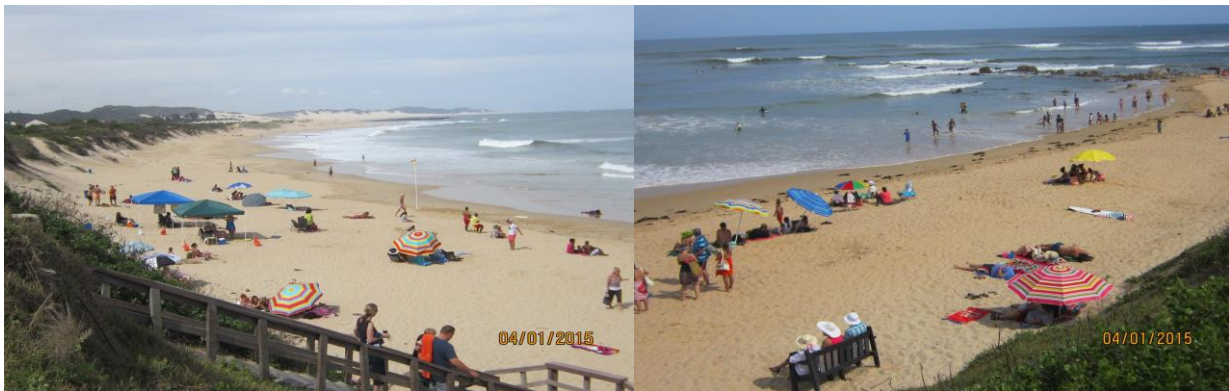
Figure 2.7: Kelly's Beach in Port Alfred (Sunshine Coast Tourism, 2019)

Land that has been vacant for a long time in Port Alfred, is now being bought by visitors who are building their permanent holiday homes. There are long-term investment outcomes that have been recorded since the year 2011 (Ndlambe Municipality, 2011; Silwana, 2015). According to Ndlambe Municipality (2011:2), there has been an increase in foreign tourist arrivals and tourist spend due to the status of the beach. Kelly's Beach has been in good condition due to Blue Flag compliance standards since the first award year (Ndlambe Municipality, 2011).

2.8.7. Blue Flag beach challenges and problems

As previously explained, the Blue Flag programme supports tourism authorities and managers to provide beaches and marinas with a certain level of environmental quality, cleanliness and safety standards for local populations and tourists (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006). Most destinations that embrace the Blue Flag status on their beaches have also implemented ICZM, which helps destination managers towards better environmental management on the coast, and which is a better foundation for beaches and marinas working towards this ecolabel (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006; United Nations Environment Programme, 2010). Problems before, during and after the Blue Flag award process are

common and lessons are learnt from several coastal tourism destinations worldwide (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006).

Blue Flag South Africa (2020) and Geldenhuys and Van Der Merwe (2014) proclaim that challenges and problems associated with the Blue Flag Award include immediate withdrawal of the status once a beach fails to comply with any of the Blue Flag rules. There are several reasons that prevent certain beaches from acquiring Blue Flag status (Lucrezi *et al.,* 2016). Klein and Dodds (2017:14) urge that there is no doubt that beach awards in general are appropriate schemes to be relied on for the improvement and management of marinas. However, several beaches fail to fully comply with water quality sampling and frequency requirements, as required by the Criterion 7 (Lucrezi *et al.*, 2016).

Other beaches in South Africa are failing to meet the standards of the Blue Flag award annually due to industrial wastewater or sewage-related discharges into the beach area (Williams & Micallef, 2009). Humewood Beach, Dolphin Beach and Kelly's Beach are the best examples of Blue Flag beaches in the Eastern Cape province; they have managed to retain their rankings despite challenges and problems faced in the past.

The following are examples of beaches in South Africa which experienced challenges and problems related to Blue Flag status.

- **Gonubie Beach** in the 2007/8 season lost the status due to water quality that was not acceptable (Silwana, 2015). The results of the samples showed traces of Escherichia coli (*E. coli*), which was above the acceptable limit (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Silwana, 2015). Since then, this beach did not manage to rectify the major noncompliance and has not obtained the status again.

- **Humewood Beach** is another beach that experienced challenges in the past (Silwana, 2015). It once had its Blue Flag status withdrawn in January 2011 for the rest of the 2010/11 season (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). The standards relating to three critically important areas of compliance for Blue Flag beaches, namely, security, cleansing and lifeguarding were not complied with. Problems and challenges with the car parking were also experienced. Ablution facilities and the boardwalk required renovations (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). This beach managed to rectify all its problems and regained its status in the next season.

- **Middle Beach** on the Sunshine Coast, in Eastern Cape has remained in the pilot phase since the 2011/12 season, after failing to receive Blue Flag beach status (Silwana, 2015). The reason behind the award rejection is that dog owners in the

community make use of the beach to walk their dogs. Based on the Blue Flag criteria (Criterion 23), dogs and other domestic animals remain prohibited from a Blue Flag beach (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). Many researchers suggest beach awards are not well known and are sometimes little understood by the public (Dodds, 2014; Lucrezi, *et al.,* 2016; Lucrezi & Van der Merwe, 2015; McKenna *et al.,* 2011; Nelson, Butler & Wall, 2007).

- In addition, **North Beach** in KwaZulu Natal lost its Blue Flag status after failing tests for water quality. Litter and dirty ablution facilities were also cited as reasons for the decision (Palmer, Van der Elst & Parak, 2011). Although ecologists indicate that the impure water quality is unsafe for the thousands of tourists who gather at Durban's most famous attraction during the holidays, senior municipal officials have neglected the concerns (Palmer *et al.*, 2011). To date, this beach has not obtained the Blue Flag status again.

2.9. CHAPTER TWO SUMMARY

This chapter touched on the sustainability concept as being an old agenda for administrations, non-governmental organisations, and private stakeholders for the past three decades. Sustainable development was defined as a type of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Sustainable Development Goals that were developed to ensure that there is sustained and inclusive economic development, social inclusion, and environmental protection, while fostering peaceful and inclusive societies through a new global partnership, were explained in this section. This chapter highlighted that recently, because of the rising concern for the environment, there has been an escalating necessity to boost sustainable tourism development in countries and regions worldwide. There is a growing global environmental consciousness which has led to several internationally significant publications on the concept of sustainable tourism development.

In South Africa, sustainable tourism development has achieved the status of being a superior goal to strengthen the country's tourism sector. The country introduced several approaches, frameworks, policies in this regard, and acts to strengthen sustainable tourism. The National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA), as well as the Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008 (ICMA), exist to supplement the South African Tourism White Paper. The promotion of sustainable tourism through the National Tourism Sector Strategy has been identified as an important strategy to bring economic upliftment, community development and poverty relief in the country. In this chapter,

researchers stressed the importance of stakeholder participation in sustainable tourism development. Thus, a clear understanding of stakeholder inclusion, support, attitudes and interests is an essential precursor to planning and management of tourism development. The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) model was discussed, highlighting how it has been used to set long-term strategies for industries and companies, to make a transition to sustainability and to expand organisational performance. Three important dimensions were reflected on, namely environmental quality, social equity, and economic benefits. The TBL was linked to sustainable tourism development.

The Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) was also discussed in this chapter, as a key model for sustainable development in coastal areas. ICZM in South Africa addresses multiple-use conflicts, plans for new uses, and protects vulnerable ecosystems and marine biodiversity. In 2009, the Integrated Coastal Management Act 24 of 2008 was introduced in the country. This act is classified as an adaptable multi-sectoral and governmental method that promotes ICZM, and which has proved to strike a balance between development, use and coastal protection. This chapter also stressed that the involvement and co-operation of all stakeholders is vital to evaluate shared goals and to avoid conflicting perspectives in tourism development. Stakeholders involved cover holistic functions, which include data gathering, preparation, decision-making, administration and monitoring.

This chapter presented the international Blue Flag ecolabel which was introduced in Europe in 1987 to balance beach conservation and protect ecosystems as recreational venues. The Blue Flag was discussed as an ecolabel that plays two important roles: firstly, to guide the industry towards the improvement of its performance by supporting operational guidelines; and secondly, to perform as a communication stimulus for beach users to identify products and services that meet and exceed a set of defined acceptable criteria. Similarly, in South Africa, the impact of the Blue Flag award programme remains positive. Through its best practice principles and examples, the Blue Flag award invites local authorities and beach operators to achieve high standards in the four categories of water quality, environmental management, environmental education and safety (Foundation for Environmental Education, 2006).

For the purpose of this literature review, Humewood, Dolphin and Kelly's Beaches were selected as best examples of successful Blue Flag award beaches in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. In addition, this chapter also highlighted the challenges faced by local authorities and beach operators throughout the process of meeting and maintaining

Blue Flag award standards. Sewage spills are one of the major reasons behind several Blue Flag awards being withdrawn.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLODY

"Success of a well-executed research depends on proper planning and adoption of appropriate methodology, which has influence on the validity of the results and acceptability of the research outcome" (Akotia, 2014:67).
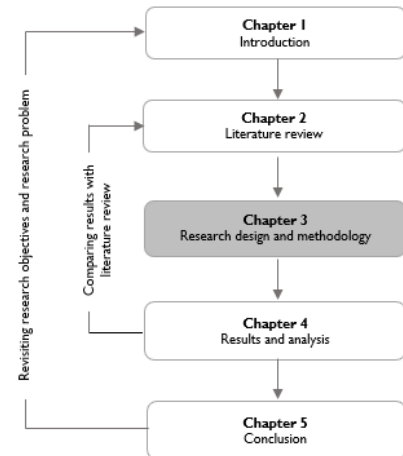
3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers an overview of the research design and methodology that was used in this qualitative study, as shown in Figure 3.1. This chapter provides a discussion of the research paradigm applicable to this study. The research design as well as research methods are then explained. The sampling procedure followed for the selection of participants, pilot study and the data collection instrument used to gather primary data, the literature sources used, and the process of data analysis are also discussed. The main strengths and weaknesses associated with the adopted research methodology, and a discussion on meeting the requirements for validity and reliability are included. This chapter ends with an explanation of ethical considerations.
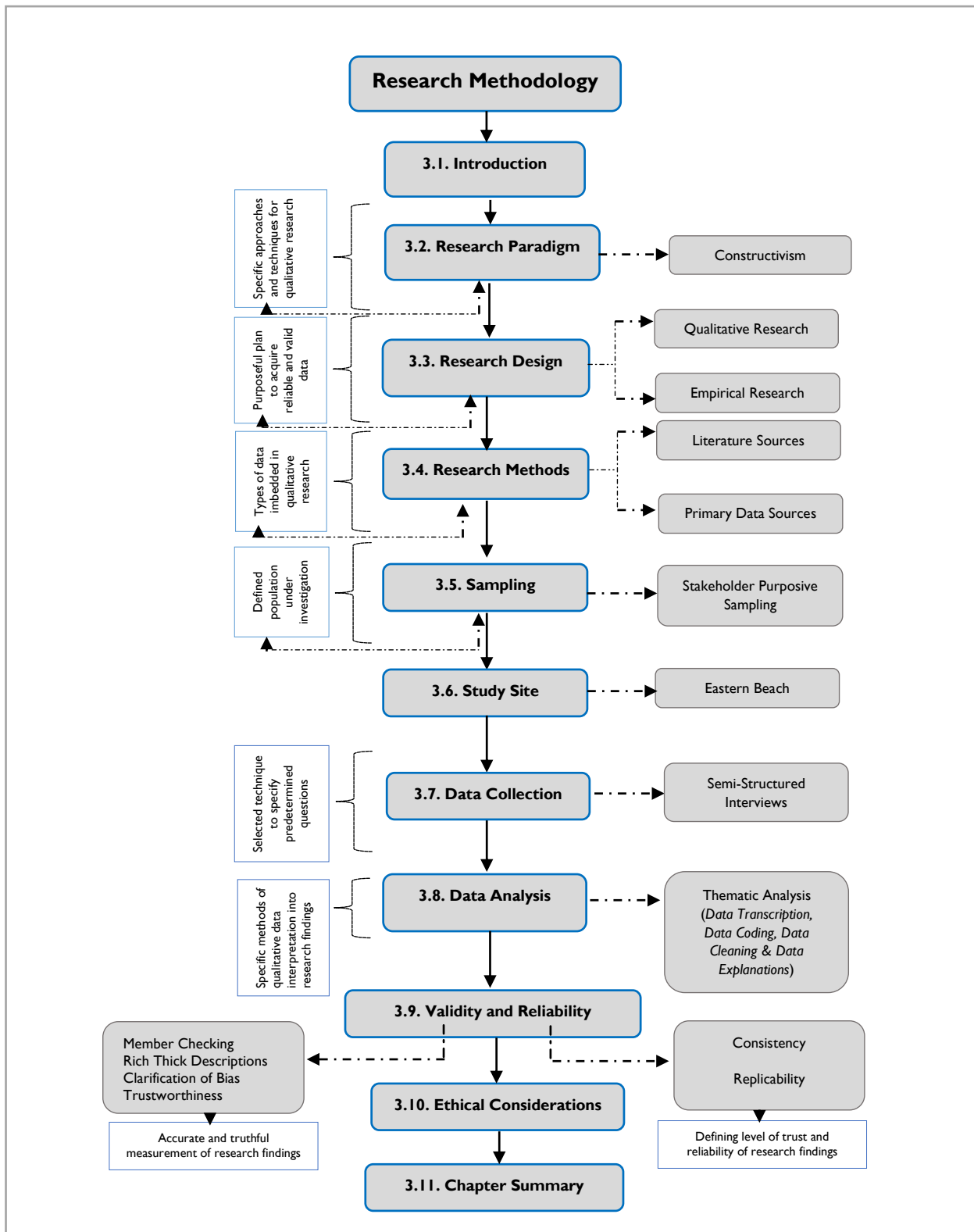
Figure 3.1: Outline of Chapter Three

Welman and Kruger (2001:66) outline that research is a process that includes the application of many methods and techniques to create scientific information by using impartial methods and procedures. However, different studies utilise different methods and techniques due to different aims and objectives (Creswell, 2014). Several researchers have

defined the meaning of the term "research" as the application of scientific methods to solve unanswered problems (Creswell, 2014, Pandey & Pandey, 2015; Richie & Lewis, 2003; Walliman, 2011).

Methodology is presented as a pure collection of methods, which complement each other, with the capability of delivering data and findings that will speak to the research aim (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Therefore, research methodology incorporates tools and techniques that explain research steps connecting theories to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results (Creswell, 2014). Keeves (1997) relates to the phenomenon encompassing the research design, methods, approaches and procedures used in an investigation – these should be well planned with the aim of solving a particular research problem.

3.2. RESEARCH PARADIGM

Neuman and Robson (2009:148) contend that paradigms are a whole system of thinking, which play an important role in science and in qualitative research. Veal (2006:3) maintains that research is generally not conducted in a vacuum – it is framed within a research paradigm, viewed through the lens of a mindset and constructed using specific approaches and techniques. Kamal (2019: 1386) views paradigms as human constructions, which deal with first principles that indicate where the researcher is coming from, to construct meaning embedded in data.

For this research, paradigm refers to the researcher's philosophical orientation, which guides every decision made in the research process. This research was explored through the interaction between the researcher and public and private destination stakeholders. The appropriate paradigm was the epistemological stance termed constructivism.

Andrew, Pedersen and McEvoy (2011:27) outline constructivism in research as a teaching philosophy, shown through a reflection of a researcher's personal experiences and relates to new knowledge acquired through research. A similar meaning of constructivism is presented by Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah (2016:143) who urge that people develop their own understanding in research and knowledge regarding the world, as they face things and reflect on learnt experiences. Thus, constructivism is summarised as a methodological concept, which assumes that people construct what they learn through their experiences (Adom *et al.,* 2016). Through a predominantly open-ended research instrument, the researcher brought into this study his own personal values and interacted with participants. The researcher relied on the participants' views on the phenomenon being studied

(Creswell, 2014). The researcher implemented measures to validate the accuracy of the findings gathered from participants. These are discussed in Section 3.9.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is regarded as the purposeful plan in which certain research methods and procedures are connected, to acquire a reliable and valid body of data for empirically grounded analyses, conclusions and theory formulation (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2006; Malhotra & Dash, 2011; Riege, 2000; Veal, 2006). It is a framework for carrying out the intended study. According to Lacobucci and Churchill (2018:152), the research design should be scientifically grounded, as well as trustworthy and reliable. The research design for this study was qualitative and empirical. The qualitative component of the research design is discussed next.

3.3.1. Qualitative research

Creswell (2014:23) refers to qualitative research as a method used for exploring and understanding the meaning ascribed by individuals or groups to a social or human problem. Shank (2002:9) describes it as a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning. This type of inquiry is based in the world of practices and scholars who seek to understand how others make sense of their experiences (Eldabi, Irani, Paul, Love, 2002; Goethals, Sorenson & MacGregor, 2004; Shank, 2002). Qualitative research aims to probe problems (Domegan & Fleming, 2007). This helps to build up a telling story without compromising the richness of the research (Golafshani, 2013; Plano Clark, 2010). The adoption of a qualitative research approach presents advantages and abilities for scholars to determine phenomena in real social contexts and deliver better understanding of and flexibility to social research (Akotia, 2014; Eldabi *et al.*, 2002; Plano Clark, 2010). Burns and Grove (2003:92) in turn comment on the same phenomenon, announcing that qualitative research is "an inductive, holistic, emic, subjective and process-oriented method, developed to understand, interpret and describe a phenomenon or setting". Qualitative research is thus normally associated with words, language and experiences rather than measurements and numerical data and is clearly bound with human senses (Burns & Grove 2003, Creswell, 2014). The strengths and weaknesses applicable to qualitative research have been summarised in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Strengths and weakness of the qualitative research approach (Adapted from Akotia, 2014)

Method	Strengths	Weaknesses
Qualitative (semi-structured interviews)	- Able to understand people's meaning. - Able to develop theory. - Able to generate data in natural setting. - Open data collection approach for quality results. - The results provide understandings and description of people's personal experiences of phenomena and provide individual case information.	- Hard to control the pace, progress and end-point of research process. - Qualitative research can be time consuming. - Data interpretation can be difficult. - Limited (small) sample

Where appropriate, a few closed questions were included in the interview guide. Data was collected directly from participants and data analysis was undertaken using inductive coding of stakeholder perceptions, to create general themes.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005:19), qualitative research is relevant to empirical research, as it involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach. This empirical element of the research design is discussed next.

3.3.2. Empirical research

The word 'empirical', refers to knowledge derived by the process of practical and scientific experiences, experiments and inquiries (Kodali, 2014). Thus, empirical research is based on empirical supportable evidence to arrive at conclusions (Creswell, 2014; Given, 2012). In addition, empirical studies are concerned with a deliberate process of collecting and analysing data – in a manner that is organised, purposeful and accountable (Creswell, 2014).

This research is empirical because it seeks to ascertain actual experiences and perceptions directly from participants, rather than from theory or beliefs. It is aimed at exploring current context and future plans towards Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach. These experiences and perceptions were determined from participants who are tourism stakeholders and who are directly involved in tourism planning, development and management of tourist attractions in East London. Research methods applicable in this empirical study are explained in the next section.

3.4. RESEARCH METHODS

In qualitative research, research design involves a series of research methods that are regularly used to gather and analyse data generated (Creswell, 2014; Walliman, 2011). As emphasised by Creswell (2009:87), research methods are the tools and techniques for

doing research and they provide ways to collect, sort and analyse information, in order to come to research conclusions. The following section outlines the types of data sources used in the current study.

3.4.1. Secondary research

Bolderston (2008:91) suggests that a literature review can be an informative, critical and useful synthesis of a particular topic to determine what is known (and unknown) in the subject area. Fink (2004:3) urges that literature sources in qualitative research are reviewed to identify areas of controversy or debate and help formulate questions that need further research. In addition, Bolderston (2008:91) contends that there are several types of literature reviews, including systematic reviews conducted as primary research projects; reviews written as an introduction and foundation for research; and reviews as a form of secondary data analysis. The researcher made use of the latter approach. Existing studies were used to provide the background to the study, to develop research objectives and to write the literature review (Chapter Two). Existing studies also formed the basis of the interview guide for the present study.

Literature sources included published journals on tourism management, travel magazines, newspapers and government/semi-government/non-government/private agency publications. Acts such as NEMA of 1998, ICMA of 2008 and other case law publications were also used. Articles, academic theses, web portals and publications from government organisations such as the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), the National Department of Tourism (NDT), Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency (BCMDA), Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM) and the Eastern Cape Department of Economic Development (ECDED) were consulted. The researcher also reviewed literature from sources published by non-governmental organisations including trusts and enterprises of different tourism establishments. In Chapter Four, theory obtained from the literature review is compared to the researcher's own findings. The research instrument used for the primary data collection is presented next.

3.4.2. Primary research

Primary data is classified as the type of information gathered from first-hand experiences of participants or the collection of original data relating to the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2014; Veal, 2006). For the present study, the researcher collected primary data through the use of semi-structured interviews, via a research instrument that was designed by the researcher, which was informed by the literature. The interview guide was designed

and checked by the supervisor and can be found in Appendix A. Semi-structured interviewing is a method of collecting primary data in qualitative research, which seeks deep information and understanding about individuals, lived experiences, values, cultural knowledge, perceptions or perspectives (John, 2001). The use of semi-structured interviews as a data collection method for qualitative studies starts from the assumption that tourism stakeholders' perceptions are substantial, useful and clear, and that they will positively affect the research and produce comprehensive data for analysis (Frechtling & Sharp, 1997). This method of qualitative data collection involved a series of open-ended questions, based on the research objectives (Mathers, Fox & Hunn, 2002). The open-ended nature of the questions included in the semi-structured interviews defined the topics under investigation and provided opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail. New knowledge was discovered through this more open-ended method (as compared to standardised questionnaires). The findings form the primary data collection and are set out in Chapter Four.

3.5. SAMPLING CONSIDERATIONS

3.5.1. Sampling methods

Babbie *et al.,* (2006:113) affirm that the sampling procedure relates to the selection of suitable populations (or 'elements'), so that the focus of the study can be appropriately researched. Several scholars assert that in qualitative research, effective sampling is very important because inappropriate methods may affect the findings and outcomes of a study (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Maxwell, 2013; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Sampling in research can be largely classified as non-probability and probability (Daniel, 2012; Richie & Lewis, 2003). For the present research, **non-probability sampling** was used, which applies non-randomised processes to draw the sample (Creswell, 2014; Veal, 2006).

Further to non-probability sampling a stakeholder purposive sampling method was used. This sampling method involves discovering and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are knowledgeable about or experienced regarding a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Patton, 2002). This is also a frequently used sampling method in qualitative studies, where participants are recruited according to pre-selected criteria that are relevant to a particular research objective (Showkat, 2017).

3.5.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria comprise a set of predefined qualities utilised to find the participants suitable for a research study (Salkind, 2010a). An appropriate selection of inclusion criteria

optimises validity and increases the validity of the research results (Hulley, Cummings, Browner, Grady & Newman, 2007; Patino & Ferreira, 2018; Salkind, 2010b). The inclusion criteria for the present research incorporated all public and private stakeholders who are involved in tourism planning development and management of tourist attractions in East London. These stakeholders also play a direct role in the management of Eastern Beach and in efforts to achieve Blue Flag status. In terms of occupation, the researcher targeted team leaders, strategic business managers, organisational supervisors, front office managers, general managers, executive heads of departments, chief executive officers, chief information officers, chief financial officers, organisational founders/co-founders, managing directors and chief operations officers.

- *Public stakeholders*

Public stakeholders are members of the public or a broad base of stakeholders affected by a governmental project, policy, decision or those who form part of a governmental organisation (Riordan, 2017). In this study, public tourism stakeholders were participants who included any public leadership or management representatives from Buffalo City Tourism Council and Ward Committees, Provincial Sector Departments including Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA); Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC); Socio-Economic Development Agency (SEDA); Department of Economic Development and Environmental Affairs (DEDEA); Local Department of Tourism; Industrial Development Corporation (IDC); Buffalo City Environmental Trust (BCET); Coastal and Environmental Services (CES); Organised Stakeholder Groups (Disability, Elderly, Women, Organised Businesses and Service Providers Nominated Community Representatives who fall under public sector stakeholders); Afesis-corplan as well as the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA). For the purpose of this study, the environment and conservation agencies mainly work in co-operation with the local municipality and were categorised as public stakeholders. This is a group of participants who also play direct management roles as team leaders; strategic business managers; organisational supervisors; managers, general managers; executive heads of departments; members of mayoral committee; executive boards; departmental spokes personnel and chief executive officers; chief information officers; chief financial officers and chief operations officers.

- *Private stakeholders*

Private stakeholders are the individuals and constituencies that contribute to the wealth-creating capacity and activities of a corporation, and that are therefore potential beneficiaries or risk bearers (Freeman & Reed, 2002). Private tourism stakeholders

included the owner or manager of accommodation establishments (such as hotels, lodges, guest houses, bed and breakfasts); local restaurants; local tourist attraction offices; members of transport and travel trade and media and private consulting organisations. This portion of the population also play direct management roles as team leaders, strategic business managers, organisational supervisors, front office managers, general managers, executive heads of departments, chief executive officers, chief information officers, chief financial officers and chief operations officers.

Exclusion criteria is defined by Salkind (2010b:3) as a set of predefined conditions used to identify participants who will not be included in a study, as they do not comply with the selection criteria. The views of host communities and tourists, while valuable, fall beyond the scope of this Master's research. Host communities and tourists form part of the destination stakeholder framework (as shown in Section 2.7 of Chapter Two) but were not included, not having responsibilities in tourism planning, coastal development and environmental management of tourist attractions with respect to Eastern Beach in East London. Children (<5–12 years), youth (13–17 years) and senior citizens (>66 years) who were not employed in the public sector as public tourism stakeholders were also excluded from this empirical research. In addition, participants who were considered as part of a vulnerable population such as incarcerated individuals or those having illness or a disability that could affect their ability to give consent or would otherwise make it dangerous for them to participate in the study, were also excluded.

3.5.3. Population and sample

The **population** comprised public and private stakeholders who were directly involved in tourism planning, development and management of tourist attractions in East London. These stakeholders also play a direct role in the management of Eastern Beach, and in efforts to achieve Blue Flag status. A list of 52 private and public tourism enterprises was obtained from the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality website, from which to identify interviewees and provide obtain basic background information on these stakeholders. This list provided the researcher with information including: the postal address, phone number, email, type of service, ownership structure, the name of the manager or supervisor and the number of employees involved in each stakeholder organisation.

The term "**sample size**" in research illustrates the number of participants included in the study (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016). As asserted by Morse and Richards (2006), the sample size depends upon the scope of the research objectives (the broader the scope, the larger the sample size needed) and on the quality of the data (the richer the data, the

smaller the sample size). The sample size for this study was influenced by the specificity of the sample (the more specific the characteristics of the participants in relation to the study objectives, the smaller the sample size) (Malterud, *et al.,* 2016). In addition to knowledge and experiences of participants, Walliman (2011) and Wolcott (2009) note that the sample size may be small and based on the availability and willingness of the population to participate. The sample size for this research was therefore set to twenty participants, aiming for an equal number of private and public stakeholders respectively.

The sample size was based on available cases as per the purposive selection criteria. The researcher communicated with stakeholders using available contact information (email addresses and telephone numbers) from the municipal database. The 20 stakeholders were purposively selected from the stakeholder population based on their knowledge about the study area. These stakeholders qualified for a purposive selection, since they are directly involved in tourism planning, development and management of tourist attractions in East London. This sample was chosen because of available stakeholders who play direct roles in the management of Eastern Beach and in efforts to achieve Blue Flag status. In addition, this research only considered stakeholders who were owners, directors, chief executive officers or managers within their organisations.

The selection of public and private stakeholders, using this sampling method ensured the validity and reliability of the information gathered (Palys, 2008). Participants incorporated directors, chief executive officers and managers, hence the informed consent from these individuals is equivalent to informed consent for the organisation. The informed consent form was adapted to reflect this. Where a director or manager referred the researcher to another employee for the interview, then the manager was first asked to sign that permission had been granted by the head of the organisation. The organisations which the selected participants worked for or owned are not listed here, in order to protect anonymity as per ethical clearance requirements (Section 3.10).

3.6. STUDY SITE

East London is a city on the south east coast of South Africa, located in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality of the Eastern Cape Province. This city has a population of over 267 000 and covers an area of 168,86 km² (Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency, 2016). East London boasts an intriguing eastern beachfront coastline, which integrates with Eastern Beach (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2018). BCMM is the local tourism district in East London (Ebomah *et al.*, 2019). Eastern Beach is one of the major local tourist attractions in the city and comprises the study area. The study area lies just past the

East London aquarium and approximately 200 meters opposite/near to the Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park (Development Management Services, 2005). Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park is a multi-purpose public park, which is located near Eastern Beach in East London. It is a popular entertainment park, used for barbequing (braaiing), drinking and picnicking (Dlomo & Tseane-Gumbi, 2017). Even though it is known to be less developed compared to other public parks, it is a favourable spot for locals and visitors (Willie & Tseane, 2011).

Eastern Beach is described as the city's most central, popular and beautiful beach, with large black rocks that are scattered along the south coastline (Bank, 2015). This beach is part of the most beautiful coastlines in the world (East London Travel Guide, 2018). The sand banks of its northern coastline add to the beauty, creating interesting areas to explore (ShowMe East London, 2019; Daily Dispatch 2019). Eastern Beach offers warm-water currents, and the ocean temperatures are more tolerable than any other parts of the Wild Coast for beachgoers to swim and relax (Hastings & Wilbanks, 2019). During the festive period, this beach is crowded with more than 10 000 beach users descending on the shore (Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council, 2017). Figure 3.2 depicts the location of Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (in red) in the Eastern Cape province. Figure 3.3 highlights the location of Eastern Beach (in red) within East London.
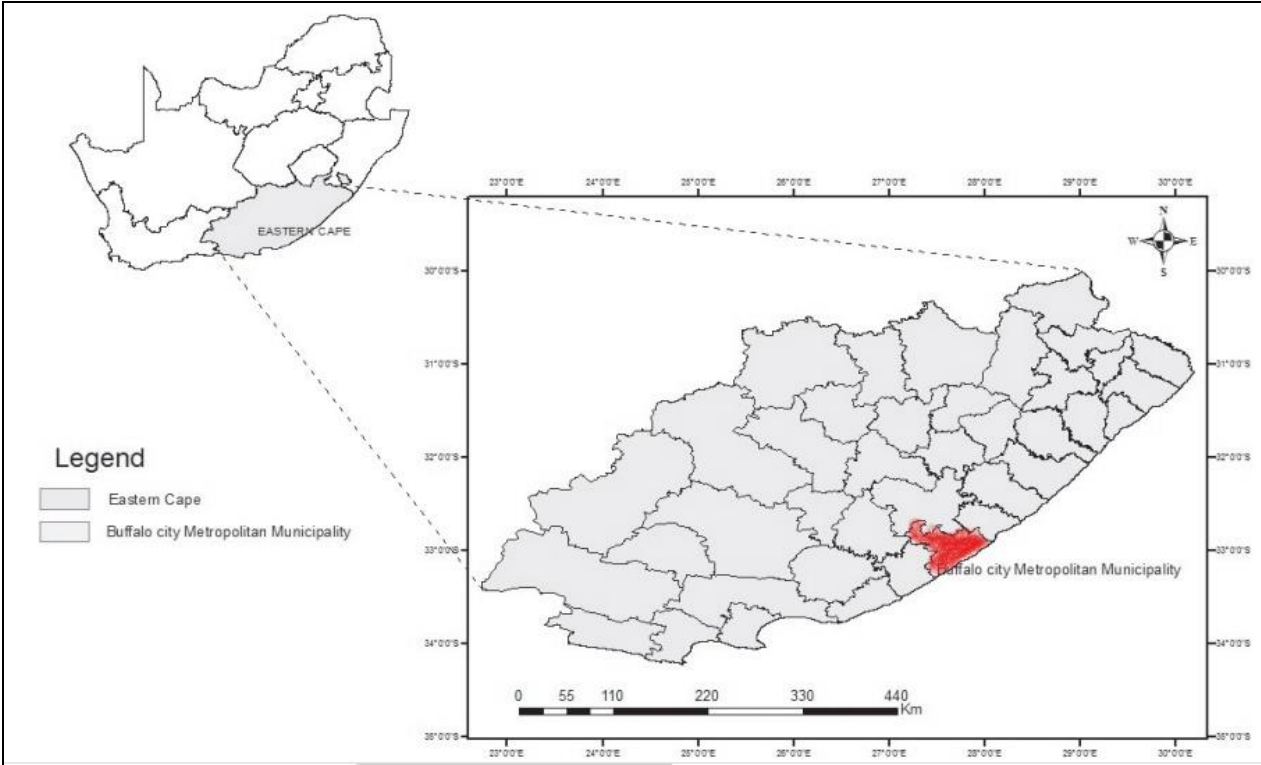
Figure 3.2: Location of the BCMM within the Eastern Cape province (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality 2018)
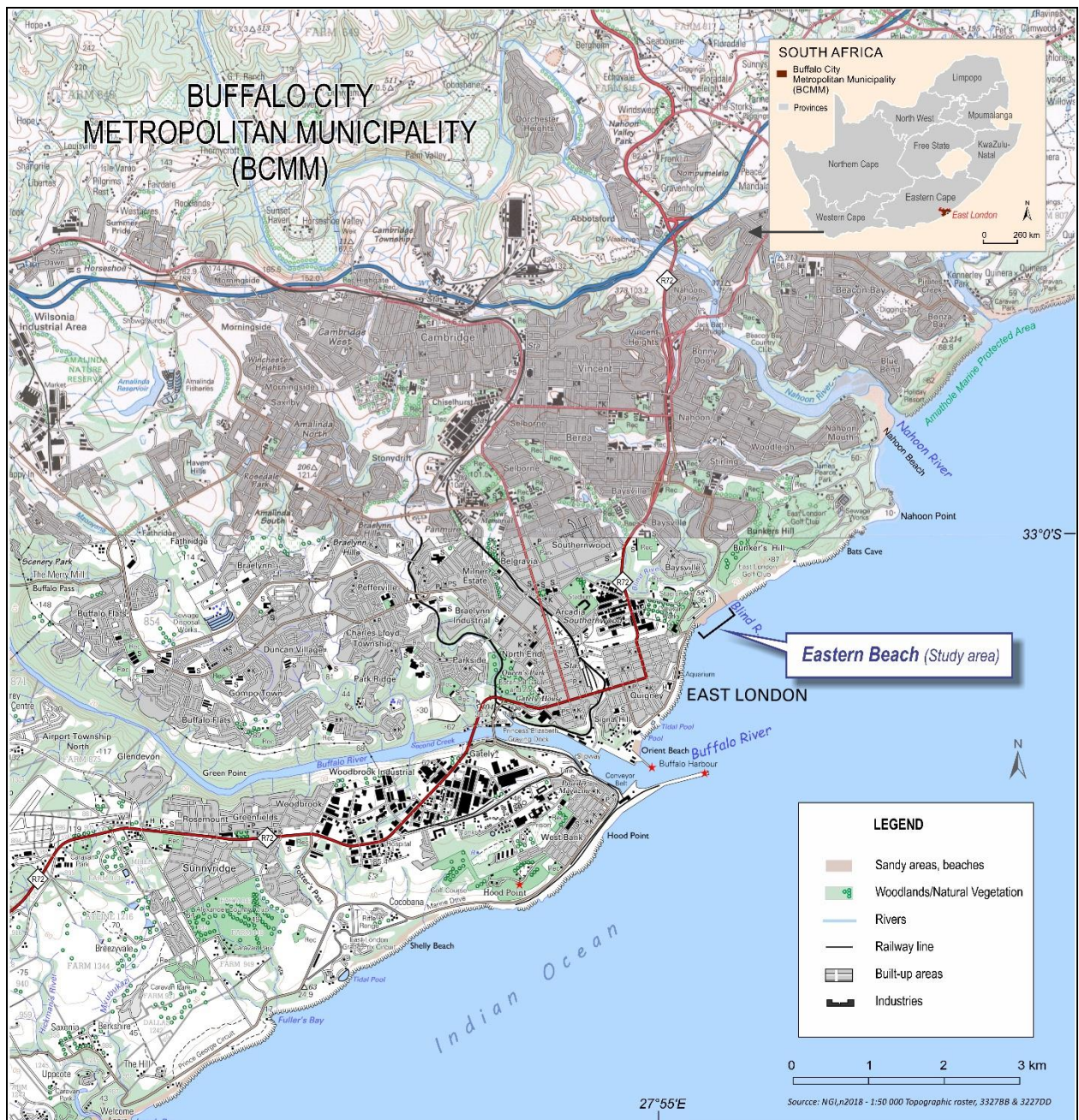
Figure 3.3: Location of Eastern Beach within East London (East London Travel Guide, 2018)

Figure 3.4 illustrates an aerial view of Eastern Beach, Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park and Esplanade Precinct in East London. The three locations are in walking distance from each other and are referred to as the 'Golden Triangle' of East London. Altogether, they offer an attractive environment, where residents, tourists and visitors spend their leisure time (ShowMe East London, 2019).
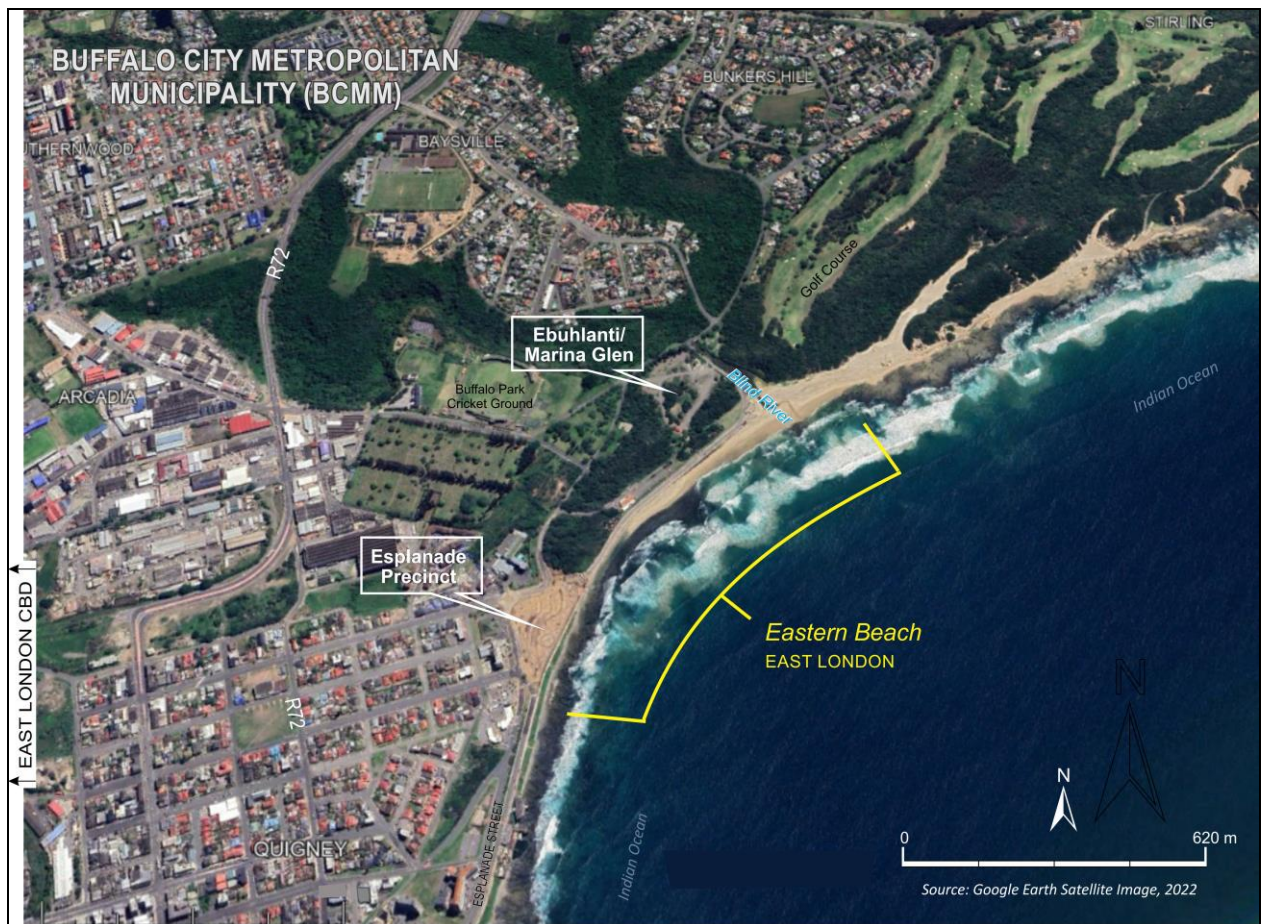
Figure 3.4: The Golden Triangle of East London (Eastern Beach, Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park and Esplanade Precinct) (Google maps, 2021).

3.7. PILOT STUDY AND DATA COLLECTION

The current research project was conducted during the period of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) which has been declared as a global pandemic. Due to the infectious nature of the virus and restrictions imposed by the South African government, primary data was collected via virtual semi-structured interviews with public and private tourism stakeholders. As previously indicated in Section 3.4.2, the researcher collected primary data through the use of semi-structured interviews, using a self-developed research instrument (interview guide).

This section deals with the **pilot** test for the current study. As previously outlined, the pilot test was conducted virtually on the 21st of September 2020, with two participants. Even though some scholars posit that a pilot test is not officially mandatory in qualitative research (Pritchard & Whiting, 2012; Sampson, 2004), pilot testing was carried out to test the effectiveness of the research instrument in the data collection process. For each stakeholder interviewed, the researcher explained the purpose of the study. Each interview lasted between 45 to 60 minutes. The researcher also followed a remote consent authorisation process by sending informed consent letters via secure email. Following the

pilot tests, minor adaptations were made to the wording of Section D of the Interview Guide. The researcher realised the need to modify the response options that participants could choose from, when indicating whether or not Eastern Beach complies with Blue Flag criteria. Initially, participants could only respond with a 'yes' (Y) or 'no' (N) to each criterion presented. After the pilot, a 'not sure' (NS) was added as an additional option.

Data collection was done via semi-structured interviews which were conducted from 1st October to 20th November 2020. During data collection for this study, MS Teams was predominantly used to connect with participants, while the researcher also accommodated other online platforms preferred by individual participants. This technology was a secure and appropriate technology, used by the University of South Africa, as it keeps privacy and security for all end-users. This communication platform did not undermine the research design of the study nor any participant's safety. This virtual platform allowed participants to join interview sessions using a password. The researcher had previously familiarised himself with a range of support and guidance documents related to using MS Teams. Its website provided necessary guidance to conduct this research project. Where participants preferred to use another platform such as Skype, Webex or Zoom, this was considered, as it was important for the participant to be comfortable and familiar with the technology used. The researcher had MS Teams recording functionality working properly on his personal computer and had examination pads for writing notes during interviews. Built-in video and audio systems were setup prior to the interviews. As a back-up, the researcher also used a cell phone as an external audio-recording device. A memory stick was used to back-up saved audio interview records. No translator was necessary for these interviews as participants had a good grasp of English.

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis process plays a conclusive role in any study's success (Duc, 2009). Thematic analysis was used to analyse primary data collected from the virtual semi-structured interviews with public and private stakeholders. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) define thematic analysis as "the process of identifying main themes emerging from the data". This is much more than simply summarising data; thematic analysis interpreted and made sense of the data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method of data analysis allowed the researcher to create coding categories, codes and sub-codes, drawn inductively from the raw data. The data analysis for this qualitative study predominantly followed the process outlined by Creswell (2009). This is shown in Figure 3.5, after which each step is explained. To assist the data analysis, computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), namely Atlas.ti (Version 9.0.18), was utilised.
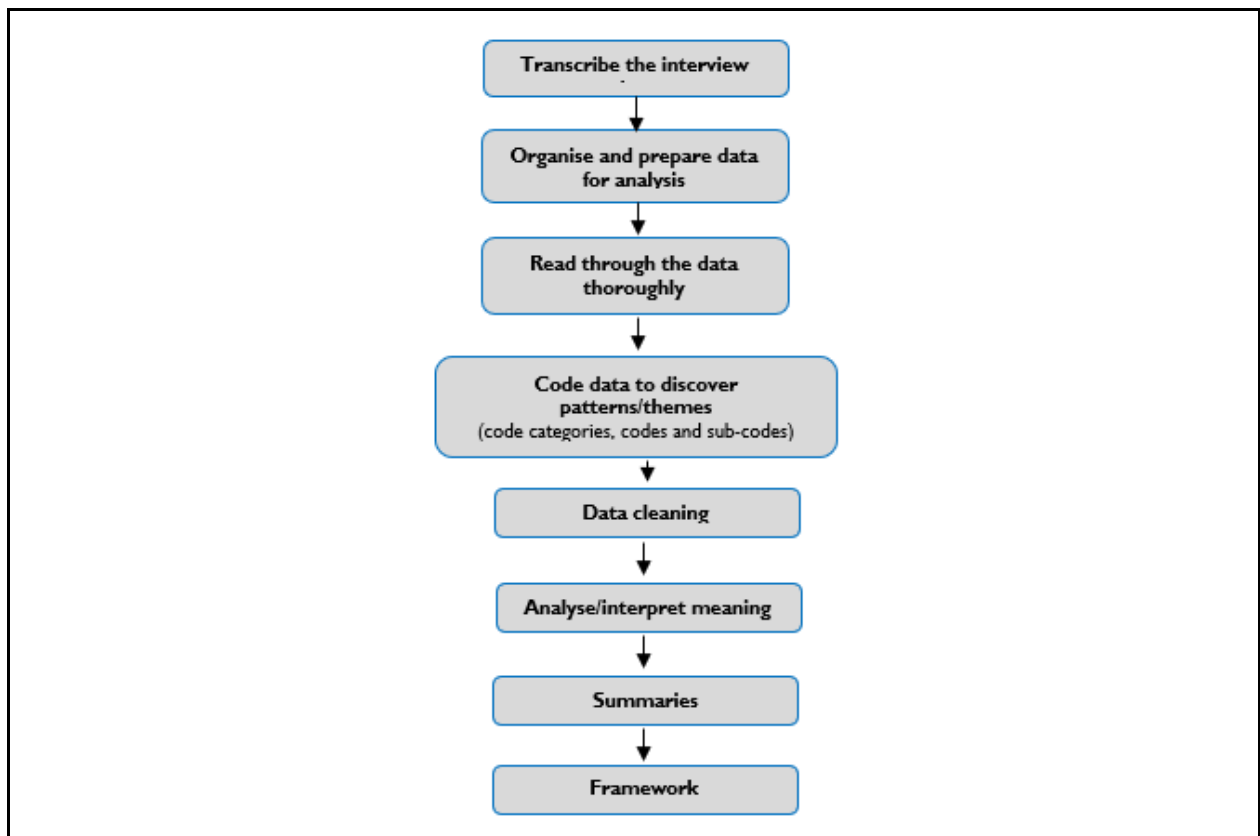
Figure 3.5: Qualitative data analysis process (Adapted from Creswell, 2009)

a) **Transcribing sound files into a word document**. Transcription involved providing a written account of spoken words from the virtual semi-structured interviews (Bailey, 2008; Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005). For this qualitative study, an external transcriber was used from the company Top Transcriptions in Umhlanga, Durban. Prior to the transcription, the researcher provided the transcriber with the transcription requirements. The requirements included the expected structure and level of detail required, with the anonymity specifications to protect participants' identities.

Each participant received an identifier code, and each interview was transcribed using that code. The transcriber heard the names on the recording but had signed a confidentiality agreement.

b) **Organise and prepare data for analysis.** Data transcripts were loaded in Atlas.ti, to be organised and prepared for data analysis. Each document of the transcript was referred to as a 'primary document' in the analysis chapter and was coded with a capital letter 'D', followed by the number for the specific primary document. The researcher organised the data by going back to the interview guide to differentiate between the research objectives and questions that were posed to participants.

When doing so, the researcher looked for ideas that emerged from the data and established how they relate to the research objectives for the current research.

c) **Read through the data thoroughly.** A vital step in any qualitative data analysis is reading, and re-reading the transcripts (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). At this stage, the researcher systematically made notes and jotted down early impressions on the data collected. Any analytical connections on the data were noted and written down during this preparation stage.

d) **Data coding to discover patterns and themes**. This was done in order to extract main themes that emerged from the data. Qualitative data was coded so that the researcher could recognise differences and comparisons in the findings (Flick, 2002). Morse and Richards (2002) posit that there are various approaches to coding in qualitative research that are undertaken for a variety of purposes. This qualitative study focused on the descriptive coding approach (David & Sutton, 2004), as it uses detailed names to describe each code, which assists the researcher in extracting findings from the data.

As shown in Figure 3.6, the researcher used Atlas.ti code manager, to inductively code transcripts, create code categories/groups and generate sub-codes which emerged. Firstly, all document transcripts were loaded into Atlas.ti document manager by the researcher, prior to coding. The following is an example of the coding process followed for the research objective one (RO1) of this study. '*Awareness*' became a code category for the RO1 and generated five codes in Atlas.ti and those sub-codes were grouped to form a stakeholder awareness code group. Under the 'Awareness' code group, one of the codes generated is '*Eastern Beach'* code, which produced its own sub-codes such as '*Beautiful beach, scenery and coastline*'.

Therefore, the coding process was applied with code groups, codes, and sub-codes, for example: '*Awareness*' (**A**) of '*Eastern Beach'* (**EB**) was coded into **A: EB**, and then the sub-code that completes the coding process shows **'A: EB: Beautiful beach, scenery and coastline'** as code output. Therefore, every code generated by the researcher had to fit the data (instead of making the data fit the code) (Queiros, 2020; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). In addition, the number of quotations found in each sub-code is also depicted in the code manager, as shown in the same Figure 3.6. Thereafter, and in preparation for the analysis stage, a code frequency table that

represents a code, and all sub-codes of awareness, was developed, while the number of quotations that emerge under each sub-code are also shown.
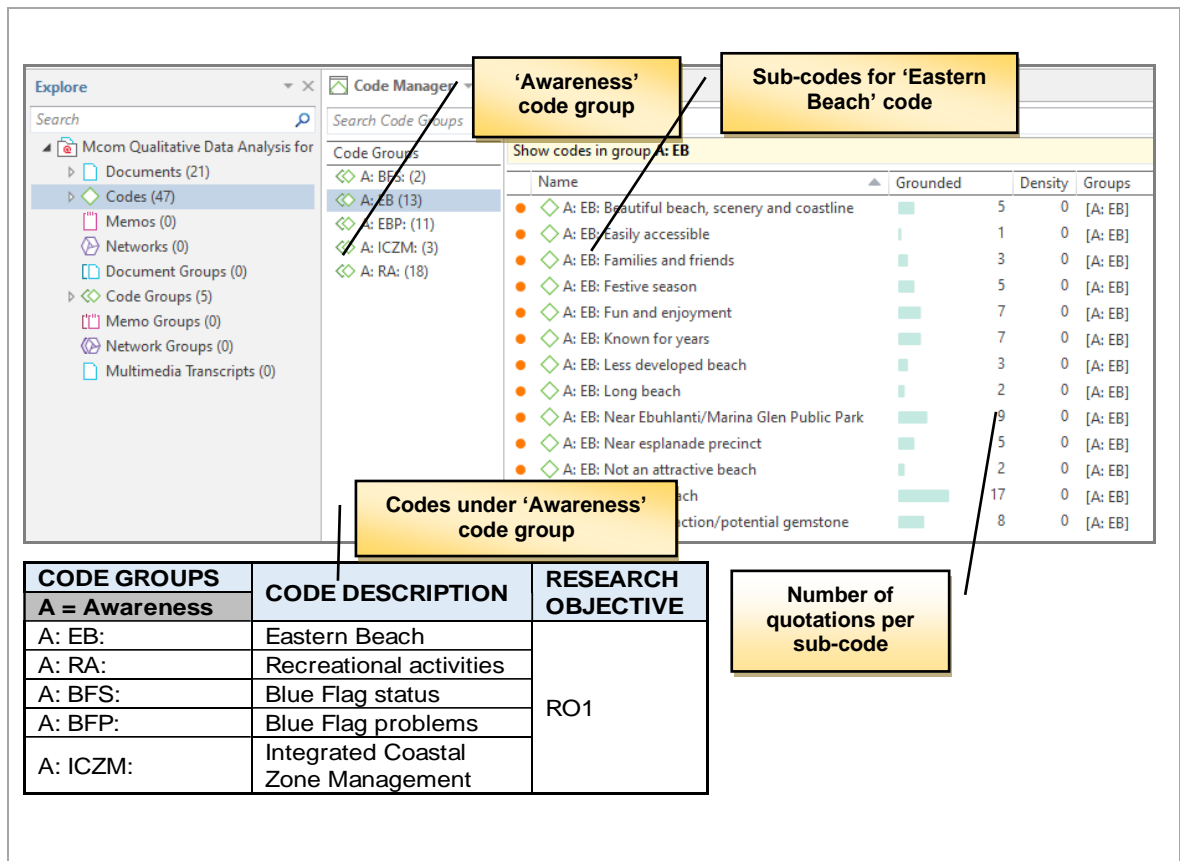
Figure 3.6: Atlas.ti coding manager

e) **Data cleaning** was performed by the researcher. This is considered an important part of producing records to ensure that qualitative data is clear and concise (Akotia, 2014). The researcher re-checked adherence to coding rules using Atlas.ti. This was done through double-clicking on each code created, which resulted in quotations associated with that code displaying in the quotation view window. This process enabled the researcher to identify any duplications and remove them, as well as to ensure that the correct number of quotations reflect, in preparation for the code frequency tables.

f) **Data analysis** was used to determine what explanations arise and how they can be confirmed (Akotia, 2014). In total, this research generated 20 interview transcripts, which were approximately 15 pages each and totalled twenty hours of interviews. The data was too extensive to be put in an appendix. The researcher then followed a 'research objective by research objective' data analysis approach, instead of 'question by question'. Through this process, the data was reduced from 725 quotations to usable summaries. The researcher used a choice of quotes, counting quotes within a

code and produced code frequency tables. Less relevant quotations that were few in number were presented in the code frequency tables but were not analysed. Orientation tables were used at the beginning of each analysis per research objective. In this research, findings were also compared with the literature review, to identify commonalities and differences.

The last two steps in Figure 3.5 show the final stages of the analysis, in which summaries were created. These were then further reduced to feed into the final framework (see Section 4.9 of Chapter Four), which aids in achieving the primary research objective.

Validity and reliability for the current study is presented next.

3.9. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Hayashi, Abib and Hoppen (2019:99) declare that validity and reliability are important elements that provide evidence of the quality of the research conducted and its results. Veal (2006:219) agrees that it is imperative to consider the concept of validity and reliability, whether the study is qualitative or quantitative in nature. On the same phenomenon, Singh (2014:37) views validity and reliability as research measures that increase research transparency and decrease opportunities to insert researcher bias into qualitative studies. Validity and reliability in the context of qualitative research are discussed in turn below.

3.9.1. Validity

Some scholars prefer not to use the term validity, suggesting the unsuitability of a quantitative concept in a qualitative study (Mohajan, 2017; Wolcott, 2009). They urge that measures such as validity should be abandoned in qualitative studies. It is important to define the criteria of validity within the context of qualitative empirical research. The current study considered the use of validity to avoid unintended biases, and to increase accuracy, trustworthiness, suitability, and even superiority of the findings (Golafshani, 2003). Validity in qualitative studies primarily signifies the accuracy of the research methods that are used to collect, analyse and interpret study results (Golafshani, 2003). In the context of this research, validity was considered under the measures of member checking, clarification of bias and ensuring trustworthiness.

- **Member checking**

The member check, also known as member validation, is referred to by Seale (1999) as an imperative element of the validation procedure in qualitative research. Koelsch (2013) confirms that member checking can be employed to support a general view of validity. The member check in qualitative studies is a useful method that is applied to assess the level of

accuracy that a researcher represented in order to understand participants' knowledge of the study subject (Koelsch, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, due to the researcher living in Gauteng, and due to COVID-19 restrictions, member checking was done via follow-ups on MS Teams and telephone calls. A total of eight follow-up calls was done by the researcher. Via member checking, the researcher was able to successfully clarify, with the relevant interviewees, the sections of the transcripts which were unclear.

- **Clarification of bias**

Smith and Noble (2014:72) affirm that an understanding of bias in qualitative research is vital and is mostly required to evaluate research design, methodology and the validity and reliability of the research findings. Bias is defined by the Oxford Dictionary (2019:3), as "an inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair". For this investigation, the researcher acknowledged and brought in his own experiences, ideas, and personal philosophies, which were accounted for in advance. The researcher clearly set out the choice of the research design and methodologies to meet the research objectives of the study and carefully followed this, which aids in reducing bias. After developing the interview guide, the researcher had it checked by the supervisor and by the pilot participants, which also aided in removing bias. The researcher also received ethical clearance approval from the Unisa Research Ethics Review Committee in the College of Economic and Management Sciences (see Appendix B). Feedback from this process assisted in reducing bias and shaped the research methodology to accepted practices.

- **Trustworthiness**

Shenton (2004:64) contends that trustworthiness in qualitative research simply poses the question: "Can the findings be trusted?". Several definitions and criteria of trustworthiness exist but the best-known criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

- *Credibility* is referred to by Korstjens and Moser (2018:32) as the assurance that the research findings are true. The researcher therefore needed to clearly demonstrate that findings represent reliable information drawn from participants' original data and represent original views (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba; 1985). To do this, the process in Chapter Four is clearly laid out taking the reader through the process, from actual quotes and subsequent coding, to arrive at each summary. Public and private stakeholders were encouraged to support their statements with examples, and the interviewer asked probing follow-up questions.

- *Transferability* in qualitative research refers to transference to other contexts or settings with other participants (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Tracy, 2010). The results of this research mainly hold value to public and private stakeholders of Eastern Beach in East London. However, some of the guidelines, and certain elements of the framework may have wider applicability and significance to other South African beaches, which may be in a similar situation to that of Eastern Beach.

- *Dependability* is described by Tracy (2010:49) as the stability of qualitative research findings over time. To ensure dependability for this investigation, the researcher clearly explained the steps taken to move from raw data to analysis and interpretation, and the subsequent findings. It must be clear how the outcomes of the research emanate from the data provided by participants.

- *Confirmability* is explained by Korstjens and Moser (2018:36) as the degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers. The findings from this research were entirely derived from the data and then, where possible, were compared with existing literature (as written up in the literature review).

3.9.2. Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research refers to the level of trust and reliability of the research results, and the consistency of results over time (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2005; Hayashi, Abib & Hoppen, 2019). The research instrument was developed from literature and checked by the supervisor, the research ethics committee and tested via a pilot test. These findings are reliable as they originate from a relevant research instrument for a qualitative investigation and capture the participants' views (found in transcripts emanating from real recordings). The sampling method targeted participants who were knowledgeable regarding the research subject.

To ensure reliability for this research, consistency and replicability measures were applied.

- **Consistency**

Mohajan (2017:59) asserts that reliability in qualitative research assesses the consistency of results over time. The interpretation of results for this qualitative research was not based on the researchers' own preferences and viewpoints but was grounded in the data received from participants. In order to improve consistency of results for this qualitative investigation, the interpretation process was embedded in the thematic analysis method adopted.

Furthermore, the researcher followed several steps to analyse the quotes obtained from the participant transcripts.

- **Replicability**

The term replicability refers to the ability of other researchers to apply the same research design used in the current research (Aguinis, & Solarino, 2019). The research design for this study provides a clear framework for the researcher and this enables replication for future scholars interested in applying the same research design.

3.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study was undertaken with caution, respect and without prejudice. The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Economic and Management Sciences, before data was collected. The ethical clearance certificate can be found in Appendix B. The researcher considered and communicated ethical principles of voluntary and informed consent, privacy, and no risk of harm for the participants involved. It was clearly explained that participation would not cause any form of monetary, emotional, social or physical damage. The process described below was followed by the researcher before conducting the semi-structured interviews with participants.

Participants were requested to give consent to participate in this research (See Appendix D). A copy of the ethical clearance certificate was emailed to each participant to read through. The ethical principles were also communicated to the participants. The participant information sheet (Appendix C) and informed consent form was incorporated into the introduction page of the survey. Participants were required to acknowledge having given their consent by completing either Section A (permission from the organisation) or B (permission from the interviewee) of the consent form (see Section 3.5.3). Appendix D contains the informed consent form that was sent to participants. Their acknowledgement showed that participants read and understood the aim of this research, including understanding their rights to access to the information, and the right to withdraw at any point. Prior to gathering information or interviewing targeted informants, the researcher confirmed the following with the interviewees:

- all the information gathered will not be shared with any third party;
- participation will remain anonymous;
- the final research remains the property of the University of South Africa (UNISA);
- copies of the research will be made available to participants if requested;

- data will be stored on the researcher's computer for five years and then destroyed;
- findings would be anonymously processed into research reports, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

All data sources from local, provincial and national government, as well as existing research studies used, are cited and acknowledged in the bibliography. This research was also undertaken in such a manner that the structure, presentation and outcomes do not:

a) stain the image and status of any individual or organisation;
b) expose any person or business adversely to the public; and
c) disregard or humiliate any person or organisation.

3.11. CHAPTER THREE SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology for this study. The focus of this study was to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status. A qualitative and empirical research design was adopted. It was explained in this chapter that research was explored through the interaction between the researcher and public and private destination stakeholders. Its paradigm considered the epistemological stance termed constructivism. Secondary data via a literature review was used to provide the background to the study, to develop research objectives and to write the literature review which is Chapter Two. It was explained that existing studies were also used to form the basis for the interview guide for the present study. It was outlined in this chapter that this study used non-probability sampling, which applied a non-randomised process to draw the sample. While public and private destination stakeholders were included as participants, communities, visitors and tourists were excluded from this research. Participants were selected using a stakeholder purposive sampling technique. The sample incorporated ten stakeholders from the public sector and ten stakeholders from the private sector, making a total of 20 interviewed participants. Semi-structured interviews, as a qualitative research instrument for primary data collection, were conducted with public and private stakeholders. These interviews were guided by the interview guide, which was developed by the researcher, checked by the supervisor and approved by the research ethics committee.

The pilot test was conducted virtually with two participants, prior to the actual interviews. Each interview conducted lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. This study was conducted during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the researcher as well as

participants were remotely located to ensure adherence to the lockdown, social distancing and travel restrictions. A virtual platform, MS Teams, was used to connect with participants, while the researcher also accommodated other online platforms preferred by individual participants. Primary data collected was transcribed into word documents. This qualitative study used a descriptive coding approach as well as detailed names to describe each code, which assisted the researcher in extracting findings from the data. To ensure anonymity and protect participants' identities, each participant received an identifier code. In this study, the researcher considered the use of validity and reliability research measures to increase research transparency, trustworthiness, quality of results and to decrease bias. In Chapter Four, it will be shown how thematic analysis was used to analyse interview data and construct meaningful findings and conclusions. The researcher chose a 'research objective by research objective' data analysis approach, choice of quotes, counting quotes within a code and showing code frequency tables to reduce data. It was outlined in this chapter that the present study was undertaken with caution, respect and without prejudice. Ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Review Committee was obtained before data was collected.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

"Beyond our positive partnership towards the environment, it is a real legacy we wish to leave behind. Not only to the Blue Flag sites, but to all the coastal areas which need caring and loving. This is why Blue Flag ecolabel is for everyone, everywhere. Take it. Use it" (Granados, 2014:5).
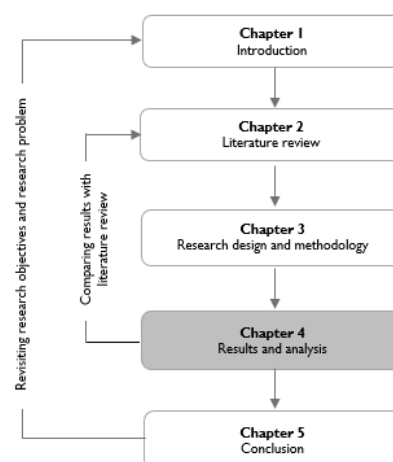
4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results and analysis of the data (quotes) that came directly from participants through semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted virtually, using the Microsoft Teams platform and the interview guide (Appendix A). Participants included public and private tourism stakeholders in East London. To organise and manage data for analysis, the researcher utilised a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), Atlas.ti – version 9.0.18. As previously highlighted in Chapter One, the results, based on the research objectives of this study will be presented in the form of tables and bar graphs. Where relevant, results are also compared with the literature review in order to determine similarities between these findings and those of previous research.

As shown in Figure 4.1, this section provides a chapter orientation, which is followed by the profile of stakeholders interviewed. As previously indicated, data is analysed and presented according to research objectives. This approach enabled data reduction as compared to question-by-question analysis, which could have been extensive. Awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag Status is presented first (RO1), followed by current plans for Eastern Beach (RO2). Thirdly, the results on the compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria (RO3) will be discussed, then the current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach (RO4). It is important to note that the RO3 summary has been merged with the Blue Flag compliance summary, since this section comprised closed questions and no coding was possible on the data obtained. This chapter further provides the results on the future improvement plans for Eastern Beach (RO5), followed by the chapter summary. In this study, the summaries progress from code summaries to research objective summaries and then to the chapter summary. Lastly, this chapter presents the Blue Flag status framework for Eastern Beach, which has been developed from the primary data.
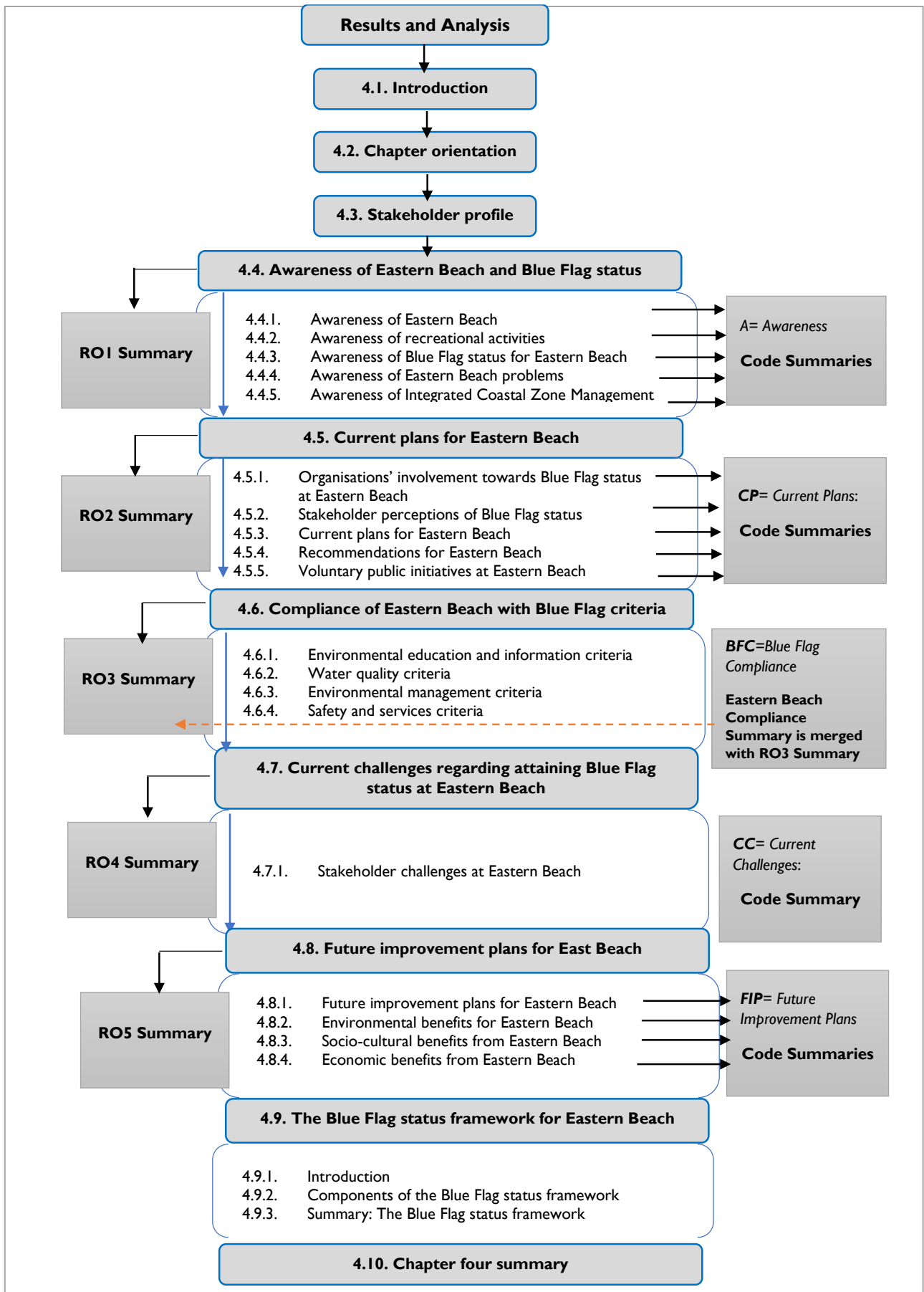
Figure 4.1: Outline of Chapter Four

This research intended to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status. The goal is to take this beach into the desired future. Therefore, if the status was obtained, balanced sustainability, in the form of the triple bottom line benefits (environmental, socio-cultural and economic) would be possible. The following section presents the chapter orientation.

4.2. CHAPTER ORIENTATION

It is important that the structure used to present results and interpretation for the entire chapter is outlined. The researcher uses codes (developed inductively by the researcher) that have been grouped within categories. The codes are used to demarcate similar responses identified from the raw data. Where required, sub-codes have been generated. Table 4.1 provides an orientation to the data analysis and interpretation in this chapter. The first column indicates the research objective (RO) number and the coding prefix applied in Atlas.ti. The specific ROs are provided in the second column, while the third column represents the relevant section in the interview guide (IG) (Appendix A). The last column depicts the section within this chapter where each RO is analysed. Apart from 'Stakeholder profile' in Section 4.3, the results are discussed per RO, starting from Section 4.4 (RO1) to 4.8 (RO5). In each of these aforementioned sections, the reader will briefly be reminded of the RO, codes and sub-codes.

Table 4.1: Orientation table for data analysis and interpretation – A

Research objective & code category	Research objective	Section in interview guide	Section in chapter
RO1: **A = Awareness**	To discover the awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status	B	4.4
RO2: **CP = Current Plans**	To understand current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status	C	4.5
RO3: **BFC = Blue Flag Compliance**	To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria	D	4.6
RO4: **CC = Current Challenges**	To ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach	E	4.7
RO5: **FIP = Future Improvement Plans**	To ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach	F	4.8

The data for all ROs are presented in the form of tables, except for the results obtained from closed questions that required 'yes' or 'no' answers. In the case of the latter, bar graphs are used. To support the findings, direct quotes are used. Where only the core

section of a quote is retained, ellipses ("...") indicate the section not included. A uniform method of referencing each quote is applied and is explained next.

Primary documents are referred to using a capital letter 'D' (for 'document') and followed by the number of the primary document quoted. After the colon ':' the numbers found represent the quotation number within that document in Atlas.ti. For instance, 'D3:14' means that a quotation is found in the primary document 3 and 14 illustrates the line number for that quotation within the textually transcribed document.

For each RO, an orientation table that is presenting the code category, research objective, section in the interview guide and section in the chapter is provided. Subsequently, another table that shows code prefixes, codes to be analysed and section in the chapter is presented. For each code, a code frequency table that presents sub-codes and stakeholder frequency is provided. In this chapter, analysis is divided into an overview, specifics and summary. At the end of each RO, a final summary of that RO is provided. Findings regarding the stakeholder profile are presented next.

4.3. STAKEHOLDER PROFILE

While the researcher and the transcriber had access to the transcripts and interviews, which contain personal and identifiable information such as names and positions of participants, personal data is not identified in this analysis chapter. Table 4.2 summarises the positions of stakeholders, whether they are from the public or private sector and how many participants held similar positions. It is notable that public and private stakeholders who participated in this research are owners, directors, chief executive officers or managers, who are holding management roles within the tourism organisations that they work for in East London. As affirmed in the literature, the involvement of major public and private stakeholders in coastal tourism developments permits good governance, and adequate and timeous participation in transparent tourism decision-making processes (De Juan *et al.,* 2016; Glavovic, 2006; Rochette, Bille & Glazewski, 2011; Tichaawa & Samhere, 2015).

Table 4.2: Stakeholder profile

STAKEHOLDER POSITIONS	STAKEHOLDER TYPE	FREQUENCY
1. Regional Tourism Development Manager	Public	3
2. Tourism & Marine Marketing Manager	Public	3
3. Director/Co-Founder	Private	2
4. General Manager	Private	2
5. Project Manager – Tourism	Public	2
6. Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality	Public	1

	Councillor		
7.	Local Economic Development Manager	Public	1
8.	Business Executive	Private	1
9.	Owner Manager	Private	1
10.	Chief Executive Officer	Private	1
11.	Senior Lecturer – Tourism Management	Private	1
12.	Tourism Development Manager	Private	1
13.	Senior Lecturer – Tourism Development	Private	1
TOTAL			**20**

4.4. AWARENESS OF EASTERN BEACH AND BLUE FLAG STATUS

The current section of the data analysis concerns the **first secondary research objective, RO1,** which aimed to discover the stakeholder's awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status (Section B of the IG). The presentation of results and data analysis is based on the answers that participants gave regarding each research objective. The results of RO1 are discussed in the order in which they were determined, and they progress from a code overview to more specific details. The code category, 'Awareness', for RO1 generated five codes as shown in Table 4.3. When analysing and interpreting results, a code frequency table that represents sub-codes will be provided, while quotations that emerge under each sub-code will subsequently be presented.

Table 4.3: Awareness code category, code prefixes and codes for RO1

CODE CATEGORY: AWARENESS (A)			
Code prefixes	**Codes**	**Section in chapter**	**Research objective**
A: EB:	Eastern Beach	4.4.1	RO1
A: RA:	Recreational activities	4.4.2	
A: BFS:	Blue Flag status	4.4.3	
A: EBP	Eastern Beach problems	4.4.4	
A: ICZM:	Integrated Coastal Zone Management	4.4.5	

4.4.1. Awareness of Eastern Beach

A. Overview: Awareness of Eastern Beach

As indicated in the code frequency table, Table 4.4, the results from participants indicate that the sub-codes with the highest number of quotations were 'Popular beach', 'Near Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park', 'Tourist attraction/potential gem', 'Fun and enjoyment' and 'Known for years'. Further sub-codes with marginally fewer quotations (five) but nonetheless relevant, were 'Beautiful beach, scenery and coastline', 'Festive season' as

well as 'Near Esplanade precinct'. Sub-codes with fewer than five quotations will not be discussed in this section in detail. Participants were public and private stakeholders who are familiar with Eastern Beach and who are also residing in and around the study area.

Table 4.4: Code frequencies for **Awareness: Eastern Beach**

CODE: EASTERN BEACH (EB)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
A: EB: **Popular beach**	17
A: EB: **Near Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park**	9
A: EB: **Tourist attraction/potential gem**	8
A: EB: **Fun and enjoyment**	7
A: EB: **Known for years**	7
A: EB: **Beautiful beach, scenery and coastline**	5
A: EB: **Festive season**	5
A: EB: **Near Esplanade precinct**	5
A: EB: **Families and friends**	3
A: EB: **Raw beach**	3
A: EB: **Long beach**	2
A: EB: **Not an attractive beach**	2
A: EB: **Easily accessible**	1
TOTAL	**74**

B. *Specifics: Awareness of Eastern Beach*

a) *Popular beach*

The sub-code, 'Popular beach', recorded the highest occurrence of 17 quotes. Participants showed much knowledge about Eastern Beach as a popular beach, for example: "*It is one of the most popular beaches*" (D21:19); "*It is a very popular beach with the public, so I think people enjoy it*" (D16:28) and "*… a lot of the time people go there*" (D11:19). It is particularly popular on weekends, for example: "*… people gather there, particularly on Friday evening*" (D13:31) and "*Well, I do know how popular it is, especially on weekends and on season times*" (D8:29). Eastern Beach is well known to local people ["*Eastern Beach is a beach that is mostly used by locals in the Buffalo City Metro and many inhabitants of the Eastern Cape*" (D19:34)], as well as to visitors from outside East London ["*It's quite a popular destination not just for people from East London, but from the inner land*" (D3:94)].

This beach is also known for gatherings, ["*It is a very popular site for gatherings*" (D17:29)] and it is a 'hotspot' ["*… so, Eastern Beach is where people in East London meet, in fact it's*

a hot spot" (D10:14)]. It is also over-visited: *"… it is one of the most popular beaches, the Eastern beach in general I would say"* (D21:19). The results from 'Popular beach' sub-code correspond with the literature, on how Eastern Beach is perceived by the public. Eastern Beach is the city's most central and popular beach in East London (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2018).

b) Near Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park

Participants' awareness of Eastern Beach was also expressed in terms of its close proximity to the well-known park, Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. The sub-code of 'Near Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park' had the second highest occurrences, with nine recorded quotations. Results under this sub-code indicate Eastern Beach's location, which is near and behind (D13:30; D17:28; D19:37; D20:22) or generally opposite (D16:31) to Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. This is a famous braai and drink 'hotspot', for example: *"It's linked quite closely to a space called Ebuhlanti, right, where people technically braai and drink"* (D3:100). These results coincide with the literature on Eastern Beach's location, which is about 200 meters, opposite Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park (Development Management Services, 2005; Willie & Tseane, 2011). Marina Glen Public Park is a popular entertainment park, used for barbequing (braaiing), drinking and picnicking near Eastern beach (Dlomo & Tseane-Gumbi, 2017; Willie & Tseane, 2011).

c) Tourist attraction/potential gem

The sub-code, 'Tourist attraction/potential gem' was the third most used code, with eight quotations. Eastern Beach was described as a tourist attraction [*"It's the biggest tourist attraction"* (D11:21)] and as a key attraction [*"It's one of the key attractions of Buffalo City"* (D14:25)]. The following quotations refer to the potential of Eastern Beach:

> "*I know Eastern Beach as basically our tourism asset, that can actually attract visitors to enjoy our coastline*" (D6:49-55).

> "*… so it has huge potential"* (D4:72).

> *"… I mean, it absolutely has the potential to be a Blue Flag beach …"* (D6:49).

Another participant, however, touched on its potential, but also expressed reservations, for example: "*It could be a potential gem, but to some extent, it's not seen that way, and therefore it doesn't have much to offer, other than the opportunity to have aquatic water activity"* (D3:98). These results affirm available literature, which notes that Eastern Beach is a key tourist attraction, potentially enticing over 10 000 beach users to the shore (Buffalo

City Metropolitan Municipality, 2019; Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council, 2017; ShowMe East London, 2009).

d) Fun and enjoyment

The results from participants revealed 'Fun and enjoyment' as a sub-code with the fourth highest recorded occurrences (seven quotes). Findings on this sub-code are associated with the sub-code 'Near Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park'. Results demonstrated that people visit Eastern Beach to enjoy barbeques (braais), drinking, socialising and relaxing, for example:

> *"It's where a lot of people go and then they can have their meat braaied for them and it's a social area …"* (D7:40).

> *"… a lot of the time people go there, I mean it's really socialising, it's about enjoying the beachfront"* (D11:19).

> *"… they have braais and relax and enjoy themselves"* (D13:32).

> *"… it's generally for people to go and enjoy themselves"* (D15:25).

> *"… it's really just for, you know, enjoying some time with friends"* (D18:35).

> *"… so, people go there to entertain themselves …"* (D20:23).

These results concur with a study conducted by Willie and Tseane (2011), where fun and entertainment are notable benefits for visiting Eastern Beach and Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. Similarly, Dlomo and Tseane-Gumbi (2017) confirmed that braaiing and drinking are the main entertainment advantages for visitors to Eastern Beach.

e) Known for years

Participants reflected on their knowledge of Eastern Beach over the years (seven quotes). One participant said: "*I know Eastern Beach very well over the years*" (D2:83). Some participants know this beach as they have lived in East London for many years, as evidenced in the following quotes:

> *"… well, I was basically born in East London, I lived here for many years, so I know Eastern Beach"* (D17:27).

> *"I have lived in East London for close to 20 years, I have been aware of Eastern Beach since I was a child, and I grew up not too far from East London"* (D18:32).

> *"… I know Eastern Beach from a very young age, when we used to come to East London"* (D13:24).

One knew this beach as a patron for 13 years and asserted that:

"… having been a citizen of the Eastern Cape for almost all my life and staying in East London for over thirteen years, … and being a patron of the Eastern Beach, I think I'm fairly clued up about Eastern Beach" (D11:42).

Eastern Beach was transformed into a tourist attraction in the1880s and is one of the well-known beaches, together with Orient Beach in East London (Bank, 2015; Tankard, 1992).

f) Beautiful beach, scenery and coastline

The next code was 'Beautiful beach, scenery and coastline', which included five quotations. Eastern Beach is known by participants as a beautiful beach, for example: *"It's a beautiful beach in East London"* (D13:25) and *"Well, it is beautiful"* (D16:29). Participants defined its beauty in terms of scenery and coastline [*"It has beautiful scenery and we've got a beautiful coastline"* (D6:57)] and its attractive sand and water [*"… the sand is nice, and water is nice …"* (D3:107)]. Existing literature describes Eastern Beach as a beautiful established beach with large waves and black rocks, which are scattered along the south coastline (Bank, 2015).

g) Festive season

The sub-code, 'Festive season', recorded five occurrences from the data. The festive season and summer months are the periods when this beach is mostly enjoyed*,* as evidenced in the following quotes:

> *"It's enjoyed on a regular basis during the summer months, December to April…"* (D3:103).

> "*… in terms of the visitor's season – it is normally packed during the peak season, which is our summer season*" (D14:36).

This sub-code relates to the 'Popular beach' sub-code, as indicated in the following quotes: *"…during the new year period, it is overcrowded"* (D21:34) and *"I do know how popular it is, especially on weekends and on season time"* (D8:29)*.* The literature confirms that Eastern Beach is normally packed during the festive season, with more than 10 000 beach users descending on the shore (Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council, 2017). Unfortunately, drownings also occur during this period [*"During the December holidays, there were possibly something like three or four drownings, specifically of kids going down to the beach"* (D3:99)]. Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council (2017) also report this, stating that the beach is often crowded with more than 10 000 beach users descending on the shore during the festive period.

h) Near Esplanade precinct

A further aspect of participants' awareness of Eastern Beach was that the beach was on or near to the Esplanade precinct. The sub-code, 'Near Esplanade precinct', was used five times, for example: *"It's on the Esplanade of East London"* (D6:51); *"It's on our main Esplanade beachfront"* (D17:30) and "…*it is next to the Esplanade"* (D7:25).

Once again, results under this sub-code demonstrate Eastern Beach's position in East London, together with the sub-code of 'Near Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park'. Eastern Beach is part of East London's beachfront precinct, which integrates space and features open spaces towards the shoreline (Buffalo Metropolitan Municipality 2020).

C. Summary: Awareness of Eastern Beach

The results on the awareness of Eastern Beach reveal that interviewed participants are aware of the study area, what it is made up of and what it is used for. This beach was described as an established, popular and beautiful beach in East London. Most participants had known this beach for years and from a young age, since they were born and raised within the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM). Participants know this beach as a popular destination, which mostly attracts local inhabitants on a regular basis and over weekends. It can be crowded during the festive season or summer months (December to April). The results showed that the location of Eastern Beach does bring compelling opportunities for visitors to have more to do at the shore, including visiting Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. Fun, enjoyment and relaxation were found to be the main reasons this beach is mostly visited by locals. Results demonstrate that people visit this beach to enjoy barbeques, drinking, socialising and relaxing with friends and relatives. Having Eastern Beach on the Esplanade precinct presents tourist amenities such as restaurants and accommodation for beach visitors. This beach is also known for its beautiful scenery and coastline, as well as for its attractive sand and water. Eastern Beach was acclaimed by participants as a significant tourist attraction or asset, a potential gem to attract visitors to the shore. One participant asserted that this beach has a potential to be a be a Blue Flag Beach.

4.4.2. Awareness of recreational activities

A. Overview: Awareness of recreational activities

The code frequency table, Table 4.5, depicts sub-codes that emerged from the recreational activities code. 'Swimming/bathing', 'Braai and drink', 'Restaurants', 'Walking', 'Accommodation' and 'Relaxing' recorded a high number of quotations. Sub-codes with fewer than five quotations are not explained in detail in this section. However, 'Surfing' and 'Play beach sports' (five quotes each) are included in this analysis, due to their relevance to the study.

Table 4.5: Code frequencies for **Awareness: Recreational Activities**

CODE: RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES (RA)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
A: RA: **Swimming / Bathing**	14
A: RA: **Braai and drink**	12
A: RA: **Restaurants**	9
A: RA: **Walking**	7
A: RA: **Accommodation**	6
A: RA: **Relaxing**	6
A: RA: **Play beach sports**	5
A: RA: **Surfing**	5
A: RA: **Sightseeing & ocean views**	4
A: RA: **Jogging**	3
A: RA: **Picnicking**	3
A: RA: **Hosts major events**	2
A: RA: **Aquarium**	1
A: RA: **Boxing**	1
A: RA: **Cycling**	1
A: RA: **Fishing**	1
A: RA: **Gym/exercise activities**	1
A: RA: **Whale watching**	1
TOTAL	82

B. Specifics: Awareness of recreational activities

a) Swimming/bathing

A high number of occurrences were noted for the 'Swimming/bathing' sub-code, with 14 quotations. Swimming or bathing is a main recreational activity that visitors can engage in at

this beach, for example: "*Look, the tourists can actually get to enjoy our warm waters*" (D6:56); "*People can swim*" (D6:61); and *"Well at Eastern Beach most people basically enjoy swimming there"* (D17:33). Positive sentiment regarding this beach emerged when another participant proclaimed that: "*It's a lovely sea beach, the beach is very level and there's a lovely swimming area for tourists"* (D13:29).

In addition to swimming or bathing activity at the beach itself, swimming pools exist for those who prefer unsalted water, for example: "… *and then, it has also got some swimming pools"* (D14:33) and "*People can swim near Orient Beach, at the swimming pools that are located there"* (D6:84). Existing literature indicates that swimming is a predominant recreational activity – due to Eastern Beach's location, which is on the most beautiful coastline in the world (East London Travel Guide, 2018). It allows visitors to enjoy swimming and bathing throughout the year, because of the warm Indian Ocean and sub-tropical weather (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2019).

b) Braai and drink

The 'Braai and drink' sub-code recorded the second highest recreational activities when visiting Eastern Beach, with 12 quotes. Visitors can braai and drink at this beach, as indicated by the following quotes:

> *"Because there's also a braai facility which is basically behind the forest, or the bushes at Marina Glen, where people would be braaiing and enjoying their beverage"* (D6:69).

> *"There are braai facilities around the Eastern Beach"* (D11:24).

> *"There's Ebuhlanti, it is a very popular braai spot …"* (D8:33).

The use of the beach for braais and drinking also emerged in Section 4.4.1, in the context of Eastern beach being close to Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park and is repeated here in the context of braaiing and drinking. It is known as a 'hotspot' for these activities [*"… it's a braai spot that has become very famous"* (D7:38)]. Negative effects also emerged here, such as: *"When people then go around towards Eastern Beach, they enjoy the water, but not in the most sober condition, during the summer months"* (D3:101).

These findings reveal that open fires (braai activities) and alcohol usage (drinking) are some of the demand-led activities, which attract visitors to the beach (positive impact) but that also often result in criticism due to loud music and drownings (negative impacts), as previously indicated in Section 4.4.1.

c) Restaurants

'Restaurants' is the sub-code that contained the third highest number of quotes, namely nine. Participants referred to the availability of restaurants, for example: "*There's some restaurants along the beachfront*" (D11:23)*; "There's nearby restaurants as well*" (D2:90) and "*At the Eastern Beach people can also get to enjoy the restaurants*" (D6:60). Three participants specifically mentioned Buccaneers, for example: *"There is also a number of restaurants there, obviously one is the restaurant Buccaneers*" (D8:32) and *"They can buy curios at Buccaneers, that is pretty much it"* (D7:33).

d) Accommodation

Participants reflected on their knowledge regarding 'Accommodation', which was the fourth highest sub-code, with six occurrences. They elaborated on the availability of accommodation, for example: *"There is a lot of hotels and B&Bs in that area*" (D7:26) and *"There are hotels"* (D6:52). One made reference to a backpackers establishment, saying *"There's also backpacker accommodation that is right at the front of the beach"* (D9:44). Sugar Shack received specific mention for instance: *"There is a backpacker called Sugar Shack"* (D4:63). Existing literature confirms that the Esplanade and beachfront in East London contain a number of colonial beach hotels, guest houses and a backpacker, which connect the beachfront to the city centre (Bank, 2015, Travel Ground, 2021).

e) Relaxing

The sub-code 'Relaxing' featured eight occurrences, making it the fifth highest. Visitors can relax and unwind at Eastern Beach, as evidenced in the following quotations:

> *"At Eastern Beach you just go to chill and relax by the marine side"* (D10:19).

> "*Yes, what most people like besides swimming, is to chill …*" (D19:39).

> "*Visitors and tourists can basically relax there*" (D21:22).

Hastings and Wilbanks (2019:1) note the warm-water currents and the ocean temperatures as drawing visitors to swim and relax at Eastern Beach (Hastings & Wilbanks, 2019).

f) Walking

The 'Walking' sub-code recorded six occurrences as a recreational activity for visitors to this beach. For example, "… *some people just walk along the beachfront"* (D20:20), *"As far as I know, there's a nice walk path for walking"* (D5:31) and *"… they can take a walk around as families"* (D6:58).

g) Surfing

The 'Surfing' sub-code recorded five occurrences, as a recreational activity at Eastern Beach. Participants stated that people engage in both water and sand surfing activities at this beach (D17:35; D18:36). The following quotations relate to surfing activities:

> *"Of course, those that are, you know, are trained in terms of surfing, they could also surf"* (D6:59).

> *"… I have seen surfers go and surf at this beach, so that's something that they could possibly do"* (D4:56).

> *"… surfing on the sand dunes – that is what people do*" (D15:27).

Bank (2015) notes that visitors take advantage of big sea waves for water surfing activities at Eastern Beach. In addition, Eastern Beach offers a bay of golden sand, with large dunes, and this is where talented sand surfers surf (ShowMe East London, 2019;).

h) Play beach sports

A further aspect of participants' awareness of recreational activities at Eastern Beach was encapsulated by the sub-code 'Play beach sports' and five quotations were recorded. Participants elaborated on playing beach sports, for example: *"People can do activities outdoors*" (D6:62); *"They enjoy playing on the beach, doing beach sports"* (D17:33); *"Some also enjoy the sporting elements associated with the beachfront, such as soccer and volleyball along the beachfront* (D11:26); and "*People can play beach soccer, and they can play beach volleyball"* (D6:63). Soccer as a favourite also emerges in this quote: "*They can play soccer because local people are playing soccer there"* (D19:36). BCMM introduced beach sports in 2018 in East London, as part of the South African Football Federation's National Beach Tournaments for beach visitors of all ages to have fun (Go Live Online Newspaper, 2018; Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2018).

C. Summary: Awareness of recreational activities

When one thinks of recreational activities, there is clearly plenty that visitors and residents can participate in at Eastern Beach. With the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, swimming or bathing is the main activity for local beach visitors. Swimming pools also exist for those who prefer unsalted water near Orient Beach, just along the shore. The activities of braaiing and drinking appear to attract most locals to this beach on weekends, throughout the summer months and during the festive season. The results revealed that these activities made this beach a famous braai 'hotspot', due to the nearby Marina Glen Public Park. It is also evident that these are some of the demand-led activities, which attract visitors to the

beach (positive impact). Other recreational activities at this beach include visitors relaxing or walking. Participants spoke out about the existence of a pleasant walking path along Eastern Beach, where people can go for a walk, sometimes as families. Surfers visit the beach to engage in surfing activities, both sand and water. Participants also elaborated on playing beach sports as one of the recreational activities at Eastern Beach, and particularly soccer which is a very popular sport amongst local people. Volleyball also emerged as a beach sport engaged in along Eastern Beach. Participants deliberated on the existence of restaurants along the beach front, with a specific mention of Buccaneers, where visitors can eat and also buy curios. The results indicated that accommodation exists (hotels & B&Bs) close to Eastern Beach as well as to Sugar Shack backpacker.

4.4.3. Awareness of Blue Flag status for Eastern Beach

A. Overview: Awareness of Blue Flag status

As indicated in Table 4.6, there were two sub-codes under the code 'Blue Flag status', with 'Blue Flag ranking' providing 29 quotes. 'Blue flag ranking' captures participants' views relating to whether Eastern Beach is known by participants as a Blue Flag beach or not. The second code is 'Other ranked beaches' (eight quotations), which was used when participants referred to other beaches that were known to have Blue Flag status or known to have application records for this status.

Table 4.6: Code frequencies for **Awareness: Blue Flag status**

CODE: BLUE FLAG STATUS (BFS)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
A: BFS: **Blue Flag ranking**	29
A: BFS: **Other ranked beaches**	8
TOTAL	**37**

B. Specifics: Awareness of Blue Flag status

a) Blue Flag ranking

Twenty-nine quotations were recorded for 'Blue Flag ranking' sub-code. When participants were asked if this beach is ranked as a Blue Flag beach or not, most responses were negative (19 out of 20). Selected examples follow:

"No, it's not ranked, it's not Blue Flag beach rated" (D2:94).

"*Unfortunately, it is not*" (D6:66).

"No, not according to my knowledge – I doubt it" (D15:29).

"… no, it's definitely not, no …" (D20:24).

"Oh, no ways. It's very far from it, even though I will not profess to fully know what the elements of a Blue Flag beach are" (D11:27).

"No, it would not even survive an inspection, let alone all the other requirements for Blue Flag beaches" (D3:106).

"No, there are no Blue Flag beaches in East London" (D7:36).

"It cannot, unless in my knowledge of the Blue Flag status you see, it's not even close to WESSA Green-Coast Award[1] status" (D10:30).

"…I've been in a meeting around Blue Flag beaches, something like two years ago. To my knowledge, they have not applied to be a Blue Flag" (D3:131).

It is interesting that some participants expressed doubt regarding their answer, as evidenced in the following quotations:

"I'm not sure but I wonder if it can qualify" (D5:34).

"I don't believe it is" (D13:34).

"*I have not heard, I'm not sure if I'm maybe mistaken*" (D19:45).

"I don't recall because the people who will apply for Eastern Beach in order to be accredited as a Blue Flag beach, it will be the Buffalo City Metro" (D19:46).

"I'm not sure what the local municipality has done from an applications point of view" (D18:38).

"I think it may have; I know Buffalo City Tourism was wanting to do it …" (D17:37).

Application efforts for Blue Flag status emerged from one participant, while another made reference to previous Blue Flag status, as evidenced in the following quotations respectively:

"*They have applied for a Blue Flag status, but it was declined because there is just too much of litter and people are not taking care of the natural environment*" (D21:31).

"*It was a Blue Flag beach some years ago*" (D16:36).

Findings from a study conducted by the Business Tech (2020), confirm that there are currently no ranked Blue Flag beaches in East London. Most participants in this study shared the same view that Blue Flag status is non-existent at Eastern Beach.

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1. **WESSA Green Coast Award** is a South African beach award programme, which complements aspects of the international Blue Flag Award, and which allows local municipalities to sustainably manage coastal sites outside of traditionally developed swimming beaches (Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa , 2017).

b) Other ranked beaches

The sub-code of 'Other ranked beaches' recorded eight quotations from the data. The results above demonstrated that the majority knew that Eastern Beach is not ranked as a Blue Flag beach, and some were not sure. These participants quoted in the section above were unable to give confident responses on the current status and previous application records for Eastern Beach.

However, one participant referred to other beaches with previous Blue Flag **application history, but which failed to obtain status**, for example: *"… the ones that have applied, include Kidds' Beach, Nahoon, Bonza Bay and Gonubie Beach*" (D3:131). One participant believed that a few beaches in the region did have Blue Flag status: "*There are three beaches that were ranked in that way. It is Gonubie, Bonza Bay and Nahoon"* (D21:28).

Others made reference to beaches that had **lost Blue Flag status** [*"There's an adjacent beach known as Orient Beach, that beach had Blue Flag status in the past"* (D18:38) and *"… Nahoon Beach was affected"* (D21:28)]. Another participant confidently stated that no **East London beaches have Blue Flag status** at present: *"There are no Blue Flag beaches in East London"* (D7:36). As previously indicated in this section, there are no currently ranked beaches in East London (Business Tech, 2020), and those that were awarded (Gonubie & Nahoon Beaches) lost the status in 2017 (Dispatch Live 2019). The findings of this study reveal that Eastern Beach has not applied in the past two years, (D3:131), while Dispatch Live (2019) reports that it last applied ten years ago; and was not approved for Blue Flag status.

C. Summary: Awareness of Blue Flag status

The majority of participants asserted that Eastern Beach does not currently have Blue Flag status. It is, however, noteworthy that a considerable number of other participants were doubtful and wondering whether this beach can qualify for the status. Views were expressed that this beach is not even close to acquiring the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA) Green Coast Award status and would not even pass the inspection phase for the Blue Flag ecolabel. One participant expressed that this beach has not applied in the past two years, while there was an overall limited awareness regarding the application history from others. Results indicated that Eastern Beach did apply for the Blue Flag status, but it was declined, due to litter and people not taking care of the environment. Some asserted that they were not certain regarding Blue Flag application history for this beach, since it is the role of the BCMM to apply for the status. However, it

emerged from the results that beaches with previous application history, but which failed to obtain the status include Kidds' Beach, Nahoon, Bonza Bay and Gonubie Beach. One participant thought that Gonubie, Bonza Bay and Nahoon are currently Blue Flag approved beaches. Orient and Nahoon Beaches also emerged in the results as beaches that lost Blue Flag status. The existing literature reveals that there are currently no ranked beaches in East London and Eastern Beach did not feature in the list of pilot beaches, which was done in 2017 (Business Tech, 2020).

4.4.4. Awareness of Eastern Beach problems

A. Overview: Awareness of Eastern Beach problems

Table 4.7 illustrates the results for A: EBP code, where the sub-code, 'Sewage and water quality issues' had the highest number of quotes. 'Litter and waste' sub-code recorded second highest occurrences, followed by the 'Inadequate beach facilities' sub-code with the third highest occurrence. 'Crowded beach' and 'Environmental degradation' sub-codes recorded four quotations, while three quotations were noted for the sub-code of 'Neglected environmental management'. The 'Safety issues' sub-code is found to be less frequent (two quotes) but relevant to the study. Other sub-codes with fewer than three quotations will not be discussed in this section.

Table 4.7: Code frequencies for **Awareness: Eastern Beach Problems**

CODE: EASTERN BEACH PROBLEMS (EBP)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
A: EBP: **Sewage and water quality issue**	11
A: EBP: **Litter and waste**	8
A: EBP: **Inadequate beach facilities**	5
A: EBP: **Crowded beach**	4
A: EBP: **Environmental degradation**	4
A: EBP: **Neglected environmental management**	3
A: EBP: **Drownings**	2
A: EBP: **Safety issues**	2
A: EBP: **Separation of races**	2
A: EBP: **Beach and city deterioration**	1
A: EBP: **Poor and stolen infrastructure**	1
TOTAL	**43**

B. Specifics: Awareness of Eastern Beach problems

a) Sewage and water quality issues

The sub-code with the highest occurrences was 'Sewage and water quality issues' (eleven quotes). Participants alluded to a **general water quality** problem at Eastern Beach, as indicated in the following quotations:

"That discharge directly into Eastern Beach and the quality of that storm water is probably very bad" (D2:87).

"The contamination coming out of there is definitely going to potentially impact Eastern Beach and the water quality at Eastern Beach, but I think that is going to be a challenge" (D2:85).

"I think people have always been aware that there's been a water quality issue there" (D2:95).

Participants further elaborated on **pollution**, as one of the problems facing Eastern Beach, for example:

"*There's a river coming down into the Eastern Beach part, which is quite polluted*" (D3:108).

"… so, because of that type of pollution, right, and the general look and feel of the area, I don't think any Blue Flag inspector will consider that to be a Blue Flag, because of the condition" (D3:109).

The **sewage** problem emerged in this section, and the majority of participants elaborated on this problem, as evidenced in the quotations below:

"I'm sure Eastern Beach would be affected, we've got sewage going out into the sea, we've got multiple problems there, municipality is allowing sewage into the sea" (D17:38).

"Our big dilemma that we have here in East London, is the sewage" (D17:40).

"There is raw sewage flowing into the ocean on the West Band, so depending on the tides, that raw sewage then can easily flow to Eastern Beach, and so contaminate that water" (D7:42).

"… one of the big problems that we have is that certainly around Nahoon Beach and I'm sure Eastern Beach would be affected; we've got sewage going out into the sea" (D21:28).

"There are no Blue Flag beaches in East London and the main reasons why, regardless of public engagement and all the criteria required to have a Blue Flag Beach, there is raw sewage flowing into the ocean" (D7:41).

In addition, the literature confirms that there are potential sources of pollution, for example, near streams, rivers or other inlets and storm water outlets (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). In the case of Eastern Beach, these results reveal that sewage and water quality problems might be the main reasons behind the lack of Blue Flag accreditation. The results correspond with an incident of a sewage spill that led to Eastern Beach closure in the past. The Buffalo City spokesman said the municipality closed the beach as a precautionary measure whilst undertaking water quality tests, after the sea water was contaminated by raw sewage. The reason for the closure was that the municipality was aware of the spill and was waiting for water quality test results to be done, and to determine whether the water could be approved as safe for swimming (Daily Dispatch, 2019). This problem would have to be resolved under the Criterion 7 of the Blue Flag status (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020).

b) Litter and waste

'Litter and waste' sub-code recorded the second highest occurrences (eight quotes). Recreation from beach visitors seems to be a major issue and contributing factor to litter, waste and overall land pollution, for example:

> *"The amount of rubble, and that is now waste, so to speak, that accumulates because of recreational activities in and around the beach"* (D3:111).

> *"… from there, those people end up spilling over into the Eastern Beach and they take the bottles and the cans and the plastic containers, and those plastic containers, … end up polluting this environment quite negatively you know …"* (D6:90).

There seems to be a lack of environmental consciousness from the beach users, as one participant aptly stated that: *"… what happened here is that there are elements that maybe haven't been so conscious of tidiness"* (D13:27). Another issue emerging under this code is that of management of the problem, *"In terms of ensuring litter management, I don't see any of those things happening you know"* (D10:21); and *"I think there is a problem of continuously trying to clean up the beach waste"* (D21:20). One participant linked this directly to being a hindrance in terms of obtaining Blue Flag status for Eastern Beach, saying that: "*I think tidiness becomes very important, which currently as things stand, we're not conforming to that …"* (D11:45). The issue of drinking and littering continues along the beaches in BCMM despite bylaws and claims by patrols of law enforcement at Eastern Beach (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2018).

c) Inadequate beach facilities

Five quotations reflected under the 'Inadequate beach facilities' sub-code. Participants spoke about the challenge of beach facilities that need to be upgraded, for example: *"With*

Blue Flag, beach facilities will need to be upgraded at Eastern Beach" (D2:79) and "*Those are actually some of the challenges with the beachfront, it must have proper ablution facilities, which we don't have*" (D11:40). Results indicate that there were efforts to upgrade beach facilities in the Buffalo City region, for example one pertinently voiced that "*… we looked at the state of facilities. Right, not just the natural, but mostly the man-made. So … the ablution facilities, boardwalks, seating arrangements, whether there's bins, how the parking area looks like*" (D3:116). However, Eastern Beach was not included, as it was further elaborated that "*… we skipped Eastern Beach, because it's common knowledge to everyone, what the challenges are at Eastern Beach*" (D3:127). It is currently not clear which specific challenges led to the exclusion of this particular beach, but the participant added, "*Hence, the poor quality of recreation that one finds in most of the beaches along the East London coast …*" (D3:139).

d) Crowded beach

Four occurrences were recorded under the 'Crowded beach' sub-code. ["*There are usually lots of people there* (D5:30); "*Look a lot of the time people go there*" (D11:19) and "*… it is normally packed*" (D14:27)]. An overlap of findings emerged from Section 4.4.1, with respect to overcrowding and the festive season. Overcrowding in coastal destinations is mostly common, but it becomes a concern when crowd control measures are missing, which can later affect carrying capacity and the limits of acceptable change (Keyser, 2009; Zamfir & Corbos, 2015).

e) Environmental degradation

The 'Environmental degradation' sub-code is the last sub-code of the A: EBP to be discussed and contains four quotes. Participants referred to environmental degradation as a problem at Eastern Beach ["*There's a lot of what is called, beach aggregation and degradation*" (D3:119) and "*There is summer degradation, mostly carving out the beach to become rockier, during the winter months*" (D3:121)]. Mention was also made of invasive plants: "*… there's an issue of invasion of alien plants*" (D11:47). Another participant associated environmental degradation with insufficient maintenance of the coastal environment and expressed that: "*I think then a general issue is just the maintaining of the grounds around the beach itself*" (D11:48).

C. Summary: Awareness of Eastern Beach problems

Findings obtained on the A: EBP code for this study exposed several important problems regarding Eastern Beach. Participants had much to say regarding sewage discharge and a polluted river, which are the main reasons for the contamination and poor water quality. The

inspection for Blue Flag ecolabel was viewed as a process that can be challenging for Eastern Beach, due to water quality concerns. Two participants doubted that this beach would obtain Blue Flag status, due to the sewage spill and polluted river. Litter and waste management was proclaimed by participants as an issue at this beach and the impacts of recreation from visitors leads to environmental pollution. Beach visitors were described by participants as oblivious to the importance of keeping the beach tidy. The state of beach facilities was also declared by participants as inadequate and needing to be upgraded. There was specific mention of facilities such as ablution facilities, boardwalks, seating arrangements, rubbish bins and parking areas from the results. One participant reported poor quality of recreation on most beaches along East London's coast because of inadequate beach facilities. This beach was described as one that can be overcrowded by visitors, especially during the festive season. Participants further referred to environmental degradation as one of the major problems at Eastern Beach. Results revealed that environmental degradation is linked to insufficient maintenance of the coastal environment at this beach.

4.4.5. Awareness of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

Regarding awareness of ICZM, participants were asked a closed question on whether they had come across the concept of ICZM before? Their responses are depicted in Figure 4.2. The majority (eleven) of these participants were found to be unfamiliar with the ICZM concept. Nine of them indicated they had come across the ICZM concept and are familiar with it from the organisations they work for.
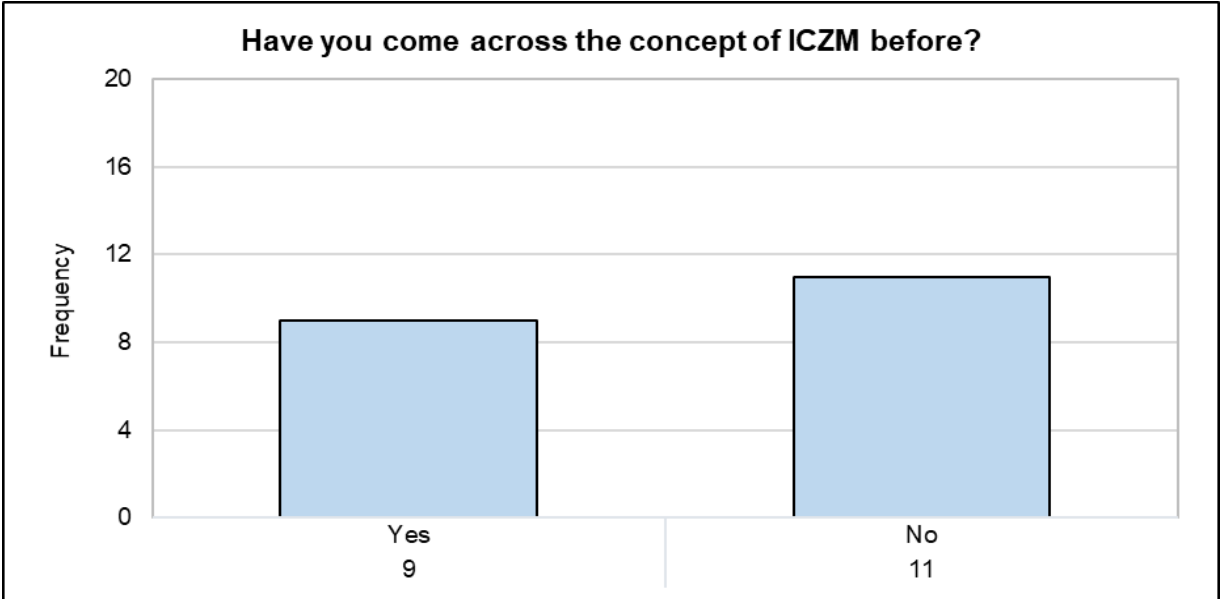
Figure 4.2: Stakeholder awareness of ICZM

A. Overview: Awareness of ICZM

In addition to the quantitative question above, participants were also asked a qualitative question relating to ICZM, namely: If yes, how is it used in your work? Findings from this question are demonstrated in Table 4.8, which shows the two sub-codes emerging from the A: ICZM code. The 'Framework use/application' sub-code consisted of 14 quotes; while the sub-code, 'No ICZM implementation', recorded 12 quotes. Findings under this section reveal how public and private stakeholders use ICZM in their organisations. Responses regarding a lack of ICZM implementation are also provided in this section.

Table 4.8: Code frequencies for **A: Integrated Coastal Zone Management**

CODE: INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT (ICZM)	
Sub-Codes	Public and private stakeholders
A: ICZM: Framework use/application	14
A: ICZM: No ICZM implementation	12
TOTAL	**26**

B. Specifics: Awareness of ICZM

a) Framework use/application

The sub-code of 'Framework use/application' contained 14 quotations and responses were obtained from participants who had come across the concept of ICZM before (Figure 4.2). One confirmed that ICZM was adopted for a **beach development programme**: *"... so, from my office, what we've also done has to do with what is called an Integrated Beach Programme (IBP) for all the beaches from East to West of East London"* (D3:123). Results revealed that the use of ICZM relates to **environmental conservation and planning**, as evidenced in the following quotations:

"*When I am developing management plans, then we have to look at … what is going on in that protection zone, to see what activities are appropriate or not appropriate in that protected zone, so it's almost proactive planning*" (D4:77-79).

"*… I have used it in the planning side of things*" (D4:76).

"*I think it is a good tool for planning …*" (D14:71),

"*The municipality is updated with that, and it is being used*" (D21:33).

"*Our organisation has a development unit, and we have a biodiversity and conservation unit, so you know it might have affected people within those units or they would have been part of that, but not from the marketing perspective*" (D18:40).

"… it has actually been on a superficial level, I think in previous years, work was done to protect the shoreline in Nahoon Beach …" (D20:28).

"I have heard about it in the areas where we manage the national reserves and the identified one was East London Coast Nature Reserve" (D19:47).

The ICZM framework remains a recognised science-driven management approach for capacity development and sustainability, for all coastal tourist destinations like East London (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2000; Glavovic, 2006; Republic of South Africa, 2003; Quesada *et al.*, 2018; United Nations Environmental Programme, 2010).

b) No ICZM implementation

The sub-code of 'No ICZM implementation' contained 12 quotations. Implementation challenges emerged strongly in the data, as cited in the following quotations:

"… I think implementation has been a challenge and I don't think its high on the priority list for Buffalo City" (D2:97).

"I have heard of it, but the plans in the metro, in my opinion, possibly have failed to implement that appropriately" (D3:128).

"… I think it's very limited in terms of actual implementation, so there are challenges with implementation" (D14:71).

"I've seen such plans and I believe BCMM should have that plan, so it is applicable, but it is not implemented …" (D10:31).

Results revealed that a gap exists concerning ICZM ["*I think there is a gap there*" (D4:81)] and things are fragmented ["*Perhaps things are fragmented and incoherent, I cannot exactly pinpoint as to what is the problem*" (D6:38)]. Even after 40 years of ICZM introduction around the world, there are still numerous challenges to be overcome with regard to its implementation (South African Institute of International Affairs, 2015). If a beach is missing ICZM, it is most likely that public awareness regarding complexities of the coastal area and active participation in the management of the coast, becomes disjointed too (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2008; Republic of South Africa, 2008; Republic of South Africa, 2003).

C. Summary: Awareness of ICZM

From the perspective of knowing that the interviews were with public and private stakeholders, it was surprising that the majority could not relate to the concept of ICZM. The results portray that the ICZM framework use or application is limited to a few organisations, and only those participants could relate to its usage. It emerged from the data that the use

of ICZM is linked to beach development programmes, environmental conservation and planning. One participant touched on IBP development and others reflected on the management of coastal protected areas and proactive planning through the use of ICZM in their organisations. Results show that ICZM is utilised to manage national reserves such as East London Coast Nature Reserve, as well as to protect the shoreline at Nahoon Beach. Despite more quotations recorded, the majority of participants appeared not to be using this framework at all. The findings reveal that ICZM is fragmented, and a gap exists in relation to Eastern Beach. Several references were made regarding the lack of ICZM implementation at Eastern Beach and BCMM was professed as the main holder of this management tool. While others indicated that the metropolitan has failed to apply ICZM appropriately, some perceived that ICZM is not a high priority.

4.4.6. Summary: Research Objective One

The first research objective (RO1) of this study aimed to discover the awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status. RO1 derived from Section B of the interview guide, and Section 4.4 of the analysis chapter. The results from the **A: EB sub-code** revealed that public and private stakeholders have sufficient insight and information regarding Eastern Beach. The beach was described based on its long-standing popularity and beauty. The results illustrated that Eastern Beach is a famous destination due to its ability to mostly attract local inhabitants on a regular basis and over weekends. It is known to be crowded during the festive season and it offers compelling opportunities for visitors to partake in both sea activities and visit Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. The results showed Eastern Beach to be a main tourist attraction with the potential to attract more visitors to the shore.

Regarding **A: RA sub-code**, findings obtained demonstrated that there are numerous recreational activities that visitors and locals can partake in at this beach. Eastern Beach offers warm sea water for bathing as well as swimming pools which are mostly enjoyed by children. This beach is well known and visited by many for fun, enjoyment and relaxation reasons. Most enjoy visiting it to barbeque (braai), drink and socialise with friends and relatives. Ebuhlanti is the popular braai area near this beach. Visitors and locals can do shopping along Eastern Beach, buying souvenirs or curios and food. There is plenty of accommodation (hotels & B&Bs). Activities include walking, as well as surfing activities on the sand and in the water. This beach is also recognised by locals for beach sports such as soccer and volleyball. There were similarities between results for the A: EB and A: RA sub-codes.

Based on the findings obtained from the **A: BFS sub-code**, Eastern Beach is well known as a beach without Blue Flag status, as affirmed by the majority of stakeholders (19 out of 20 participants). Some were found doubtful and wondering whether this beach can qualify for the status. This beach is also not currently accredited with the WESSA Green Coast Award, hence some perceived that it would not even pass the inspection phase for the Blue Flag ecolabel. Eastern Beach has an application history for the status, even though it has been unsuccessful. Stakeholders were aware of other beaches with previous application histories for the status, but which failed to obtain it. These beaches include Kidds' Beach, Nahoon, Bonza Bay and Gonubie Beach. East London has no Blue Flag accredited beaches currently and the literature supported that East London was not piloted for the status since the year 2017.

This study exposed several important problems regarding Eastern Beach from the **A: EBP sub-code.** Stakeholders mentioned sewage discharge and a polluted river, which are the main reasons for the contamination and poor water quality at this beach. Litter and waste management were also proclaimed as beach problems that are leading to negative impacts such as environmental pollution. Eastern Beach is therefore known for being an untidy beach, with inadequate facilities including ablution facilities, boardwalks, seating arrangements, rubbish bins and parking areas. It also emerged that overcrowding is a problem during the festive season, due to insufficient public control measures. Participants further referred to environmental degradation as one of the major problems which was associated with insufficient maintenance of the coastal environment at this beach.

This research depicted that most stakeholders interviewed could not relate to the ICZM concept of the **A: ICZM sub-code**. The ICZM framework application is limited to the few organisations that use it. In the case of Eastern Beach, ICZM is used for beach development programmes, environmental conservation and planning. It emerged that IBP development, management of coastal protected areas and proactive planning is achieved through the use of the ICZM framework. For the national reserves such as East London Coast Nature Reserve, ICZM is used to protect the shoreline. However, the results illustrated that the use of ICZM is fragmented. Other stakeholders perceived that when it comes to Eastern Beach, this framework is not a high priority for the local municipality.

4.5. CURRENT PLANS FOR EASTERN BEACH

As portrayed in the orientation Table 4.9, the current section of the data analysis concerns the **second secondary research objective, RO2,** which aimed to seek to understand

current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status (Section C of the IG). Current Plans code category will be referred to as CP in this section.

Table 4.9: Orientation table for data analysis and interpretation – B.

Research objective & code category	Research objective	Section in interview guide	Section in chapter
RO1: **A = Awareness**	To discover the awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status	B	4.4
RO2: **CP = Current Plans**	To understand current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status	C	4.5
RO3: **BFC = Blue Flag Compliance**	To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria	D	4.6
RO4: **CC = Current Challenges**	To ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach	E	4.7
RO5: **FIP = Future Improvement Plans**	To ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach	F	4.8

The results of RO2 are discussed in the order in which they were ascertained, and they evolve from a code overview to more specific details. The code category, 'Current Plans', for RO2 generated five codes as shown in Table 4.10. As previously highlighted in the first research objective of this analysis chapter, when analysing and interpreting results a code frequency table that represents sub-codes will be provided. Quotations that emerge under each sub-code will be subsequently presented.

Table 4.10: Current plans code category, code prefixes and codes for RO2.

CODE CATEGORY: CURRENT PLANS (CP)			
Code prefixes	**Codes**	**Section in chapter**	**Research objective**
CP: OIBF:	Organisations' involvement towards BF status	4.5.1	RO2
CP: SPBF:	Stakeholder perceptions of Blue Flag status	4.5.2	
CP: CPEB	Current plans for Eastern Beach	4.5.3	
CP: RECS:	Recommendations of stakeholders	4.5.4	
CP: VEPI:	Voluntary environmental public initiatives at Eastern Beach	4.5.5	

4.5.1. Organisations' involvement towards Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach

Regarding organisations' involvement towards Blue Flag status, participants were first asked a closed question on whether their organisations have a role to play in Eastern Beach seeking Blue Flag status. Figure 4.2 depicts their responses. Eleven indicated that

their organisations do have a role, while nine indicated that their organisations are not involved.
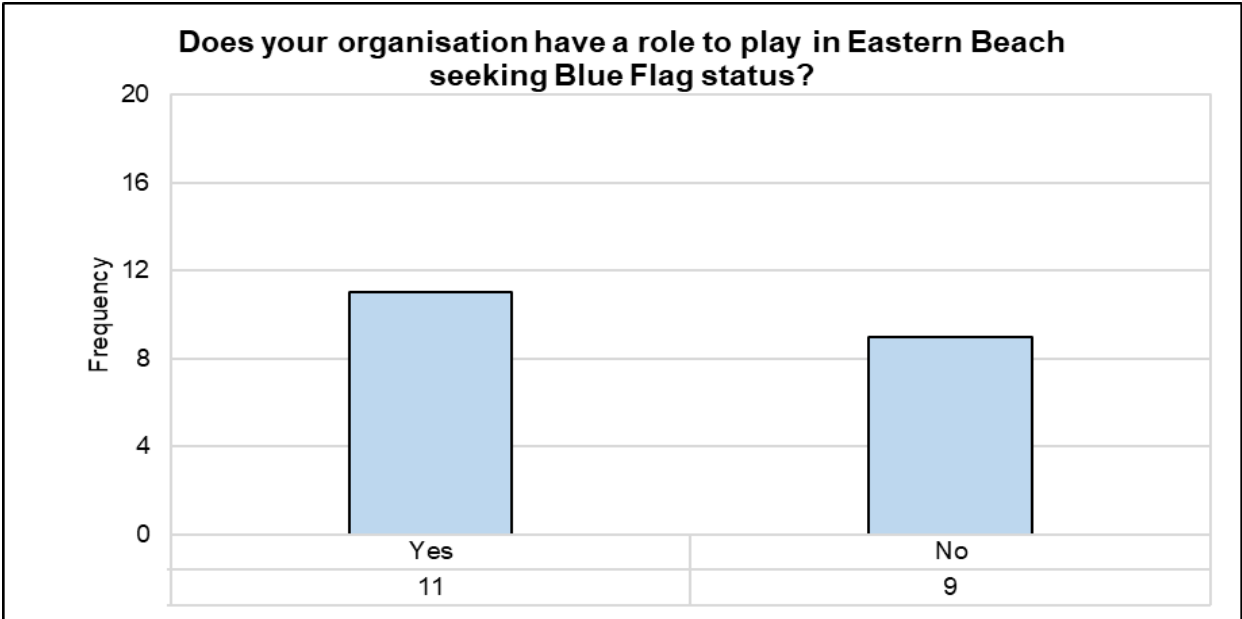
Figure 4.3: Organisations' involvement towards Blue Flag status

In addition to the question above, participants were also asked a qualitative question relating to their organisations' involvement, specifically: "If yes, what are these roles?" Findings from this question are portrayed in Table 4.11, which demonstrates eight sub-codes emerging from the CP: OIBF code. The results from participants signify that the sub-codes with the highest number of quotations were 'Drive stakeholder engagement', 'Promote economic returns', 'Promote the city and research', 'Manage beaches', 'Create vision and leadership' and 'Environmental management'. Sub-codes with fewer than five quotations will not be discussed. Findings under this section indicate that public and private stakeholders are involved in various ways at Eastern Beach and towards Blue Flag status.

Table 4.11: Code frequencies for **Current Plans: Organisations' involvement towards Blue Flag status**

CODE: ORGANISATIONS' INVOLVEMENT TOWARDS BLUE FLAG STATUS (OIBF)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
CP: OIBF: **To promote engagement**	14
CP: OIBF: **Promote economic returns**	9
CP: OIBF: **Promote the city and research**	7
CP: OIBF: **Have vision and leadership**	6
CP: OIBF: **Environmental management**	6

CP: OIBF: **Address challenges and service delivery**	4
CP: OIBF: **Build infrastructure**	3
TOTAL	**49**

B. Specifics: Organisations' involvement towards Blue Flag status

a) To promote stakeholder engagement

The sub-code, 'Promote stakeholder engagement', was the first sub-code recording the highest occurrences (14 quotes). Participants declared that a main role played by their organisations is to engage, advise and support Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality's plans through **stakeholder engagement,** for example:

"… we promote engagement locally as the chamber, I think if you wanted to include Blue Flag status, you would need to engage with the public and private organisations, as well as communities …" (D4:84).

"As the tourism committee within the Border Kei Chamber of Business, we promote tourism within this region, so …, we are engaged to advise, lobby, support and engage with stakeholders …" (D7:47).

"… to support public buy-in … to achieve that Blue Flag status, as it still wouldn't happen if the public and private sector organisations don't buy into this" (D4:112).

It emerged that participants are aware that their organisations are engaged in tourism **planning projects and creating awareness** at Eastern Beach, as indicated in the following quotations:

"… our organisation is part of planning in the municipality, to inform the municipality in terms of what it is that needs to be done there …" (D9:45).

"… we're within the private sector space, so we spend a lot of time working with the public sector and Tourism Committee in Buffalo City Tourism, certainly planning tourism projects …" (D17:50).

"Well, we use a Ward Councillor as a role player to facilitate dialogue and engagement, thinking and planning … and how various land activities need to be managed in order to achieve and maintain that Blue Flag status" (D4:87).

"… I can say we are involved to get communities of the BCMM on board, in terms of making awareness …" (D6:95).

"So, our involvement would be in the form of making the public aware; to say these are the things that you can do, or you cannot do because of the Blue Flag …" (D15:51).

One participant expressed that his organisation is involved to **support tourism businesses** along Eastern Beach and associated this engagement to Blue Flag status: "… *you obviously need the support of Buffalo City Metro, because of their jurisdiction. … we could involve the businesses along that beach, all your hospitality, Osner, Premier, Kenneways Hotels, as I think the status will be beneficial to all …*" (D8:39). Regarding the promotion of stakeholder involvement at Eastern Beach, the available literature clarifies that the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has confirmed that most problems associated with this beach are known and the Department has realised that more efforts are needed if the environment is to be protected from pollution. DEA has decided to partner with national Good Green Deeds non-profit organisation, to mobilise every citizen to assist with cleaning initiatives at Eastern Beach. The aim is to promote environmental actions that take into consideration sustainable living practices (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2018).

The involvement of major public and private stakeholders in coastal tourism developments ensures good governance, with adequate and timeous participation enabling transparent tourism decision-making processes (De Juan *et al.,* 2016; Glavovic, 2006; Rochette *et al.,* 2011; Tichaawa & Samhere, 2015). Due to the important role that private stakeholders play towards the assurance of sustainable tourism in the province, the Border-Kei Chamber of Business (BKCOB) also partnered with the Call-2-Action organisation, enhancing the engagement between public and private sector in East London (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2019). The Buy-Back Centre was opened in October 2021, in an effort to curb the ongoing crisis of littering and illegal dumping in BCMM and, essentially, to clean up the city. The mandate was also to motivate recycling, by offering cash incentives to those who recycle near Eastern Beach (Border-Kei Chamber of Business, 2021).

b) Promote economic returns

The involvement of participants' organisations towards Blue Flag status was expressed in terms of the promotion of economic returns. The 'Promote economic returns' code was the second most used code, with nine quotations. The involvement of participants' organisations towards Blue Flag status is important **to attract tourism businesses and bring income** ["*… the owners of tourism and hospitality businesses' stakeholders participate … meaningfully and … function optimally for Blue Flag status, … as everybody would get economic benefits*" (D6:93); "*… to ensure that the city, once it takes on this initiative, we optimise on the status that we have … making sure that this information is out there, scheduling activities that bring income to the area*" (D20:47); "*… some businesses*

are more interested in tourism like Local Economic Development and tourism amenities" (D2:108); and *"… then ultimately, the economic spin-off is that they fall into other business sectors as well"* (D14:48].

The results indicate that organisations get involved in striving for Blue Flag status for **investment returns**, for example: *"… so, the role of private sector would be to invest in buildings and in business and therefore they will uplift the area in that way"* (D21:49); and "*We invest in infrastructure, so that visitors can come and spend money and by so doing, we create local economic development*" (D6:100). Another reason for involvement is to **attract funding opportunities**, for example: "*So for me, we are a stakeholder that is very important … trusted …, and a charitable stakeholder that gets funding from the National Department of Tourism for such initiatives*" (D9:41).

c) Promote the city and research

Participants reflected on the involvement of their organisations towards Blue Flag status to promote the city and research (seven quotes). Findings on this sub-code portray that participants are aware that their organisations are already involved in the development and promotion of the city and are making strides towards the status. Their involvement is to **increase the appeal of the city's beaches** [*"… we're well positioned … to make applications and we've got a core responsibility for the development and promotion of tourism within the city. Seeking Blue Flag status can only elevate the appeal of the city's beaches"* (D18:46); "*Organisationally, I say we support it to ensure that the city benefits once it takes on these initiatives, we optimise on the status that we have"* (D20:47) and *"I am involved with the Border-Kei Chamber Tourism Committee … , so we really are about promoting the city and obviously, you know, Eastern Beach …"* (D17:46).

Another participant made reference to the **interpretation of the city's history and heritage**: *"… we are working together with the Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency which is busy now putting some information at the Esplanade … in terms of interpreting and promoting history and heritage of the Buffalo City"* (D19:58). One participant elaborated that his organisation is involved at this beach and is doing more than just research, but **supports student learning**, *"Educational institutions like Walter Sisulu University are involved … apart from research, but for the student integration. We have a number of things that the university as a major stakeholder in the geographical area has some input on"* (D5:46). Marketing and sponsorship received a specific mention, as ways in which the Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency (ECPTA) is involved, for example: *"The*

Eastern Cape Tourism Parks Agency is [the] marketing and sponsoring agent of the city and the province" (D6:90).

d) Have vision and leadership

The sub-code of 'Have vision and leadership' had the fourth highest number of quotes (six). Findings indicate that there is a need for stakeholders to work towards the same **vision** when it comes to Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach: *"… I think there is a challenge with public and private speaking to each other and achieving the same vision"* (D21:43). Blue Flag status would also require some kind of **leadership** from stakeholders, and currently it is missing [*"… I think what is lacking is someone to lead the process from our organisations and all partners … like a framework"* (D12:38); *"Absolutely, control and leadership as the metropolitan municipality is involved and under authority"* (D21:38); and *"… so, each role from the government or in this case municipal perspective, it's really about providing the leadership, to say we have that goal to achieve as a region or as the municipality and to get the support from business or from the private sector"* (D20:46)]. One participant deliberated on the involvement of her organisation for the required **technical support provision**: *"… I would say it's the technical support through planner meetings, where we also input on what best can be done for the Eastern Beach, as we know that all the inhabitants in the Buffalo City they like Eastern Beach"* (D19:65).

e) Environmental management

A further aspect of participants' views on organisations' involvement towards Blue Flag status was the "Environmental management' sub-code (six quotes). One participant said that, *"Obviously from the recreation, environmental and the engineering, we're more involved"* (D21:09). Most participants expressed environmental management as the reason for the involvement of organisations they work for [*"So, we are more concerned about the environmental management right,…"* (D9:39); *"… we previously had input around water management, and I do believe that there has been issues with sewage spills into the ocean, and stuff like that"* (D16:47); *"… I think as a stakeholder with private interest, we include communities normally, so in fact they should see Blue Flag status as the environmental requirement right"* (D9:53); and: *"We work with Wild and Environment Society of South Africa (WESSA), … an organisation that is specialising with such, because they are responsible for wildlife and environment in South Africa"* (D9:38)].

C. Summary: Organisational involvement towards Blue Flag status

The results illustrate that the majority of participants' organisations are involved in efforts towards obtaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach. Participants deliberated on the

involvement of their organisations to promote engagement and to advise and support public buy-in between the public and private sector, as well as with communities. Participants understand their organisation's involvement towards Blue Flag status, in terms of planning for tourism projects and creating public awareness. Some are part of planning within the municipality, to inform or guide it in terms of what needs to be done, while others are involved in the management of land activities at Eastern Beach. The results depict that these organisations are involved in supporting the promotion of economic returns and infrastructure investments that can benefit local communities. The organisations are also preparing for applying for Blue Flag status to increase the appeal of the city. Organisations are involved for various reasons, including the development and promotion of tourism as well as for the promotion of history and heritage of the BCMM. It emerged from the findings that leadership for Blue Flag status is lacking from the local municipality. Support from businesses and educational institutions is needed, for best practices and student integration into the industry. Other organisations are more concerned about the environmental and water management functions, which are important components of the Blue Flag criteria, hence their involvement.

4.5.2. Stakeholder perceptions of Blue Flag status

In this section, participants were initially asked a closed question on whether they think Blue Flag status for Eastern Beach can improve beach quality, which can attract both visitors and residents. Their responses are portrayed in Figure 4.3. It is significant that the majority (19) gave a positive response, while only one participant expressed a negative answer to the question posed.
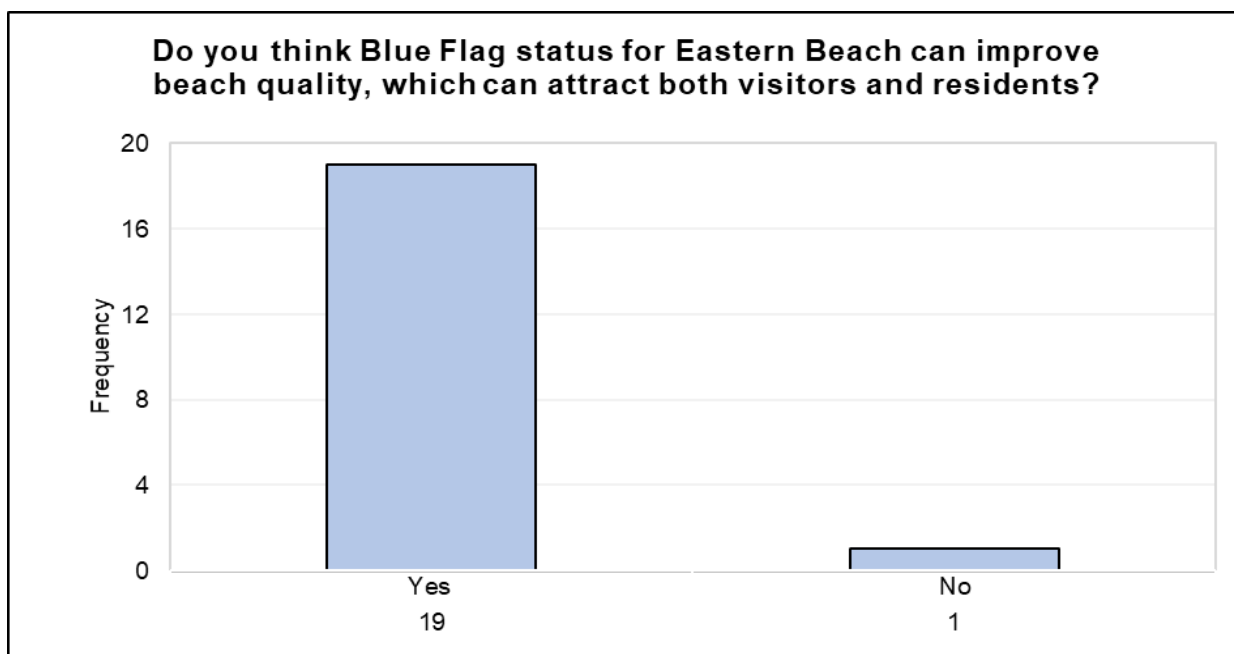
Figure 4.4: Stakeholder perceptions of Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach.

A. Overview: Stakeholder perceptions of Blue Flag status

The question above was followed by a qualitative question, which asked participants to explain their answers. Findings from this question are represented in Table 4.12. This table portrays sub-codes that developed from the code, 'Stakeholder perceptions of Blue Flag status'. 'Beach quality, profile and confidence' recorded a high number of quotations (22), followed by the 'Beach attractiveness' sub-code with 11 attached quotations. The 'City and community benefits', 'Education and training' as well as 'Improves safety' sub-codes each recorded three quotations. Sub-codes with two or less quotations are not dealt with in this section. Participants were positive that Blue Flag status can improve beach quality, which can attract both visitors and residents to Eastern Beach.

Table 4.12: Code frequencies for **Current Plans: Stakeholder perceptions of Blue Flag status.**

CODE: STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS OF BLUE FLAG STATUS (SPBF)	
Sub-Codes	Public and private stakeholders
CP: SPBF: **Beach quality, profile and confidence**	22
CP: SPBF: **Beach attractiveness**	11
CP: SPBF: **City and community benefits**	3
CP: SPBF: **Education and training**	3
CP: SPBF: **Improves safety**	3
CP: SPBF: **Blue Flag will not make a change**	1
CP: SPBF: **Recreational activities**	1

TOTAL	44

B. Specifics: Stakeholder perceptions of Blue Flag status

a) Beach quality, profile and confidence

The sub-code with the highest occurrences was 'Beach quality, profile and confidence' (22 quotes). Participants alluded to **beach water quality** that can improve due to the status, *"… I think it's a good tool that we could use to try and improve quality of the beach* (D4:100)*; "… that can only help improve the beach water* (D17:55); *"To say; Eastern Beach has Blue status or accredited, you can be rest assured that you are going to get good water"* (D14:56); and "*the water quality can be maintained"* (D8:43). Findings reveal that other participants perceived the status positively, for the **improvement of the beach itself** ["… *surely to improve the entire beachfront, so if we could get Blue Flag status, that would be phenomenal"* (D17:55) and "*A Blue Flag status means that the beach is in excellent standard*" (D8:43)]. One touched on the assurance that visitors would get the benefit of a **quality beach:** *"I believe so because if you are a tourist or you are a visitor, you want to get the best quality of what you are visiting"* (D14:47).

It emerged that if Blue Flag status was obtained, **water quality would be better** to **attract more visitors**: "… *if Eastern Beach achieves Blue Status, it means it will have better water quality and then the visitors are going to come*" (D4:100). Moreover, **beach facilities** would be better managed: "*… I mean it's a phenomenal thing … it would require certain management of facilities on the beach*" (D17:55)*,* and improve land activities: "*so, I think to attain Blue Flag status, it would require improvement of certain land activities"* (D4:100). Other participants touched on **beach profile improvement and confidence**, for example: *"Well, I think a Blue Flag beach will give people confidence when they are using a beach facility. … it's not just about water quality only … so, by achieving a Blue Flag status, that gives a big prominence, internationally, and which will help the different tourism entities promote the area"* (D7:53) and *"Generally, Blue Flag beaches are well known for high standards – we can be on world class standards. So, to have that kind within our city would be beneficial"* (D15:39). Findings revealed that **Eastern Beach would be internationally ranked**, because of the status*, "I would say it will be ideal to have a Blue Flag beach, especially making it at Eastern Beach because it's most visited, it's very popular amongst other beaches, which then can assist us to get to meet the international beach standards"* (D19:61). Locals may **develop pride in their own city***, "… and that's important, once they get that status locals can develop a pride in their city or their town"* (D13:55)*,* while others

will have more confidence to use the beach, *"I think the association of the Blue Flag status to a beach gives comfort to any visitor"* (D12:26).

b) Beach attractiveness

The sub-code, 'Beach attractiveness', recorded the second highest number of quotes under the stakeholder perceptions code (11 quotes). Participants perceived that Blue Flag status can help to **attract more visitors** [*"… attaining the Blue status will definitely provide an opportunity, or it will act as a catalyst, as I indicated earlier, to attract visitors."* (D6:98); *"… so, yes, it will definitely ramp things up, your visitor numbers will increase …"* (D12:28); *"By virtue of us attaining the Blue Flag and keeping the beach clean, it would attract more people, and the public gets the best value out of it"* (D14:62); *"So, it would attract more people just by that status alone"* (D6:54); and *"It would make the beach more attractive"* (D2:133)].

Reference to **international visitors** arose from the results; *"Well, a Blue Flag status brings in tourists, not just locals, but necessarily your international customers"* (D8:42); while another reflected on the **safety benefits** attached to Blue Flag: *"Because you're going to market yourself as the safest place, as the safest beach … people can come in numbers, but it can attract visitors* (D9:48-51). Improvement in the **natural environment** emerged in this section from one participant: *"… then the aesthetics of the area will improve as well"* (D3:166).

c) City and community benefits

'City and community benefits' is a sub-code with three quotes. One participant elaborated on the **benefit for the city**, by saying: *"It would be beneficial for the city or the town, yes it would, but it would be more for hotels around the beachfront that would have a much bigger impact"* (D8:44). Others alluded to **community benefits** due to Blue Flag status, for example: *"… then definitely it could benefit stakeholders within the community"* (D5:49) and *"… because we have some projects that we are working on together, to try and also uplift those communities, they can benefit as well, and attractions that are in the townships as well can increase the visitor experience within the Buffalo City"* (D19:59).

d) Education and training

The sub-code 'Education and training' has three quotes. Participants touched on education of beach visitors due to Blue Flag status [*"I'm pretty sure that education by having a Blue Flag means, and even beachgoers and visitors will be educated from an environmental perspective and all that kind of stuff"* (D7:59); *"If there are statuses like that and categories,*

that would say Blue Flag, they would just help the people become more aware of the environment" (D13:41); and *"Yes … even if it just creates an awareness of the environment to people, the beach environment in the community, it would be great"* (D13:54)].

e) Improves safety

'Improves safety' is the last sub-code to be discussed under the code of 'Stakeholder perceptions of Blue Flag status (three quotes). Participants made reference to improvement in beach safety, for example: *"The Eastern Beach can have a Blue Flag and maintain it, it means it guarantees us or the tourist, that the water is safe, the environment is safe"* (D14:68); *"Well, just the security aspect, you know, once a beach has Blue Flag status, it creates an element of safety or trust"* (D16:55); and *"Yes, absolutely, because it's about a clean and safe environment and it currently doesn't have a very good reputation in that regard"* (D18:49).

C. Summary: Stakeholder perceptions of Blue Flag status

The majority of participants confidently asserted that Blue Flag status can be a positive opportunity and declared that it would improve beach quality which can attract both visitors and residents. The results indicate that Blue Flag is a good tool that can be used to improve beach facilities and activities at Eastern Beach. Participants expressed that Blue Flag status would give people confidence, provide international beach prominence or world class standard, as well as promote the area. It emerged that the status could elevate the appeal of the city's beaches and give assurance to any visitor. Participants affirmed that Blue Flag status would help people develop pride in their city and be a catalyst to attract visitors.

Some participants synthesised that Eastern Beach could easily promote itself should it obtain Blue Flag status, and visitor numbers could increase. The results demonstrate that this status would benefit the wider city and surrounding townships, having a positive ripple-effect on surrounding areas and community stakeholders. Participants reflected on education and conversed that the status would mean beachgoers and visitors can be educated and have environmental awareness. Others recognised that Blue Flag status creates an element of safety or trust or can lead to an improvement in beach safety in terms of water and environment.

4.5.3. Current plans for Eastern Beach

A. Overview: Current plans for Eastern Beach

Table 4.13 depicts the results for CP: CPEB code, where the sub-code, 'Infrastructural development', contained the highest number of quotes. The sub-code, 'Current plans for

Blue Flag unknown', recorded the second highest occurrences, followed by the sub-codes, 'Increase in security' and 'Refurbish Eastern Beach for Blue Flag'. The 'Cleaning campaigns' and 'Replacing sewage pipes' sub-codes are less frequent, but relevant to the study. Other sub-codes with one quotation only will not be discussed.

Table 4.13: Code frequencies for **CP: Current plans for Eastern Beach.**

CODE: CURRENT PLANS FOR EASTERN BEACH (CPEB)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
CP: CPEB: **Infrastructural development**	22
CP: CPEB: **Current plans for Blue Flag unknown**	4
CP: CPEB: **Increase in security**	3
CP: CPEB: **Refurbish Eastern Beach for Blue Flag**	3
CP: CPEB: **Cleaning campaigns**	2
CP: CPEB: **Proper planning for Eastern Beach**	1
CP: CPEB: **Replacing sewage pipes**	1
CP: CPEB: **Research & development**	1
TOTAL	37

B. Specifics: Current plans for Eastern Beach

a) Infrastructural development

This sub-code contained 22 quotations. Participants spoke about infrastructural development as a major current plan at Eastern Beach. The results signify that management efforts have been directed at changing the entire Eastern Beach precinct, by **constructing an integrated urban park** ["*…we're actually developing an 87-million-rand facility, which is an integrated urban park, we're looking at the full precinct, which will develop and that will include Eastern Beach upgrade*" (D3:164); "*… we're focusing on infrastructure development now, which is basically creating a recreational park, with an open-air theatre, information box, information trader stalls and so forth*" (D11:53); "*… the municipality invested millions … to that uplifting of the East London beachfront*" (D15:35); and "*There is some work that they are doing there, constructing a pedestrian bridge, and I also understand that they are putting it as a priority with plans to upgrade Ebuhlanti and the Eastern Beach*" (D15:53)]. These results correspond with existing literature on the current Eastern Beach advancement. ShowMe East London (2021) confirms that there is indeed an upgrade at Eastern Beach, which is planned to include a Water World Park, and adjacent developments have been planned to strengthen East London's tourism potential for both local and international users.

Other participants touched on the same **construction project in progress but did not have in-depth details** [*"… there are no talks around Blue Flag status directly as things stand, but I do know that there's a development that's underway, where they are constructing"* (D6:86); *"… they are doing an interesting development just in front of Osner Hotel* (D10:36); *"At the moment … there's so much of infrastructure, upgrade and development around the beach itself, yes, there is"* (D12:40); *"Well, there's a place called Court Crescent, which is in front of the Osner Hotel that is currently developed"* (D13:43); *"The BCMDA (Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency), they are doing infrastructure upgrades on that beachfront at the moment"* (D16:49)]. Other participants linked current infrastructural development to **Blue Flag status plans**, as evidenced in the following quotations:

> *"… after this development, we may use the integrated coastal management process, or policies, or regulations, as it is outlined through the city or through development interventions for something like Blue Flag"* (D3:167).

> *"… because of that kind of development, I assume that the Blue Flag status will actually be an integral part of that plan"* (D6:87).

> *"So, what I think they are trying to do in terms of future plans and current plans, is to make sure that man-made attractions complement the nature in terms of the Blue Flag beach* (D10:36).

> *"… to necessarily work towards the Blue Flag status achievement and improving the Eastern Beach overall, as an attraction to actually make it a more attractive beachfront with more facilities and friendly amenities for the visitors"* (D14:57).

The results demonstrate that the **Integrated Beachfront Management Plan**, which is already in progress is one of the municipal interventions that is linked to the beach upgrade, for example: *"We did come out with an assessment of basically the beachfront area and came out with a plan which is called the Integrated Beachfront Management Plan. So, with the plan, we've started to make some interventions, providing ablution facilities, helping to structure the informal traders in the area"* (D11:51).

b) Current plans unknown

The sub-code, 'Current plans unknown', was the second most used code, with four quotations. Some participants were not aware of current plans concerning Blue Flag status at this beach, for example: *"I don't have any, ja, when I first came to East London thirteen years ago, that is the last I heard the city was actually planning to develop this area, I believe that subsequently they threw those development plans in the bin … So, subsequent to that, I don't know of any sort of plans for this beach"* (D4:115); *"I don't think there are any,*

there's none, I have to be honest, there's none. Because I don't think that the city and the officials that are driving … or managing the coastal part of the city, right, are particularly thinking to have it as a Blue Flag status. Everyone steers away from Eastern Beach, because of the link and complexity of Ebuhlanti … So, I don't think anyone would even attempt, at the moment, to have it declared, or move towards upgrading the space for Blue Flag status (D3:142-143)"; "No, I'm not aware of any plans" (D5:59); and *"Zero, there is nothing at the moment"* (D7:54).

c) Increase in security

Participants' awareness of current plans was expressed in terms of an increase in security. The sub-code, 'Increase in security', recorded three occurrences. Results demonstrate that security is being improved at Eastern Beach [*"Look … the agency from our side is trying to get more capacity in terms of the security part. We've done applications to the Department of Public Works for additional hands to fight alien invasive plants"* (D12:29); *"…I do know that as Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency …, especially on the peak season like Easter and December holidays, we also assist on deploying tourism ambassadors or tourism safety monitors that patrols and provide information to people that are along the beach"* (D19:62); and *"The Border-Kei Chambers Call To Action, with the municipality, is working on keeping that area safe, by providing security …"* (D16:59)]. The literature confirms the need for security to be increased at Eastern Beach. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (2020) reported that the BCMM that increased safety measures in and around East London's beaches, since the 2017 festive season. The East London beachfront has been the scene of numerous attacks on beachgoers in recent years (South African Broadcasting Corporation, 2020).

d) Refurbish Eastern Beach for Blue Flag

'Refurbish Eastern Beach for Blue Flag' is the fourth sub-code, which contained three quotations. Participants elaborated on refurbishing Eastern Beach as one of the current plans, for example: *"Yes, that are some of the interventions which we're doing to try and make Eastern Beach, a new beach, a better place for tourists to enjoy"* (D11:55); *"I know that the municipality is ensuring strides already on to make sure that there's an interest from the public sector, through refurb, why can't Eastern Beach become a Blue Flag then?"* (D19:67); and *"They have tried to change the previous situation and to try to clean up and have extra staff to work there … but it needed the major development"* (D21:37).

e) Cleaning campaigns

A further aspect of participants' knowledge of current plans was encapsulated by the sub-code, 'Cleaning campaigns', and recorded two quotations. Findings revealed the involvement of the Border-Kei Chamber Call To Action and BCMM [*"The Border-Kei Chamber Call To Action (BKCCA) with the municipality is working on keeping that area clean as well"* (D16:58) and the other alluded to the fact that *"… Buffalo City is always engaging on cleaning campaigns and this is also regulated by some of the other political parties to ensure that people are more educated on keeping the beaches clean so that we can attract more tourism"* (D21:44)]. The campaign endorsed by the DEA regarding environmental cleaning initiatives at Eastern Beach through the Good Green Deeds is part of the evidence in the literature review. The DEA confirmed that the littering problem associated with Eastern Beach is known and has realised that more efforts are needed if the environment is to be protected from pollution. DEA has partnered with the national Good Green Deeds to mobilise every citizen to assist with cleaning initiatives, and the aim is to promote environmental actions that take into consideration sustainable living practices (Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, 2018).

f) Replacing sewage pipes

The sub-code of 'Replacing sewage pipes' is the last and least used sub-code of the CP: CPEB code and contains one quotation. This sub-code is relevant to the study; hence it is included here. The participant made reference to the replacement of sewage pipes at Eastern Beach:

> *"… they are building and replacing an old sewage pipeline that used to run past Eastern Beach. They're replacing it with a new pipeline that might help with the water quality"* (D2:115).

C. Summary: Current plans for Eastern Beach

The results on current plans towards Blue Flag status illustrate that participants elaborated more on infrastructural development. Participants mentioned that an integrated urban park is under development and that such a development would include the upgrade of Eastern Beach. Interestingly, it emerged from the results that integrated coastal management processes, policies and regulations are known by some stakeholders and will be used in moving towards the Blue Flag status at this beach. Human-made attractions are currently being developed to support natural attractions like Eastern Beach. The results depict that there are plans currently in place to refurbish this beach, through an upgrade of beach facilities and amenities. It is interesting to note that while several plans are underway, a few

participants (four) were not aware of any current plans at this beach. Safety and security also emerged as a part of current plans at this beach. Participants conversed that the Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency, The Border-Kei Chamber of Business Call To Action, and Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency have plans to increase security. Tourism ambassadors or safety monitors often get deployed to Eastern Beach to provide patrols to increase safety. The results demonstrate that there are plans to improve Eastern Beach, making it a better place for tourists to enjoy. BCMM, together with political parties, are working on cleaning campaigns to keep Eastern Beach clean and attract more tourism. There are developments concerning the replacement of an old sewage pipeline that used to run into Eastern Beach. It is hoped that the replacement of the old sewage pipeline might help with the water quality at this beach.

4.5.4. Recommendations for Eastern Beach

A. Overview: Recommendations for Eastern Beach

A further qualitative question was posed to those participants who were not aware of any current plans for Eastern Beach, specifically: *If you are not aware of any current plans for Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status, what recommendations would you suggest in order to work towards Blue Flag status*? The results from this question are depicted in the code frequency table, Table 4.14, and the top nine sub-codes were 'Stakeholder engagement', 'Manage pollution and land activities', 'Manage beach facilities', 'Create guidelines and public awareness', 'Improve safety and security', 'Basic BF requirements must exist', 'Encourage economic opportunities', 'Proactive management of infrastructure', 'Encourage economic opportunities' and 'Proactive management of infrastructure'. A further sub-code with slightly fewer quotations (four) but nevertheless relevant, was 'Use best practice examples of Blue Flag in SA'. Sub-codes with fewer than four quotations will not be discussed.

Table 4.14: Code frequencies for **Current Plans: Recommendations for Eastern Beach.**

CODE: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EASTERN BEACH (RECS)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
CP: RECS: **Stakeholder engagement**	24
CP: RECS: **Manage pollution & land activities**	21
CP: RECS: **Manage beach and facilities**	18
CP: RECS: **Create guidelines & public awareness**	11
CP: RECS: **Improve safety & security**	9
CP: RECS: **Basic Blue Flag requirements must exist**	8

CP: RECS: **Encourage economic opportunities**	8
CP: RECS: **Proactive management of infrastructure**	7
CP: RECS: **Provision of resources**	7
CP: RECS: **Use best practice examples of Blue Flag in South Africa**	3
CP: RECS: **Implement central business districts**	2
TOTAL	**118**

B. Specifics: Recommendations for Eastern Beach

a) Stakeholder engagement

A high number of occurrences was recorded for the sub-code, 'Stakeholder engagement', with 24 quotations. Participants deliberated on stakeholder collaboration as a recommendation for Eastern Beach. The results depict that the majority of them highlighted the need for **better engagement regarding obtaining this status** ["*… my recommendation would be the engagement of stakeholders for a proper analysis of what needs to be done there* (D9:52)*; "I think it should be a joint private and public enterprise venture whereby private and public organisations can get together and work on this together"* (D21:40); *"I think public and private do need to come together … there needs to be collaboration …"* (D2:137)]. This finding aligns with the South African Institute of International Affairs (2015) who found that lack of collaboration in tourist destinations is a key stumbling stone of sustainable coastal tourism development.

Participants were more specific when it comes to stakeholders who should be better engaged towards the status, and highlighted **community involvement** ["*You also need community views in everything you are doing, so for Blue Flag status to be a success you need to involve the communities, nothing for communities without communities"* (D9:47); "*… for me the community engagement is key, because if community is not involved, a goal can be difficult as they always have a critical role to play"* (D6:106); and *"communities forming basis of that."* (D9:52)].

While **public and private stakeholders** emerged as role players to be involved, some participants recommended that **local municipality should lead the plans** for Blue Flag status ["*My first recommendation would be that the local government should take it up because in my opinion they are the immediate people who plan for the municipality"* (D5:51); "*The recommendation would be that the municipality there at Eastern Beach should engage stakeholders and have consultations regarding Blue Flag"* (D9:63); *"for public engagement and information airing, … the local municipality needs to take it upon themselves to engage the locals, or the people visiting the Eastern Beach"* (D15:43);

"There's a need for a stronger social mobilisation of the public" (D12:36); *"The only thing to do is to form a subcommittee under East London Tourism, which would involve members of the public and the council, so that they can converse more closely"* (D13:57); and *"Well, I think the local tourism office would need to work hand-in-hand with the development agency and the local municipality to drive that"* (D18:53)]. Based on the above recommendations, it is vital to note there is a similarity compared to existing literature. Therefore, "it is vital to understand the perceptions of those who have some interest, in or responsibility for, marine litter (i.e., the stakeholders) in order to communicate effectively, target outreach and engagement practices and influence behavioural change" (Hartley, Holland, Pahl, Thompson, 2015).

A few participants touched on stakeholder engagement as a way to bring in **educational awareness for the status** at Eastern Beach [*"I think of engagement as a huge educational campaign … is necessary to just get everybody on board, on the same page for Blue Flag"* (D16:62); *"You can have a committee for Blue Flag status and get people prepared to work to keep it with the public"* (D17:61); and *"… to keep that standard up through public participation, there can be engagements for campaigns, where people can just be aware of the status and the safe swim zones, etc …"* (D18:65)]. The focus of stakeholder engagement on the coast is predominantly around environmental education and protection. Stakeholder campaigns help to develop projects and educational programmes; these are often designed to train tourists and residents on how to use the resources, increase confidence and to integrate marine litter education (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2018).

b) Manage pollution and land activities

The sub-code 'Manage pollution and land activities' recorded the second highest occurrences with 21 quotations. It emerged from the results that land pollution caused by littering should be better managed at Eastern Beach if the status is to be obtained. This is **what Eastern Beach Management can do** [*"So, what can feasibly happen or what needs to change for the Blue Flag, for me, is definitely pollution control beach, is a big one… they may need to have upstream litter screenings"* (D4:93-94); *"… Eastern Beach needs general cleaning, because it is the negative externalities that prevent us from getting a Blue Flag status, like broken bottles on the floor, private businesses should play a role you know …"* (D12:57); *"… we need to have people who volunteer to be there, to make sure that the public aren't throwing things on the sand and breaking glass, you know, things that cause a problem and will make you lose your licence"* (D17:60) and *"There could be programmes*

used to clean up Eastern Beach, which is very known to be part of the area which is dirty" (D15:37)]. Quotes from participants exposed an **educational focus on visitors** [*"… one of the things we have talked about, is litter, so they need to start to educate people at school about taking care of the environment and avoid littering"* (D16:61); and *"The local municipality need to take it upon themselves to engage the locals, or people visiting the Eastern Beach on the danger they are causing by littering"* (D15:37)].

Other participants made reference to the **sewage spill as a source of water pollution**, which should be managed better at this beach. The sewage pipe featured under the CP: CPEB: 'Replacing sewage pipes' sub-code and it features here again. In the current section, participants recommend that *"… they'll need to sort out their sewerage waterworks … and then it becomes the local tourism and the municipality's role to do"* (D18:64); *"there's a little stream that goes in there and it's not as clean as it should be. So, you could fund the cleaning of the area"* (D8:50-53); and *"… because there has been a sewage spill that's happening over and over again, so, to have a Blue Flag, there must be a proper planning and maintenance to stop such activity … and it is also about waste management and coastal protection"* (D15:54).

Interestingly, one participant reflected that **Blue Flag would be a good solution to pollution and litter**: "… *so I think it would be a good thing to try and achieve Blue Flag status, simply because it will allow or require an improvement of the beach, particularly from a pollution point of view… and littering. … quite a considerable amount of effort will have to go into thinking about how various land activities need to be managed in order to achieve and maintain that Blue Flag status"* (D4:101).

c) Manage beach and facilities

The sub-code with the third highest occurrences was 'Manage beach and facilities' (18 quotes). Participants made reference to the management of the beach and facilities and were confident that **beach facilities need to be revamped or upgraded**, as they are currently not well maintained ["*… the facilities need to be relooked at … I mean the ablutions need to be fixed, the lifeguard area needs to be revamped"* (D8:48); "… *a very important recommendation is to basically manage the beach and I think ... the ablution facilities they are in such a poor condition; they need to be looked at"* (D2:107); "*Upgrade the ablution facilities, upgrade the life-savers facilities, upgrade the area that are currently used for picnic, get a better management process"* (D3:139-156); and *"I think the municipality needs to take charge as a custodian of the beach facility, to upgrade rest rooms, … lifeguards and the quality of the water as* well" (D14:40)].

Other participants recommended that **facilities should be added.** While some ablution facilities exist, these quotes indicate that there are not enough [*"My recommendation would be to put facilities at Eastern Beach because there are no facilities in place there"* (D15:42); *"There is not enough ablution facilities for people and the status you know, surely there should be toilets, and taps and drinking water, and dirt bins"* (D16:51); *"Well, I don't think there are sufficient facilities … we need to make sure that there are sufficient facilities … for public use, a kiosk where people can get refreshments, the availability of lifeguards, the ablution facilities, parking and safe walking paths for visitors"* (D18:50); and *"We need more sort of facilities like restaurants, more sort of playing fields for children, as my recommendation"* (D21:47)].

d) Create guidelines and public awareness

The results from participants revealed 'Create guidelines and public awareness' as the sub-code with the fourth highest number of quotes (11). Participants recommended that guidelines and public awareness should be created at Eastern Beach, to move towards Blue Flag status. The sub-code, 'Manage pollution and land activities', which has been previously explained in this section, overlaps with this sub-code. **Environmental cleaning campaigns** emerged again here:

> *"I recommend that BCMM takes responsibility to manage and create awareness, it's also their responsibility to keep the environment clean"* (D4:101).

> *"… the public needs to be educated in terms of keeping the place clean and maintaining it, because a lot depends on the type of maintenance and cleanliness which is very important for Blue Flag status"* (D21:43).

> *"… an awareness campaign is key. It encourages people then to participate and keep the place, you know, neat … tidy and clean"* (D18:57-58)].

Non-governmental organisations were endorsed to handle this responsibility, example, "*… NGOs for environmental reasons, might also take responsibility to get people to see that by polluting the area, is what effectively prevent us from gaining the Blue Flag status.*" (D5:60). **Environmental consciousness** from the public emerged as one of the recommendations in this section, *"… you cannot have a Blue Flag award and keep it … if the public treat it with disrespect, littering and leaving garbage behind, if they're not keeping the beach clean, there's no point in having [it]"* (D17:58). Another participant advocated that the municipality should **make recommendations** for the status at Eastern Beach: "*The environmental side of BCMM should be leading the part in guiding people and making*

recommendations, so that we could achieve that Blue Flag status" (D20:43). **Policy formulation** received a specific mention and was recommended as one of the basic approaches for Blue Flag status: *"I think it's incumbent upon those who are playing a leadership role in terms of managing and preserving environmental tourism resources to develop a strategy for an environmental policy, to help plans for Blue Flag status.* (D6:101-106).

e) *Improve safety and security*

The 'Improve safety and security' sub-code is related to the 'Increase in security' sub-code of CP: CPEB, which was analysed previously. The sub-code 'Improve safety and security' of the current section recorded nine occurrences. Participants' recommendations for Eastern Beach were expressed in terms of **improved safety and security** [*"… it's not just about water quality to be improved – although that's probably the most important thing, but it's also about safety, security …"* (D2:130); *"We need to provide more street patrol in terms of security in the area* (D11:54); *"Security, so that any visitor can see that they are visiting a place that is safe for children, that is safe for them to use, that is accredited and so forth"* (D12:27); *"Security for the visitors … one thing that we've got to be very careful of and make sure that the public are aware of"* (D17:62); *"Safety, people want to feel safe and that means, to have a beach that is managed by lifeguards…"* (D18:52)].

BCMM and BCMDA were recommended by other participants as entities which should work together towards the improvement of safety and security at Eastern Beach [*"… I recommend safety, that's their responsibility (BCMM), as well as to acknowledge what makes this place special … and acknowledge that people are responsible for ensuring that it's still there for when your children want to come here"* (D4:108); and "*We would encourage the Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency (BCMDA) also to work together with us in terms of having a status for the Eastern Beach because … we want the safety in the area …"* (D19:66)].

f) *Basic Blue Flag requirements must exist*

A further aspect of participants' recommendations for Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach was encapsulated by the sub-code, 'Basic BF requirements must exist', and recorded eight quotations. Basic requirements and conditions for Blue Flag status must exist, for example: "*I want to be clear that Blue Flag is an international brand, right, so you can only attain Blue Flag as an international brand if you have your basics in place. Now, with Blue Flag status, there's quite a number of other conditions, if I remember the tick list, then there's something like over 30 things that need to be met, and I don't even think we're currently at five"*

(D3:157-158). A benchmark against other destinations was recommended by another participant: *"We must benchmark and look at other destinations and see how best they've managed, in order to attain it and how they've managed to, for example, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Knysna, Plettenberg Bay, they're very good at it. In conjunction with those destinations and obviously we can get an answer through creating that juxtaposition between us and them"* (D6:107-108).

Other participants touched on the criteria of **compliance and availability of facilities**, as evidenced by the following quotes:

> "*I am not sure – particularly Eastern Beach, because it was my understanding of the criteria of the Blue Status, there had to be certain facilities, there had to be certain checks that we need to comply to*" (D14:42).

> "*You can have Blue Flag status without any huge development actually taking place, as long as the basic criteria that will give you the Blue Flag is met, because I've been to some Blue Flag beaches in the province that are in the most rural of spaces, where there is no development, but yet the beach has attained that status purely because of the cleanliness of the sand, the water and the fact that there is access to a safe, clean ablution facility and lifeguards are in place*" (D18:61).

Two quotes focused on the improvement of water quality: *"… first and foremost, it's to improve the water quality"* (D18:54) and *"So, for example if the programme is clear to say the beach must be clean. The water must be clean and be taken care of"* (D9:33).

g) Encourage economic opportunities

The results from participants revealed 'Encourage economic opportunities' as a sixth sub-code with eight recorded occurrences. Participants were keen on Blue Flag status in order to **attract economic opportunities** [*"The economic opportunities it attracts must be part of your role in that management process, which needs to be defined"* (D4:104); *"So whatever Buffalo City is doing there, it's doing it for the economic benefit of the establishments along the beachfront, … but then the communities should form the basis of that"* (D9:61); *"All the stakeholders should be responsible in terms of attaining a Blue Flag. Because that guarantees us that we are going to get more visitors, our tourism spin-offs and … we are going to grow economically … I mean by growing, it means that the economy is going to benefit"* (D14:60); *"Well I think, you know, generally businesses around the beach and anybody who is interested in that area and certainly … businesses that want to contribute either by giving their time or some funds to promote Blue Flag can do that"* (D17:59); and *"Well, I think in everything that we do, in these sort of projects there, we're in tourism and people must be involved to sell and promote economy for your city, I think public and private should work together enormously on that"* (D13:56)].

Job creation also emerged [*"Because tourism is one of the propellers of the economy, right, it's one of the key sectors. So, Blue Flag in tourism is like the process where stakeholders … we can work together to ensure that there is job creation"* (D9:57); *"Tourism can benefit … it's going to grow because of this award, by having a lot of visitors, it means that we recommend people to book accommodation, to eat and to use amenities"* (D14:61); and "*Because there are very important organisations whereby you have a range of different people from the city that are selected as board members and obviously their contributions would come from different sectors to support Blue Flag, mainly economic and businesses … everyone would be involved"* (D21:42)].

h) Proactive management of infrastructure

The sub-code, 'Proactive management of infrastructure', had seven quotes, making it the seventh highest sub-code. Participants recommended and referred to proactive management of infrastructure at this beach, as one of their recommendations [*"I think the city … must be more proactive in how they manage the basic infrastructures"* (D3:162)*; "… if that infrastructure management is not happening … it's not just for Eastern Beach as a Blue Flag, that is for East London and Buffalo City in general"* (D3:177); "*It's to ensure that the infrastructure is in place*" (D18:58); *"I would suggest that a policy needs to be developed for better management of land infrastructure, not only for Eastern Beach but all the way to West Bank area"* (D6:103).

i) Provision of resources

The sub-code, 'Provision of resources', is the last sub-code of the CP: RECS and contains seven quotes. Participants recommended that resources should be provided and preserved in the quest for Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach [*"I think those in leadership must look at better management and preserve tourism resources at Eastern Beach"* (D6:104)*; and "… I think it really comes down to allocating resources and making sure that there are right people who are working on the jobs to make sure that … most cost-effective thing is done for the status …* (D20:41)].

Participants recommended that existing land be utilised to **develop facilities such as enterprises** around this beach, for example: *"I think they need to probably use or buy the land around the beach to develop their own sort of enterprises, so that it will become a more tourist attraction thing, … to initiate a new hotel for instance brings about new change in that area"* (D21:47) and *"… my recommendation maybe would be the funding to be able to maintain the resources being put in place"* (D18:60). There needs to be a **political will to manage resources** better for the status at Eastern Beach**:** *"… because of the complexity*

around Ebuhlanti, right, no one, has got that political will to make a decision to close off that space, rehabilitate the dunes towards the east, rehabilitate the river and provide resources for that Blue Flag" (D3:147). The literature on the political will illustrates a difference compared to these findings. The BCMDA has recently confirmed a tender that was issued to develop sufficient braai facilities and provide streetlights at Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. The current upgrade of facilities at this park proves that there is political concord and municipal will to improve this park, rather than closing it off (Buffalo City Metropolitan Development Agency, 2021).

C. Summary: Recommendations for Eastern Beach

There were plenty of recommendations that participants touched on concerning Blue Flag status at this beach. Most of them deliberated on the need for stakeholder engagement for this ecolabel to be successful. The results illustrate that participants consider a joint venture or collaboration of all stakeholders as a major recommendation. Participants maintained that a holistic stakeholder engagement between BCMM, public and private stakeholders and communities, can help towards a proper analysis of what needs to be done at this beach. BCMM was further endorsed by stakeholders to drive these engagement efforts with the public. The results revealed that this type of engagement would help to achieve the same vision and deal with the service delivery problems of the city and this beach. Participants voiced that there is a need for management to take responsibility towards facilitating educational campaigns, driving awareness and helping to keep Eastern Beach clean. It was recommended that environmental cleaning campaigns should exist and be managed by the BCMM. Regarding environmental consciousness, some participants endorsed that non-governmental organisations should also take responsibility to get people involved in efforts to avoid polluting the area.

Pollution control was mentioned when participants suggested that beach users need to know and change their perceptions towards the environment. The management of pollution and land activities also emerged and included upstream litter screenings and improvement in litter management at the beach. The negative environmental impacts such as litter and broken bottles could prevent this beach from obtaining the status. Cost-effective solid waste management was recommended as a solution towards protecting the environment. The results indicate that beach facilities such as restrooms or ablution facilities, litter bins and lifeguard facilities are currently in poor condition and should be upgraded. Participants alluded that BCMM must take responsibility to manage and create awareness on how to keep the coastal environment clean. It emerged from the results that land pollution caused

by littering should be better managed at Eastern Beach if the status is to be obtained. It was recommended that Eastern Beach should be cleaned, with stakeholders identifying the negative impact of litter on achieving Blue Flag status.

Sewage spill also emerged in this section, as a source of water pollution, which should be managed better at this beach. The sewage pipe issue also featured under the CP: CPEB. The results revealed that there is a river stream that deposits into the beach and it has polluted water. Therefore, it was recommended that such a stream must be rehabilitated. Participants asserted there must be proper planning, maintenance, waste management and coastal protection at Eastern Beach. It was also recommended that environmental guidelines for public awareness should be made available at this beach. Participants recommended that there is a need for proactive management of land infrastructure at this beach, through policy implementation. Other participants recommended that there must be a provision of resources to support the status, such as enterprises around Eastern Beach and Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. While it surfaced that there is a need for political will to manage resources at Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park, existing literature reveals that the current infrastructure and facilities' upgrade at this park proves that there is political concord and municipal will to improve the park.

The results revealed that stakeholders with leadership roles regarding environmental management and conservation should develop policies for Blue Flag status. Participants agreed that safety and security should be improved at this beach. It emerged that visitors should be aware that they are visiting a place that is accredited and safe for everyone to use. The results exhibit that this beach could attain Blue Flag status if basic requirements and conditions can be met, but few of those requirements could be met currently. It was recommended that economic opportunities should be attracted to improve tourism spin-offs and economic growth. The results illustrate that resources should be allocated, including land and the right organisations which can work towards Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach.

4.5.5. Voluntary environmental public initiatives at Eastern Beach

Concerning voluntary environmental public initiatives at Eastern Beach, participants were asked a closed question, on whether they are aware of any voluntary environmental public initiatives that are aimed at raising public awareness at Eastern Beach? Figure 4.5 portrays their responses. The majority (13) of these participants were unaware of any initiatives, while seven were aware of voluntary environmental public initiatives.
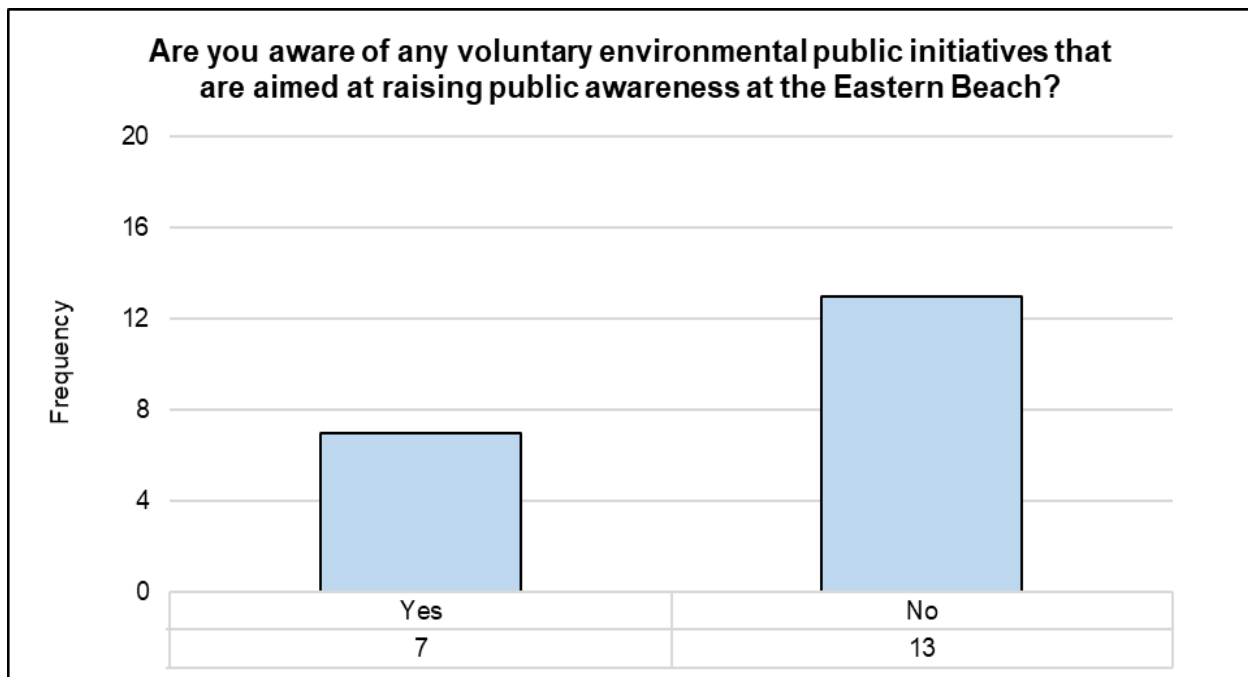
Figure 4.5: Awareness of voluntary environmental public initiatives at Eastern Beach

A. Overview: Voluntary environmental public initiatives

In addition to the quantitative question above, a qualitative question was posed to those who were aware of voluntary environmental public initiatives, namely: "If yes, please explain these initiatives". Findings from this question are not demonstrated in the form of a code frequency table, since these all fall under voluntary environmental public initiatives. Seven participants responded, with a total of 12 quotes.

B. Specifics: Voluntary environmental public initiatives

Regarding voluntary environmental public initiatives, different organisations from the public (three) and private sector (four), which are involved at Eastern Beach, were mentioned by participants. **WESSA** was alluded to by two participants [*"WESSA is involved in any public awareness, the only one I would be aware of would be WESSA. I think WESSA's key role is awareness and education, so that's beach clean-up* (D4:96-97); *Litter is a major problem. So, I think of WESSA, is the organisation that have done clean up campaigns in the area* (D2:119)].

BCMM was also mentioned: "*So BCM may in fact be conducting beach cleans*" (D4:98)]. The results also illustrate that **Windmill, Dispatch** and **Johnson & Johnson** companies participate in these voluntary environmental public initiatives at this beach: *"There are some private businesses, for instance Windmill that does campaigns on cleaning … the streets … with Dispatch, we've done some work, including … Johnson & Johnson, in terms of*

cleaning … at the beachfront and other areas" (D12:34 and 41). Some participants alluded to the **Environmental Public Works Programme (EPWP)** ["*A programme called EPWP is cleaning the coast, and working on the coast, things like that"* (D14:52) and *"The EPWP organisation is the one that is responsible for cleaning under the Buffalo City Metro, it does clean occasionally* (D15:46)]. Lastly, **Call To Action Programme** and **Mercedes Benz SA** were also mentioned [*"I don't know if you know the Call To Action Programme from the Border-Kei Chamber cleans the beach, the esplanade area …"* (D16:43) and *"… I do know Mercedes Benz SA is very much involved with the Call To Action, as well on cleaning there …"* (D16:60)].

C. Summary: Voluntary environmental public initiatives

Regarding voluntary environmental public initiatives, the results indicate that a few participants are aware of clean-up initiatives. These seem to be spearheaded by organisations and it is not clear to what extent the public are involved. Participants discussed BCMM and WESSA as major role players in cleaning campaigns, as well as in public and educational awareness initiatives at Eastern Beach. EPWP, Mercedes Benz SA, Windmill and Johnson and Johnson were mentioned, as programmes responsible for occasionally cleaning up the coast, within BCMM. Another initiative is the Call To Action Programme, in partnership with BKCOB (a non-profit organisation that often cleans Eastern Beach).

4.5.6. Summary: Research Objective Two

The second research objective (RO2) of this study aimed to understand current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status. RO2 derived from Section C of the interview guide, and Section 4.5 of the analysis chapter. The results from **CP: OIBF code** exhibited the important roles played by various organisations involved in striving towards Blue Flag status. These organisations promote engagement, plan for tourism projects, promote economic returns and infrastructure investments, create environmental public awareness and support tourism projects, while others recommended the involvement of communities. They ensure that host communities benefit. Their major reasons for the involvement at this beach are to assist with environmental and water management functions, as well as applying for Blue Flag status. It appeared, however, that leadership for Blue Flag status is lacking from the local municipality. More support from local businesses and educational institutions is needed.

The results encapsulated by the **CP: SPBF code** illustrated positive perceptions of Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach. It is viewed as a great opportunity that would improve the

beach standard and quality. Stakeholders reflected on the benefits associated with improving beach quality, giving people confidence, providing international beach prominence and elevating the city's appeal. This beach could easily promote itself as a preferred destination and increase visitor numbers if the status was obtained, stakeholders surmised. A positive ripple-effect impact was perceived regarding beachgoers who can be better educated on the importance of environmental awareness at this beach and surrounding areas. Stakeholders expressed that the status would enhance beach safety, in terms of water and environment.

The results captured within the **CP: CPEB** code revealed infrastructural development as a major current plan for Eastern Beach. An integrated urban park is under development, as part of the current beach upgrade. Findings demonstrated that integrated coastal management processes and policies are known and will be used in development interventions such as Blue Flag ecolabel. An old sewage pipeline is being upgraded, which used to run into the beach. It is hoped that the replacement of the old sewage pipeline will improve the hygiene of water for swimming at this beach. Additionally, human-made attractions are at present being developed and beach facilities including amenities are being enhanced at Eastern Beach. Provisions are already being made to accommodate informal traders in the area. Stakeholders voiced that safety and security are part of current plans at this beach. Currently organisations including BCMDA, the BKCCA and ECPTA have plans to increase safety and security, through the deployment of safety monitors. BCMM, together with political parties such as the Democratic Alliance, currently drive cleaning campaigns to keep this beach clean. These plans are meant to improve Eastern Beach, making it a better place for tourists to enjoy, stakeholders agreed.

The results on the **CP: RECS code** demonstrated plenty of recommendations conferred by stakeholders. They deliberated on the need for stakeholder engagement for this ecolabel to be successful. It was recommended that a joint venture or collaboration of all stakeholders, holistic stakeholder engagement between BCMM, public and private stakeholders and communities is vital. The results portray that there is a need for management responsibility to facilitate educational campaigns, drive awareness and help to keep the beach clean. The management of pollution and land activities emerged, and stakeholders asserted that upstream litter screenings and litter management is highly recommended. Cost-effective solid waste management was suggested, as a solution towards environmental protection. The local municipality was recommended to take responsibility to manage and create public awareness on keeping the coastal environment clean. Beach facilities such as restrooms or

ablution facilities, litter bins and lifeguard facilities should be upgraded and more of these should be provided. Beach and public park environmental management policies were recommended to guide users on how to protect the environment. It was advised that safety and security be improved, while the basic requirements for the Blue Flag ecolabel should be met. Economic opportunities should be attracted to improve tourism spin-offs and economic growth. Proactive management of basic infrastructure was also endorsed, including the allocation of basic resources to support the status.

Regarding **CP: VEPI code**, the results demonstrated that few stakeholders are aware of voluntary environmental clean-up initiatives at Eastern Beach. They are spearheaded by organisations such as BCMM and WESSA as major role players in cleaning and public educational awareness campaigns. EPWP, Mercedes Benz SA, Windmill, the Call To Action Programme in partnership with BKCOB, and Johnson and Johnson were mentioned in terms of occasionally cleaning up the coast within BCMM.

4.6. COMPLIANCE OF EASTERN BEACH WITH BLUE FLAG CRITERIA

As per orientation Table 4.15, the current section of the data analysis concerns the **third secondary research objective, RO3,** which aimed To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria (Section D of the IG). The Blue Flag Compliance code category will be referred to as BFC in this section. For this section, the questions to participants were quantitative closed questions. The results are portrayed in the form of tables, followed by summaries.

Table 4.15: Orientation table for data analysis and interpretation – C.

Research objective & code category	Research objective	Section in interview guide	Section in chapter
RO1: **A = Awareness**	To discover the awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status	B	4.4
RO2: **CP = Current Plans**	To understand current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status	C	4.5
RO3: **BFC = Blue Flag Compliance**	To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria	D	4.6
RO4: **CC = Current Challenges**	To ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach	E	4.7
RO5: **FIP = Future Improvement Plans**	To ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach	F	4.8

A beach that complies with all the Blue Flag criteria is most likely to be accredited with Blue Flag status. However, not all beaches are able to obtain this internationally recognised ecolabel, due to the inability to meet all the criteria (Klein & Dodds, 2017; Lucrezi *et al.,* 2016; Williams & Micallef, 2009). To determine the positioning of Eastern Beach in this regard, public and private stakeholders were requested to respond to selected criteria with a *yes*, *no* or *not sure*, when expressing the compliance or noncompliance of Eastern Beach with each Blue Flag criterium.

While all the criteria were presented in Section 2.8.3, the researcher focused only on the major criteria which related to the research problem and addressed the research objectives.

4.6.1. Environmental education and information criteria

Table 4.16 presents the results obtained from participants regarding the compliance of Eastern Beach with the environmental education and information criteria.

Table 4.16: Environmental education and information criteria

Environmental education and information criteria		Response frequency		
		Yes	No	Not sure
1.	There is information presently displayed regarding the Blue Flag ecolabel at the Eastern Beach.	0	17.0	3.0
2.	Eastern Beach is promoting environmental education activities for the beach users.	4.0	15.0	1.0
3.	A beach map indicating the different facilities available is currently displayed at the Eastern Beach.	10,0	10,0	0,0
4.	Eastern Beach is currently offering a Code of Conduct, which is displayed and guiding beach users about the appropriate use of the beach and surrounding areas.	11,0	8,0	1,0

As indicated in Table 4.16, the majority of stakeholders (17), indicated that information regarding the Blue Flag label is not on display, while the other three participants were not sure. Eastern Beach is also not promoting environmental education activities, based on the majority of participants' (15) replying 'no'. This finding links to the findings in Figure 4.5 on there being a lack of awareness of any environmental public initiatives.

Regarding the display of a beach map showing facilities, ten participants felt Eastern Beach complied with this, while ten felt it did not comply. In the awareness of Eastern Beach's

problems (A: EBP), in Section 4.4, participants touched on 'Inadequate Beach Facilities' as one of the problems at Eastern Beach. This means they might be missing or if they exist; they should be upgraded or better displayed for the public to be mindful of them. Eleven participants agreed that a code of conduct was on display at the beach, while eight said 'no'. This could suggest a link between prevailing negative ecological impacts of beach users and limited sustainable information, which beach users should be cognisant of at Eastern Beach. Therefore, much effort is required in terms of environmental education and information criteria, to improve the current status of this beach. Such ecological efforts should be aimed at meeting South Africa's international obligations related to coastal and educational matters for beach users at Eastern Beach (Environmental Defence, 2020; Klein & Dodds, 2017; Republic of South Africa, 1998).

4.6.2. Water quality criteria

As this section focuses on the compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria, Table 4.17 presents the results obtained from participants, relating to water quality.

Table 4.17: Water quality criteria

Water quality criteria		*Response frequency*		
		Yes	**No**	**Not sure**
1.	Eastern Beach is currently complying with water quality sampling and frequency requirements for the Blue Flag beaches.	4,0	11,0	5,0
2.	There is perceived industrial, waste-water or sewage-related discharges, currently affecting Eastern Beach.	17,0	2,0	1,0
3.	Eastern Beach is fully complying with the standards and requirements for water quality analysis.	0,0	11,0	9,0

With respect to compliance with water quality sampling and frequency, the majority (11) of interviewed participants selected 'no', indicating that this beach does not currently comply. It is concerning that the majority of participants (17) indicated that there are problems regarding industrial or sewage water-waste at Eastern Beach. To supplement these results, participants also referred to water quality issues in Section 4.4. Such findings are concerning, especially when environmental legislation in South Africa puts emphasis on the proper execution of regulations, to avoid impaired coastal planning, land-use and unwanted sewage related spills on its beaches (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Duc, 2009; Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, 2019).

As expected, most participants (11) subsequently disagreed that Eastern Beach is complying with the standards and requirements for water quality analysis. Other participants

(9) were unsure about this criterion, indicating a concern or a gap which perhaps requires further research. Currently and due to lacking Blue Flag status at this beach, there is no official encouragement from the city to abide by the Bathing Water Directive (BWD) policies. These policies are concerned with beach certification, water quality, beach safety, cleanliness and reliability (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, 2019). These results indicate that Eastern Beach is currently not complying with the standards for swimming water, which should be in line with the Blue Flag requirements for the microbiological parameters regarding faecal coli bacteria and intestinal enterococci (Foundation for Environment Education, 2006).

4.6.3. Environmental management criteria

Table 4.18 depicts participants' responses regarding Eastern Beach's compliance with environmental management criteria.

Table 4.18: Environmental management criteria

Environmental Management		Response frequency		
		Yes	No	Not Sure
1.	A beach management committee appointed by the local authority/beach operator for the Eastern Beach already exists.	3,0	13,0	4,0
2.	Eastern Beach has clean facilities, which are meeting required standards for Blue Flag beaches.	1,0	17,0	2,0
3.	Facilities for the separation of recyclable waste materials (glass, tins, dry and wet waste), exist at Eastern Beach.	5,0	15,0	0,0
4.	At Eastern Beach, there is an adequate number of restrooms and ablution facilities for beach users.	2,0	17,0	1,0
5.	Eastern Beach has strict and controlled measures that are guiding the access of dogs and other domestic animals.	6,0	14,0	0,0

Interviewed participants disclosed a noteworthy negative response in relation to the existence of a beach management committee, which should be appointed by the beach operator or by the BCMM, to look after this beach. This finding reveals a lack of a joint coastal management effort, which should exist to ensure that there is a shared responsibility for planning, development, management and monitoring of this natural attraction, towards Blue Flag status. A high frequency of responses was received (17,0) (the majority of stakeholders) for criterion 2, where participants indicated that Eastern Beach does not have clean facilities which is a required standard for a Blue Flag ecolabel. The results also indicate that this beach is not complying with the criterion related to the availability of facilities for the separation of dry and wet waste, with most (15,0) participants responding with a 'no' answer.

Restrooms and ablution facilities for beach users are also not adequate; 17 participants responded with a 'no' answer to the criterion. This reveals a need for facilities at this beach to be sufficiently developed and then maintained, as suggested earlier in Section 4.5 of this analysis. These results suggest that a degree of noncompliance exists at Eastern Beach, which oppose the required national standards and regulations on acceptable beach facilities. These results also signify that beach authorities, in conjunction with the BCMM, must ensure that facilities and activities under their responsibility comply with environmental criteria. While facilities are concerning at this beach, the management of the beach, its facilities and immediate surrounding areas must also comply with appropriate coastal development plans and monitoring, as per the planning regulations of the Republic of South Africa (2014).

Finally, Table 4.18 indicates that the majority of participants (14,0), felt that Eastern Beach lacks strict and controlled measures to guide access of dogs and other domestic animals. Non-adherence to Blue Flag beach requirements on pets, as well as inadequate beach facilities, reveal a lack of a broad coastal public consciousness of policies and regulations, which should be positively influencing sustainable tourism practices at Eastern Beach.

4.6.4. Safety and services criteria

Table 4.19 presents three criteria relating to safety and services, where participants were asked if they feel Eastern Beach is complying or not complying.

Table 4.19: Safety and services criteria

Safety and Services		Response frequency		
		Yes	No	Not Sure
1.	Appropriate public safety control measures currently exist for beach users at Eastern Beach.	13,0	5,0	2,0
2.	Essential facilities and access for physically disabled visitors or residents already exist at the Eastern Beach.	8,0	11,0	1,0
3.	Emergency plans to cope with pollution risks currently exist at Eastern Beach.	6,0	13,0	1,0

In spite of incidents related to people drowning, robbery and other types of crime at this beach, appropriate public safety measures do exist. A high frequency of responses (13,0) supported this. However, further research is needed to determine the extent of public safety control measures towards the prevention of previously mentioned safety issues at Eastern Beach.

In terms of facilities and access for physically disabled visitors, responses are mixed, with eight participants saying 'yes', 11 saying 'no' and one being unsure. The public and private stakeholders gave negative responses when it comes to the existence of emergency plans to cope with pollution risks at this beach (13 said 'no', six said 'yes'). This is therefore an area for future action, as beach management should have contingency plans to manage oil, hazardous or toxic waste spills. As per the criteria, this beach should have defined plans for events that could lead to large-scale pollution impacts on the beach or bathing water (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa, 2019). With respect to safety and services criteria, these results signify that there is a need for Eastern Beach to be managed based on the implemented safety plans of the Republic of South Africa (1993)

4.6.5. Summary: Research Objective Three
D. *Summary:* Eastern Beach compliance with Blue Flag criteria

Since this RO did not consist of separate codes, the standard summary (D) is dealt with together with the summary for RO3. The third research objective (RO3) intended To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria (Section D of the interview guide). Regarding **environmental education and information criteria**, the results of this study depict that information involving the Blue Flag ecolabel is not currently on display at Eastern Beach. This beach is correspondingly not complying with the promotion of environmental education and training activities, which should occur at Blue Flag beaches. These findings are linked to the lack of awareness regarding environmental public initiatives concerning this beach. Participants showed compliance with regard to the code of conduct, which is on display to guide beach users about the appropriate use of the beach.

Regarding water quality, most participants indicated beach noncompliance pertaining to industrial or sewage water-waste entering the sea. The results indicated that the majority further disagreed that Eastern Beach is complying when it comes to **water quality criteria**. Those who were not sure could not be overlooked since they were very close (nine) to the majority (eleven). Participants responded to **environmental management criteria,** showing a noteworthy negative response in terms of the current lack of a beach management committee, which should be appointed by the beach operator (BCMM) to look after Eastern Beach. The results illustrate that this beach is non-compliant regarding clean facilities, which should exist to meet Blue Flag requirements, as noted by the majority of participants. In relation to the criterion on the availability of facilities for the separation of dry and wet waste, most (15) participants indicated noncompliance with a 'no' response.

The results illustrate that Eastern Beach has no adequate restrooms and ablution facilities for users, with most participants (17) giving a 'no' response. In terms of the **safety and services criteria**, the majority agreed that this beach has appropriate safety and security and hence complies with the criterion. Facilities emerged again in this criterion, now in relation to access for physically disabled visitors. There was a mixed response here regarding compliance. Finally, most participants disagree that Eastern Beach has emergency plans to cope with pollution risks.

4.7. CURRENT CHALLENGES REGARDING ATTAINING BLUE FLAG STATUS AT EASTERN BEACH

This section of this data analysis chapter answers the **fourth secondary research objective, RO4,** which aimed to ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach (Section E of the IG). The orientation Table 4.20 depicts the Current Challenges (CC) code category.

Table 4.20: Orientation table for data analysis and interpretation – D.

Research objective & code category	Research objective	Section in interview guide	Section in chapter
RO1: **A = Awareness**	To discover the awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status	B	4.4
RO2: **CP = Current Plans**	To understand current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status	C	4.5
RO3: **BFC = Blue Flag Compliance**	To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria	D	4.6
RO4: **CC = Current Challenges**	To ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach	E	4.7
RO5: **FIP = Future Improvement Plans**	To ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach in East London	F	4.8

The findings of RO4 are deliberated in the same order in which they were determined, and they evolve from a code overview to specific details. The code category, 'Current Challenges', for this secondary research objective generated one code, since one qualitative question was asked in this section, as shown in Table 4.21. As previously highlighted with the first research objective of this analysis chapter, when analysing and interpreting results, a code frequency table that represents sub-codes will be provided. Quotations that emerge under each sub-code will subsequently be presented. This is done in Section 4.7.1. Section 4.7.2 covers the qualitative question. Several questions are listed,

and participants were asked to indicate which of those questions are relevant to Eastern Beach. Their responses are presented in Table 4.23.

Table 4.21: Current challenges code category, code prefix and code for RO4

CODE CATEGORY: STAKEHOLDER CHALLENGES AT EASTERN BEACH			
Code prefixes	**Codes**	**Section in chapter**	**Research objective**
CC: SCEB:	Stakeholder challenges at Eastern Beach	4.7.1	RO4

4.7.1. Stakeholder challenges

A. Overview: Current challenges faced by stakeholders at Eastern Beach

Table 4.22 depicts the results for CC: SCEB: code, where the sub-code, 'Public control issues and insufficient beach management', contained the highest number of quotes. The sub-code, 'Safety and security issues' recorded the second highest occurrences, followed by 'Lack of ablution facilities' as third highest. Other sub-codes with two or less quotations will not be analysed in this section.

Table 4.22: Code frequencies for **Current Challenges: Stakeholder challenges at Eastern Beach**

CODE: STAKEHOLDER CHALLENGES AT EASTERN BEACH (SCEB)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
CC: SCEB: Public control issues	18
CC: SCEB: Safety and security issues	8
CC: SCEB: Lack of ablution facilities	6
CC: SCEB: Insufficient waste bins	5
CC: SCEB: Sewage management	3
CC: SCEB: Lack of leadership	2
CC: SCEB: Lack of respect for the environment	1
CC: SCEB: Lack of Integrated Coastal Zone Management	1
TOTAL	**44**

B. Specifics: Current challenges faced by stakeholders at Eastern Beach

a) Public control issues and insufficient beach management

This sub-code 'Public control issues and insufficient beach management' contained 18 quotations. Participants elaborated on public control issues as a major challenge facing stakeholders at Eastern Beach. The results signify that the **management of people** at the

beach is a major issue ["… *the management of people is the biggest issue*" (D3:181); "*My belief is that there's not sufficient oversight and control, which is challenging now*" (D13:58); "*… there is no crowd control at all*" (D18:70); and "*… it needs control from the municipality in terms of ensuring that people do what is acceptable at the beach*" (D21:52)].

One participant touched on the lack of control and **limits of acceptable change**, "*… I think that lack of control there can be linked to, there's this nice concept of limits of acceptable change*" (D5:69). **Overcrowding** emerged as one of the current challenges at this beach, with one participant confirming that "*The challenge faced by public stakeholders is too much overcrowding, and people are allowed to be there any time*" (D9:64) and "*There is no control on the number of people that's allowed in the space, right, so sometimes it's totally overcrowded*" (D3:182). The results illustrate that **alcohol usage is a challenge** that can be dangerous: "*Alcohol on the beach becomes a problem… and especially when you've got little kids and it's very dangerous for the little ones*" (D17:67) and "... *because there's uncontrolled drinking, and subsequently, quite a number of criminal actions emanate from the drunkenness*" (D3:183). These results show a link with stakeholder awareness of recreational activities at Eastern Beach, where alcohol usage (drinking) is one of the demand-led activities that attract visitors to the beach (Section 4.4.2 of RO1). Demand-led activities in a destination or tourist attraction are known to be environmentally unfriendly and unsustainable (Keyser, 2009).

One participant touched on the **lack of environmental consciousness**: "*there is no awareness care for the environment on keeping it a clean place*" (D13:60). Literature indicates that efforts have been made to deal with this challenge. For example, the Coastal Awareness Programme (CAP) was launched in 2018 by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment. The CAP was aimed at reducing the lack of environmental consciousness amongst the visitors to Eastern Beach, introducing measures to control illegal dumping and use of vehicles in the coastal area (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2018; Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment 2018). However, there is no evidence to prove that this programme is still in place to support environmental management at Eastern Beach. Participants expressed changes faced by stakeholders in terms of **insufficient beach management**. One participant alluded to insufficient capacity to manage the beach, for example, "*… one of the public sector challenges, I think will be capacity and resources to manage this beach facility*" (D4:116), while another touched on the **lack of effort from the municipality** "*I think one of the challenges they face, is that almost lack of a concerted effort from the side of the municipality to manage Eastern Beach, I would say*" (D6:115).

Problems faced by Eastern Beach were linked to **entertainment from Ebuhlanti**: for example, *"The challenge will be the entertainment area of Ebuhlanti and how that is controlled"* (D4:117); *"Another big problem is that you shouldn't have anyone drinking on the beach and it is because of the park nearby, they end up at sea drunk …"* (D8:58). **Vandalism of facilities** emerged as one of the challenges faced by stakeholders at this beach, with one participant asserting that: *"… there is definite issue of vandalism … so they keep stripping the facilities and that is an ongoing struggle for them … "* (D17:65-66). Existing evidence indicates that more effort to minimise these challenges is made during the festive season through the South African Police Services Joint Operations Centre, which includes Disaster Management, Law Enforcement, Traffic, Fire, Police Lifesaving, Ambulance services and National Sea Rescue Institute (Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, 2019).

b) Safety and security issues

The sub-code, 'Safety and security issues' was the second most used code, with eight quotations. Participants voiced that **crime is a challenge** faced by stakeholders at Eastern Beach, for example:

> *"My challenge is crime ... Many people wouldn't really feel safe around Eastern Beach"* (D15:54).

> *"… it has got a problem of crime; it is not safe to walk out there at night"* (D21:51).

> *"There's an element of crime, you know, it's not visibly policed"* (D18:68).

> *"I think it's quite a high-risk area in fact there's been a number of incidents there in the past with people having been accosted and robbed and stuff like that"* (D7:65).

These results reveal similarity and linkage of safety elements across several sub-codes and ROs. Safety and security first emerged under 'Current Plans for Eastern Beach' (CP: CPEB) in Section 2.5.3, where stakeholders indicated that safety and security is one priority that is being improved at Eastern Beach. Secondly, safety and security emerged under 'Recommendations for Eastern Beach' (CP: RECS), where participants recommended that safety and security is one important element that needs to be enhanced, so that beach visitors become aware that they are visiting a safe place for all. The same safety and security element featured under 'Safety and services' criteria (Section 4.6.4), where the results showed that Eastern Beach is not compliant towards essential facilities and access for disabled visitors and has no emergency plans to cope with pollution risks.

Yet again, in the current section, the results portrayed that there is not enough security: *"The security is not sufficient, although we provide"* (D3:178). Others made reference to **insufficient lifeguards** for beach users' safety: *"The lifesaving services are not even sufficient, even if it's there, because there's not enough guards as compared to the number of users"* (D3:179); *"… there are not lifeguards present all year round, a lot of people are not obeying the rules and drinking on the beach"* (D18:66) and *"I'm sure they have lifeguards, but generally when there are big crowds, there is insufficient safety controls"* (D13:59).

c) Lack of ablution facilities

'Lack of ablution facilities is a fourth sub-code, which contained six quotations. The results illustrate that ablution facilities is a challenge, for example: *"… I think the lack of ablution facilities is the main one"* (D5:68); "*So the challenge there is that there isn't enough ablutions and not enough maintenance from the city*" (D7:66); *"… facilities need a serious revamp, especially the ablutions, including the lifeguards shack …"* (D8:59); "… *my stakeholder challenge would be facilities such as change rooms and toilets*" (D15:52); and "*It would be facilities, proper ablution facilities that are clean …*" (D16:63).

d) Insufficient waste bins

The results from participants revealed 'Insufficient waste bins' as a sub-code with five quotes. Participants alluded to insufficient waste bins at Eastern Beach as a challenge for stakeholders:

> *"…facilities for waste control and management are a problem, although there are public bins, right, they are not sufficient"* (D3:180).

> *"…because people drink and throw the rubbish right there, for me that's a key challenge and bins are few"* (D5:67).

> *"… littering and waste management because … if want to throw away rubbish and you miss one rubbish bin, you struggle to find another one. So, there is insufficient waste or rubbish bins around the beach"* (D15:53).

> *"… because there's a lot of broken glass and litter on the ground, bins are limited, so that just makes the environment unsafe and dirty"* (D18:67).

e) Sewage management

A further aspect of participants' understanding of current challenges faced by stakeholders at Eastern Beach was encapsulated by the sub-code, 'Sewage management' which featured in three quotations. The results illustrate that sewage is a challenge and participants acknowledged that this beach is affected by sewage discharge [*"… sewage is*

an issue, so water and its hygiene is also a problem due to that river there with sewage flowing down to the sea from Nahoon, so that would definitely be the first issue" (D17:64); *"… and also, the sewage spillage on the river that runs into the ocean"* (D15:55) and "*Elevation of the sewage problem is their challenge"* (D7:64)]. These findings link with different sections and ROs previously discussed in this analysis chapter.

The sewage and water quality element first featured in Section 4.4.4, under 'Awareness of Eastern Beach problems' (A: EBP) of RO1, where participants alluded to a general water quality problem at Eastern Beach, due to sewage. Secondly, in Section 4.5.3 under 'Current Plans for Eastern Beach' (CP: CPEB), participants elaborated on the replacement of a sewage pipe, which is planned to help with water quality. Under RO3, the results on the water quality criteria depicted that Eastern Beach is currently not complying due to the same sewage issue. In addition, these findings correspond with Daily Dispatch (2019) and Momba, Osode and Sibewu (2006), who arrived at a similar conclusion regarding the sewage challenge at this beach.

C. Summary: Current challenges faced by stakeholders at Eastern Beach

The majority of participants indicated that public control is a challenge that stakeholders are facing at Eastern Beach. They specifically asserted that there is lack of control which is needed to manage people at this beach; this leads to another challenge, which is overcrowding. The results also reveal that alcohol usage is a challenge, which some participants noted endangers other beach users, especially children. There is also lack of control of people who entertain themselves at Ebuhlanti and go to the sea intoxicated. Alcohol usage also results in criminal activities. Participants further described safety and security as a current challenge, asserting that people do not feel safe at this beach at night. Participants alluded to incidents of robbery at the beach and referred to it as high-risk. Some asserted that safety is a challenge due to insufficient lifeguards. Beach management emerged as an issue faced by stakeholders.

The results indicate that there are insufficient resources relating to public security measures (i.e. security officers and lifeguards) and management of physical beach facilities (number of waste bins and use of waste bins). More security is required for the protection of existing beach facilities from vandalism. In addition to insufficient resources, other participants reflected on this phenomenon, confirming that that there are limited efforts from the municipality to ensure that the management of this beach is improved. Sewage

management received a specific mention as an issue concerning stakeholders, since the spillage leads to the sea.

4.7.2. Eastern Beach challenges

A. Overview: Challenges relevant to Eastern Beach

This is a quantitative section, where several challenges were listed, and participants were asked which of these were relevant to Eastern Beach. They indicated whether specific challenges were applicable or not applicable to Eastern Beach. The researcher used the literature review to formulate a list of common beach challenges which often prevent most beaches from obtaining Blue Flag status (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020). Participants' responses are portrayed in Table 4.23, and subsequently discussed.

Table 4.23: Challenges relevant to Eastern Beach**.**

Challenges relevant to Eastern Beach	Response frequency (n = 20)	
	Applicable	Not applicable
1) Lack of coordination of requests for applying for Blue Flag award for Eastern Beach	16	4
2) Lack of monitoring of bathing water quality to ensure Blue Flag Beach quality compliance	18	2
3) No organised litter collection and acceptable forms of litter disposal	12	8
4) Absence of organised collection of waste for recycling	7	13
5) Lack of organised collection of hazardous wastes for appropriate disposal	12	8
6) Absence of assurance that the standards concerning safety provisions are met	17	3
7) Lack of regular environmental education activities for beach users at Eastern Beach	20	0
8) Insufficient maintenance of the beach, so that it does not look good for beach users	20	0
9) Lack of Information boards for visitors on protecting the environment, safety precautions and services	17	3
10) Inadequate incorporation of environmental considerations into local planning for the Eastern Beach	20	0

B. Discussion: Challenges relevant to Eastern Beach

Where relevant, the challenges have been grouped and discussed according to themes.

a) Lack of coordinated requests for Blue Flag status

With regard to challenges relevant to Eastern Beach, the majority (16/20) of participants indicated that the coordination of requests to apply for the Blue Flag status is lacking.

b) Lack of monitoring of bathing water

The lack of monitoring of bathing water relates to the water quality problem, which prevents beaches from obtaining the status or causing those with status to lose it. Concerning this beach, 18 out of 20 participants indicated a lack of compliance in this regard, since water quality is not monitored. Existing literature indicates that there is inadequate waste-water treatment amongst beaches located within the BCMM (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 2020; Momba *et al.,* 2006).

c) Environmental management and planning challenges

The following two challenges relate to environmental management challenges that Blue Flag and non-Blue Flag beaches face. In relation to Eastern Beach, most participants indicated an existing challenge pertaining to organised litter collection (12/20) and organised collection of hazardous wastes for appropriate disposal (12/20). It is significant that all participants (20/20) specified that the inadequate incorporation of environmental considerations into local planning is an applicable challenge at Eastern Beach. Regarding this beach, compliance is only met in terms of organised collection of waste for recycling, as 13 out of 20 indicated that this challenge was not applicable.

These results correspond with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) (2018), which confirms that environmental management issues exist at Eastern Beach. The department has initiated temporary awareness programmes at this beach, aimed at addressing environmental management challenges but that is not sufficient. DEA joint strategies with Working for the Coast (WftC) projects and the public were once held, to raise awareness about access to the coast, coastal public property and keeping the property clean (Department of Environmental Affairs, 2019).

d) Environmental education and information challenges

The results indicate existing environmental education and information challenges. All participants exposed the lack of compliance concerning regular environmental education activities for beach users (20/20), while most (17/20) indicated a lack of information boards for visitors (on protecting the environment, safety precautions and services at Eastern Beach). Participants earlier indicated that information regarding the Blue Flag ecolabel is not on display and this beach is not promoting environmental education activities (Section 4.6.1). Findings in this section then correspond with those of that previous section. It is noteworthy that all participants specified insufficient maintenance of the beach (resulting in it being unattractive to beach users) as a challenge (20/20). Projects driven by the DEA are

occasional and focus on public environmental awareness at Eastern Beach and Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park.

e) Beach safety standards are not met

The majority (17/20) of participants marked the absence of assurance that the standards concerning safety provisions are met, as an applicable challenge for this beach. In the light of other findings, this is an obvious finding since the standards are not being met, therefore there cannot be assurance in this regard. Yet, participants indicated that they were happy with the public safety control measures that currently exist at Eastern Beach (Section 4.6.4). This finding can be linked to the 'Safety and security issues' sub-code, in Section (b) of 'Current challenges faced by stakeholders' (Section 4.7.1).

4.7.3. Summary: Research Objective Four

The fourth research objective (RO4) of the study aimed to ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach. RO4 originated from Section E of the interview guide, and Section 4.7 of the analysis chapter. The results from **CC: SCEB code** illustrated the *lack of control to manage people*, which leads to *overcrowding* at Eastern Beach. The *alcohol usage* is a challenge, which can endanger other beach users, especially children. Participants made reference to *safety and security*, stating that beach *users do not feel safe* to be at the beach at night. This beach was criticised for *robbery incidents and noted as high-risk*. The results demonstrated insufficient security for the protection of existing beach facilities from *vandalism*. There are limited resources, relating to *public security measures* (i.e. security officers and lifeguards) and management of physical beach facilities (number of waste bins and use of waste bins). *Sewage management* received a specific mention due to the sewage spill problem at this beach.

4.8. FUTURE IMPROVEMENT OF EASTERN BEACH

This section addresses the fifth and last **research objective, (RO5) of the study**, which aimed to ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach (Section F of the IG). The 'Future Improvement Plans' code category will be referred to as FIP in this section, as illustrated in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24: Orientation table for data analysis and interpretation – E.

Research objective & code category	Research objective	Section in interview guide	Section in chapter
RO1: **A = Awareness**	To discover the awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status	B	4.4
RO2: **CP = Current Plans**	To understand current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status	C	4.5
RO3: **BFC = Blue Flag Compliance**	To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria	D	4.6
RO4: **CC = Current Challenges**	To ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach	E	4.7
RO5: **FIP = Future Improvement Plans**	To ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach	F	4.8

The code category, 'Future Improvement Plans', for RO5 generated four codes as shown in Table 4.25. For each of these, when analysing and interpreting results, a code frequency table that represents sub-codes will be provided. Quotations that emerge under each sub-code will subsequently be presented. Section 4.8.1 asked stakeholders a further improvement question, namely: *What do you think can be done differently to improve the status of Eastern Beach?* Subsequently, Sections 4.8.2 to 4.8.4 asked questions that were aimed to determine environmental, socio-cultural and economic benefits that could ensue, should Blue Flag status be achieved.

Table 4.25: Future improvement plans code category, code prefixes and codes for RO5.

CODE CATEGORY: FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS (FIP)			
Code prefixes	**Codes**	**Section in chapter**	**Research objective**
FIP: FIPEB:	Future improvement plans for Eastern Beach	4.8.1	RO5
FIP: EBEB:	Environmental benefits for Eastern Beach	4.8.2	
FIP: SBEB:	Socio-cultural benefits from Eastern Beach	4.8.3	
FIP: ECBEB:	Economic benefits from Eastern Beach	4.8.4	

4.8.1. Future improvement plans for Eastern Beach

A. Overview: Future improvement plans for Eastern Beach

Table 4.26 illustrates the results for FIP: FIPEB code, where the sub-code, 'Upgrade the beach and keep it clean', contained the highest number of quotes. 'Improve beach facilities'

recorded the second highest occurrences, followed by 'Invest in Eastern Beach' as the third and 'Improve public awareness and safety' as the fourth highest sub-code. Sub-codes with only two or less quotations would not usually be analysed. However, the sub-code 'Rehabilitate sewage stream' will be analysed due to its relevance to the study.

Table 4.26: Code frequencies for **FIP: Future improvement plans of Eastern Beach.**

CODE: FUTURE IMPROVEMENT PLANS OF EASTERN BEACH (FIPEB)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
FIP: FIPEB: Upgrade the beach & keep it clean	14
FIP: FIPEB: Improve beach facilities	12
FIP: FIPEB: Invest in Eastern Beach	9
FIP: FIPEB: Improve public awareness and safety	7
FIP: FIPEB: Manage Eastern Beach better	4
FIP: FIPEB: Rehabilitate sewage stream	2
FIP: FIPEB: Environmental protection	2
TOTAL	**47**

B. Specifics: Future improvement plans for Eastern Beach

a) Upgrade the beach and keep it clean

This sub-code contained 14 quotations. Participants spoke about the beach upgrade and keeping it clean, as a major future improvement plan at Eastern Beach. It emerged that the beach must be **upgraded to improve its status** ["*I would say upgrade and improve the development there … bring in more activities, attractions …*" (D14:71); "*So, a strategy ought to be developed to upgrade the place called Marina Glen to be part of the Eastern Beach …*" (D6:117); "*The first thing that comes to my mind is to formalise and enhance the operation of Ebuhlanti …*" (D4:119) and "*… enhance it and act as if you have Blue Flag status, even before you apply for the status*" (D9:66)]. Other participants made reference to **keeping the beach clean** and treating it like a Blue Flag beach, for example:

> "*… the normal cleaning of the beach, is part of very basics, not even to a Blue Flag status, but just as basics … to keep the beach clean*" (D3:185).

> "*… we cannot have a beach area where it's used as a braai spot and people come and drink and throw bottles as they please, we just need to keep it clean and abide by what will make it a Blue Flag …*" (D6:117-127).

> "*Well, … the first thing they need to do is … a big clean up, and once you've got it to the right level and it needs to be maintained and kept there*" (D8:60).

"… keep the beach clean and tidy or just have maybe, monitors helping people to keep their environments clean, directing to the dirt bins …" (D16:65).

"I think if they can just improve on the cleanliness from an environmental perspective; water, sand, etcetera" (D17:81).

One participant touched on **solid waste management**, as one of the improvement plans to be considered and aligned to beach quality, for example:

"I think what needs to happen there is waste and various waste streams need to be upgraded to improve the quality of the beach and that's specifically solid waste from litter that's generated in the area" (D4:120).

South Africa adopted the Blue Flag ecolabel because it ensures that accredited beaches can be promoted for their sustainable management, international standard of cleanliness, safety and environmental responsiveness (Blue Flag South Africa, 2020; National Department of Tourism, 2016b). The findings above indicate a desire by stakeholders to take steps to achieve this.

b) Improve beach facilities

Eastern Beach's future improvement plans were expressed in terms of the upgrade of facilities. The sub-code, 'Improve beach facilities', recorded 12 occurrences. Participants confirmed that beach facilities must be improved as they are currently a problem ["*… they need to enhance specific facilities along the beach"* (D9:71); "*… there must be improved facilities, like ablution facilities … braai facilities, waste receptacles must be improved as they are a problem and people throw their litter down"* (D2:147-148); *"Improve beach lights, because when you are there, even before eight o'clock it's already discouraging because lights are not working and it gets dark …"* (D9:72-73*); "If we could just get all our beach facilities up to those standards, it would make a huge difference for this beach and our town"* (D13:71); *"I think they just need to make sure there is enough toilets"* (D16:68)].

Access control facilities received specific reference from participants: "*I would also include access controls at both entrances there, at the entry and exit…"* (D4:122) and *"The first thing in my opinion is access control services to manage people …*" (D5:70). One stakeholder touched on **payable access facilities** for Eastern Beach, that can generate funds to improve it: "*Maybe there should be a facility to allow a small fee to enter the beach, even it's as small as R2 per person, at least then those funds can go towards improving it and maintaining it"* (D8:63). Other participants elaborated on **signage facilities**, which should be considered so as to improve the status of this beach, for example: *"… it needs*

basic things are there like signboard facilities, advising about sea currents, pollution control and no drinking information" (D3:184) and *"I think you need to have signage, better signage, generally"* (D12:46).

c) Invest in Eastern Beach

'Invest in Eastern Beach' is the third sub-code, which contained nine quotations. Participants elaborated on investing in Eastern Beach as one of the future improvement plans, to change the status of this beach and **create employment**, for example: *"I think we must invest in this beach for the status, so we need a very strong local economic strategy that is actually anchored or that is underpinned by the Eastern Beach"* (D6:116) and *"So, we need to use that free land more and invest towards something that can create employment …"* (D6:118). There is a need to **attract investment opportunities** which will improve the local tourism economy [*"… business will want to invest in the area and when you have businesses investing in an area, you see the economy being stimulated …"* (D4:135); *"The city may then improve its economy through investments … subsequent to Blue Flag status, they must upgrade it so that we can investment into hotels there, …"* (D3:192); and *"I mean, by formalising the Ubuhlanti and the picnic area, there may be businesses that could actually invest there and open up opportunities for beach cafés and more* (D4:133)].

Tourism amenities that can **support entrepreneurs** should be built at Eastern Beach, as part of the improvement plans, for example: *"… you need to build something like a casino there or build something like accommodation establishments, eatery places, small shops that can be owned by local entrepreneurs, which can essentially assist to create, you know, employment"* (D6:119). Under 'Improve beach facilities' sub-code of this section, access control facilities featured and emerge again here as a future investment opportunity. One participant suggested investment in **access control facilities**, *"Because one of the challenges sometimes, especially during December, is that it's just, there's too many people, I think we need to invest in access controls at Eastern Beach …"* (D12:45), while another touched on **time investment** at this beach, *"I think, we need to develop an invested interest from all the parties to … look after their beach, because if I feel like it is my beach, I am going to look after it"* (D16:66).

d) Improve public awareness and safety

This sub-code contained seven quotations. Participants touched on public awareness and safety, as part of the future improvement plans to change the status of this beach. Some examples follow:

"… they need to then improve your safety and security" (D8:61).

"… then you need to also make provision for their stay to be a safe stay and also visibility of police there at the beach. They also need to enforce the law that was passed in this country long ago, that we don't need to drink at the beachfront, for safety …" (D9:73-74).

"We must make sure that this beach is well policed to get rid of the crime element" (D18:72).

"… so improving security, would be one thing I would look at there" (D4:123).

"… they need to then improve your safety and security because I think unfortunately the area is not very safe, that's the biggest issues" (D8:61).

Safety and security is strongly featuring in the results for this study. These results reveal a comparison and linkage of safety element across several sub-codes and ROs. Safety and security first emerged under 'Current Plans for Eastern Beach' (CP: CPEB) in Section 2.5.3, where stakeholders indicated that safety and security is one priority that is being improved at Eastern Beach. Secondly, safety and security emerged under 'Recommendations for Eastern Beach' (CP: RECS), where participants recommended that safety and security is one important element that needs to be enhanced, so that beach visitors become aware that they are visiting a safe place for all. The same safety and security element featured under 'Safety and services' criteria (Section 4.6.4), where the results showed that Eastern Beach is not compliant towards essential facilities and access for disabled visitors and has no emergency plans to cope with pollution risks. Now safety and security emerge in this section, as a future improvement plan for Eastern Beach (Section 4.8.1, FIP: FIPEB).

e) Manage Eastern Beach better

Regarding future improvement plans to change Eastern Beach status, 'Manage Eastern Beach better' was the fifth sub-code, with four recorded quotes. The results indicate that introducing **beach operational hours** will assist to better manage this beach, for example: *"… they need also make sure that there are times to open and close the beach, especially during busy days, so that you don't have people that get drunk, sleep or drown at the sea"* (D9:70). **Community involvement** arose in this section, and one participant asserted that "*I think you do need to have some community involvement definitely, because you can't just go and implement or expect to manage something without consulting locals or general public, like those who regularly go there, or those that work there, must be involved"* (D8:66).

As a way to manage Eastern Beach, one participant stated that **recreational activities** must be improved, *"… because Eastern Beach is a natural resource right, to not only enhance resources in terms of the natural features, enhance activities that are done to better manage it"* (D9:67). **Support from businesses** was noted as one of the future improvement plans to change the current beach status, for example: "*we need support, maybe a unit or whatsoever corporative or business that is going to be involved in ways along the beach to assist in managing it*" (D9:74).

f) *Rehabilitate sewage stream*

'Rehabilitate sewage stream' is the last sub-code of the future improvement plans for Eastern Beach code. Though only two quotes were recorded here, this issue has emerged previously in Sections 4.4.4 (A: EBP code); 4.5.3 (CP: CPEB code) and 4.6.2 (Water Quality Criteria). As part of the future improvement plans, the results illustrate that the rehabilitation of the sewage stream is vital to change the current status of Eastern Beach to be safer and cleaner, as evidenced in the following quotations:

> *"They should manage water pollution that is sourced from upstream and that is discharged through that small little river mouth, which is bad. I think there is quite a bit of solid waste and littering to the beach, so its solid waste, littering from a number of sources. Then it may render the area a safer beach to go. So, it's cleaner and safer"* (4:121).

> *"… you need to sort out that stream leading to the beach. Because its important, you need to monitor your sewerage pipes, make sure that they don't leak into the beach"* (D12:44).

C. *Summary: Future improvement plans for Eastern Beach*

The results indicate that participants had several ideas on plans to improve the current status of Eastern Beach. Some indicated that the Ebuhlanti (Marina Glen Public Park) should be formalised as part of the future improvement plan. Keeping it clean and tidy was deliberated as one of the missing basics for this beach. Participants were against the use of alcohol and littering, since such actions decrease the likelihood of attaining Blue Flag status. As part of the future improvement plans, participants alluded to the improvement of beach facilities. Specific mention was made regarding ablutions, public signage, braai, waste receptacle facilities and public streetlights. Participants further alluded to public awareness and safety that must be improved to change Eastern Beach status. They highlighted that safety and security is an issue that requires public policing and law enforcement to get rid of crime. As part of the future improvement plans, participants advised that investment opportunities should be attracted for businesses to participate in,

so that local tourism can be improved. They asserted that investment can be considered through the creation of employment opportunities, supporting entrepreneurs and providing access control to improve this beach. It was further suggested by stakeholders that public access control facilities would improve crowd control and beach management.

The beach needs a local economic strategy and tourism amenities that can support entrepreneurs. Participants contended that beach operating hours should be introduced, as part of managing this beach better. Community involvement was proclaimed as part of improvement plans. The results revealed that recreational activities should also be enhanced and support from businesses is required, to better manage this beach. Participants mentioned again the rehabilitation of the river stream as well as sewerage pipes, which are known to be current sources of water pollution and solid waste to the beach.

4.8.2. Environmental benefits for Eastern Beach [If Blue Flag status was achieved]

A. Overview: Environmental benefits for Eastern Beach

Table 4.27 portrays sub-codes that developed from the code, 'Environmental benefits for Eastern Beach'. An environmental benefit question was asked in this section, namely: *'If Blue flag status was achieved for Eastern Beach, what positive impacts could result for the natural environment (the beach itself).* The sub code, 'Environmentally friendly beach' recorded a high number of quotations, followed by 'Improved cleanliness of bathing water, beauty and restored marine life' with twelve attached quotations. 'Safe beach' was the third highest sub-code, with five quotations. Sub-codes with two or less quotations are not dealt with in this section. Participants were able to identify environmental benefits for Eastern Beach, should Blue Flag status be achieved.

Table 4.27: Code frequencies for **FIP: Environmental benefits for Eastern Beach.**

CODE: ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS FOR EASTERN BEACH (EBEB)	
Sub-Codes	Public and private stakeholders
FIP: EBEB: Environmentally friendly beach	14
FIP: EBEB: Improved cleanliness of bathing water, beauty and restored marine life	12
FIP: EBEB: Safe beach	5
FIP: EBEB: Pollution free beach	2
TOTAL	33

a) Environmentally friendly beach

The sub-code, 'Environmentally friendly beach', recorded the highest occurrences (14 quotes). Participants advised that the environment will be **protected and become healthier** ["*… I think it will be a healthier environment, marine environment … and some of the coastal forests would be better protected*" (D2:149), "*… the natural forest in that area could also be allowed to regenerate from degradation*" (D4:125); "*… yes, the environment would be protected and then everything else will flow from there*" (D5:75); "*Well, if we achieve that status, the natural environment will just go from strength to strength, I mean your wildlife, your flora, your fauna all that will just be protected, remain in a much better state, and it's better for our kids and our future*" (D8:67); *Yes, I think one of the benefits would be around the environmental sensitivity and protection or preservation of the area, flora and fauna on the beach …*" (D14:76)].

Findings reveal that if the status could be achieved at this beach, **environmental cleanliness** would improve, as there would be **less littering and pollution**, for example:

> "*… just because of less litter and rubbish, you know, that can get into the environment …*" (D2:149).

> *This beach is urban in its nature so … I think its environment will be improved or reduced pollution and improved utilisation of the adjacent terrestrial environment*" (D4:126).

> "*I can tell you that the environment will improve significantly. It will improve, because it means people will be able to comply, or know the do's and don'ts*" (D14:72).

> "*So, ja, I think of the Blue Flag status in terms of improving the quality of the environment at the beach*" (D4:130).

> "*Yes, I think it will obviously provide the cleanliness that we want*" (D6:125).

> *Well, if we get the status, Eastern Beach will be a cleaner beach*" (D7:68).

> "*… the environment would be clean, and nature of course will not be tampered with*" (D14:75).

> "*The ecosystem will improve, you know*" (D16:71).

b) Improved cleanliness of bathing water, beauty and restored marine life

The environmental benefits of Eastern Beach were expressed by participants in terms of the improvement in cleanliness of water, beauty and restored marine life. Participants

perceived that cleanliness of bathing water would improve due to the status ["*… that will improve the cleanliness of water for swimming*" (D12:49); "*In terms of the environment, water could definitely benefit*" (D4:130); "*… I think it would be a much healthier place to be, cleaner, water would be improved*" (D16:69) and "*Well the first thing would obviously be water that will be cleaner and better than what it is now*" (D17:68)].

Participants contended that there would be restored **marine life** , "*Umm, well, I think everything thrives within a clean environment … so if you've got a clean water, you just have better sea life*" (D18:73); "*The key advantage will be for the water and the water animals, the marine world … that would come back*" (D5:74); "*I think it will be more scenic and probably also attract more different animal sea species to come closer to the shore, which invariably might have a positive knock-on effect for tourists who want to watch*" (D12:48); "*…absolutely, it would certainly help the marine life*" (D13:65); "*… the impact naturally would be the protection of marine life*" (D15:57) and "*You will probably have the marine life coming back to shore. More dolphins, you know…*" (D16:71).

Due to the Blue Flag status, **the beach would be attractive** ["*we can have a revitalised beachfront with a Blue Flag beach and … attractive beachfront that would attract tourism, which would definitely, which would help the economy*" (D17:72) and "*… the impact would be the pride of having the status to better the state of the art when we talk of beach facilities or the beach will be beautiful you see*" (D15:58)].

c) Safe beach

The sub-code of 'Safe beach' had the third highest number of quotes (five). Findings indicate that if Blue Flag status can be achieved at Eastern Beach, **more people would want to visit**: ["*I think, when a beach is safe, you tend to have so much more activities, and suddenly people will want to come, and they will want to stay, unlike now they are getting fewer and fewer*" (D16:76), "*The beach will attract people because of the safety and amenities linked to that status*" (D14:80) and "*We would have less, you know, drowning incidents and I think it would just be a pleasant and safe space for all people to enjoy*" (D18:75)]. Improved safety would also **give people confidence** ["*… it would really help … people generally seem safe with the Blue Flag status. It just gives confidence to the visiting people*" (D13:64). **Beach laws will be enforced**, while **public policing will also improve** to ensure safety, for example: "*… the laws of the use of the beach would be enforced, like no drinking on the beach; there wouldn't be broken glass, you wouldn't have animals and dogs on the beach. There would be visible policing and have less crime*" (D18:76).

C. Summary: Environmental benefits for Eastern Beach

Should Blue Flag status be attained, Eastern Beach would be an environmentally friendly beach, which is protected and could therefore become a healthier space. Participants felt that vegetation and wildlife would be restored and protected. The natural forest would regenerate from degradation. Findings illustrated that environmental cleanliness would advance at this beach, due to less littering by the beach users. People visiting the beach would better comply with what is acceptable and not acceptable (dos and don'ts). The quality of the beach environment and ecosystem would be enhanced by the Blue Flag status at this beach. The results also portray that, due to Blue Flag status, the cleanliness of water will be better and healthier for swimming. Marine life would be restored, and it was voiced that different marine species might come closer to shore, which would increase the enjoyment for beach visitors. The beach itself would be beautiful and attractive, complemented by facilities appropriate to a Blue Flag beach. Participants further elaborated on the safety element of the beach, noting that, as a result of the status, more people would want to visit and would have confidence to swim and use beach amenities that align with a Blue Flag beach. Beach laws would be better enforced, eliminating activities such as drinking. Due to improved public policing that is associated with a Blue Flag beach, participants alluded that there would also be less crime.

4.8.3. Socio-cultural benefits from Eastern Beach [If Blue Flag status was achieved]

A. Overview: Socio-cultural benefits from Eastern Beach

As indicated in the code frequency table, Table 4.28, the results from participants illustrate that the sub-codes with the highest number of quotations were 'Safer environment for locals', followed by 'Enhanced community and tourist experience' and 'Environmental awareness and education, as well as 'Employment of locals'. Sub-codes with fewer than three quotations will not be discussed.

Table 4.28: Code frequencies for **Future Improvement Plans: Socio-cultural benefits from Eastern Beach**

CODE: SOCIO-CULTURAL BENEFITS FROM EASTERN BEACH (SBEB)	
Sub-Codes	**Public and private stakeholders**
FIP: SBEB: Safer environment for locals	6
FIP: SBEB: Enhanced community and tourist experience	5
FIP: SBEB: Environmental awareness and education	3
FIP: SBEB: Employment of locals	3
FIP: SBEB: Community pride of the city	2

FIP: SBEB: Service delivery will improve	1
FIP: SBEB: Improves opportunity for local events	1
TOTAL	**21**

B. Specifics: Socio-cultural benefits from Eastern Beach

a) Safer environment for locals

A high number of occurrences was recorded for the sub-code, 'Safer environment for locals', with six quotations. Participants deliberated on the **safe environment for families and children**, which can result from the status, for example: "*I think the benefit if Blue Flag beach could be achieved would be a much safer environment for people to come bring their families and also stimulate tourism in that area*" (D2:150); "*The socio-cultural benefit for me is that people will be making use of safer beach facilities. Because it is safe and has clean facilities, that is positive …*" (D15:59); and "*I think the socio-cultural benefits could definitely be in the sense of security that will be improved, meaning that we can take busses of school children there for holidays*" (D4:127). It emerged that due to Blue Flag status, Eastern Beach would be a **beach that is healthy and recommended to others**: "*… it would be a beach that you can recommend people to go to, so it has that benefit and even for locals because it's not just tourists, locals like to go to the beach as well you know, and we all choose a beach that we find to be clean and well maintained and looked after*" (D8:69); "*… because making use of high quality beaches is good for health, locals will swim in healthy water and that is good for them too*" (D15:60). The results further illustrated that the **city image would improve** because of beach safety brought by the status, for example: "*The city is currently perceived as being unsafe and grimy. So, the more accolades we get for it being a safe and clean environment the better, and the Blue Flag would give it that status to say, our beaches are clean*" (D18:78).

b) Enhanced community and tourist experience

The sub-code 'Enhanced community and tourist experience' had the second highest occurrences, with five quotations. Participants made reference to 'enhanced attitudes of the locals due to Blue Flag status at this beach' as one of the benefits, for example:

> "*Well, you know, the achievement of any sort of those standards of excellence, like Blue Flag status, it always enhances the impression or their attitude towards the people within the town. It can only be positive*" (D13:66).

> "*Because now you'd start to have better ablution facilities, the quality of experiences of local citizens would recover, and they would be enjoying all those service delivery benefits from the city too*" (D12:51).

"It would just be marvellous. I mean, it's a local tourist destination and it's a seaside city. We would be able to take advantage of the availability of an accredited beach in the proximity of our homes. (D13:67).

"One of the social benefits of course is that people will be freer to visit the beach with family and friends because of better experience and fun" (D14:70).

It was also mentioned that the beach will offer **better recreational facilities** for families and friends to enjoy in safe and clean water, for example: *"… it will attract family and friends, particularly to enjoy recreation because there will be facilities … amenities, and ablution blocks. The kids will be safe, swimming pools will be clean, and water will be clean"* (D14:81).

c) Environmental awareness and education

The results from participants revealed 'Environmental awareness and education' as a third sub-code with three recorded quotations. Participants indicated that if Blue Flag status can be achieved at Eastern Beach, there would be **awareness and education** about the environment as one of the benefits, for example: *"… so the environmental awareness, environmental education benefits of the area could be hugely improved if we have the status"* (D4:128); *"Yes, you will have communities involved with regards to education, or training events that need their participation at Eastern Beach"* (D5:77) and *"I mean there will all sorts of tourism. There will not just be international, it will be local as well, I mean even schools, who will be learning about the environmental part, it would be an area where schools can go to, to learn"* (D8:73).

d) Employment of locals

Another element of socio-cultural benefits was encapsulated by the sub-code, 'Employment of locals' and recorded three quotations. The results reveal that locals would have opportunities to **open small businesses** due to Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach, for example: *"It would definitely empower them, and … encourage small businesses to open up, you know, you could have a whole lot of other beach activities, we've seen the beaches in Port Elizabeth for instance"* (D18:82). The socio-cultural benefits of Eastern Beach were also expressed by participants in terms of the possibility of **employment for locals** resulting from the Blue Flag status, for example: *"… there are many establishments within Esplanade, which can range from accommodation to restaurants, as well as some offices of the transportation sector. As those businesses will benefit, some locals will get employment directly as well"* (D13:70) and *"I think, firstly informal traders will be empowered for their arts*

and crafts." "They can be set up nicely for them to be able to sell, for everyone who goes to the beach to be able to do a little bit of shopping" (D16:64).

C. Summary: Socio-cultural benefits from Eastern Beach

The results signify that Eastern Beach would be a safe environment for families and children, should Blue Flag status be achieved. It emerged that security would improve, enabling school children to visit this beach for educational purposes. Safe facilities also received a specific mention. Participants surmised that Eastern Beach would become a beach that is healthy and recommended to others, with the required clean water standards making swimming safe. The city's image would advance, since the city will be perceived differently due to the status and be known as having a safe and clean beach. Participants elaborated on the enhancement of community and tourist experiences, highlighting that the status would enhance attitudes of local people. Better experiences will also unfold to locals as they might enjoy better service delivery from the city, post the attainment of the status. The results revealed that there would be better recreational facilities, which will attract international tourists as well as local families, friends and children to Eastern Beach. The environmental awareness and education benefits would also improve significantly, and communities would be able to participate in education and training events at this beach.

4.8.4. Economic benefits from Eastern Beach [If Blue Flag status was achieved]

A. Overview: Economic benefits from Eastern Beach

Table 4.29 represents sub-codes that emerged from the code 'Economic benefits from Eastern Beach'. 'Attracting more tourists' recorded a high number of quotations, followed by the sub-codes of 'Local tourism economy improves' and 'Tourism businesses will improve'. Participants were able to explain economic benefits, which can be associated with Eastern Beach, should Blue Flag status be achieved.

Table 4.29: Code frequencies for **FIP: Economic benefits from Eastern Beach**

CODE: ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR EASTERN BEACH (ECBEB)	
Sub-Codes	Public and private stakeholders
FIP: ECBEB: Attracting more tourists	16
FIP: ECBEB: Local tourism economy improves	13
FIP: ECBEB: Tourism businesses will improve	11
TOTAL	40

a) Attracting more tourists

The sub-code, 'Attracting more tourists', was the sub-code with the highest occurrences (16 quotes). Participants professed that Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach would lead to the **attraction of more tourists,** as evidenced in the following quotes:

> *"… it will definitely promote more attractive to tourists … I still think it's a recognised brand to bring tourists if achievable"* (D2:151).

> *"… it would bring in additional people to that area as in … it would be a beach that people would strive to go to again … since we don't have any Blue Flag beaches along the Buffalo City coastline"* (D8: 68-70).

> *"We can benefit in terms of attracting tourists you see, those tourists who expect to be in clean areas"* (D9:76).

> *"… a lot of foreign people that will not go to especially your Europe and your America, they might want to go to our beach, if they know what sort of status it has"* (D8:71).

> *"… if we could certainly get a status, that is when people would be attracted. So, I think it would be good for our tourists, people that visit East London from out of town"* (D13:63).

> *"By having the Blue status, you are ensuring the quality of the beach itself. So, more tourists will be more eager to come ... we will attract and get them in numbers"* (D14:79).

> *"… more international tourists would highly make use of our high-quality beach …"* (D15:61).

> *"… it would definitely attract more visitors, certainly there are international visitors who only go to Blue Flag beaches … and who travel because of Blue Flag beaches"* (D17:69).

Others agreed that due to more tourists coming, **more spending, job creation and increased revenue** are some of the economic benefits that may accrue. For example: *"There will be an increase in number of visitors and then, an increase in visitors brings us increase in visitor spending which leads to job creation, income generation"* (D5:78); *"People don't want to go to places that are not attractive, so more people will come, which will lead to economic benefits"* (D6:126*); and "…there will be more international and regional tourism, I think that might be an attraction for us with a positive impact on the economy"* (D17:70).

b) Local tourism economy improves

Economic benefits of Blue Flag status were expressed by participants in terms of the improvement in the local tourism economy. The 'Local tourism economy improves' was the second most used code, with 13 quotations. Participants asserted that the **economy would improve** since tourism amenities will be mostly used, for example: "*… there's also quite a few accommodation establishments within that area, with the status they will be elevated and used more being a safe zone, those hotels and guest houses probably will have more opportunities to attract visitors*" (D18:81) and "*Well, more tourists means more people in the restaurants and hotels, so that is economic benefit for tourism and there can be a wide additional revenue for all businesses*" (D8:72).

Having more visitor arrivals would lead to **increased visitor spend** ["*By having a lot of visitor numbers, then you are having people who spend money more on an average day in shops … the money that they spend is going to have a value-chain effect … it multiplies and results in very good economic possibilities for the Eastern Beach*" (D14:82); "*That will improve the general economy of the area. If you are looking at the Ebuhlanti side, that's where local people go to buy their meat and the local Mamas (mothers) are already set up to provide that service to local people. More and more would go there and income is generated that way, so having a Blue Flag Beach would impact that positively without a doubt* (D7:70); *Restaurants like Buccaneer's along that beach would be busy, as so many visitors will go there, and some go for beach shopping and entertainment. I think a lot of people would be attracted to go there and spend*" (D4:134) and "*Local people will benefit through those economic activities that happen along that beach. With the status, entrepreneurial opportunities that come about will be due to a lot of people that visit*" (D6:123)].

c) Tourism businesses will improve

The sub-code of 'Tourism businesses will improve' had the third highest number of quotes (11). Findings indicate participants associated economic benefits of Blue Flag status with formal tourism businesses and informal businesses, which could improve [*"… the tourism businesses along the beach will expand and in-turn, the municipality will also benefit in terms of revenue, which will be channelled back to service delivery*" (D9:81); "*Because of many visitors, invariably there will be more demand for services, so more small to medium businesses will thrive and new will start*" (D12:53)].

Hotels, restaurants, guest houses and transport business emerged as main tourism businesses that the status would mostly benefit and improve, for example: "*Well, the more people it attracts, the more people from out of town that come into town, to spend holidays*

and use our guest houses, restaurants, helping them grow and grow the economy of the city" (D13:68); *"Those tourism establishments ranging from accommodation establishments to restaurants, as well as some offices of the transportation sector within the Esplanade area, will benefit and maybe locals will get employment as well"* (D13:70); *"Undoubtedly those tourism businesses on the beach front will definitely benefit, including transport sector. There's a lot of opportunity for transport if more people come"* (D13:69); and *"Benefits will be for restaurants around ... there are even hotels, B&Bs and guesthouses. Since the Blue Flag will attract people to this area … those businesses will benefit and improve"* (D15:63).

The results revealed that **small businesses including informal traders could benefit,** should the Blue Flag status be achieved at Eastern Beach. Participants confirmed that, [*"It will be beneficial to grow those small businesses … depended on tourists along our beach, like those selling traditional artefacts and informal traders"* (D15:62); *"Well, I mean I think developing the craft market would be a very important part of small businesses. It would bring more people down to the beachfront, but it would also give local people an opportunity to earn an income"* (D16:75); *"Small traders with hiring out mountain bikes, segways and beach gear, kiosks, would have many opportunities because of the status"* (D18:83)].

C. Summary: Economic benefits from Eastern Beach

The results from this section depict that Eastern Beach would bring economic benefits, should it obtain the Blue Flag status. Participants indicated that it would attract more tourism, because the beach would be associated with a recognised brand. Others proclaimed that in addition to more tourists, there would be continuous visits to Buffalo City and Eastern Beach. International tourists were referred to as potential visitors, since they are known by participants to visit quality beaches with Blue Flag status. The results revealed that there would be more spending, job creation and increased revenue, because of more visitors to East London. The improvement in the local tourism economy is one of the benefits that was perceived by participants for this beach.

Tourism amenities such as accommodation establishments (hotels, guest houses and B&Bs), restaurants, including transport would be elevated and used more, especially those near Eastern Beach. It was expressed that there can be a wide range of additional revenue brought by the status, based on increased visitors and average tourist spend within the city. Participants deliberated on the economy that would generally improve in the area, while locals (formal and informal traders) would be able to generate income from selling/providing services to tourists visiting East London and the beach. It also emerged that, with the

status, entrepreneurial opportunities would arise as many people visit East London and Eastern Beach. The results further revealed that by formalising Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park as a local tourist attraction, there could be investment opportunities for new businesses.

4.8.5. Summary: Research Objective Five

The current section of the analysis chapter responded to the fifth research objective (RO5), which aimed to ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach in East London. RO5 derived from Section F of the interview guide, and Section 4.8 of the analysis chapter. Findings produced by the **FIP: FIPEB code** revealed that Ebuhlanti (Marina Glen Public Park) should be formalised as part of future improvement plans. It must be kept clean and tidy, while visitor actions that include illegal alcohol use and littering should be avoided. Stakeholders confirmed that beach facilities including ablutions, public signage, braai, waste receptacle facilities and public streetlights require improvement. Safety and security featured as an issue that should not be excluded in future plans. Results demonstrate that an investment strategy is required to attract local businesses, create employment opportunities and support local entrepreneurs. In future, this beach must have access control amenities, which would improve crowd control (operating hours) and beach management. As part of plans for the future, the stream flowing to the beach will be rehabilitated to prevent water pollution and solid waste.

Concerning **FIP: EBEB code**, stakeholders predicted that should Blue Flag status be attained, this beach would be an environmentally friendly beach, better protected and healthier. Surrounding vegetation and wildlife would be restored and conserved. The environmental benefits, namely cleanliness due to less litter, minimum land pollution and enhanced quality, were mentioned by stakeholders. The results also portray that due to Blue Flag status, the cleanliness of water as well as beach enjoyment would be improved, while Eastern Beach would have improved water quality for swimming. With the facilities required for the status, this beach would be more attractive and beautiful. Environmental benefits for this beach would include safety and users will have confidence to swim and utilise the beach amenities that are in accordance with a Blue Flag beach. Beach laws would be better enforced, and public policing would improve.

The results as illustrated by the **FIP: SBEB code** signify that this beach would be a safe environment for host communities and visitors, because of the status. School children could visit for educational reasons. This would be a beach that can be highly recommended to others. The city's image would advance, since the status has international prominence for

both host communities and visitors. Stakeholders referred to the enhancement of community and tourist experiences, concluding that the status would enhance the attitudes of local people. This beach would be supplemented with amenities that would attract families, friends and children. As a benefit, communities would be more environmentally aware and educated regarding the best practices for Blue Flag status to be maintained.

Stakeholders made reference to **FIP: ECBEB code**, assured that Blue Flag would bring economic benefits into the city. The status would attract more tourism and lead to repeat visitors, especially the sought-after international tourists. Stakeholders alluded to more spending, job creation and increased revenue, which are the most desired economic benefits for East London as a tourist destination. Facilities such as accommodation establishments (hotels, guest houses and B&Bs), restaurants, and transport would be elevated and used more. It was expressed that additional city revenue will result from the status, and potential increased tourist spend would result. Locals (formal and informal traders) would be able to generate income from selling/providing services to tourists visiting East London and the beach. Other entrepreneurial opportunities would also arise as more people visit East London and Eastern Beach. The results further revealed that by formalising Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park, that would open investment opportunities for new businesses.

4.9. A BLUE FLAG STATUS FRAMEWORK FOR EASTERN BEACH

4.9.1. Introduction

The current section of this study presents a Blue Flag status framework for Eastern Beach, which encapsulates the main findings from the secondary research objectives. This is the final step in data reduction and presents a framework that achieves the primary research objective. The study aimed to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status. When developing the Blue Flag status framework, the researcher utilised the primary data collected from public and private tourism stakeholders. These stakeholders are directly involved in the tourism planning, development and management of Eastern Beach, and other tourist products or services in East London. The findings are presented in the previous sections of Chapter Four, with brief summaries following each code section that emerged from the raw data. The Blue Flag status framework is presented in Figure 4.6 and has been constructed from the following:

- Summaries which follow each code section in Chapter Four. The summaries portray key findings from the participants interviewed.

- Recommendations by the researcher based on the study results.

The Blue Flag status framework sets the context to assist stakeholders involved at Eastern Beach to move towards attaining Blue Flag status.

Current Context

1. Awareness of Eastern Beach
- Long-standing/established beach
- Popular and beautiful destination
- A beach without Blue Flag status
- Mostly attracts locals on a regular basis and over weekends.
- Crowded during the festive season
- Close to Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park
- Main beach of East London with potential to attract international visitors

2. Recreational activities at Eastern Beach
- Swimming/bathing (at sea and in swimming pools)
- Fun, enjoyment and relaxation
- Enjoyment of braais, drinks and socialising with friends and relatives
- Visiting Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park - the only braai hotspot near the ocean
- Shopping along Eastern Beach
- Accommodation (hotels and B&Bs)
- Walking along the seashore
- Surfing activities in both sand and water
- Beach sports such as soccer and volleyball

3. Eastern Beach Problems
- Sewage discharge and a polluted river
- Litter and waste management
- An untidy beach
- Inadequate facilities such as ablution facilities, boardwalks, seating, rubbish bins and parking areas
- Overcrowding
- Insufficient visitor management measures
- Environmental degradation
- Insufficient security officers and lifeguards
- Insufficient maintenance of existing beach facilities (taps and shower)

Non-compliance with Blue Flag criteria
- Environmental education and information
- Water quality
- Environmental management
- Safety and services

ICZM Challenges
- Fragmented use of ICZM by few organisations.
- Lacking municipal leadership to promote ICZM use
- No integrated application of ICZM for Blue Flag status

4. Current Plans for Eastern Beach
- An integrated urban park is under development
- Building new beach facilities
- Promotion of stakeholder engagement, economic returns and infrastructure investment
- Continuous planning for tourism projects
- Stakeholder assistance with environmental and water management functions
- Creation of environmental public awareness
- Support tourism projects
- Replacing old sewage pipe
- Improving safety and security

Future Plans

5. Future improvement plans and best practices for Eastern Beach
- Keep Eastern Beach clean and tidy
- Introduce beach operating hours
- Regulate Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park using public park guidelines
- Prevent Illegal alcohol usage and littering
- Improve beach facilities such as ablutions, public signage, braai facilities, waste receptacles
- Develop an investment strategy to attract local businesses
- Invest in access control facilities for crowd control and visitor management
- Prevent water pollution
- Provide leadership and involve local communities

Affect compliance and require attention

Ensure continued implementation

Require implementation

Desired State

BLUE FLAG

ICZM

Environmental benefits

Socio-cultural benefits

Economic benefits

Balanced sustainability: Triple Bottom Line benefits

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Figure 4.6: The Blue Flag Status Framework for Eastern Beach

4.9.2. Components of the Blue Flag Status Framework

The researcher used an organised process-flow to develop this framework, which depicts five key components and is derived from the primary data of the research. The 'Current Context' cluster of the framework demonstrates the stakeholders' awareness of Eastern Beach **(Component 1)**, recreational activities at Eastern Beach **(Component 2)**, the current problems at Eastern Beach **(Component 3)** and current plans for Eastern Beach **(Component 4)**. Future improvement plans and best practices that can be undertaken in future **(Component 5)**, form the 'Future Plans' cluster of the framework. Finally, the framework contains a 'Desired State' cluster, which points to the benefits of the triple bottom line, associated with balanced sustainability and links this to Blue Flag and ICZM. Each of the above-mentioned are discussed briefly in turn below.

Current Context

a) Component 1: Awareness of Eastern Beach

In moving towards Blue Flag status, it is important to establish current awareness of Eastern Beach. From the primary data, key features of a natural beach attraction were identified. Based on the stakeholder awareness, this beach has no status currently, which presents an opportunity to consider the Blue Flag ecolabel. Component 1 establishes the potential of Eastern Beach. It is the main beach in East London, currently attracting mostly locals, but with the potential to attract international visitors; and is an established urban beach.

b) Component 2: Awareness of recreational activities

Component 2 of the framework features the recreational activities which visitors can engage in at Eastern Beach. These further justify the potential of this beach to offer more to visitors should Blue Flag status be obtained.

c) Component 3: Eastern Beach problems

Considering that this beach is not currently Blue Flag ranked, it is crucial that the framework represents a clear overview of problems identified by stakeholders. Many beach problems were presented, some of which included noncompliance with Blue Flag criteria. It is therefore essential that compliance with Blue Flag ecolabel standards is met, namely: *environmental education and information, water quality, environmental management, and safety and services*. It would be impossible for this beach to attain the status should the existing problems at Eastern Beach be overlooked. The criteria standards are stringent and

mandatory for beaches that apply for Blue Flag status. In essence and post the status attainment, Eastern Beach would need to be better managed to maintain all four important criteria components, because the status can be withdrawn due to noncompliance. Other problems related to ICZM challenges that are also known and should be minimised when working towards better coastal zone management at Eastern Beach. In moving towards the status at Eastern Beach, the use of ICZM by organisations involved should be improved. Currently, the use of ICZM is fragmented. The local municipality should therefore promote ICZM, for the purpose of the status, since the lack thereof is part of the problem affecting Blue Flag compliance and the attainment of the status. Considering that the Blue Flag ecolabel is an approved sustainable tourism development guideline in South Africa, it is vital that the principles of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Act 24 of 2008 and the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 are incorporated, when working towards Blue Flag status.

The problems identified in Component 3 hinder the attainment of the status and of achieving balanced sustainability.

d) Component 4: Current plans for Eastern Beach

Component 4 concerns current plans which have been put in place to resolve the identified beach and stakeholder challenges. It is vital that current plans continue to be implemented successfully. Beach managers should take advantage of the infrastructural investment means in place, to finalise the replacement of the sewage pipe, the development of an integrated urban park and proper beach facilities. Other initiatives include safety and security and continuous planning for tourism projects. For the purpose of Eastern Beach, this framework highlights a fundamental need for stakeholders to work closely together, while ensuring that public awareness regarding the environment is created, and other tourism related projects associated with the coast are well supported. Within the Blue Flag Status Framework, a link exists between Eastern Beach problems and current plans and is represented by a green arrow between Component 3 and 4. Current plans have been put in place to resolve current problems at this beach. In addition, the current plans provided by stakeholders provide hope for better planning, development and sustainable management of Eastern Beach which can, in turn, increase economic spend.

Future Plans

e) Component 5: Future improvement plans and best practices

The future improvement plans identified in this research can assist stakeholders and beach managers in attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach. These include keeping the beach clean and tidy, visitor management and introducing beach operating hours (06h00 to 18h00). Other spaces associated with the beach, such as the Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park must be regulated, to minimise negative impacts that can hinder the attainment of the status in future. Environmental management, education and training, as well as safety and services criteria, should be used as a basis to restrict alcohol usage and illegal littering. Sustainable development and safe use of beach facilities and services by visitors should be a high priority at Eastern Beach.

Desired State

This research intended to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status. The goal is to take this beach into the desired future. The attainment of the status, effective implementation and use of ICZM, as well as the triple bottom line benefits of sustainability, portray the desired future for Eastern Beach. If this status was obtained, balanced sustainability, in the form of the triple bottom line benefits (environmental, socio-cultural and economic) would be possible. These emerged from Section 4.8 of the research and are summarised in Table 4.30. They form part of the desired future state for Eastern Beach.

Table 4.30: Potential benefits if Blue Flag status was attained for Eastern Beach

Environmental benefits	Socio-cultural benefits	Economic benefits
• An environmentally friendly and a better protected beach • Restoration of marine life and natural vegetation • Beach cleanliness due to less illegal litter, minimum land pollution and enhanced beach quality • Healthy water for swimming/bathing • A more attractive and beautiful seashore • Public safety due to improved public policing and beach security • Beach enjoyment and satisfaction • Beach laws would be better enforced	• A safe environment for host communities and visitors • Highly recommended beach for school children • Enhancement of host communities' and tourists' experiences • City's image would advance with international prominence • Boosting the impression and attitudes of local people • Amenities which are user-friendly to attract families, friends and children would exist	• Attraction of more tourism, leading to repeat visitors, particularly international tourists • Better job creation and increased revenue • Amenities such as accommodation and restaurant establishments, including the transport sector, would be elevated • Increased tourist spend and revenue for the city • Entrepreneurial opportunities would arise as many people visit the city • Savings opportunities would accrue for hotel establishments and other tourism amenities

Blue Flag compliance and the practice of ICZM would also assist in achieving balanced sustainability. Furthermore, there is significant overlap between the practices of ICZM and Blue Flag. These linkages are hence presented in the framework using black arrows.

The grey block arrows in 'Future Plans' also have important bearing on the 'Desired State'. To achieve the desired state: the problems require attention as they affect compliance; the current plans should be continually implemented; and the future plans require implementation.

Finally, this framework validates the conceptual framework (Figure 1.1) that was discussed in the first chapter of this study.

4.9.3. Summary: The Blue Flag Status Framework

The Blue Flag Status Framework is a tool that has been developed to assist Eastern Beach stakeholders to move towards Blue Flag status in East London. Containing three clusters and five components, it summarises the research in a manner that can be of use to stakeholders involved in Eastern Beach. Components 1 and 2 predominantly highlight its potential. Component 3 deals with the problems at Eastern Beach which were divided into the general problems and then those associated with noncompliance to Blue Flag criteria and the use of ICZM. From the problems experienced, current plans (Component 4) and future plans (Component 5) have been devised by public and private stakeholders. Implementation thereof and resolution of the problems can lead to the desired state of achieving balanced sustainability (environmental, economic and socio-cultural benefits) through Blue Flag and ICZM. Key linkages throughout the framework are also highlighted.

4.10. CHAPTER FOUR SUMMARY

Sections 4.3 to 4.8.4 presented the analysis and discussion of the results. The findings per research objective were presented in the form of tables and bar graphs, and then discussed. Where possible, findings were compared with those from previous research within the subject area.

a) Awareness: Eastern Beach, Blue Flag status, recreational activities and ICZM

The results summarised in this section are derived from the RO1 summary of this study, which assisted in reducing the data. Findings revealed that stakeholders have sufficient insight and information regarding Eastern Beach. The beach itself is popular and beautiful, a well-known destination that attracts mostly locals on a regular basis and over weekends. It can be crowded during the festive season and offers opportunities for visitors to swim and

visit Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. Findings revealed that this beach is a main tourist attraction in East London with the potential to attract more visitors to this shore. Findings of this research demonstrated that there are many recreational activities that visitors and locals can participate in at this beach.

Swimming pools exist and are mostly enjoyed by children. Eastern Beach is visited by many for fun, enjoyment, and relaxation. Most enjoy visiting it to barbeque (braai), drink and socialise with friends and relatives. Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park is the only braai hotspot near this beach. There is also plenty of accommodation, while other activities include walking on the seashore and surfing activities in both sand and water. This beach is also recognised by locals for beach sports such as soccer and volleyball on its sandy pitch. This beach is not Blue Flag ranked and stakeholders were aware of other beaches that have application history for the status, but which failed to obtain it. East London currently has no Blue Flag beaches.

This study also exposed several important problems regarding Eastern Beach. It was evident that sewage discharge and a polluted river are the main reasons for the contamination and poor water quality at this beach. Litter is also a problem that is leading to negative impacts such as environmental pollution. This beach is known to have inadequate facilities. It also emerged that overcrowding is a problem during the festive season, due to insufficient public control measures. The results revealed that most stakeholders could not relate to the ICZM concept. The ICZM framework use, or application thereof, is limited to the few organisations that use it. Where it is applicable, it is used for beach development programmes, environmental conservation, and planning. In total, however, the use of ICZM in managing Eastern Beach is fragmented.

b) Current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status

This summary originates from the RO2 summary, which illustrated that vital roles are played by various organisations involved in working towards Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach. These organisations appeared to be promoting stakeholder engagement efforts amongst the local municipality, private and public sector organisations, including communities. It was also revealed in this RO that such a stakeholder collaboration is vital for better planning for tourism projects, promotion of economic returns and infrastructure investments for the city, creating environmental public awareness and supporting tourism projects. They also ensure that host communities are involved and that they benefit. Other reasons for the involvement include assistance with environmental and water management functions, as well as applying for Blue Flag status. Results revealed that leadership for Blue Flag status is lacking from the local municipality and there is a need for management responsibility to

facilitate educational campaigns, drive awareness and help to keep the beach clean. Findings further indicated positive perceptions of the status, since it was viewed as a good opportunity which could improve the beach standard and quality. The benefits associated with improving beach quality, giving people confidence, providing international beach prominence, and elevating the city's appeal, were synthesised. This beach could lead to an increase in visitor numbers if the status was obtained. Beachgoers can be better educated on the importance of environmental awareness and surrounding areas.

The results of this study revealed that infrastructural development is a major current plan at Eastern Beach. An integrated urban park is under development, while an old sewage pipeline is being upgraded, to improve the hygiene of the water for swimming. Human-made attractions are being developed such as a sea view deck, the water world and storm water channels/fountains, including beach facilities, which are being enhanced at Eastern Beach. Beach facilities such as rest rooms or ablution facilities, litter bins and lifeguard facilities, tidal pool, pedestrian walking paths, improved parking bays and signage, as well as street lighting, are currently being upgraded. Further current plans include improved safety and security through the deployment of safety monitors. The Democratic Alliance was noted to be currently driving beach cleaning campaigns. These plans are meant to improve Eastern Beach, making it a better place for tourists to enjoy. It was also recommended that there is a need for stakeholder engagement for this ecolabel to be successful. A joint venture or collaboration of all stakeholders, between BCMM, public and private stakeholders and communities is vital. The management of pollution and land activities emerged, and stakeholders recommended upstream litter screenings and litter management. Economic opportunities should be attracted to improve tourism spin-offs and economic growth. Proactive management of basic infrastructure was also endorsed, including the allocation of basic resources to support the strive towards Blue Flag status. The results lastly demonstrated that few stakeholders are aware of voluntary environmental clean-up initiatives at Eastern Beach. Findings illustrated that organisations such as BCMM, WESSA, EPWP, Mercedes Benz SA, Windmill, and Call To Action Programme, drive cleaning initiatives and public educational awareness campaigns at Eastern Beach.

c) *Eastern Beach compliance with Blue Flag criteria*

The results of this study depict that information involving the Blue Flag ecolabel is not currently on display at Eastern Beach (RO3). This beach is correspondingly not complying with the promotion of environmental education and training activities, which should occur at Blue Flag beaches. Participants showed compliance with regard to the code of conduct, which is on display to guide beach users about the appropriate use of the beach. The

results indicated that the majority disagreed that Eastern Beach is complying when it comes to water quality criteria. Participants responded to environmental management criteria, showing a noteworthy negative response in terms of the current lack of a beach management committee, which should be appointed by the beach operator (BCMM) to look after Eastern Beach. Furthermore, the results illustrate that this beach is non-compliant towards clean facilities, which should exist to meet Blue Flag requirements. The results illustrate that Eastern Beach has inadequate restrooms and ablution facilities for users. In terms of the safety and services criteria, the majority agreed that this beach has appropriate safety and security, although contrasting responses emerged under other research objectives.

d) Current challenges and future improvement plans for Eastern Beach

The results summarised in this section derive from the RO4 and RO5 summaries of this study. Findings illustrated that a lack of visitor management is leading to overcrowding at this beach. The alcohol usage is a challenge, which can endanger other beach users, especially children. This beach was criticised for robbery incidents and noted as high-risk. Findings also demonstrated insufficient security for the protection of existing beach facilities from vandalism. This beach has limited resources for public security measures and managing the physical beach facilities. Sewage management is a current challenge, due to the sewage spill problem. Findings revealed that Ebuhlanti (Marina Glen Public Park) should be formalised as part of future improvement plans. The beach needs to be kept clean and tidy, while visitor actions that include illegal alcohol use and littering should be prevented.

Beach facilities including ablutions, public signage, braai, waste receptacle facilities and public streetlights require improvement. Results demonstrate that an investment strategy is required to attract local businesses, create employment opportunities, and support local entrepreneurs. In future, crowd control and beach management are required at Eastern Beach. Results show that the stream flowing to the beach will be rehabilitated to prevent water pollution and solid waste.

As part of the benefits that would be obtained should Blue Flag status be achieved at this beach, environmental benefits include that Eastern Beach could become a healthy environment, which would promote confidence for users to swim, and utilise beach amenities that are in accordance with international standards. In relation to socio-cultural benefits, the results disclosed that this beach would be a safe environment for host communities and visitors, because of the status. School children could visit for educational

reasons. Eastern Beach could be highly recommended to others and the city's image would be enhanced, since the status would have international prominence. The results also revealed that the Blue Flag would bring economic benefits into the city. More tourism, resulting from repeat visitors, especially international tourists would accrue due do this ecolabel. There would be more spending, job creation and increased revenue, which are the most desired economic benefits for East London as a tourist destination. Facilities such as accommodation establishments (hotels, guest houses and B&Bs), restaurants, and transport would be elevated and used more. It was expressed that additional city revenue will result from the status, and potential increased tourist spend would accrue.

e) Blue Flag Status Framework

The final part of this chapter (Section 4.9) continued the analysis of findings to produce the Blue Flag Status Framework, which sets the context, to assist stakeholders involved at Eastern Beach to move towards attaining Blue Flag status. This framework summarises the current context and future plans by considering five components, namely: the stakeholders' awareness of Eastern Beach (Component 1), recreational activities at Eastern Beach (Component 2), current problems at Eastern Beach (Component 3) and current plans for Eastern Beach (Component 4). Future improvement plans and best practices that can be undertaken in future (Component 5) form the future state cluster of the framework. Finally, the framework points to the benefits of the triple bottom line, associated with balanced sustainability, as the desired state. The framework shows how adherence to Blue Flag criteria and the principles of ICZM can lead to balanced sustainability and the triple bottom line spin-offs of environmental, socio-cultural and economic benefits. The Blue Flag Status Framework depicts how the attainment of the status could be beneficial for this beach and for the city, in terms of the promotion of tourism and encouragement of coastal sustainable tourism. The accreditation of this beach would encourage a much-needed balance between the ecosystem and promotion of the beach as an international tourism and recreation location. This framework supports sustainable tourism expansion and ecological management through the use of ICZM and the Blue Flag ecolabel at Eastern Beach.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

"I hope for your help to explore and protect the wild ocean in ways
that will restore the health and, in so doing, secure hope for
humankind. Health to the ocean means health for us".
(Sylvia Earle, 2009:272).
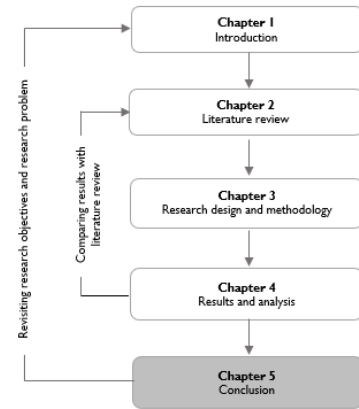
5.1. INTRODUCTION

This final chapter concludes the study. It will demonstrate how the primary and secondary research objectives have been accomplished (Section 5.2), which in turn, address the research problem (Section 5.3) as outlined in Chapter One. The contributions of this research will be explained in Section 5.4, followed by limitations of the study in Section 5.5. Suggestions for further research will be delineated in Section 5.6. The outline of this chapter is shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Outline of Chapter Five.

The primary research objective of this study was to **investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status**. This was done through a predominantly qualitative research design, which focused on the perceptions of public and private stakeholders in East London.

5.2. REVISITING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This section reflects on the achievement of the five secondary research objectives that framed the study, and which helped to answer the primary research objective and, in so doing, addressed the research problems under investigation. Throughout all the secondary research objectives, and where applicable, findings were compared with material from the literature review. Table 5.1 indicates the sections within the study where each secondary research objective was addressed.

Table 5.1: Research objectives and chapter sections

Research objective	Research objective	Section in chapter
RO1:	To discover the awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status	4.4
RO2:	To understand current plans and recommendation for Eastern Beach towards Blue Flag status	4.5
RO3:	To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria	4.6
RO4:	To ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach	4.7
RO5:	To ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach	4.8

5.2.1. Secondary Research Objective 1

RO1: To discover the awareness of Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status.

This secondary research objective was achieved in Chapter Four, under Section 4.4 of the study. Results indicated that interviewed stakeholders had adequate awareness and knowledge of Eastern Beach. These stakeholders were aware that the beach is currently not ranked as a Blue Flag beach. As part of this research objective, the findings revealed sufficient recreational activities that beach visitors can participate in at Eastern Beach. Problems associated with Eastern Beach were also discovered and were clearly elucidated by the stakeholders. Findings from RO1 indicated a fragmented use of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) framework by public and private stakeholder organisations involved at this beach.

5.2.2. Secondary Research Objective 2

RO2: To understand current plans and recommendations for Eastern Beach, towards Blue Flag status.

The second secondary research objective was accomplished in Chapter Four of this study, under Section 4.5. This research primarily confirmed the involvement of stakeholder organisations at Eastern Beach, working towards the Blue Flag status. They are involved in planning for tourism projects, creation of environmental public awareness and supporting tourism projects. There is infrastructural development currently underway in the form of an integrated urban park at this beach. As part of the current plans towards the status, an old sewage pipe, which caused major water quality issues is presently being replaced, to avoid further waste deposits into the sea. Safety and security, voluntary environmental public initiatives and cleaning campaigns, are other current plans that came forward from RO2 of this study.

5.2.3. Secondary Research Objective 3

RO3: To establish the extent of compliance of Eastern Beach with Blue Flag criteria.

The third secondary research objective was achieved in Section 4.6 of the analysis chapter. Findings proved that Eastern Beach in East London is currently not complying with the Blue Flag ecolabel criteria of environmental education and information, water quality, environmental management, and safety and services. As anticipated, a beach without the status is unlikely to comply with Blue Flag criteria. From the findings, this beach showed compliance with respect to the code of conduct criterion, which guides beach users regarding the appropriate use of the beach. Compliance with Criterion 1 was also revealed in Table 4.19.

5.2.4. Secondary Research Objective 4

RO4: To ascertain current challenges regarding attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach

This study attained the fourth secondary research objective in Section 4.7 of Chapter Four. Results showed that there are significant challenges regarding the attainment of Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach. RO4 revealed challenges related to sewage management, lack of visitor management, overcrowding and alcohol usage. While RO3 revealed compliance with public safety control measures, the qualitative findings from RO4 revealed that resources are limited, and that there are insufficient public safety and security measures, such as security officers and lifeguards. RO4 depicted that there is a lack of management of physical beach facilities and there is unsatisfactory security for the protection of existing beach facilities from vandalism.

5.2.5. Secondary Research Objective 5

RO5: To ascertain future improvement plans for Eastern Beach.

The last secondary research objective, RO5, was achieved in Chapter Four, Section 4.8. The results included several improvement plans which can assist Eastern Beach in moving towards Blue Flag status. It was clear that stakeholders wanted Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park to be formalised as a local tourist attraction and to be regulated by the local municipality. One of the future improvement plans is to keep Eastern Beach clean and tidy. Stakeholders also want to avoid illegal alcohol use and littering. Beach facilities such as ablutions, public signage, braais, waste receptacles and public streetlights will be improved at Eastern Beach. As part of the enhancement suggestions, safety and security will also receive attention. There needs to be an investment strategy to attract local businesses, create employment opportunities and support local entrepreneurs. An important future plan involves imposing standard operating hours and implementing access control for crowd

control and visitor management. It surfaced that Eastern Beach should be enhanced, with managers acting as if they have Blue Flag status, even before they apply for it. Lastly, and emerging again in this RO, sewage control and river rehabilitation featured as part of the plans for the future of this beach.
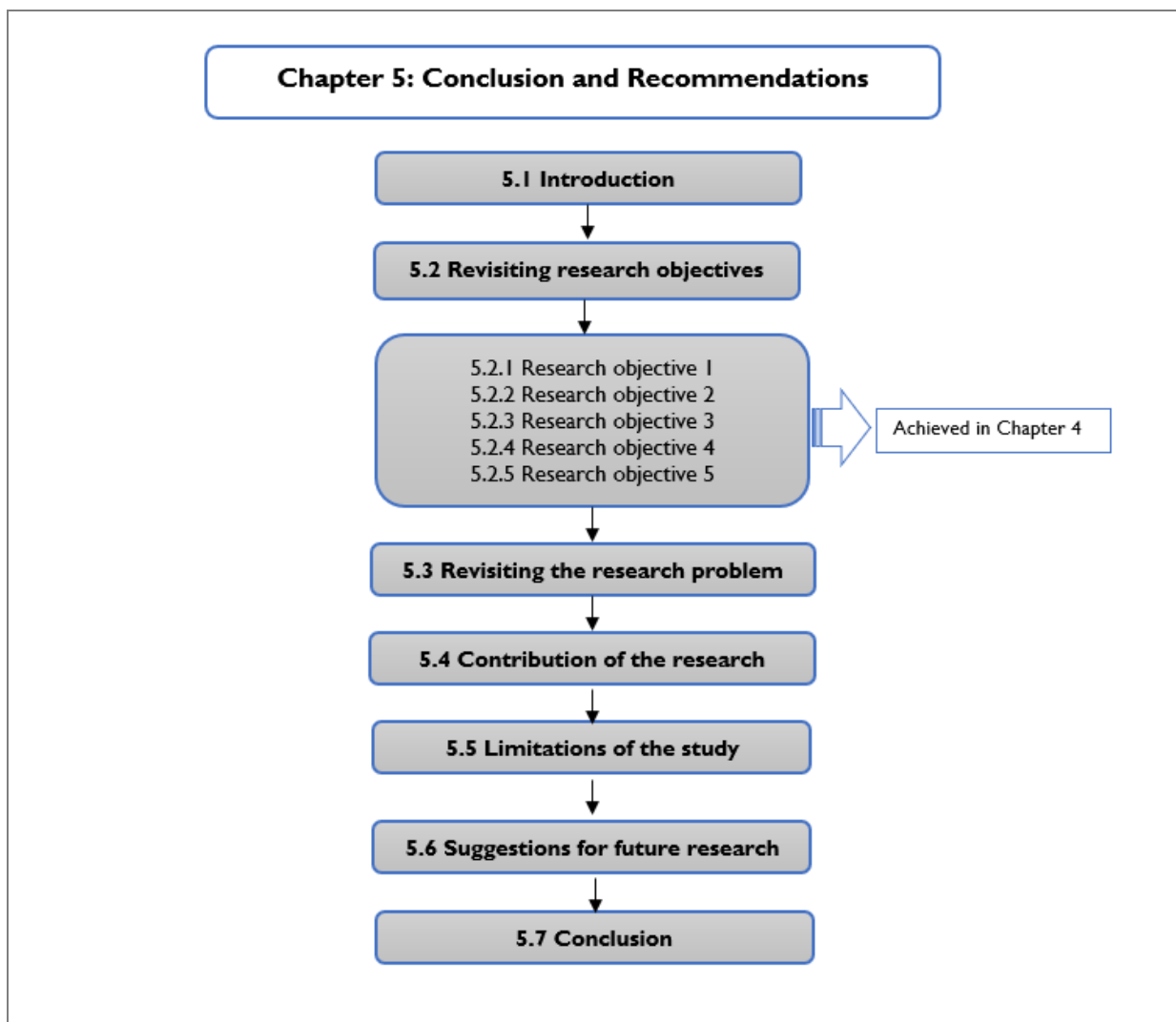
5.2.6. Primary Research Objective

The primary research objective of the study was to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status. Although this has been achieved via the secondary research objectives, as discussed above, the researcher's final step in achieving the primary research objective was to create the Blue Flag Status Framework. This framework encapsulates the achievement of the primary research objective of this study. When developing the Blue Flag Status Framework, the researcher utilised the primary data collected from public and private tourism stakeholders. The framework, as the attainment of the primary research objective, sets the context to assist stakeholders involved at Eastern Beach to move towards achieving Blue Flag status. The attainment of the status, effective implementation and use of ICZM, as well as the triple bottom line benefits of sustainability, portrayed the desired future for Eastern Beach.

5.3.   REVISITING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problems that gave rise to this study were outlined in Chapter One and are revisited here (indicated in bold). As part of a bigger problem in the Eastern Cape, East London and Eastern Beach, this study initially highlighted that the province hosts East London city, which **still suffers from past historical infrastructure backlogs and slow growth of tourist resources**, especially on the shoreline. It is part of the same problem that the **city is generally characterised with high levels of unemployment, excessive poverty and rapid population growth**. These gaps for the province and the city were not part of the study's primary research objective. However, based on the conceptual framework and key terms presented in Chapter One (Figure 1.1), sustainable tourism development was adopted in this empirical study as a theoretical context for a type of expansion that accepts interdependence between monetary growth, community equity and ecological integrity. This means that the study employed secondary data (literature review), to depict how sustainable tourism development in the Eastern Cape province, together with the adoption of the Blue Flag ecolabel, can make strides towards solving the problem of unemployment, excessive poverty and rapid population growth in the province, based on existing successful adoption examples of this ecolabel.

Sustainable tourism development and the Blue Flag award programme still show exclusion, owing to environmental legislation and policies that are currently fragmented and which have not effectively promoted tourism. This was a further problem identified, which was highlighted afresh in this research. The findings have pinpointed the challenges as well as current and future plans that could assist in mitigating this. The need to collaborate is an important finding, which could bear fruit given the positive will and intent of stakeholders to take Eastern Beach to the next level (Sections 4.5 and 4.5). The research also demonstrated the benefits that sustainable tourism development can bring should the status be attained (Section 4.9.2, Desired state of the Blue Flag Status Framework). Since **Eastern Beach is not currently ranked as a Blue Flag beach**, problems associated with ensuring environmental legislation and policies and the attainment of Blue Flag criteria still exist. In this regard, the literature review delivered useful insights concerning environmental policies, approaches and rights (the Bill of Rights; White Paper on the Sustainable Development & Promotion of Tourism, Agenda 21) and Acts (NEMA 107 of 1998 and ICMA 24 of 2008), which could be used as a background foundation towards sustainable tourism development goals in East London, and Eastern Beach in particular.

Another research gap highlighted was the **lack of a proper ICZM strategy, which continues to negatively affect the ability to maintain Eastern Beach as a pristine beach of choice.** In Section 4.4.5, this study provided vital findings concerning the fragmented use and implementation of ICZM at Eastern Beach. Public and private stakeholders provided recommendations on the effective use of ICZM in moving towards Blue Flag status.

Another research gap mentioned **an increase in the intensity of the adverse negative impacts which cause a deterioration of this beach as a tourist attraction, which demotivates tourists and visitors, creates discontentment among the hosts, and hinders the tourism potential of this destination**. In Section 4.4.1, this study provided opposing results with respect to this gap. Interestingly, this gap was addressed positively by the study, since stakeholders identified that this beach is a popular destination, which mostly attracts local inhabitants on a regular basis and over weekends. It is crowded during the festive season or summer months. It was further discovered that this beach has the potential to be a Blue Flag beach, attract international tourists and more local visitors as well as elevate the city's appeal. The results showed that the location of Eastern Beach does bring compelling opportunities for visitors to have more to do at the shore, including visiting Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. Responding to the problem, this study also

indicated positive perceptions of the status, since it was viewed as a great opportunity, which could improve the beach standard and quality.

While Eastern Beach, according to stakeholders, is perceived positively by visitors, the negative ecological impacts are acknowledged. These emerged in the research gaps and in this study. With respect to the **deprived tourism development and management practices, which were noted to lead to numerous negative ecological impacts along Eastern Beach coast**, this study provided findings concerning beach problems in Section 4.4.4, which are currently known by the stakeholders involved. This revealed that negative impacts such as illegal littering and disposal of dry and wet waste on the land and sea of Eastern Beach still exist. This study also demonstrated that problems associated with **litter and waste, inadequate beach facilities, crowded beach and environmental degradation** do exist at Eastern Beach. The Blue Flag Status Framework of this study (Figure 4.6: Section 4.9) further depicts that known beach problems were considered by stakeholders as the basis for the formulation of current plans explained in Section 4.5.

Considering that issues facing Eastern Beach have reached a critical stage, there was an important need for **long-term management planning, developmental strategies and management practices as guided by the constitution.** This study revealed important plans in place to attempt to address this gap. Firstly, involved stakeholders provided current plans for Eastern Beach in Section 4.5. They elaborated that part of their long-term management plan is to promote vital stakeholder engagement/collaboration with the local municipality, public and private sector organisations as well as communities, to move towards the sustainable future of Eastern Beach and attainment of the Blue Flag ecolabel. Secondly, RO2 of this study responded to the developmental strategies highlighted in this research problem, determining that stakeholders involved at this beach are already fulfilling required roles, including better planning for tourism projects such as the Blue Flag status; promotion of economic returns and infrastructure investments for the city; creating environmental public awareness; and supporting tourism projects.

Thirdly, there are already existing vital management practices in place at Eastern Beach, as guided by the constitution. The study revealed that the stakeholders involved, together with the local municipality, are working on plans which are set to improve environmental and water management projects, including infrastructural development and improvement at Eastern Beach, Esplanade Precinct and at Ebuhlanti/Marina Glen Public Park. Some management practices still require better leadership for Blue Flag status, which should mainly be driven by the municipality. In addition, the management responsibility of facilitating educational campaigns, driving awareness and keeping the beach clean have

not been successfully implemented. Therefore, this study forms a vital basis to raise awareness associated with the 'long-term management planning, developmental strategies and management practices' gap previously identified by the researcher. Finally, with respect to negative impacts and management issues, perhaps the findings of this research, together with the practical tool of the Blue Flag Status Framework could assist stakeholders in moving towards the desired state.

5.4. CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

a) With insufficient evidence of existing research in the context of the Blue Flag ecolabel in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa and at Eastern Beach in particular, this research provides context, on which future plans can be based.

- It provides detailed evidence on the stakeholder awareness of the beach itself (the study area) and its associated recreational activities. While it has been confirmed that several impacts do indeed prevail on this coastline, the current plans and recommendations revealed a will and intent to move this beach towards Blue Flag status.

- Current beach problems and stakeholder challenges, which are preventing Eastern Beach from attaining Blue Flag status are highlighted.

- The standard of Eastern Beach's compliance was ascertained against the international Blue Flag criteria standards (environmental education and information, water quality, environmental management, safety and service), for a broader awareness of the beach's current state and providing new evidence for future research.

- This research considers the Blue Flag ecolabel and ICZM for improved management and future sustainability of Eastern Beach. It presents laws and policies that influence the practice of ICZM in South Africa (Section 2.6.2 of the literature review). The use of statutory acts and policies such as ICZM by stakeholder organisations involved in moving towards Blue Flag status, were evaluated against the ICM Act 24 of 2008.

b) This study also provided insights regarding what can be done differently to improve the current status of Eastern Beach. In addition, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge regarding the imperative balance of social, economic and environmental aspects around coastal tourist attractions, particularly the beach.

c) Furthermore, this study presents the possible positive impacts that attaining Blue Flag status could have on Eastern Beach, from the perspective of involved leadership/management representatives. These are presented in the form of positive environmental, socio-cultural and economic spin-offs, that can improve destination attractiveness.

5.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Findings of this empirical research are limited to the perceptions of public and private stakeholders, regarding Eastern Beach in East London. For the purpose of this qualitative research, which is in fulfilment of a Master of Commerce degree, a maximum of twenty key public and private tourism stakeholders were interviewed. Only public and private stakeholders, who are directly involved in tourism planning, development and management of tourist attractions and amenities in East London were involved and interviewed for this qualitative study.

- As a result of the rigour required in qualitative studies in terms of transcribing, processing, coding and cleaning of the data, followed by write-up and analysis, the researcher limited the study to Eastern Beach only. This restricts the generalisability of the primary research findings,

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face interviews were impossible during the time of data collection. The researcher used Microsoft Teams to interact virtually with participants, which ensured that COVID-19 restrictions were adhered to.

5.6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

During the course of this study, the following emerged as areas for future research:

- The study of the Blue Flag ecolabel in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa is still limited. To build on this work, there is a need for future studies to focus on communities' perceptions regarding the potential impact that Blue Flag status could have on the beaches of the Eastern Cape. This would help to determine to what extent findings differ from the perceptions of public and private stakeholder organisations. Benefits associated with balanced tourism development may be ascertained directly from host communities.

- Future studies could be conducted to establish beach users' insights on their decisions to choose accredited and non-accredited beaches in the Eastern Cape province. Findings of such research may help to build visitor profiles regarding choices of beaches, expectations, and experiences.

- Due to the fact that several beaches in the Eastern Cape have lost their Blue Flag status, it is imperative that future studies focus on the main factors behind noncompliance with Blue Flag certification standards.

- Bearing in mind that ICZM was referred to as a beach management tool that is seldom used at Eastern Beach, future research may seek to determine the practical importance of such a management tool towards the attainment or retainment of the Blue Flag status. This could also assist in determining the drivers of noncompliance and help in developing a framework for the development of other beaches, based on lessons learnt.

- Considering that Eastern Beach beachfront is currently being revamped, incorporating a public park that is worth millions in terms of infrastructure, future studies could evaluate the socio-economic benefits associated with this tourism development in East London. Findings from such studies may assist in discovering the social and economic spin-offs of this beach upgrade.

5.7. CONCLUSION

> "Human health depends on the health of our oceans. Not only can we
> avoid diseases and bacteria, but healthy oceans through Blue Flag
> ecolabel can even improve our food supply and health of beach users.
> Ideas concerning Blue Flag ecolabel contribute to human learning,
> responsible management and coastal sustainability"
> (Sofar Ocean, 2021:1).

It is noted that awareness regarding the Blue Flag ecolabel is still limited in South Africa. Yet, beaches with Blue Flag status remain vital revenue generators, as they encompass healthy environments that offer safe leisure, relaxation and recreation to beach visitors. Without a doubt, "human health depends on the health of our oceans" (Sofar Ocean, 2021). From the lessons learnt, the importance of the Blue Flag ecolabel varies from a voluntary certification, into a prevailing beach management tool, which is valuable to uplift beach quality and prominence. Amongst 48 accredited beaches in South Africa, with seven of them located in the Eastern Cape province, more still needs to be done. Eastern Beach is currently not accredited with the Blue Flag status and has not applied for years. Hence, the primary research objective behind this research was to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, regarding the current context and future plans for attaining Blue Flag status.

To achieve this objective and address the research problem, five secondary research questions were formulated. This was done through a predominantly qualitative research design, which focused on the perceptions of public and private stakeholders in East London. This qualitative study was designed to provide insights regarding current beach status, recreational activities, current plans and recommendations towards the status. As far as could be ascertained, this is the first empirical study to provide current challenges and future improvement plans for this beach towards a sustainable future, from the perspective of private and public stakeholders involved in East London. All secondary research objectives were met and the researcher's final step in achieving the primary research objective was to design the Blue Flag Status Framework. This framework is a tool which can assist Eastern Beach stakeholders to move towards Blue Flag status in East London.

While this study confirmed that several negative impacts and challenges currently face the beach and stakeholders, the current plans and recommendations from involved stakeholders reveal a will and intent to move towards the status. Considering that Eastern Beach is not currently ranked, the level of compliance towards the criteria for Blue Flag status validates the need for this framework to be considered by involved stakeholders.

Even though this study aimed at determining current plans and context towards the attainment of Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach, it also provided insights on how the sustainable tourism development approach, constitutional laws, policies and acts, which already exist in South Africa, can be used as background foundation to raise awareness. Blue Flag beaches elsewhere within the Eastern Cape province, can be studied to provide guidelines of what has worked. Furthermore, this study presented possible environmental, socio-cultural and economic spin-offs, which could accrue due to the use of the framework and attainment of the status at Eastern Beach.

In relation to sustainable tourism expansion and ecological beach management through the Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach, this research casts light on compelling opportunities that can improve the city's appeal. Additionally, public and private stakeholders can play an important role in driving holistic stakeholder inclusion and ensuring that local communities do indeed benefit from tourism activities at this attraction. Through the attainment of Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach, sustainable tourism development that moves beyond environmental considerations to employment for host communities, is possible, thus refining the quality of life and alleviating social inequalities.

Findings of this research can provide a direction to beach managers and other involved stakeholders – providing a holistic picture of the different initiatives and plans underway, illustrating common ground, and most importantly, revealing the intent that prevails to improve Eastern Beach. Using the Blue Flag status conceptual framework, the attainment of the status would be a victory for the impoverished Eastern Cape and could serve as an example that, in spite of challenges, the environment can be conserved, and high-quality beaches can be made available that enrich the lives of both locals and outside visitors.

Returning to the quotes from Sofar Ocean (2021) and Earle (2009), the latter which was used at the start of Chapter 5, it is noticeable that health to the oceans, means health to us (East London, stakeholders, and communities at large). Likewise, the study of the Blue Flag ecolabel is not only a solution to the environmental dimension of the triple bottom line, or not only can we avoid diseases and bacteria from sea water, but healthy oceans can even improve our food supply and the health of communities and beach users. Therefore, the focus of this research on Eastern Beach, does provide compelling reasons for a sustainable future for the Eastern Cape province, East London and local communities, through the attainment of the Blue Flag status. It is also meaningful that ideas concerning this ecolabel contribute to human learning, responsible management and coastal sustainability, which

can be seen as a win for the country at large, through the fulfilment of its sustainable developmental agenda on this coast.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview guide

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INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following questions will be used to guide the research with the public and private stakeholders in East London, regarding Eastern Beach.

SECTION A: STAKEHOLDER PROFILE

   1. What is the name of the organisation to which you belong?

……

   2. What is your position in this organisation?

………..

SECTION B: AWARENESS OF EASTERN BEACH AND BLUE FLAG STATUS

   1. What do you know about Eastern Beach?

………...…

………...

   2. What can visitors or tourists do at the Eastern Beach?

……….

……….

   3. Is Eastern Beach currently ranked as one of the Blue Flag Beaches in East London? *Yes/No*

………..

………...

   4. If it is, when did Eastern Beach obtain its Blue Flag status? Please explain:

………

………...

   5. If not, has Eastern Beach ever applied for a Blue Flag status in the past? Please explain:

………..

………..

   6. **The Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is known to be a useful tool towards maintenance of beach quality, cleanliness and protection of coastal zones.**

6.1 Have you come across the concept of ICZM before? *Yes/No*

6.2 If yes, how is it used in your work?

………..

………..

………..

</div>

SECTION C: CURRENT PLANS FOR EASTERN BEACH

1. Does your organisation have a role to play in Eastern Beach seeking Blue Flag status? *Yes/No*

   …………………………………

2. If yes, what are these roles?

   ……...

   ……...

   ……..

3. Which other organisations do you think need to be involved in achieving Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach?

   ……...

   ……...

   ……...

4. Please explain why you think so.

   ……

   ……

   ……

5. Do you think Blue Flag status for Eastern Beach can improve beach quality, which can attract both visitors and residents? *Yes/No.*

   …………………………………………

6. Please explain your answer

   ……

   ……

   ……

7. As a public or private stakeholder for Eastern Beach, what current plans are you aware of that are working towards Blue Flag status?

   ……

   ……

   ……

   ……

8. Please explain these plans.

   ……

   ……

   ……

9. If you are not aware of any current plans for Eastern Beach and Blue Flag status, what recommendations would you suggest in order to work towards Blue Flag status?

   ……

   ……

   ……..

1. Are you aware of any voluntary environmental public initiatives that are aimed at raising public awareness at the Eastern Beach? *Yes/No.*

   ………..

   ………..

   ………..

2. If yes, please explain these initiatives.

   ………..

   ………..

   ………..

   ………..

3. Do you think public and private stakeholders have a responsibility/role to play towards attaining a Blue Flag award for the Eastern Beach? *Yes/No.*

   ………………………………………

4. Please explain your response, what would these responsibilities/roles be?

   ………..

   ………..

   ………..

   ………..

SECTION D: EASTERN BEACH AND BLUE FLAG CRITERIA

The following are criteria for the Blue Flag Beaches. For each one, indicate with a **yes (Y), no (N) or not sure (NS)** to show whether Eastern Beach complies or not.

a)	**Environmental Education and Information**	Y	N	NS
1.	There is information presently displayed regarding the Blue Flag eco-label at the Eastern Beach.			
2.	The Eastern Beach is promoting environmental education activities for the beach users.			
3.	A beach map indicating the different facilities available is currently displayed at the Eastern Beach.			
4.	The Eastern Beach is currently offering a Code of Conduct, which is displayed and guiding beach users about the appropriate use of the beach and surrounding areas.			
b)	**Water Quality**	Y	N	NS
1.	The Eastern Beach is currently complying with water quality sampling and frequency requirements for the Blue Flag beaches.			
2.	There is perceived industrial, wastewater or sewage-related discharges, currently affecting Eastern Beach.			
3.	The Eastern Beach is fully complying with the standards and requirements for water quality analysis.			

c)	**Environmental Management**	Y	N	NS
1.	A beach management committee appointed by the local authority/beach operator for Eastern Beach already exists.			
2.	The Eastern Beach has clean facilities, which are meeting required standards for Blue Flag beaches.			
3.	Facilities for the separation of recyclable waste materials (glass, tins, dry and wet waste), exist at Eastern Beach			
4.	At Eastern Beach, there is an adequate number of restrooms and ablution facilities for beach users.			
5.	Eastern Beach has strict and controlled measures that are guiding the access of dogs and other domestic animals.			
d)	**Safety and Services**	Y	N	NS
1.	Appropriate public safety control measures currently exist for beach users at Eastern Beach.			
2.	Essential facilities and access for physically disabled visitors or residents already exist at Eastern Beach.			
3.	Emergency plans to cope with pollution risks currently exist at Eastern Beach.			

SECTION E: CHALLENGES REGARDING ATTAINING BLUE FLAG STATUS

1. What do you think are the challenges or problems faced by the public and private stakeholders involved in Eastern Beach?
   ………
   ………
   ………

2. **Tick** which of the following challenges you think are relevant to Eastern Beach.

a)	Lack of coordination of requests for applying for Blue Flag award for Eastern Beach	
b)	Lack of monitoring of bathing water quality to ensure Blue Flag Beach quality compliance	
c)	No organised litter collection and acceptable forms of litter disposal	
d)	Absence of organised collection of waste for recycling	
e)	Lack of organised collection of hazardous wastes for appropriate disposal	
f)	Absence of assurance that the standards concerning safety provisions are met	
g)	Lack of regular environmental education activities for beach users at Eastern Beach	
h)	Insufficient maintenance of the beach, so that it does not look good for beach users	
i)	Lack of Information boards for visitors on protecting the environment, safety precautions and services	
j)	Inadequate incorporation of environmental considerations into local planning for Eastern Beach	

SECTION F: FUTURE IMPROVEMENT OF EASTERN BEACH

1. What do you think can be done differently to improve the status of Eastern Beach?

    ……
    ……
    ……
    ……

2. If Blue Flag status was achieved for Eastern Beach, what positive impacts could result for **the natural environment (the beach itself)?**

    ……
    ……
    ……

3. If Blue Flag status was achieved for Eastern Beach, what positive benefits do you think this could bring to:

    a) the **socio-cultural environment of East London?**

    ……
    ……
    ……

    b) the **economic environment of East London?**

    ……
    ……
    ……

    Thank you for your involvement in this research!

Appendix B: Ethical clearance approval

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA DEPARTMENT APPLIED MANAGEMENT RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (DAM-RERC)

Date: 18 August 2020

| ERC Reference # : |
| 2020_CEMS_DAM_006 |
| Name: Ntuthuzelo Headman Sayedwa |
| Student #: 63561557 |

Dear Mr. NH Sayedwa

Decision: Ethics Approval from August 2020 to August 2023

Researcher(s):   Mr. NH Sayedwa
                    078 546 1359 / 63561557@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Supervisor (s):   Dr. DR Queiros
                    072 262 2986/ queirdr@unisa.ac.za

| **Working title of research:** |
| **Best practices for attaining Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach: Perceptions of public & private stakeholders** |

Qualification: Master of Commerce in Tourism Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa DAM Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

> *The **medium risk application** was **reviewed** by the DAM Ethics Review Committee in July/August 2020 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved on the 18th of August 2020.*
>
> The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:
> 1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.

Open Rubric

2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the DAM Committee.

4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (08/2023). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2020_CEMS_DAM_006** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs C Poole
Chair: DAM-RERC
E-mail: damrerc@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 433-4668

Prof RT Mpofu
CEMS DED
(on behalf of Prof Mogale

Prof M Mogale
Executive Dean: CEMS
E-mail: mogalmt@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429-4419

URERC 25.04.17 - Decision template (V2) - Approve

University of South Africa
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Appendix C: Introductory letter to stakeholders

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Mr Ntuthuzelo Headman Sayedwa and I am doing research towards a Master of commerce in Tourism Management at the University of South Africa. My supervisor is Dr Dorothy Queiros, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Applied Management. I have funding from the Masters and Doctoral Research Bursary Committee (MDRBC) to conduct this empirical research. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Towards Blue Flag status at Eastern Beach in East London, South Africa: Current context and future plans.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

I am conducting this research to investigate the perceptions of public and private stakeholders involved in the management of Eastern Beach, to determine best practices required to attain Blue Flag status.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You have been chosen as a manager, director or chief executive officer of a public/private tourism stakeholder in East London. Your selection to participate is based on your direct or indirect role in tourism planning, coastal development and the environmental management of Eastern Beach, East London. Referring participation to another member of the organisation is also acceptable, and your informed consent is requested for the referral. This research is targeting twenty stakeholders (both public and private) chosen from the list of stakeholders on the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality website.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves semi-structured interviews, which will be conducted through a virtual technology platform, predominantly Microsoft Teams (MS) and will be audio-recorded. Should you be unfamiliar with MS Teams and prefer to use another technology such as Zoom, Webex or Skype meetings, the researcher will consider the use of your ideal platform. The questions are attached. Each interview will last approximately 40 minutes.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. If you take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Your perceptions will add value to the sustainable future of Eastern Beach, providing useful information on the best practices you think are required to attain Blue Flag status. The results of the study will be shared with you. This research will contribute to our knowledge regarding the balance between the social, economic and environmental aspects of Eastern Beach.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

There are no negative consequences. No personal information needs to be disclosed. The open-ended questions allow participants to answer the questions in their own way.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your answers will be given a code and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. You have the right to insist that your name must not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher will know about your involvement in this research.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of the study results will be securely stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval, if applicable. Hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer using a relevant software programme such as Freeraser or File Shredder.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

The researcher will not be offering incentives to respondents.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Applied Management Research Ethics Review Committee (DAM-RERC), UNISA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Mr Ntuthuzelo Headman Sayedwa at 63561557@mylife.unisa.ac.za, website: http://www.unisa.ac.za The findings are accessible for a period of five years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact: 63561557@mylife.unisa.ac.za or queirdr@unisa.ac.za.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr Queiros at 012 433 4667; queirdr@unisa.ac.za. Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson of the Department Applied Management Research Ethics Review Committee (DAM-RERC), Mrs Carmen Poole at 012 433 4668; damrerc@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Yours Sincerely

Mr Headman Sayedwa

Student: Department Applied Management

E-mail: 63561557@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Appendix D: Informed consent for stakeholders

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

- **If you are the head of this organisation, please complete Section A**.
- **If you, as head of the organisation, are participating in the study as the interviewee, please also complete Section B.**
- **If your organisation has already agreed to form part of this research, and you have been selected to be the interviewee, please skip to Section B.**:

SECTION A: PERMISSION FROM THE ORGANISATION

I hereby grant permission for the organisation _____(insert name of organisation), to be included in this research.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Position within organisation: _____

SECTION B: PERMISSION FROM THE INTERVIEWEE

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the virtual semi-structured interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant name & surname: _____ (please print)

Participant signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's same & surname: _____(please print)

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E: Turnitin receipt
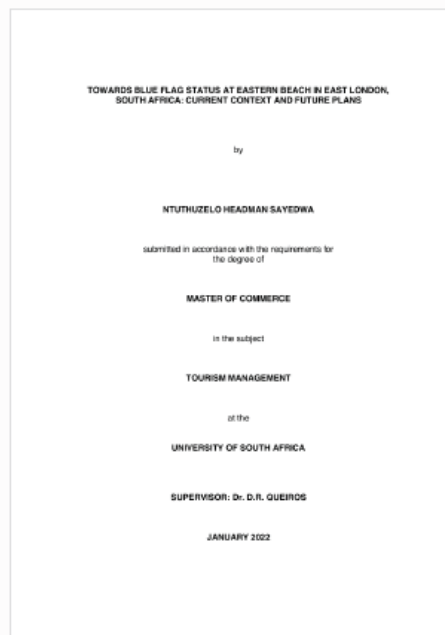
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TOWARDS BLUE FLAG STATUS AT EASTERN BEACH IN EAST LONDON,
SOUTH AFRICA: CURRENT CONTEXT AND FUTURE PLANS

by

NTUTHUZELO HEADMAN SAYEDWA

submitted in accordance with the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF COMMERCE

in the subject

TOURISM MANAGEMENT

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: Dr. D.R. QUEIROS

JANUARY 2022

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Appendix F: Certificate from Editor

SHARON (SHEYNE) R BALL TTD (JCE)

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16 February 2022

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

To whom it may concern

This certifies that I have edited the thesis, TOWARDS BLUE FLAG STATUS AT EASTERN BEACH IN EAST LONDON, SOUTH AFRICA: CURRENT CONTEXT AND FUTURE PLANS, by Ntuthuzelo Headman Sayedwa.

This document is to be submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce in the subject Tourism Management at the University of South Africa.

Disclaimers

1. I focused on language issues, including grammar, tenses, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, and consistency with regard to UK spelling.

2. I gave attention to the word order where necessary and made suggestions to improve the flow of the story line. Some discrepancies in the generation of the List of References and the Table of Contents were also pointed out.

3. A complete edited copy was provided to the author. Final decisions rest with the student as to which suggestions to implement. Changes made to the document subsequent to editing would not be covered by my editing certification.

Sheyne R Ball
Language editor