Tourism is a very important economic and social element in southern Africa. Although tourism and its developmental nature are always polarised, the impacts of tourism are relatively widely spread in the region. New places are constantly introduced to tourism, and the existing destinations and attractions are modified and further developed in order to satisfy the needs of growing numbers of international as well as evolving domestic tourists. As a result, tourism has become a major economic driver in the region with broad scale of benefits ranging from additional incomes and employment, improved public infrastructures, facilities and services, new incoming investments and increased possibilities for entrepreneurship and more international business environments and contacts, for example. Tourism has also a wide range of other kinds of evident or potential impacts on environment, economy, people and their everyday life and cultures. This has highlighted the role of sustainability in tourism. The issue of sustainable development and thinking the impacts and changes proactively are important in southern Africa, where the attractiveness of natural and traditional cultural environments, which are sensitive to the changes caused by poorly managed and controlled tourism, plays the key role in tourism and its future prospects in the region.

With the increasing role of the tourism industry in southern Africa, the need to research and study tourism, its developmental nature and impacts has been emphasised recently. During the past few years, the research input has increased, and also educational programmes and courses have evolved in tourism and related fields. In the region, the first dedicated Department of Tourism Management was established at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, in 1997. Most probably the youngest university level unit, the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, was established at the University of Botswana (UB) in 2009. Thus, the focus on tourism studies is growing, but as in many other regions in the world, the elements and processes of sustainable development in tourism development, policies and education still call for more work and interests in the academia and beyond. The aim of this book is to contribute to the academic field of tourism studies by providing an introduction to the connections between tourism, sustainability and development with a range of case
studies and examples from the region. The volume has an emphasis on policy issues in sustainable tourism and as such it aims to be used by specialists, academics and students of southern African and international tourism, management, environmental studies, geography and social sciences. The main focus of the book is on tourism, sustainability and natural resource-dependent communities facing processes of transition. These processes are generally long and gradual with direct and/or indirect links to evolving tourism. Although the book is recognising the key role of tourism in transition, the social, cultural, economic and political contexts of tourism and local communities are also highlighted. The academic value of the contributions has been enhanced by a peer review process.

A number of individuals and organisations deserve a word of thanks. The home universities of editors have been supportive in the collaboration. The Finnish Foreign Ministry’s financial support through the Institutional Collaboration Instrument (ICI) and the project Sustainable Tourism in Southern Africa has made it possible for the editors and contributors to meet and discuss about the volume in hand, and on related course and collaborative plans in future. In addition, the North-South-South Higher Education Programme coordinated by Centre for International Mobility (CIMO, Finland) has provided a very good platform to meet and develop sustainable tourism-related courses and course materials, based on the book project between the universities of Botswana, Cape Town, Namibia, Oulu and Pretoria. We would like to thank Elinor Robertson and the Channel View staff and C. Michael Hall (Series Editor) for their interest, support and great help with the book, starting from an early stage of the project till the printing of the finished product in hand.

Jarkko Saarinen would like to thank his co-editors for their efforts in working on the edited book and for the whole process and opportunities to discuss and spend time with them in their home institutions and in Oulu, close to the Arctic Circle. The final part of the book was edited while Jarkko was working at the UB as a Visiting Professor – sincere thanks to the UB, the Faculty of Business and Haretsebe for hosting him. Jarkko would also like to thank colleagues at the Department of Geography ‘back home’ and especially the Tourism Geographies Research Group at the department. Moreover, thanks are due to Richard Butler, Rene van der Duim, David Duval, David Fennell, Willem Ferguson, Sanette Ferreira, Antti Honkanen, Petri Hottola, Leon Hugo, Jari Järviluoma, Alan Lew, Dorothea Meyer, Dieter Müller, Anja Mäläskä, Maaria Niskala, Kaija Pajala, Dallen Timothy, Regina Scheyvens and Gustav Visser – among many others – for discussions, collaboration and support, and the OYUS Rugby Club for relaxing time, when no academic matter weighs a thing. Final thanks are for Satu, Mira and Katlego waiting at home or travelling with.
Fritz Becker, who enjoyed Jarkko’s vigour in propelling the project and the spirit of the editing team, has pleasure in expressing a word of thanks for all the support the Namibian contributors received from Dr Martin Hipondoka and his Laboratory for Spatial Analysis of the Department of Geography, History and Environmental Studies at the University of Namibia; his professional assistance in the thematic map work is always appreciated. On a personal note, Fritz is indebted to Ria and Franka who patiently waited at home and seldom had the opportunity to join travelling for the project. Haretsebe Manwa would like to express her appreciation and thanks to Professor Chanda who nominated her to represent the Department of Environmental Science on the Book project; Professor Darkoh, Professor Philip Pearce and Professor Gianna Moscardo for being my inspiration. The most important person in my life: Joe, whose support has always made the long journey seem so simple and enjoyable. Deon Wilson would like to thank Jarkko Saarinen for initiating this project, acquiring funding and providing support. Your professional leadership as editor of this book is much appreciated. A special word of thanks to the co-editors.

Further, the individual contributors of the book deserve our greatest thanks – without them the book would not exist. We trust that this book will be informative and a source of inspiration to all readers.

Jarkko Saarinen, Fritz Becker, Haretsebe Manwa and Deon Wilson
Gaborone, Windhoek and Pretoria