



# STIMULATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM CONCESSIONS

Case studies on how tourism can benefit the environment and communities living in and around protected areas



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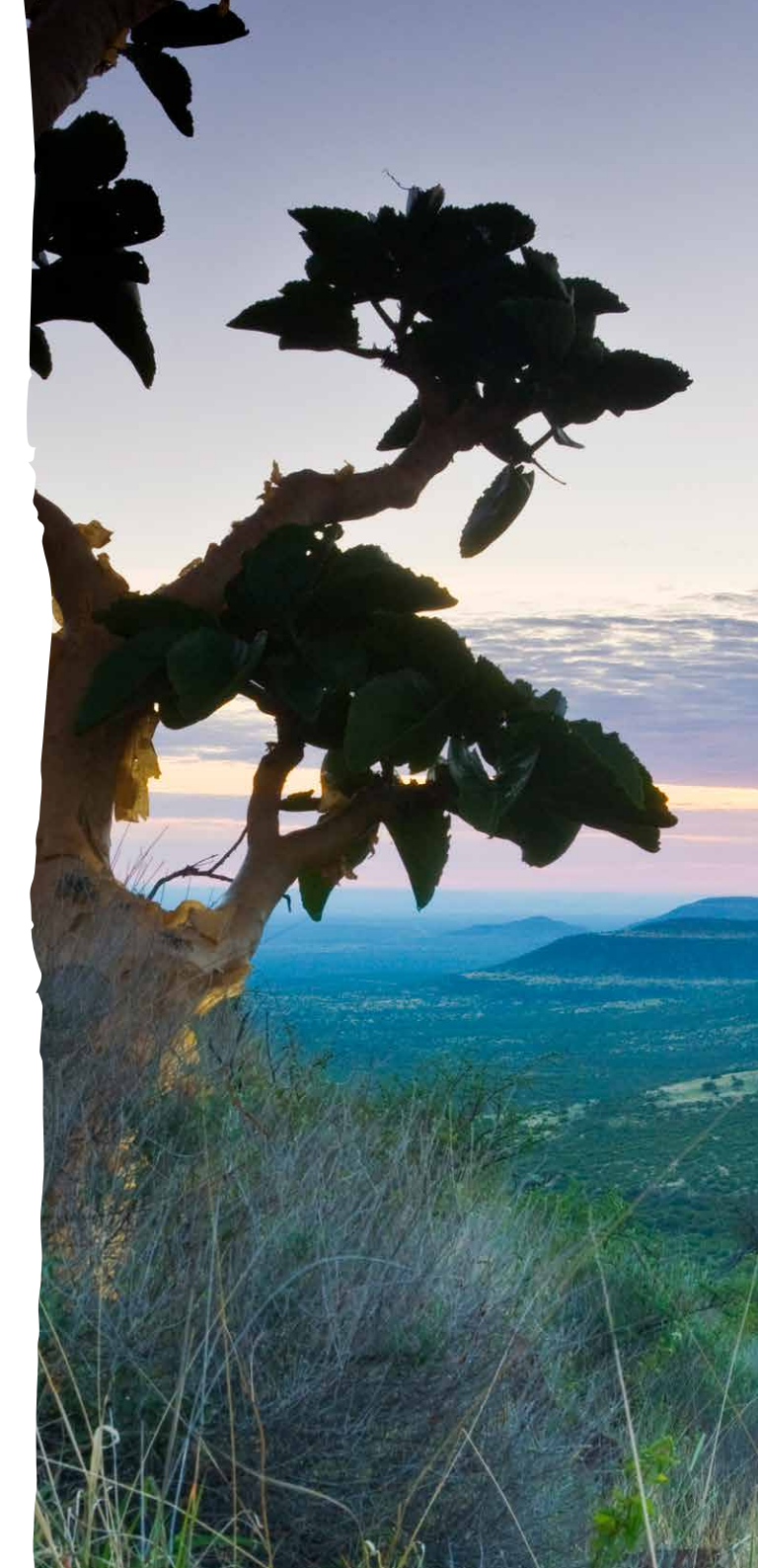
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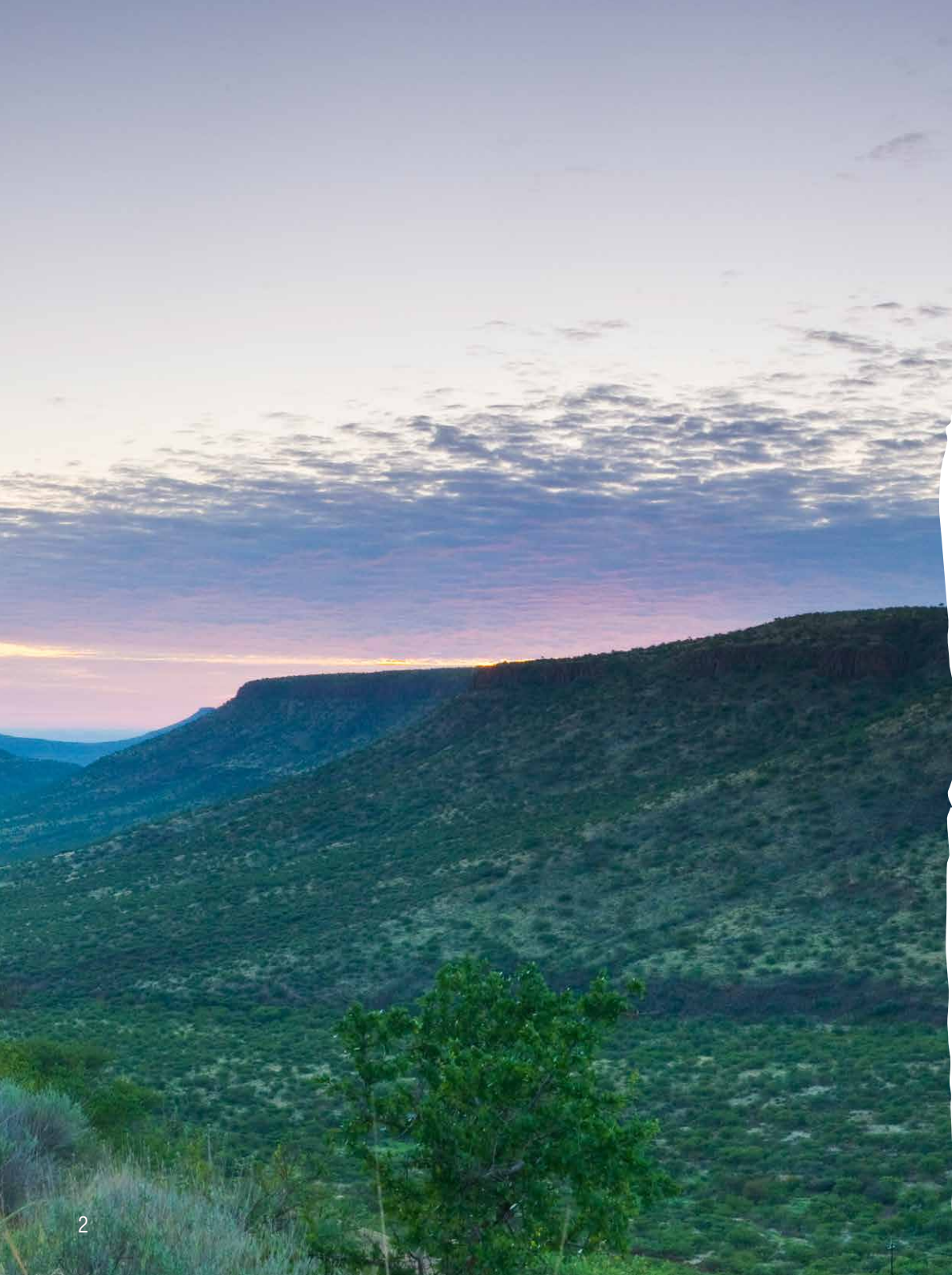
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## FREQUENTLY USED TERMINOLOGY

**Concession** – A lease, license, easement or permit for a tourism operation within the boundaries of a forest or protected area undertaken by any party than the forest or protected area agency to provide products and services typically designed to enhance or facilitate the visitor’s experience (Thompson, et al. 2014).

**Ecotourism** - Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education (TIES 2015).

**Nature-Based Tourism** – Broadly refers to travel to natural areas, including protected areas.

**Protected Area** – A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values (IUCN 2019). For the purpose of this document, this definition refers to national parks, wilderness areas, protected forests and nature reserves.

**Sustainable Tourism** – Tourism that provides for the conservation of biological and cultural diversity, includes meaningful community participation and is economically sustainable (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2004).

**Tourism** - The movement of people to places or countries outside their usual environment for personal or business/ professional purposes, for more than 24 hours and less than a year (UNWTO 2019). This definition includes both domestic and international travel.

<b>AAGEMAM</b>	Mamirauá’s Auxiliaries and Ecotourism Guides Association
<b>AWC</b>	African Wildlife Capital
<b>BMNP</b>	Bale Mountains National Park
<b>CBNRM</b>	Community Based Natural Resource Management (Namibia)
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
<b>EWCA</b>	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority
<b>FIT</b>	Free and independent travelers
<b>GFA</b>	Grootberg Farmers’ Association
<b>HP ECOSOC</b>	Himachal Pradesh Ecotourism Society
<b>IUCN</b>	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NPS</b>	United States National Park Service
<b>NTNC</b>	National Trust for Nature Conservation (Nepal)
<b>MSI</b>	Mountain Shepherds Initiative
<b>NASCO</b>	Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations
<b>PA</b>	Protected Area
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposals
<b>RSCN</b>	Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (Jordan)
<b>TALC</b>	Tourism Area Life Cycle
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environmental Program
<b>UNWTO</b>	United Nations World Tourism Organization
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>USFS</b>	United States Forest Service
<b>WBG</b>	World Bank Group
<b>WTTC</b>	World Travel and Tourism Council
<b>WWF</b>	World Wildlife Fund



# INTRODUCTION

The World Bank Group pursues its mission of reducing poverty and improving people’s lives by promoting sustainable development through investment and advisory services in both the public and private sectors. The World Bank recognizes that tourism is an important source of inclusive poverty reduction—particularly in the developing world—and strongly believes the sector has the potential to boost competitiveness, expand economic opportunity and provide a pathway to prosperity in client countries.

Many developing countries have rich natural assets including national parks, forest reserves, and diverse biodiversity that have potential to offer visitors nature-based tourism experiences. Through investing in the tourism development of these protected areas, governments can help generate income for the communities living around these assets. Often, destinations do not have significant financial resources to allocate to the preservation of these areas and must seek out alternative ways of funding their protection. The revenue generated from tourism is one such solution to supplement public financing. It can provide income to support conservation and management of these areas while also creating economic opportunities for the communities that live in and around the protected area borders.

The World Bank also feels that development can be best catalyzed by learning from others—including their successes, challenges and lessons learned. The purpose of this document is to highlight examples of tourism development in protected areas and provide insights and lessons learned from around the world as a series of case studies. It has been written for those who are new to concessions—including national governments, protected area managers, entrepreneurs, tourism authorities and their advisors in the international development and non-governmental organization (NGO) community—to learn more from practical examples of how concessions were utilized for developing tourism in protected areas and better understand some of the stakeholders involved and policies required to create change within a destination.

The authors conducted research to identify and select diverse and wide-ranging examples. The identification of case studies focused on both international tourism award recipients and recommendations from the World Bank team and industry colleagues. Selections include destinations as well as public and private sector tourism operations based upon their successful achievement of:

- Support for the protection of cultural and natural resources
- Providing direct benefits to the social and economic well-being of local people
- Environmentally-friendly operations







# 01

## IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A protected area is defined as, “A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”

– **International Union for the Conservation of Nature**

With the right policies in place, tourism can contribute directly to the conservation of natural areas and habitats by bringing visitors to protected areas to learn, participate, and support local economies. In many destinations—especially protected areas—tourism income can replace revenue generated by actions that threaten biodiversity, such as poaching, deforestation or the sale of wild animals for consumption (UNEP 2001). A portion of the revenues generated from park entrance fees and tourism providers (such as tours and accommodations) can be allocated specifically to fund the protection and management of environmentally sensitive areas (UNEP 2001). Tourism also has the potential to increase public appreciation of the environment through bringing people into closer contact with nature—spreading awareness of issues impacting the destination and how to mitigate these issues with more sustainable behaviors.

The management of protected areas—which includes national parks, wilderness areas, protected forests and nature reserves—has evolved over hundreds of years and still means a number of different things to different people. The idea

underlying the protection of places is universal, however, and land that is considered to be

environmentally significant is often placed under some type of government ownership and protection.







Dependent upon the specific policies of a region, the management of a protected area can have a negative impact on local residents. Under some circumstances, local populations are forced to relocate from the area and denied access to the natural resources that had previously sustained their livelihoods. The relationship between communities and protected areas can also involve other conflicts based upon differing interests. For example, some communities view protected areas and their managers as those who create and enforce rules that inhibit their ability to provide for their families. And there are some protected area managers who view communities as an extractive and destructive force that requires constant monitoring and policing (Humke 2011).

While these issues associated with protected areas can constrain people’s lives and activities, tourism **can be** developed to allow communities to benefit from protected areas, and in particular, from tourism activities anchored in these protected areas, and to provide communities an incentive to support conservation initiatives.

As Brett Jenks, President of Rare Conservation states: *“Conservation is not an ecological challenge. It is an economic, social, and political challenge.”* It is for this very reason that an increasing number of governments around the world along with conservation and development organizations are focusing on solutions that engage and address the

needs of local communities (Humke 2011). At its best, tourism presents an opportunity to better align the economic activities and needs of the populations living in or around protected areas with conservation objectives. More specifically, sustainable tourism presents an opportunity to develop economic alternatives dependent upon the *preservation* of natural resources, rather than their *extraction* (Humke 2011). Furthermore, sustainable tourism creates an opportunity for communities, governments and protected area managers to begin a collaborative and productive dialogue, align interests and bridge any disconnects that may exist between them (Humke 2011).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature further describes the potential benefits of tourism in protected areas, including (Eagles, Haynes and McCool 2002):

	BENEFITS
ENHANCING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increases jobs for local residents</li><li>• Increases incomes</li><li>• Stimulates new tourism enterprises and diversifies the local economy</li><li>• Encourages the local manufacture of goods</li><li>• Attracts new markets and foreign exchange</li><li>• Improves living standards</li><li>• Generates local tax revenues</li><li>• Enables employees to learn new skills</li><li>• Increases funding for protected areas and local communities</li></ul>
PROTECTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conserves biodiversity (including species and ecosystems)</li><li>• Protects, conserves and values cultural and built heritage resources</li><li>• Creates economic value and protects resources which may otherwise have no perceived value to residents</li><li>• Transmits conservation values through education and interpretation</li><li>• Helps to communicate and interpret the values of natural and built heritage and of cultural inheritance to visitors and residents of visited areas, thus building a new generation of responsible consumers</li><li>• Supports research and development of good environmental practices and visitor management systems to influence the operation of tourism businesses and visitor behavior at destinations</li><li>• Improves local facilities, transportation and communications systems</li><li>• Helps develop self-financing mechanisms for protected area operations</li></ul>
ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promotes aesthetic, spiritual and other values related to well-being</li><li>• Supports environmental education for visitors and locals</li><li>• Establishes attractive environments for destinations for both residents and visitors</li><li>• Improves intercultural understanding</li><li>• Encourages the development and preservation of culture, crafts and the arts</li><li>• Increases the education level of local people</li><li>• Encourages people to learn the languages and cultures of foreign tourists</li><li>• Encourages local people to value their local culture and environments</li></ul>





**Key Terminology**

**Concession** – the right to use land or other property for a specified purpose, granted by a government, company, or other controlling body. It can include a commercial operation and/or piece of land. A tourism concession could provide accommodation, food and beverage, recreation, education retail, and interpretive services (Spenceley, Snyman and Eagles, Guidelines for Tourism Partnerships and Concessions for Protected Areas: Generating Sustainable Revenues for Conservation and Development 2017)

**Concession contract** – A written agreement between the protected area authority and partner, specifying the rights and obligations of both parties. It might also be called a concession agreement, lease, management or services contract, or by various other names (Spenceley, Snyman and Eagles, Guidelines for Tourism Partnerships and Concessions for Protected Areas: Generating Sustainable Revenues for Conservation and Development 2017)

**Partnership** - An arrangement in which two or more individuals share the profits and liabilities of a business venture. Various arrangements are possible: all partners might share liabilities and profits equally, or some partners may have limited liability (Spenceley, Snyman and Eagles, Guidelines for Tourism Partnerships and Concessions for Protected Areas: Generating Sustainable Revenues for Conservation and Development 2017)

# 02 ROLE OF CONCESSIONS IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT WITHIN PROTECTED AREAS

There are two basic management approaches for the delivery of tourism services in protected areas. One involves the government or protected area authority providing the service using its own staff and resources; insourcing. The second involves the authority choosing an outside contractor to provide the service; outsourcing (Spenceley, Snyman and Eagles, A Decision Framework on the Choice of Management Models for Park and Protected Area Tourism Services 2018).

The case studies presented in this document explore examples when protected area authorities have

decided to outsource the provision of visitor services. This has proven to be one successful approach for providing the types of tourism services at a certain level of quality that a protected area agency might not be best suited to provide. In general, outsourced partners may provide a better understanding of the tourism industry and markets, are less constrained by government policies, and have more financial flexibility to raise capital and other sources of funding.

There are five potential management models available for service delivery through outsourcing. These include (Spenceley, Snyman and Eagles, A Decision

Framework on the Choice of Management Models for Park and Protected Area Tourism Services 2018):

- Using for-profit, private companies;
- Using non-profit organizations;
- Using local community organizations;
- Using another government department; and,
- Using a joint-venture company (i.e. public-private, private-community, public-community or public-private-community).

As evidenced above, tourism development can be comprised of different stakeholders with a vested interest in a destination's development. These parties need guidelines in the form of strong concession policies that help ensure a standardized process over concerns that include land rights, the provision of visitor services, access to natural resources, appropriate visitor behaviors, ongoing visitor management and revenue sharing. The development of concessions policies has major ramifications on both communities and the environment and should be developed in a thoughtful and transparent way that optimizes the positive contributions of tourism and ensures equitable benefit-sharing for both communities and conservation.







Broadly, concessions can be defined as a lease, license, easement or permit for an operation undertaken by any party other than the protected area agency. These legal instruments governing concessions are broken down further in the following table (Spenceley, Snyman and Eagles, Guidelines for Tourism Partnerships and Concessions for Protected Areas: Generating Sustainable Revenues for Conservation and Development 2017).

TYPE OF LEGAL INSTRUMENT	DESCRIPTION	LENGTH	EXAMPLES
Concession	A concession is the right to use land or other property for a specified purpose, granted by a government, company, or other controlling body. It can include a commercial operation and/or a piece of land.	10-40 years	Accommodation, food and beverage, recreation, education, retail, and interpretive services
Lease	A contractual agreement in which one party conveys an estate (i.e. land and facilities) to another party for a specified, limited time period. The lessor retains ownership in the property while the lessee obtains rights to use the property. Typically, a lease is paid for.	5-30 years	Use of fixed infrastructure such as accommodation, airports, restaurants, shops etc. for a rental fee.
License	Gives permission to a legally-competent authority to exercise a certain privilege that, without such authorization, would constitute an illegal act. Often seen by the public as a form of quality control and requires due diligence by the competent authority, in contrast to a permit. Possession of the land is not granted through the license. Licenses give protected area authorities the ability to screen applicants to ensure that they fulfil a set of conditions.	Up to 10 years	Vehicle-based tours (e.g. game drives, hot-air ballooning, white-water rafting, boat cruise) using operators own equipment.
Permit	A temporary form of permission giving the recipient approval to do a lawful activity within the protected area. Permits normally expire within a short length of time. Usually the number of permits is large and limited by social or environmental considerations. In most cases, permits are given to anyone who pays the corresponding fee.	Up to 10 years	Activities such as guiding, canoeing, hunting, and climbing using operators' own equipment.

Ultimately, protected area authorities have the responsibility of determining what visitor services should be provided, who will be the most efficient and responsive partner to help develop the tourism products and services (i.e. whether it should be insourced or outsourced), and how visitation will be managed as tourism develops. The ongoing management of tourism depends on forward-looking policies and sound management philosophies that include building a harmonious relationship among local communities, the private sector, and governments regarding developmental practices that protect the natural environment while being compatible with economic growth (Edgell and Swanson 2013).





## 03 THE EVOLUTION OF A PROTECTED AREA AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

A tourism destination can be defined as a city, town, or other area that is dependent to an extent on the revenue generated from the tourism industry (Beirman 2003). A destination should also be thought of as the grouping of individual products—including accommodations, attractions, restaurants and service and transportation providers—that provide for the overall visitor experience.

There has been a dramatic increase in the area falling under protected status within the past 25 years with current figures indicating over 202,467 protected areas today, covering almost 20 million square kilometers or

14.7% of the world's land, excluding Antarctica (UNEP-WCMC and IUCN 2016). At the same time, one of the most significant and systemic trends in worldwide tourism in recent years is the demand for “experiential travel,” defined as more immersive, local, authentic, adventurous and/or active travel (Skift 2014). The natural and cultural resources found in the protected areas that are suitable for tourism provide excellent potential for these areas to be developed as tourism destinations and appeal to experiential travelers.

Successful tourism in protected areas requires the ability to develop and market tourism products based

on what the protected area has to offer, and the ability to maintain the quality of these areas for future use (Spenceley, Snyman and Eagles, A Decision Framework on the Choice of Management Models for Park and Protected Area Tourism Services 2018). For this reason, it is critical for protected area managers to work together with local tourism destination managers as well as the partners best suited to develop high-quality tourism experiences as the destination evolves. As some protected areas must start from scratch in terms of developing their tourism infrastructure and assets, these case studies further explore how this has been successfully achieved through outsourcing to various partners in a number of destinations around the world.

Recognizing that some of the individual case studies (such as the boutique ecolodges) presented in this document are individual tourism products, it is useful to consider them as just one piece of a destination when considering larger-scale impacts that can be achieved from tourism development. Destinations, much like new consumer products, experience a certain product life cycle that includes introduction, growth, maturity, and decline (Butler 1980). The goal of decision makers is to extend the growth and





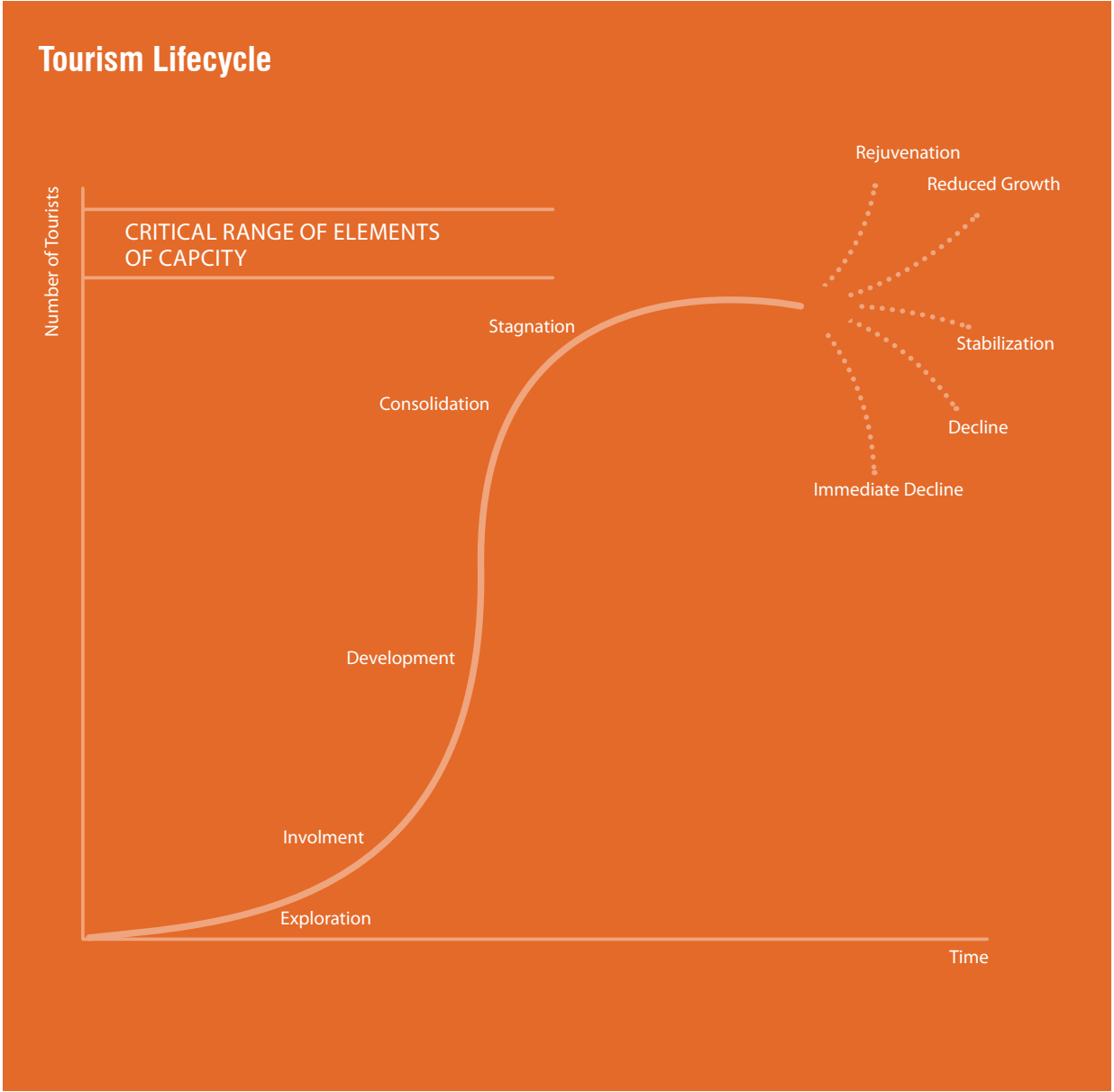


maturity phases to maximize revenue. Investors, developers, communities, and policy makers must also be cognizant of how their destination is performing within this paradigm and ensure that development does not happen carelessly and without respect for the things that made the area attractive to visitors in the first place, including the rich natural and cultural resources of a protected area. Major phases of the tourism lifecycle include (Butler 1980):

- 1) **Exploration** – New tourism product(s) are being introduced and a small number of adventurous visitors begin coming, seeking out a place that is special and considered “undiscovered” in terms of its culture, natural beauty, history or landscape. *(Refer to the Bale Ecolodge, Uakari Floating Lodge, and Mountain Shepherds Initiative case studies).*
- 2) **Involvement** – An identifiable tourist season begins to emerge; visitor numbers start increasing and economic impacts start to become apparent. Local communities begin to notice the revenue generating potential from visitors to the region and begin providing services through basic accommodations, food, guides and transport. *(Refer to the Fenyan Ecolodge and Akagera National Park case studies).*
- 3) **Development** – Larger investors begin to see the emerging potential of the area and begin investing more money into the area for larger-scale facilities. Public policies are required if the destination is to continue developing sustainably as this investment can include larger hotels that can make the number of tourists increase dramatically. Job opportunities for communities in the region also increase in both

tourism related jobs and other supply chains (such as construction and services). *(Refer to the Annapurna Circuit, Grootberg Lodge and //HUAB Under Canvas case studies).*

- 4) **Consolidation** – The local economy becomes more reliant on tourism and many local community members earn their income from the industry. Visitor numbers continue to increase and tourist services are provided by large national or international companies with local operators still playing a critical role. *(Refer to the Coconino National Forest case study).*
- 5) **Stagnation** – This is a critical point in which certain decisions have to be made by policy-makers. As visitor numbers begin to peak, the destination can lose some of its original features. For example, if a national park offered a quality wildlife viewing experience that are now overcrowded. Certain visitors may also be attracted by familiarity and more extensive facilities, which can cause an adaptation of markets and products (such as the introduction of chained-brand hotels and services).
- 6) **Rejuvenation or Decline** – From the stagnation point onward, there are two basic possibilities: a decline in various forms or rejuvenation. The last stage of the model offers five scenarios between complete rejuvenation and total decline:
  - Successful investments and/or redevelopment leads to renewed growth
  - Minor modifications to capacity levels lead to modest growth in tourism
  - Tourism is stabilized by cutting capacity levels
  - Continued overuse of resources and lack of investment leads to decline
  - War, disease or another catastrophe causes an immediate collapse in tourism



While many destinations aspire to reach the consolidated phase within their tourism lifecycle, protected areas new to tourism development need to begin with exploration. Advancing along the TALC curve requires a sound policy foundation, the involvement of community members and other tourism stakeholders, and well-planned development. As more local community members become involved in a growing tourism economy, it is critical to design concession policies that maximize the benefits to local communities and the environment, while at the same time allowing the tourism sector to grow.





Achieving Tourism Development within Protected Areas at Scale: The United States National Park Service (NPS)

Year Agency Established:	1916
Number of Annual Visitors:	330 million (NPS 2019)
Economic Impacts	\$18.2 billion spent annually outside of the parks on other sectors such as camping, gas, groceries, recreational activities, hotels, restaurants, retail and transportation which contributes approximately 306,000 jobs to the national economy. An estimated \$34 billion in economic output is generated annually when adding both direct spending and indirect (induced) spending outside of the parks (NPS 2018)
Website:	<a href="https://www.nps.gov/index.htm">https://www.nps.gov/index.htm</a>

Overview

The National Park Service is the agency of the United States federal government that manages all national parks, many national monuments, and other conservation and historical properties. The National Park Service employs 20,000 individuals directly and oversees 417 sites with at least 19 different designations including 129 historical parks or sites, 87 national monuments, 59 national parks, 25 battlefields or military parks, 19 preserves, 18 recreation areas, 10 seashores, four parkways, four lakeshores, and two reserves. These protected areas combined contain at least 247 species of threatened or endangered plants and animals, 75,000 archeological sites, and 18,000 miles of trails (NPS 2017).

The vast majority of NPS’s budget comes from United States tax payers with approximately \$3 billion

per year appropriated through the United States government (NPS 2018). That figure constitutes approximately 85% of the NPS’s annual operating budget. The other revenue generating mechanisms (such as concessions fees, entry fees and grants) are important, however they are the minority of the funds required to operate the park system in its entirety.

The core competencies of the NPS are in natural resource management, cultural resource management, planning, facilities and land, and interpretation. There is no tourism department structurally within the organization, however a position dedicated to tourism is located under Partnerships and Civic Engagement. Tourism functions within the NPS focus on partnerships, interpretation and planning. Visitor services such as delivering food and beverage, retail, guided services, and accommodations are managed by the

private sector through the NPS’s extensive network of concessionaires and tour operators through tour permits called commercial use authorizations (for guides, fishing, hunting, etc.).

The National Park Service currently manages approximately 480 concession contracts at more than 100 sites. Concessionaires provide visitors with food, lodging, transportation, shops and other services. They employ approximately 25,000 people and generate approximately \$1.4 billion in gross revenues annually through the following sectors (NPS 2018):

- 19% Lodging
- 17% Food and Beverage
- 16% Merchandise and Retail
- 48% Other (e.g. transportation, marinas, campgrounds, etc.)





## 04 MANAGEMENT MODELS AND CASE STUDIES

Concessions can be broadly defined as a lease, license, easement or permit for a tourism operation within the boundaries of a protected area undertaken by any party than the protected area agency (Spenceley, Snyman and Eagles, Guidelines for Tourism Partnerships and Concessions for Protected Areas: Generating Sustainable Revenues for Conservation and Development 2017) designed to enhance or facilitate the visitor's experience. The entity is most commonly from the private sector, but can also be a non-governmental organization, public entity or

a partnership as explored further through the case studies. Depending on the country, a concession can be awarded through a number of different processes including auction, tender, request for proposals, or in response to an unsolicited application.

Concession agreements provide for the contractual terms between the private sector and the government which gives an entity the right to operate their business within the protected area and is typically subject to a variety of conditions (or "covenants") to

protect the interests of the government, protected area authority, environment and local communities. These agreements are also issued for a variety of durations, such as five years to a tour operator for a biking tour; or 30+ years for the building and operation of an ecolodge (Thompson, et al. 2014). Outsourcing the provision of visitor services can help establish tourism experiences and infrastructure that the protected area agency may not have the expertise or financial resources to provide while generating income for the protected area agency to reinvest in conservation efforts (Thompson, et al. 2014).

When considering concessions, park managers need to decide what visitor services the protected area should provide and which ones are best suited for an outsourced partner. The aim of an outsourced concession should be to maximize the benefits that good concessionaire can provide while mitigating the risks. Protected area agencies should be mindful that not all concessionaires have the same priorities for conservation and therefore it is critical to build covenants into the agreement to create transparent mutual benefits for both communities and conservation.







Models

Through the case studies, four different models are explored to provide the history on how individual examples were formed, how they are currently being managed, and key success factors, challenges and lessons learned. These models are not a comprehensive summary of the various ways that tourism can be developed within a protected area system. Instead they represent practical ways in which concessions policies were implemented in a way that benefits communities and the environment. The four management models highlighting the roles of different partners along with case studies explored in this section include:

Management Model 1: Private Operators

- 1.1 Feynan Ecolodge, Jordan
- 1.2 Bale Mountain Lodge, Ethiopia

1.3 Red Rocks Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest, United States

Management Model 2: Nonprofits and Non-Governmental Organizations

- 2.1 Akagera National Park, Rwanda
- 2.2 Uakari Floating Lodge, Brazil

Management Model 3: Community Organizations and Community Entrepreneurs

- 3.1 Mountain Shepherds Initiative, India
- 3.2 Annapurna Circuit, Nepal

Management Model 4: Joint Ventures

- 4.1 Grootberg Lodge, Namibia
- 4.2 //Huab Under Canvas, Namibia

While each model is unique and the case studies are destination-specific, the stories and lessons learned

behind the establishment of each can serve to inform those involved in the policy-making and management of protected areas and the communities impacted by them. Governments and protected area authorities will ultimately need to determine which model is best for the destination based on park management plans, their primary objectives in conservation and community benefits, the availability and tourism potential of concession sites, and investor demand.

While some of these case studies represent smaller, “boutique” examples, this is the reality of nature-based tourism. Through increased development and the addition of more businesses and services into the tourism economy, destinations must recognize the overall potential for scaling-up. The investments made during the early phases of tourism development can serve to propel destinations into reaching their greater potential.

Summary table of case studies

SR. NO.	CASE STUDY	COUNTRY	AWARDING AUTHORITY	CONCESSIONAIRE	TYPE OF PRODUCT	SNAPSHOT OF IMPACTS
1.1	Feynan Ecolodge	Jordan	Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (NGO)	EcoHotels (Private Company)	Ecolodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Over 80% of food and other supplies utilized are purchased from within a 40 km radius of the lodge, benefitting local community members beyond direct employment</li></ul>
1.2	Bale Mountain Lodge	Ethiopia	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (Government)	Kimber Ltd (Private Company)	Ecolodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>By drawing tourists to Bale Mountains National Park and through contributing 3% of its revenue to EWCA, the lodge is increasing the park's earnings from entry fees—providing much-needed resources to reinforce the wildlife authority's capacity to manage the park.</li></ul>
1.3	Red Rocks Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest	United States	National Park Service (Government)	Various Private Companies	Recreational Permitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Nearly all permits are issued to locally-owned and operated businesses, and those that are “outside” businesses tend to hire locally and provide other financial inputs into the local economy.</li></ul>
2.1	Akagera National Park	Rwanda	Rwanda Development Board (Government)	African Parks (Nonprofit)	20 year agreement for overall Co-Management of Park and ecolodges (some though separate concessions to private operators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Akagera has purchased at least \$70,000 USD in local materials, given at least \$50,000 for wildlife compensation damages, and provided over \$140,000 to local community projects.</li></ul>
2.2	Uakari Floating Lodge	Brazil	Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Government)	Mamirauá Institute (NGO) and community	Ecolodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>400 community members benefitting through direct employment or supply chain linkages; \$1 generated by the lodge creates an estimated \$5 for the local community in wider benefits. Ownership is slowly being transferred to the community.</li></ul>
3.1	Mountain Shepherds Initiative	India	State Forest Corporation (Government)	Mountain Shepherds Initiative (Community Organization) and communities	Trekking and Lodges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Some of the avenues through which the locals earn apart from employment include direct sale of carpets and woolen products from remote villages, homestays, mule services for treks, porters/guides for treks, and local transport.</li></ul>
3.2	Annapurna Circuit	Nepal	National Trust for Nature Conservation (Nonprofit)	Communities	Lodges, teashops and hundreds of other subsidiary services to cater to trekkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Income from tourism is used to integrate traditional subsistence activities into the framework of resource management and to develop small-scale conservation and alternative energy projects that raise the living standards of the local people</li></ul>
4.1	Grootberg Lodge	Namibia	≠Khoadi-//Hoas Conservancy	Journeys Namibia (Private Company)	Ecolodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>With community members comprising 98% of the employees at the lodge, former poachers have become passionate conservationists as trained guides.</li></ul>
4.2	//HUAB Under Canvas	Namibia	//Huab Conservancy	Ultimate Safaris (Private Copmany)	Ecolodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In 2017, the combined total financial benefits to the conservancy was approximately \$94,000 US</li></ul>





## MANAGEMENT MODEL 1: PRIVATE OPERATORS

### Model Overview

Properly managing protected areas while providing visitor services is expensive and requires a variety of different skills. Although protected area authorities play a critical role in the maintenance and management of protected areas, they tend to lack the economic funds and business “know-how” necessary to be successful for running tourism enterprises. Increasingly, protected area authorities

recognize that the provision of visitor services and experiences can be more effectively developed through outsourcing that also generates a source of fees. As a result, the typical concession model seen throughout the world is a government or protected area authority offering a concession to a private sector tourism operator who is envisaged as an important partner in helping protected area managers achieve their twin goals of conservation and attracting visitors. These types of concessions

can produce a greater development impact than other models as the private sector has both the industry expertise and access to markets. The private sector can also more easily raise capital, which diversifies funding sources from reliance on the government (Thompson, et al. 2014) or donors. The following case studies, including two ecolodges and a number of recreational permits, highlight examples of how concessions have been granted to private operators.





## Case Study 1.1: FEYNAN ECOLODGE

Country:	Jordan
Type of Product:	Ecolodge
Landscape:	Mountainous/Desert
Protected Area:	Dana Biosphere Reserve
Protected Area Size:	308 square kilometers
Population of Local Community:	3,000 people
Year Established:	2005
Number of Annual Visitors:	4,000 – 6,000
Number of Local Employees:	22 (18 full-time and 4 part-time)
Economic Impacts	~Approximately 400 people (80 families) benefit from direct employment or supply chain linkages. Due to the sourcing of local products, approximately 50% of visitor revenue stays within the local community
Website:	<a href="https://ecohotels.me/Feynan">https://ecohotels.me/Feynan</a>
Recent Awards or Accolades:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• TripAdvisor’s Certificate of Excellence (2011 – 2017)</li><li>• TripAdvisor’s “Hall of Fame” for receiving Certificates of Excellence for 5 consecutive years (2011 – 2015) and is currently rated as the top hotel in the Dana area by TripAdvisor users</li><li>• Tourism for Tomorrow Awards 2015 – Finalist ‘Community Award’ category</li><li>• National Geographic World Legacy Awards 2015 - Finalist ‘Engaging Communities’ category</li><li>• One of the best 25 ecolodges in the world in 2013 by National Geographic Traveler Magazine</li></ul>



### Overview

Deep in the heart of the mountainous Dana Biosphere Reserve, the candle-lit Feynan Ecolodge rests in the Wadi Feynan along the face of the Great Rift Valley. Established in 1989, Dana Biosphere Reserve is Jordan’s second largest nature reserve, home to the highest level of biodiversity in the country.

Feynan Ecolodge was designed by Jordanian architect Ammar Khammash to resemble a caravanserai (a resting place for camel trains). With 26 available rooms, guests of the lodge can typically be found participating in adventure activities, interacting with the native Bedouin, exploring local archaeological sites or unwinding in the tranquil surroundings. The area’s archaeological ruins coupled with its natural heritage and beauty has put Feynan on the map as a low-impact tourism destination.

### History and Formation

Feynan Ecolodge was first conceived and constructed in 2005 by Jordan’s Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), a Jordanian NGO devoted to the protection of the Kingdom’s finest natural landscapes. RSCN is an independent national organization established in 1966 under the patronage His Majesty the late King Hussein. The organization has the mission of protecting and managing the natural resources of Jordan including the country’s wildlife and wild places. It is one of the few national organizations in the world with such a public service mandate (RSCN 2015). RSCN receives funding from a number of sources including fees

from over 300 members as well as support from the national government and international donor institutions—including United States Agency for International Development and World Bank.

In its short but rich history, RSCN has established seven protected areas throughout Jordan (RSCN 2015). RSCN also has a number of ecotourism initiatives that contribute to the sustainable development of these protected areas through both supporting nature conservation programs in target areas and creating jobs for locals. The Dana Biosphere Reserve was the first protected area where an ecotourism and sustainable development model was applied by RSCN in the mid-nineties with the construction of the Feynan Ecolodge made possible through funding by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Feynan Ecolodge was the first ecolodge developed to offer the local Bedouin communities much needed economic opportunities and provide a sustainable alternative to open cast copper mining. After opening in 2005, the lodge was managed directly by RSCN for the first four years of operations.

### Current Management and Approach

In 2009, EcoHotels approached the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature regarding the lodge after considering an ecolodge venture in Jordan. Instead of building something new, they proposed taking over and improving the management and operations of the existing lodge so it may reach its full potential. Also founded in 2009, EcoHotels is a privately-owned Jordanian company dedicated to “*creating*



*and managing ecolodges in remote areas and taking travelers on exciting journeys into nature, culture and themselves”* (EcoHotels 2018). A five-year concession agreement between EcoHotels and RSCN was signed in 2009 and has since been renewed through the year 2026. The concession agreement includes provisions to protect the reserve and ensure benefits for the local community.

Since its takeover of the lodge in 2009, EcoHotels has strived to perfect an environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and profitable business model. Feynan has been transformed from a hotel to an ecotourism destination that offers a range of unique and authentic experiences. Its environmental footprint has also decreased and the number of staff has doubled—benefiting even more families



in the local community. As a result of their efforts, visitor numbers increased by 130% within the first 18 months of operations and the lodge has received numerous awards and acclaim in the international media.

While not required through the concession agreement, Feynan employs all of its staff from the local communities surrounding the Dana Biosphere Reserve. This contributes to the uniquely authentic atmosphere in the lodge, while generating much needed jobs and income for surrounding communities. In addition, Feynan also sources goods and services from the local community through partnerships which provide supplemental income for locals, such as (Feynan Ecolodge 2019):

- Local drivers provide shuttle services to and from the lodge in their own vehicles during their free time. All revenue generated from guests for this service is given to the drivers. This service alone benefits more than 45 families from the local Bedouin community;
- Over 80% of food and other supplies utilized are purchased from within a 40 km radius of the lodge. For example, bread is supplied by a local Bedouin woman who bakes from her family tent;
- The candles that light the lodge at night and the leather furniture items are purchased from onsite leather and candle workshops that employ local women;
- A shop at the lodge also showcases and sells a great deal of artisan crafts and artwork from local communities;
- EcoHotels introduced Bedouin cultural experiences such as the “Bedouin experience” and the “Day with a Shepherd” that give guests insight into the Bedouin traditional way of

- living while providing the local community with additional economic support. The fee for these activities goes directly to the family who provides the experience; and
- The clay water jars used instead of plastic water bottles are purchased from a women's cooperative close to Petra where local women make pottery items to earn an income.

As a result of these various supply chain linkages with the local community, Feynan directly benefits around 80 families (approximately 400 people) and around 50% of what the guest pays stays in the immediate local community (Feynan Ecolodge 2019).

From an environmental perspective, the lodge is completely off the grid. Rooftop solar panels generate just enough electricity for the lodge’s kitchen, office and en suite bathrooms (which also have solar hot showers). Water is supplied from a local spring (Feynan Ecolodge 2019).

As outlined in the concession agreement, a percentage of Feynan’s revenue (not profit, so there is less risk to RSCN) is spent on conservation efforts at the Dana Biosphere Reserve managed by the NGO lodge owner. In addition to the percentage, the lodge collects a conservation fee of 2-4 Jordanian Dinar (approximately \$2.80 - \$5.60) per person, per stay on behalf of RSCN. The management of Dana Biosphere Reserve by RSCN aims to balance the need to protect the environment with the needs of the local people living in and around the reserve. In Dana, the management plan is based on the concept of ‘zoning’ which defines the areas where certain activities can or cannot happen. In addition to applying and enforcing the zoning rules, money from guests staying at Feynan goes towards conservation

activities in the reserve undertaken by RSCN including (Feynan Ecolodge 2019):

- Patrolling and law enforcement to minimize threats on species and habitats (such as hunting and cutting down trees);
- Research and monitoring to understand biodiversity, habitats and population trends. In particular using “photo-trapping” through motion sensor cameras to understand and record animal populations. Some species in the Reserve are only known to exist due to the use of photo-trapping; and
- Education locally, nationally and for visitors to raise awareness and support for conservation activities in Jordan.

Key Success Factors

- A solid concession agreement between EcoHotels and RSCN along with a shared ethos for environmental sustainability and community benefits.
- The diverse expertise that EcoHotels brought to Feynan to improve upon the lodge—including sales, marketing, branding, customers service, technology, renewable energy and experiences development.
- The unique environment and setting of the lodge.
- A well-cultivated relationship with the community who are able to make the product a success due to their authenticity and the experiences they provide to the guests. Feynan has also seen first-hand how involving the local community in eco-tourism activities has

increased their value and appreciation of the cultural and natural resources found within the Dana Biosphere Reserve.

Challenges and Limitations

- Regional political instability and its impacts on tourism to Jordan.
- Training local community members with low levels of formal education in remote areas.
- Large initial investments required for the development of the lodge and the needed systems (such as telecommunications).

Lessons Learned

- Engage and consult with the community at all stages of the planning and development of the lodge and experiences.
- It was critical from the onset to involve and consult with an operator who has successfully established or operated an ecolodge elsewhere.

Source: (Tarazi 2018)

Achieving Tourism Development at a larger scale: World Bank Support for Nature-Based Tourism Development Jordan’s Protected Areas

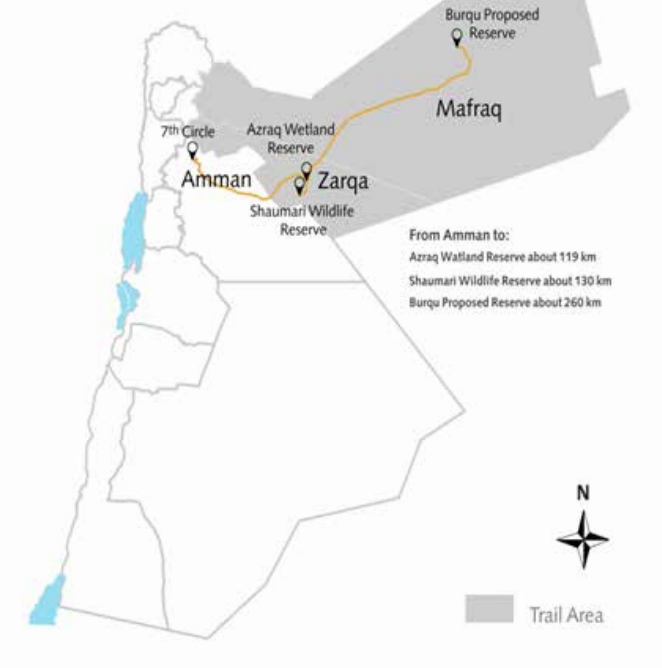
From 2012-2017, the World Bank implemented a project to establish a 250km ecotourism corridor (“Jordan’s Eastern Badia Trail”) connecting the Al Azraq and Shaumari reserves with a proposed Protected Ara of Burqu’. Working with RSCN, the goal of the corridor was to develop low-volume, high-value community-centered ecotourism, and provide income-generating opportunities to local communities, while contributing to conservation of the area’s biodiversity.

As pilot projects, two Bedouin campsites were purchased with needed equipment, rangers were employed to manage rangeland reserve, and a community liaison officer was employed to assist communities and address their concerns. Burqu’ Ecolodge was also completed and furnished in June 2017. Due to open in 2018, projections for 2018 estimated that the 10-room lodge would accommodate a total of 644 guests and earn roughly US\$24,606 annually, of which the expected community share would be 75% (or US\$18,454).

The total project cost was USD 14.6 million, of which about 1/3 was spent directly on eco-tourism activities, and the remaining on activities to restore landscapes and improve livelihoods which contributed indirectly. Also, of the total project cost, USD 3.3 million was a grant from GEF and the remainder the contribution of the government.

Source: The World Bank

Where in Jordan?





## Case Study 1.2: BALE MOUNTAIN LODGE

Country:	Ethiopia
Type of Product:	Ec lodge
Landscape:	Mountain cloud forest, afro-alpine moorland
Protected Area:	Bale Mountains National Park
Protected Area Size:	2,150 square kilometers
Population of Local Community:	100,000
Year Established:	2014
Number of Annual Visitors:	1,000 – 1,300
Number of Local Employees:	34
Economic Impacts	Outside of those directly employed, the lodge impacts an additional 300 community members through various vertical supply chain linkages.
Website:	<a href="http://www.balemountainlodge.com">http://www.balemountainlodge.com</a>
Awards:	TripAdvisor 2016 and 2017 Certificate of Excellence, 2015 Safari Awards



### Overview

Unlike many of its East African neighbors, Ethiopia is not widely known as a wildlife destination and the country’s tourism infrastructure for wildlife viewing is still relatively undeveloped. Ethiopia’s protected area system covers 14% of its landmass (larger than the global average), however less than 2% of Ethiopia’s land is currently managed as a wildlife conservation area and only two national parks have been legally constituted (African Wildlife Fund 2013 ). Compounding this issue is a growing national population of more than 100 million people (CIA 2018), with the majority living in rural areas dependent upon natural resources for their livelihoods. Given the tremendous value of Ethiopia’s natural capital, the country’s national park system has great potential to be developed and managed as a significant economic asset through tourism.

Pioneering a new model for tourism development within a National Park, Bale Mountain Lodge is an eleven-room boutique forest lodge in the Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP) of south-central Ethiopia. The lodge is the first private concession to be granted within an Ethiopian National Park and has set the standard for conservation-related tourism in the country. The location of the lodge was selected to provide guests an opportunity to experience a pristine environment that incorporates the largest tract of afro-alpine moorland remaining on the continent. Situated in a cloud forest, its location within Ethiopia’s premier National Park offers access to the rift valley and wider local attractions. This mix of habitats also supports a number of rare species, many endemic to Ethiopia and some found only within Bale National Park. 60% of the remaining Ethiopian wolves, the world’s rarest canid and Africa’s rarest carnivore, are found within the park.

Other species include the endemic mountain nyala, Menelik’s bushbuck, black maned lions, rare giant forest hogs, and significant numbers of endemic or rare bird species (FZS 2018).

Bale Mountain Lodge offers high-quality accommodations, food and service while providing guests, through experienced local guides, the opportunity to engage with the local community and with scientific research and conservation teams working in this unique location.

### History and Formation

Stationed in Ethiopia as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Logistics Corps, Guy Levene and his wife Yvonne fell in love with the country and—through their travels—were aware of the lack of accommodations for tourists. After deciding to establish roots in the country, they looked for a piece of land that would help more visitors experience the destination. They incorporated a private company in the United Kingdom (Jember Limited) and were introduced to Bale Mountains National Park through the Ethiopia Sustainable Tourism Alliance, a sustainable tourism development program funded by the United States Agency for Development (USAID). With very few other tourism facilities in Ethiopia’s national parks—and none with high-quality accommodations—they felt this was the perfect site for a lodge endeavor and submitted a letter of intent in 2012 to invest in the land.

As this was the first concession to ever be granted by the Ethiopian government inside a National Park, the first step was to draft and ratify a concession



agreement with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA), a government body under Ethiopia’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism with the responsibility for managing Ethiopia’s National Parks. Utilizing best practice examples from across Africa (including South Africa, Botswana and Kenya), Guy Levene alongside representatives from African Wildlife Capital and the USAID-Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Alliance drafted a concession agreement that included conservation requirements, community covenants and the lease details surrounding usage of the land. The draft concession agreement was submitted to EWCA for their consideration in February 2012. After some negotiations, the 45-year concession agreement was ratified on June 4, 2012. African Wildlife Capital arranged for US\$935,000 of debt financing via Umiliki Investments to fund the development of Bale Mountain Lodge (Conservation Capital 2016). The lodge was constructed and officially opened on January 18, 2014.



Current Management and Approach

The lodge is run by the Levene family and generates income for more than just the 34 people it employs directly. Its business model includes a vertical supply chain designed to encourage community-based microenterprises to develop, estimated to support an additional 300 people. As one of its conservation covenants for AWC financing, the lodge also set up a community trust to engage local people in conservation and ensure equitable benefit distribution. By drawing tourists to Bale Mountains National Park, the lodge is also increasing the park's earnings from entry fees—providing much-needed resources to reinforce the wildlife authority's capacity to manage the park. As stipulated by the concession agreement, the lodge pays 3% of its revenue to EWCA. As tourism revenues go up, the hope is that the Ethiopian government will begin to understand the value of what they have, creating a case for the protection of more National Parks like Bale.

Built with setting an example in mind, Bale Mountain Lodge is operated as a conservation-driven lodge. The lodge has its own 25Kw micro-Hydro installation to sustainably generate all of its power needs. Wood heating furnaces in all rooms use logs from sustainable plantation sources to create cozy rooms that are also carbon neutral. Low energy heat pump water heating and lightbulbs enable 70% reduced power usage across lodge operations. All building materials were sourced from outside the Bale Mountains National Park so that there was no degradation of the National Park or to their ability to promote best conservation practices to their staff and the adjacent village. A biogas plant produces methane which creates the cooking gas needed for the service areas, greatly reducing their carbon footprint. The lodge's water comes from the mountain stream and is subjected to slow sand filtration to produce drinking water from the taps. This reduces the use of plastic bottled water and

ultimately, they plan to eliminate all plastic from the lodge. All of their waste water flows through soak aways and reed beds to recycle water back into the river courses on a 'closed system' approach to accessing resources and long-term sustainability (Bale Mountain Lodge 2018).

While the lodge in Bale is currently the main way to market the area, they want to ensure visitors learn about the surrounding National Park during their visit. Several teams of research scientists visit the Park throughout the year and are encouraged to liaise with guests. Since opening the Lodge, Munich University has discovered 22 new species of butterflies and moths. More recently, a viper named Harenna Bitis has been officially discovered, jointly accredited to Mississippi and Utah Universities. Two frog species were discovered in the vicinity of the Lodge in November 2018. The Park is also a birdwatcher's paradise and has been rated '4th best birding site in Africa' by the African Birding Club.



African Wildlife Capital: An Investment Company with a Cause

African Wildlife Capital (AWC) is a mission-based investment company owned by African Wildlife Foundation (AFW), an international conservation organization that focuses on critically important landscapes in Africa. AWC uses impact investment capital to help develop private-sector enterprises with promising commercial and conservation potential.

After more than a decade of engagement in conservation enterprise work, AWF recognized the need for a new type of conservation finance. Thus, AWC offers alternative development financing in the form of structured loans to selected small- and medium-sized conservation enterprises.

This financing supports enterprises with promising business models that can help protect habitat or wildlife populations—while also benefiting the livelihoods of local Africans. AWC is intended to take AWF's work to a new scale and use the capacity of Africa's burgeoning private sector to do more, in more places, for the benefit of conservation and people.

Source: (AWF 2018)

Source: (Levene 2018)

Key Success Factors

- Willingness from the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority to work with the proposed concessions agreement and facilitate its approval.
- Support from the USAID-Ethiopian Sustainable Tourism Alliance to make connections and open doors with African Wildlife Capital.
- Managing expectation levels very clearly.
- Providing environmental and community benefits above and beyond government regulations.

Challenges

- The investment was made at a time of stability in Ethiopia, but the changing political situation has since impacted visitation to the country.

Lessons Learned

- Setting realistic expectations with the community, government and themselves in terms of what they can achieve from both a financial and conservation impact perspective.
- Conservation is often an issue of managing people and not the environment. At times the local community can have a mindset that is difficult to change.





### Case Study 1.3: UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE RED ROCKS RANGER DISTRICT OF THE COCONINO NATIONAL FOREST

Country:	United States
Type of Product:	Recreational Permits
Landscape:	Desert
Protected Area:	Coconino National Forest
Protected Area Size:	536,925 acres
Population of Local Community:	12,600
Year Established:	1907
Number of Annual Visitors:	2 million to the National Forest, 275,000 clients served by permitted guides (RRRD 2017)
Number of Local Employees:	60
Economic Impacts	Tourism is a \$600 million industry in the Sedona Area. Visitors to Sedona add \$14.5 million in local tax dollar generating more than 66% of the city's sales tax revenues. Tourism supports more than 10,000 jobs in the region and generates nearly \$200 million in wages alone (Sedona Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Bureau 2018)
Website:	<a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/coconino/recarea/?recid=54892">https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/coconino/recarea/?recid=54892</a>



#### Overview

Red Rock Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest ("the District") is famous around the world for its iconic red rock vistas. The remains of an ancient shoreline, these crimson cliffs have been carved by the forces of the desert into one of nature's masterpieces. The District has six designated wilderness areas, two wild and scenic rivers, and 350 miles of trails. The District surrounds the popular tourism destination of Sedona, Arizona and visitors are able to experience the stunning landscape through hiking, horseback riding, scenic drives, sliding down natural rock waterslides, picnicking, camping, and water play. To ensure quality recreation experiences for the guided public, the Forest Service requires that any commercial outfitter/guides operating within the National Forest have a permit (NPS 2018).

#### History and Formation

There are a variety of unique experiences available in this region and the United States Forest Service (USFS) Red Rocks Ranger District is responsible for making exploration possible through granting tourism recreation permits within the District. The goal of the permits are to provide experiences for visitors that generate income for conservation while minimizing the impacts to the environment.

A needs assessment and capacity analysis were conducted for the District to first establish the public need for outfitter or guide services for various types of activities. A list of recreational activities was identified and ranked based on a set of criteria (such



as whether they meet the mission of the USFS). A capacity assessment helped to establish numerical visitor capacity estimates that were used to support how much use will be allocated to the outfitters as well as how many permits for each type of activity they should issue. A competitive application process is utilized to select outfitters for each activity type with questions regarding their qualifications and how their business will support the local economy. Applications are reviewed by an interdisciplinary team of specialists (such as a biologist, archeologist, and soils scientist) to determine potential environmental impacts of the activities.

#### Decision Documents

There are four steps the United States Forest Service takes to reach a decision regarding the amount and location of commercial services within its protected forests:

- 1) **Needs Assessment** – determines the public and agency's need for authorized outfitting and guiding activities  
Example: [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd579645.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd579645.pdf)
- 2) **Visitor Capacity Analysis** – determines the estimated number of visitors that can use an area during a defined time period based on resource and setting capability  
Example: [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd579644.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd579644.pdf)
- 3) **Management Plan** – utilizing information from the two steps above, the plan describes a vision for a full-developed outfitter/guide program along with an outfitter-guide allocation expressed as a percent of total visitor capacity available to outfitter-guides (in service days or range of service days)  
Example: [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd579981.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd579981.pdf)
- 4) **Environmental Analysis** – referencing the three documents above, this analysis authorizes site-specific outfitter-guide use

Source: (Rowe 2018)



### Current Management and Approach

The Red Rocks Ranger District currently has 48 permits with authorized activities including jeep tours, hiking tours, metaphysical (vortex) experiences, hot air balloons, biking, equestrian tours, fly fishing, and off-highway vehicles (RRRD 2017). Nearly all of these permits are issued to locally-owned and operated businesses, and those that are “outside” businesses tend to hire locally and provide other financial inputs into the local economy. Approximately \$860,000 in permit fees were generated in 2017 alone (RRRD 2017). Annual funding from the program is used to:

- Pay a staff of six employees to manage the program. This increased number of staff (up from just two employees in 2009) has resulted in increased efficiency within the program, better relationships with permittees, and the ability to issue more permits. There were 22 permits in 2009 compared to 48 currently;
- Trail and road maintenance;
- Archeological and biological surveys; and
- Service toilets and other amenities at trailheads.

Permits are initially granted for two years, and unless there is documented poor performance, they are extended for eight years. Thereafter, permits are reissued every ten years. Each outfitter is required

to pay the USFS 3% of gross revenue from the operations that occur within the National Forest.

A number of specific projects have been accomplished in partnership with permittees, including:

- Over the Edge, Arizona Safari Jeep Tours, and Pink Jeep Tours donate money to be used for trail construction and maintenance in the Sedona area (RRRD 2017). Pink Jeep Tours provides 100% maintenance of Broken Arrow Road, one of the most popular 4x4 routes on the district. They are also site stewards for Honanki Heritage Site (cliff dwellings) whereby they conduct trail and site maintenance as well as provide visitor statistics.



- Currently seven permittees have road-maintenance agreements to conduct base maintenance (including gravel fill, removing rock falls, etc.) on over 100 miles of roads used by their operation and the public (RRRD 2017).
- The USFS provides educational training for permittees and their employees on how to provide information to visitors on respecting the natural and cultural resources of the surrounding areas.

These projects benefit not only the permittees and their clients, but all of the recreating public in the area. The permittees are pleased with the partnership of the USFS and enjoy any opportunity to increase their involvement in helping them to manage these public lands.

### Key Success Factors

- Concessions via recreational day permitting has allowed for many different ways for visitors to experience the Forest.
- The initial needs assessment process has allowed USFS to manage the permitting process through thoughtful recreation planning.
- The USFS views their outfitter guide permittees as partners for managing the public land, and not simply concessionaires.
- The funding generated has been critical to their ability to support local conservation and address natural resource issues.

### Challenges and Limitations

- Environmental analysis can be delayed by the need to coordinate with other agencies/ local governments. Some such coordination is required by law, and it can delay timeframes for completion.
- Many competing priorities on the national forest can stretch specialists’ time thin, and even though most permit-related analysis is simple, it rarely ranks as a top priority. This often leads to delays.

### Lessons Learned

- It has been critical to involve both the local communities and businesses impacted by the permitting in order to obtain their buy-in.
- Part of the success of this program can be attributed to NPS not being afraid to take risks. If they discover an issue with the permit (such as negative environmental impact), they have mechanisms in place to modify the permit to correct this.

Source: (Rowe 2018)





## MANAGEMENT MODEL 2: NONPROFIT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

### Model Overview

While entities that enter into concession agreements with protected area authorities are typically private operators, these can also be public entities, NGOs, nonprofits, community associations, or combinations of any of these. Non-governmental organizations and nonprofits often represent the views of groups with no voice—including wildlife or other environmental issues—or less of a voice—including

marginalized communities—and are able to help empower these local communities to be important partners of the tourism operation.

The following case studies were selected to demonstrate two examples of when the initial emphasis of the protected area was on conservation (prior to any tourism exploration) and the Government sought out or created a partner that was able to both manage the protected area

while developing visitor services and experiences. The first example of Akagera National Park is a co-management agreement, where the nonprofit concessionaire (African Parks) has developed a number of tourism concession agreements with investors and operators. The second example is an NGO in Brazil (the Mamirauá Institute) that has been contracted to operate an ecolodge within a protected reserve and is working to gradually transfer ownership to the local community.



## Case Study 2.1: AKAGERA NATIONAL PARK

Country:	Rwanda
Type:	A National Park under a 20-year co-management agreement with a non-profit organization, African Parks.
Landscape:	Savanna/wetland
Protected Area:	Akagera National Park
Protected Area Size:	1,122 square kilometers
Population of Local Communities:	300,000 (African Parks 2018)
Year Established:	1934 (public-private partnership established in 2010)
Number of Annual Visitors:	32,000 (2015 numbers) (Akagera National Park 2017)
Number of Local Employees:	220 (Akagera National Park 2017)
Economic Impacts	Akagera purchased at least \$70,000 USD in local materials, given at least \$50,000 for wildlife compensation damages, and provided over \$140,000 to local community projects. Paid more than \$5 million USD to locally hired staff since 2010.
Website:	<a href="https://www.africanparks.org/the-parks/akagera">https://www.africanparks.org/the-parks/akagera</a>
Recent Awards or Accolades:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ruzizi Tent Lodge won TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence in 2015</li><li>• Successful lion reintroduction in 2015 covered by Rwanda TV, TIME Magazine, CNN, National Geographic, Yahoo, and Discovery News.</li><li>• African Parks earned the Special Award for Endangered Species Conservation in 2017 for their work reintroducing rhinos to Akagera.</li></ul>





## Overview

Beyond the lush volcanoes and mountain gorillas seemingly synonymous with Rwanda’s ecotourism industry, lie the rolling hills of Akagera. The lowest elevation (1,300 meters) of Rwanda’s spectacular landscapes, the hills gradually fade into grassland savannah and a maze of wetlands on the country’s eastern border with Tanzania. Rwanda’s only ‘Big 5’ (leopard, rhinoceros, elephant, cape buffalo, and lion) destination, there are over 12,000 large individual mammals and 482 bird species in the park. Rwanda’s joint-venture public-private partnership with African Parks has re-invigorated tourism and reintroduced iconic wildlife species in the landscape.



## History/Formation

Akagera National Park was one of Africa’s first national parks, founded in 1934 by the Belgian government. Historically inhospitable due to difficult terrain, Akagera remained a wildlife haven through much of the twentieth century. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Rwandan government operated several projects geared towards wildlife, tourism, and park management, including the translocation of 26 elephants to the park in the 1970s (African Parks 2014). However, as Rwanda’s growing human population began to cohabit national park land, human-wildlife conflict became increasingly common.

The aftermath of Rwanda’s 1994 genocide relocated many thousands of refugees to eastern Rwanda. In 1997, the Rwandan government decided to allocate more than half of the 2,500 km<sup>2</sup> national park to resettle refugees, reducing the park to its current 1,122 km<sup>2</sup> area. While this land allocation eased natural resource pressures, it did not solve human-wildlife conflict or poaching in the park. By the early 2000’s, both rhinos and lions were extirpated (African Parks 2014).

During post-genocide reconstruction, the Rwandan government struggled to establish a regular tourism program, reduce poaching, and mitigate

human-wildlife conflict. Consistently overshadowed by Rwanda’s prime gorilla attraction, Akagera lacked funding for both conservation initiatives and development projects to combat rural poverty. Intent on attracting greater foreign investment and streamlining its regulatory agencies, Rwanda’s government established the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) in 2009. The RDB consolidated previously distinct environment, tourism, and business development agencies into one single agency with objectives to coordinate, spur, and promote economic development.

The RDB soon after formed a partnership with the nonprofit, African Parks, entering into a 20-year public-private partnership to co-manage Akagera National Park. African Parks is a non-profit conservation organization that takes responsibility for the rehabilitation and long-term management of African national parks in partnership with governments and local communities. African park headquarters are located in South Africa. Its executive board is located primarily in South Africa but also retains members from other African countries like Tanzania and Rwanda. The NGO currently manages 15 national parks and protected areas in nine countries covering 10.5 million hectares (including Benin, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Zambia). An in-country park warden, staffed by African Parks, currently manages Akagera National Park.



## Current Management and Approach

In 2010, the Akagera Management Company was established by this public-private partnership with African Parks to manage Akagera National Park. African Parks retained 51% ownership, the other 49% belonging to the RDB. The 20-year concessions agreement is subject to the eight key principles of African Parks’ management model (African Parks 2018):

- 1) Delegation of management responsibility – a clear mandate of operational responsibility granted to African Parks.
- 2) Creation and retention of all park revenue.
- 3) Long-term commitment – African Parks secured a 20-year concession agreement.
- 4) Ecological rehabilitation – management of wildlife and ecosystems within the park.
- 5) Delegation of management – authority to appoint, remove, or discipline all staff.
- 6) Implement governance structures and mechanisms – created a separate legal entity (the African Management Company) to enable African Parks management of the national park.
- 7) Maintain law enforcement – African Parks maintains full responsibility for law enforcement activities.
- 8) Creating a constituency for conservation – African Parks received the authority to negotiate with local communities and stakeholders on behalf of the park.



Two immediate benefits of this concession contract were African Parks’ proven tourism management expertise and ability to procure funds from affiliated donors. In addition to RDB financing, philanthropic development and conservation organizations have provided significant funding. For example, the Wyss Foundation provided \$65 million in support of various African Parks projects, including Akagera. Meanwhile, the Walton Family Foundation contributed \$5 million USD with an emphasis on Akagera National Park (African Parks 2018). With the financial capital, management expertise, and complete autonomy over the park, African Parks maintained and improved many existing facilities. The government of Rwanda helped address these past issues by hiring a contractor to build a 120-kilometer predator-proof fence to reduce human-wildlife conflict with the 300,000 local Rwandans living along Akagera’s western boundary. And over the course of six years, African Park’s new law enforcement strategies significantly reduced poaching to an all-time low.

To help tourism to Akagera reach scale, African Parks also constructed two award-winning lodges, the Ruzizi Tented Lodge and Karenge Bush Camp. Ruzizi Tented Lodge was finished in 2013, its nine tents are spaced widely apart on either side of a thatched reception and dining area that overlooks Lake Ihema. The lodge is entirely solar-powered and is an upscale retreat for up to 20-people in the wild heart of Akagera. Within two years, Ruzizi Lodge won TripAdvisor’s Certificate of Excellence in 2015 and continues to be Akagera’s most popular lodging attraction and has now received this award for the fourth year in a row (African Parks 2018).

Karenge means ‘small footprint in Kinyarwanda’ and is designed to leave no impacts on the ecosystem. Karenge is a seasonal camp, set up for 3 months at a time without any permanent construction materials. The camp is composed of six tents, with a maximum of 12 guests (African Parks 2018). Recently, the Akagera Management Company finalized a concession agreement with private sector entity, Wilderness Safaris, to open a new six-lent luxury lodge camp overlooking Lake Rwanyakazinga (African Parks 2018). Wilderness Safaris operates high-end lodging in seven African countries; the proposed Magashi camp is expected to further increase tourism revenue with minimal impact.

African Parks operations have increased overall tourism to Akagera. Park visits have increased from 15,529 visitors in 2010 to over 44,066 in 2018 (African Parks 2018). These numbers include both foreign and domestic tourists, of which nearly 50% of these park visitors are Rwandan nationals (African Parks 2018). Overall, the park has increased tourism revenue more than 500% in the eight years between 2010 and 2018 (from \$350K in 2010 to \$2 million USD in 2018) (African Parks 2018). This revenue generated covers 80% of annual park operations. With revenue increasing each year, the park expects that total revenue will soon breakeven with total costs (\$2.3 million USD) and become completely self-financing.

### Key Success Factors

- A solid co-management agreement between African Parks and the RDB dependent

upon the government’s trust of African Parks’ management authority and a shared commitment to both conservation and sustainable development.

- African Parks’ track record across Africa demonstrated its technical expertise and ability to finance both conservation and development. Akagera park operations, human-wildlife conflict, and wildlife populations have markedly improved since the public-private partnership began.
- RDB support throughout the entire concession process – from RDB’s “one-stop-shop” that streamlines foreign investment, facilitates simple and transparent partnerships, and authorizes the management of park operations.
- African Parks’ reintroduction of rhinos and lions, as well as the rehabilitation of iconic species like elephant and giraffes, has stimulated tourism in the park.

### Challenges and Limitations

- The impassable wetland terrain on the eastern side of the border makes law enforcement difficult. While the park has nearly eliminated terrestrial poaching, Rwandans and Tanzanians will illegally harvest wildlife from wetland areas.
- Even with a 300% increase in revenue in six years, Akagera National Park is still several years away from profit on park operations alone.
- Rwanda has the highest population density in continental Africa. Given the park’s re-allocation of land to genocide refugees in 1997, there is always potential for human-wildlife pressure on its western border.

- Local communities do not manage the park. Communities depend on Rwanda’s mandatory revenue-sharing policy and supply-chain benefits associated with African Parks management to receive park revenue.

### Lessons Learned

- Tourism development takes time. While African Parks could quickly establish financial backing, it took considerably longer to rehabilitate wildlife populations, scale-up the tourism infrastructure, and build a tourism base.
- As a public-private partnership, African Parks was able to provide necessary start-up capital to build infrastructure and provide expertise in scaling-up tourism operations. African Parks past success across Africa helped establish credibility and secure funding for Akagera.
- Rwanda’s formation of the RDB and its streamlined government processes for foreign investment have enabled efficient public-private partnerships with both African Parks and Wilderness Safaris in Akagera.







Case Study 2.2: UAKARI FLOATING LODGE

Country:	Brazil
Type of Product:	Ecolodge
Landscape:	Flooded Forest
Protected Area:	Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve
Protected Area Size:	11,000 square kilometers
Population of Local Community:	10,867
Year Established:	1998 (for researchers) 2001 (expanded and opened for tourists)
Number of Annual Visitors:	860
Number of Local Employees:	57
Economic Impacts	~400 community members benefitting through direct employment or supply chain linkages; \$1 generated by the lodge creates an estimated \$5 for the local community in wider benefits
Website:	<a href="http://uakarilodge.com.br">http://uakarilodge.com.br</a>
Recent Awards and Accolades:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence (2015-2017)</li> <li>• Lonely Planet Top 10 Best Places in the Amazon</li> <li>• National Geographic 2012 Best Hotels in South America</li> <li>• Braztoa 2015 Sustainability Award</li> <li>• World Responsible Tourism Awards 2015 – Best for Poverty Reduction (Silver)</li> <li>• Equator Prize 2017 Finalist</li> <li>• World Travel and Tourism Council Tourism for Tomorrow Awards – 2018 Community Award Finalist</li> </ul>



Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions





## Overview

Uakari Floating Lodge is located inside Brazil’s largest protected flooded area, the Mamiraua Reserve. The Reserve is a state conservation area, made up of channels, lakes and a seasonally flooded forest. The lodge floats in the middle of a tributary, consisting of five guest bungalows with views of the surrounding river and forest. In total, there are 10 rooms with the capacity for 20 guests. The lodge has a central floating area with a small deck, kitchen, restaurant and bar, video room and library.

Activities are led by biologists in tandem with local guides from the communities. Available activities

include sunrise boat trips, canoeing, jungle treks, fishing, visiting local communities and lectures about the local Mamirauá Institute and its research. Private packages include exclusive opportunities for birdwatching, photography and spotting rare birds and wildlife (such as jaguars) with researchers. Each year the lodge works to expand their programs in order to provide even more activities to guests.

## History and Formation

The region was first explored in 1983 by Marcio Ayres, a PhD student studying the uakari monkey. This area is—and continues to be—the unique habitat

of this particular species, and his research revealed how important it is to protect this unique corner of the world. The research study informed discussions with the government about protecting the area and in 1996, the largest protected flooded forest area in the world (the Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve) was formed. In 1999, the Mamirauá Institute was formed by and currently serves as a branch of the Brazilian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation to act as its official research unit. The Institute continues to conduct research programs while leading the social development and management of the Mamirauá Reserve.

To initially fund the efforts to conserve and protect the

area, the Institute received a number of Government contracts and partnerships. These funds enabled the Institute to build a camp out of necessity for the additional number of researchers coming to the reserve to study the region and its uakari monkey.

When the reserve was established, a zoning system was also created which restricted locals from being able to use certain regions for extractive uses, such farming and fishing. Given this impact to the community, the researchers felt it was important to help establish alternative sources of income and ways to use the land—such as ecotourism. The Mamirauá Institute consulted with various communities and conducted a study to determine how much of an economic impact tourism could have on the area. Tourism was found to be an ideal solution given the region’s distinct drought and flood season and resulting difficulties with fishing and agriculture in the unrestricted zones during certain times of the year.

The Institute began to realize that ecotourism along with the local community has an important role to play in conservation of the amazon. Initially established as a protected area for the purposes of scientific research and biological preservation, a complex set of local, regional, national, and international factors combined to allow for the Reserve’s transformation into a “people-oriented” park that could effectively address the dual needs of development and conservation. Its establishment created an entirely new category of protected area in Brazil: *the Sustainable Development Reserve*. In this model, local people continue to reside within park boundaries and a zoning system is established to determine the different types of resource use and activities allowed within specific sections of the Reserve (McLaughlin 2011). Tourism planning for

the Reserve continued and in the year 2000, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) gave a grant to the Institute to construct the lodge.

## Current Management and Approach

Operational since 2001, Uakari Lodge currently utilizes a joint venture model of shared management between the Mamirauá Institute for Sustainable Development (MISD) and the communities in the Mamirauá Reserve. The enterprise’s aim is to generate income for the local people and to contribute to natural resource preservation.

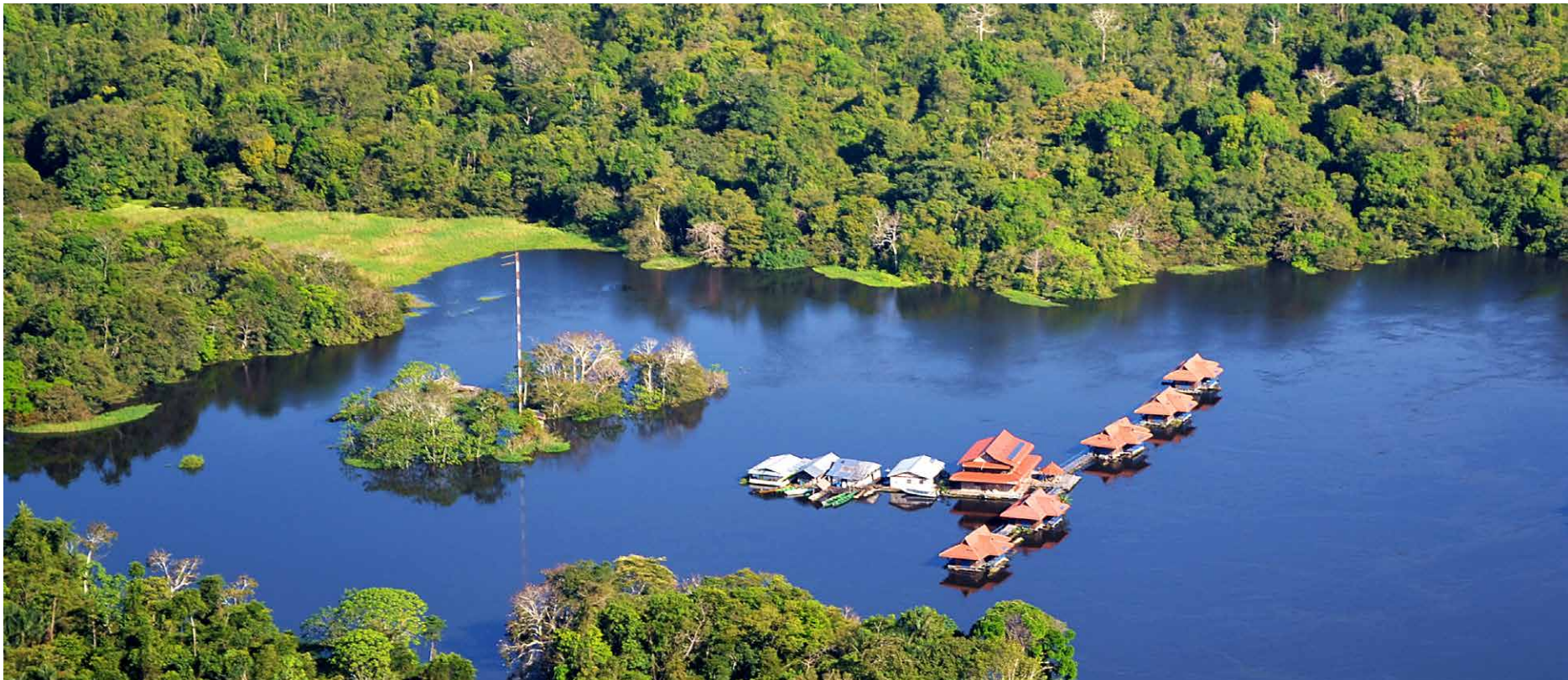
Approximately two years after the lodge opened, the Mamirauá’s Auxiliaries and Ecotourism Guides Association (AAGEMAM) was established to more efficiently manage the community’s involvement in both tourism and the lodge. A formal contract was signed between the lodge, AAGEMAM and the Mamirauá Institute. To work at the lodge, individuals must be part of the association which regularly interviews community members with an interest in working in tourism to accept new members. As the community organization becomes increasingly efficient through training, full control and management of the lodge are slowly being transferred directly to the organization, a process which aims to be completed by 2022.

In addition to providing meaningful employment to local residents, the facilities of Uakari Lodge’s operation are remarkably sustainable. Energy comes from the sun, rain is collected and kept, and waste is treated before coming back to the river. The tiles are ecological, made of recycled PET from plastic bottles.



There are currently 60 people working at the lodge, 95% of which live in the ten surrounding communities. The lodge’s team works in rotation system for positions including management, local guides, maids, cooks, auxiliaries and janitors. Each person works approximately 10-15 days per month and returns back home. The objective of the rotational system is not to make the people dependent on tourism, but to supplement their income and allow them to undertake other activities, including fishing and agriculture.

The lodge receives approximately 860 visitors per year consisting of mainly couples and families. Since it was created, 11,000 guests have stayed in the lodge, supporting the livelihoods of some 400 community members with each \$1 generated by the lodge creating an estimated \$5 for the local community in wider benefits. The direct impact has been in the form of salaries and products sold to the lodge (including agricultural products and fish).





### Key Success Factors

- Having the Institute consult with the community at the very beginning along with measuring the potential benefits that tourism can have for both the local community and conservation.
- Participatory management and the shared feeling that everyone has contributed to the success of the enterprise.
- Building the capacity of the local community organization and slowly transferring ownership over time. During the initial transfer phase, there will be someone outside of the community to serve as the manager to ensure smooth continuity of operations.

### Challenges and Limitations

- The lodge's location in a remote area has made it sensitive to risk factors, both external and internal. Among the most significant external factors that the enterprise has endured is the interruption in flight access to the municipality. This occurred during a time of significant growth for the enterprise when the Tefé municipal airport was abruptly closed, resulting in a significant decrease in demand.
- The exchange rate, with its large fluctuations, resulted in an overvaluation of the Brazilian Real, turning Brazil into an expensive international long-distance destination. This negatively

impacted demand for the destination and enterprise.

- Costly repairs due to the nature of the climate in the Amazon and using mostly wooden materials.
- Community members need regular trainings to ensure a certain level of quality. The rotational system utilized by the lodge tends to exacerbate this challenge.
- Given their remote location, attending trade fairs can also be very expensive which limits the marketing the lodge is able to do.
- While benefits stay within the local communities, revenue generation from the lodge is limited due to its size.

### Lessons Learned

- Thinking small in the beginning and growing once established was critical to their success. Infrastructure-wise they did not find it wise to build something really big or expensive as the on-going maintenance would be a challenge.
- Uakari exemplifies a win-win through tourism. The region's resources are protected from over-exploitation by people from the outside coming into the reserve as well as communities. These same communities are fully trained to management level in tourism that thrives on conservation. When the drought season comes or the plains are flooded, but tourists continue to flow, there is still plenty of work for local people.

Source: (Nassar 2018) (McLaughlin 2011)

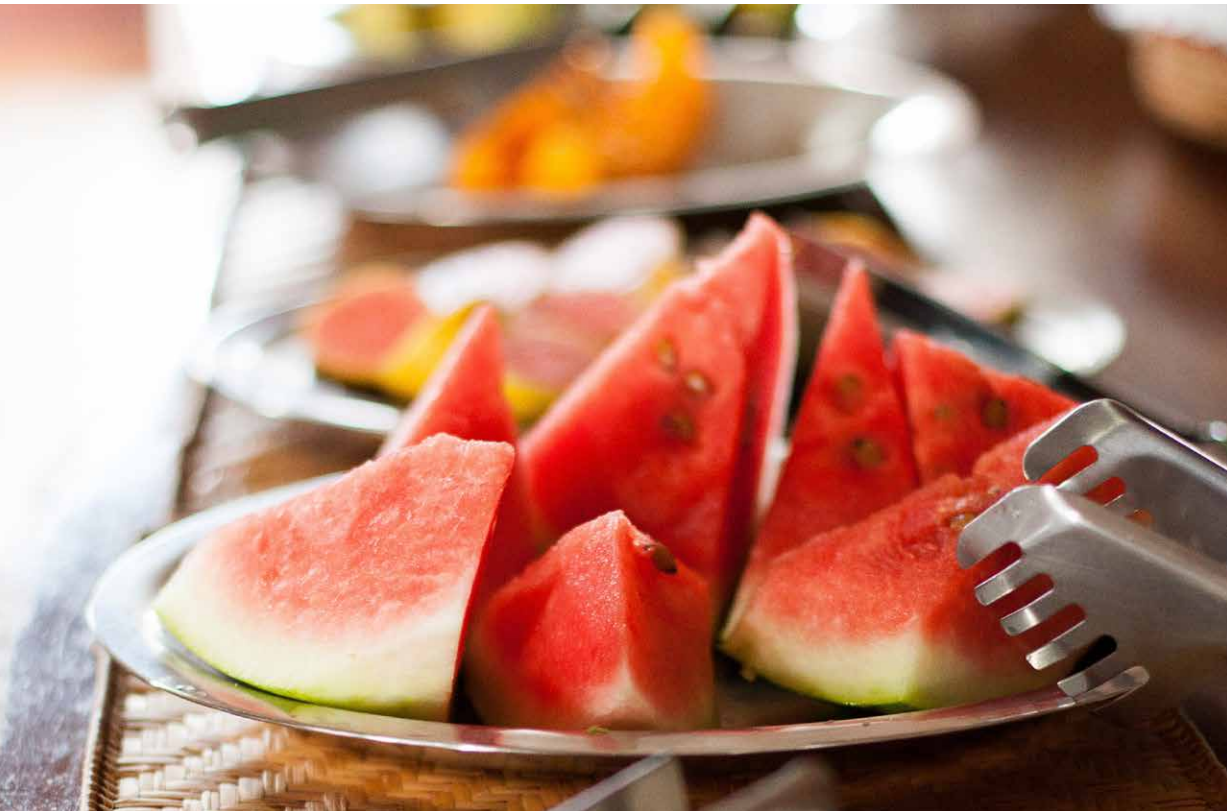
## MANAGEMENT MODEL 3: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENTREPRENEURS

### Model Overview

Although communities are the original custodians of the world's natural places, some protected areas have been established in an exclusionary way. In some situations, communities are forbidden from extracting natural resources that are important for their livelihoods. In other instances, traditional communities are removed from their lands with little consultation. Inevitably, this has triggered negative impacts on local communities, disrupting

their traditional ways of living and limiting their control of and access to natural resources. This can undermine conservation efforts through conflicts between protected area managers and local communities. Recognizing that the success of protected area conservation strategies lies in the ability to both engage and empower local communities, there are a number of organizations working to involve and empower local people through tourism development in and around protected areas.

As evidenced in the following case studies, an intermediary group or initiative has been critical in facilitating concessions to both community organizations and individual community entrepreneurs. These concessions policies not only grant the rights for communities to operate a tourism business within a protected area, they also establish the protocols for communities to share the responsibility in the management of natural resources.





### Case Study 3.1: MOUNTAIN SHEPHERDS INITIATIVE

Country: :	India
Types of Products:	Trekking packages, homestays and lodges
Landscape:	Mountainous
Protected Area:	Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve
Protected Area Size:	2,236 square kilometers
Population of Local Community:	22 villages with over 3,000 people combined
Year Established:	2006
Number of Annual Visitors:	700-900
Number of Local Employees:	A core team of 6 with an additional 5 employees managing the lodges at multiple locations. 12-14 people are also employed during training programs.
Website:	http://mountainshepherds.com and www.ndi.edu.in
Awards:	2015 Tourism for Tomorrow Awards Finalist (People category) – World Travel and Tourism Council



#### Overview

Upon visiting the wild and pristine Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, sustainable and culturally-appropriate tourism is made possible by local communities and the homestays run by the Mountain Shepherds Initiative (MSI or the “Initiative”) in the villages of Lata and Tolma in the Dhaulī Ganga (Niti valley) in Garhwal. Guests are welcomed to stay in traditional village homes and enjoy local cuisine prepared by their hosts. Mountain Shepherds arranges for treks in the deodar and birch forests of the national park with local guides who are experts in the local flora and fauna (Mountain Shepherds Initiative 2018).

The Mountain Shepherds Initiative represents a grassroots effort to create a new model of tourism in the High Himalayas. Beginning in 2003 with the Nanda Devi Campaign for cultural survival and sustainable livelihoods, communities with the assistance of seasoned activists have prepared and actively promoted a community-owned ecotourism plan and outreach campaign to develop tourism to experience both the biosphere reserve and their unique trans-Himalayan culture. Mountain Shepherds is an attempt to bring these plans to fruition by throwing open the doors of Nanda Devi to the world (Mountain Shepherds Initiative 2018).

#### History and Background

The mountain of Nanda Devi was once the second most popular summit to attempt in the Himalayas after Everest. However, such popularity brought heavy environmental pressures on the surrounding region, and in 1982 the Indian government created the Nada Devi Biosphere Reserve and shut off the region to human access.

This policy may have helped the natural environment, but it was a tragedy for the local people, an Indo-Tibetan ethnic group known as the Bhotiya. With the creation of the Biosphere Reserve, they lost access to their prime alpine pastures, the source of medicinal herbs, and to the tourist trade that helped sustain them. The irony is that a few years earlier these same communities had given birth to the Chipko movement, whose collective activism to save the region’s forests is one of the most celebrated stories in the history of Twentieth Century environmental activism.

The local people asked for their rights back, and recent moves by the newly created state government of Uttarakhand opened the park back up to limited ecotourism in 2002. In the spring of 2003, local villagers were given limited access and explicit management rights to trekking in the core zone after being banned for 20 years (Mountain Shepherds Initiative 2008). In response the Bhotiya worked to develop sustainable, community-based tourism around Nanda Devi which culminated with the founding of the Mountain Shepherds initiative in 2006.

#### Current Management and Approach

The Mountain Shepherds Initiative ensures that local culture and way of life directly benefits from the adventure lovers visiting the region. The initiative has built the capacity of more than 70 youth from remote areas in a variety of skills necessary to support tourism in the Himalayas including search and rescue methods, energy medical response, life saving techniques, nature guides, yoga and cooking. A core group of 5-6 community members manage the company itself, while also working as cooks, housekeepers, nature guides, and mountaineering

and ski instructors. Five additional employees also manage their series of lodges in multiple locations. A minimum of 12-14 persons are also employed specifically during the training programs.

Locals are incentivized to work hard through the chance to own shares in the company. So far 12% of the total equity is owned by the community, and the percentage is growing each year with the goal of local ownership reaching 40%. Some of the avenues through which the locals earn apart from employment include direct sale of carpets and woolen products from remote villages, homestays, mule services for treks, porters/guides for treks, and local transport. Local communities also assist to organize professional training programs in basic mountaineering, skiing, outdoor education, yoga and community-based disaster response through the Nada Devi Institute (a subsidiary of the Mountain Shepherds Initiative).

Since its creation, Mountain Shepherds has transformed from a seasonal trekking company to become one of the most popular destinations for trekking and skiing in India. In addition to offering trekking packages for visitors, Mountain Shepherds Initiative also manages two lodges built by the British as a military post for forest guards. Under the management agreement with the State Forest Corporation, MSI is responsible for housekeeping, food preparation and e-marketing. Whenever a booking is generated, the State Forest Corporation collects 1000 Rupees per day for the room while the remainder covers room costs (such as food and housekeeping) with a small profit to help support MSI. Future plans of the initiative involve improving infrastructure to strategic locations, expanding its network of people and promoting the capacities of youth in other areas with tourism potential.



Mountain Shepherds Initiative also recently signed an agreement with the State Forest Corporation to use land in a prime location to build a tented lodge on a 20% revenue sharing basis. In addition to their booking portal [www.shepherdsdodge.in](http://www.shepherdsdodge.in) which includes the two lodges mentioned above, they will also be offering a few more hotels and homestays in the coming months. The new facilities will be managed directly by community members at various locations and the revenue will go primarily to the communities with a 15% commission generated for MSI. MSI will not be managing these properties directly but ensuring a certain level of quality. The vision is to create a comprehensive booking portal for small hotels and remote homestays all around the region linked to MSI's treks and tours products to provide visitors with a complete multi-day itinerary and package.

Recently MSI has begun to share its model with other communities in the Himalayas interested in tourism

development. They have visited five locations in northeast India to showcase their experiences and to encourage these communities that they too could develop responsible tourism. In so doing they are helping sustain these remote and inaccessible villages, while also ensuring the preservation of the natural heritage that surrounds them.

Key Success Factors

- The community cohesiveness and support for tourism development in the region.
- Identifying new markets in addition to mountaineering such as school groups and experiential travelers.
- Creating additional services to bring money to the community, such as trekking porters and the sale of handicrafts such as rugs.
- Being given the opportunity from the State

Forest Corporation to manage the two forest lodges that existed in the region.

Challenges

- The biggest needs for tourism to reach its potential include major investments in roads and tele-communications networks.
- Given the remoteness and rural nature of the community, it is difficult for them to market themselves directly online. As a result, many of the tourism bookings are coming from outside operators who give only a small percentage back to the community.
- While this initiative has low impact on the environment and is benefitting communities, it is small in scale.

Lessons Learned

- Marketing through word of mouth and social media influencers has been one of the most effective way to increase visitation including sharing stories and bringing journalists out to write about the place.
- Most of their visitation started with very experienced trekkers, but now they are finding they can also attract more experiential tourists and broaden their market.

Source: (Kainthola 2018)

Case Study 3.2: ANNAPURNA CIRCUIT

Country:	Nepal
Types of Products:	Network of independently owned lodges, tea houses, porters and subsidiary tourism services
Landscape:	Forest
Protected Area:	Annapurna Conservation Area
Protected Area Size:	7,629 square kilometers
Population of Local Community:	120,000
Year Established:	1986
Number of Annual Visitors:	145,000
Number of Local Employees:	Estimated that 50-60% of local residents are benefitting from tourism in the area
Economic Impacts	95% locally managed lodges (over 700 lodges, teashops, hundreds of subsidiary services to thousands of trekkers)
Website:	<a href="http://www.ntnc.org.np/project/annapurna-conservation-area-project">http://www.ntnc.org.np/project/annapurna-conservation-area-project</a>





### Overview

The Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) is the largest protected area in Nepal and is well known both nationally and internationally for its scenic beauty, unique biodiversity and rich cultural heritage. Home to some of the world’s highest mountains, the ACA is also the most popular trekking destination in the Nepal Himalayas drawing approximately 60% of the country’s total trekkers (NTNC 2018). Here visitors can find everything the Himalayas have to offer, accessible along a selection of well-maintained

trails that snake in and around the Annapurna massif, separated from the Dhaulagiri mountain by the deepest gorge in the world. Visitors include both organized mountaineering groups and independent trekkers visiting the area.

The 128-mile horseshoe-shaped route circles Nepal's Annapurna range, and it has been hailed as one of the best trekking routes since it was first opened to foreigners. Travel writers and hikers alike relish about the trail’s remoteness, mountain villages, exotic wildlife, holy pilgrimage sites and stunning scenery.

### History and Background

The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) was the largest undertaking of the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), an autonomous non-profit organization established by legislative law of Nepal in 1982. NTNC’s mission is to conserve nature and natural resources in Nepal while meeting the needs of local people in a sustainable way (NTNC 2018).

NTNC was tasked with relocating communities out of the region—a requirement once an area is declared a National Park. After many consultations and inputs from locals that included ideas on how they can help conserve the forest, NTNC alongside the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) decided that relocating people may not be the best approach and created a “conservation area” strategy that incorporated local people in the management of the area. After receiving support from the government on this approach, WWF provided financial support in 1986 to pilot this concept in one village (Ghandruk). Through this pilot location—which happens to be on the way to Annapurna Base Camp—the NTNC realized that tourism could be part of the conservation story while providing economic benefits for local people. After being recognized as a “Conservation Area” in 1992, ACAP’s program expanded to cover the entire Annapurna area (Bajracharya 2015).

ACA is the first protected area in Nepal that has allowed local resident to live within the boundaries and own private property while maintaining their traditional rights and access to the use of natural resources. It is also the first protected area which has refrained from using army assistance to protect

the dwindling natural resource base on which the region depends. Instead, it invests whatever financial resources available for community development and social capital building in the region (NTNC 2018).

### Current Management and Approach

Tourism, over the years, has been firmly established as one of the most important and competitive sectors of the local economy. There are now over 700 lodges, teashops and hundreds of other subsidiary services to cater to the thousands of trekkers. 95% of the lodges are locally managed and a Tourism Management Committee within the NTNC is responsible for approving any new lodge developments in the area.

Covering a massive area, the Annapurna Conservation Area Project is divided into seven conservation offices spread amongst six districts of Province No. 4 in Nepal. The area is extended over 15 rural municipalities and one metropolitan city. An elected Chairperson runs each rural municipality, and an elected Mayor leads the city. The elected officials are responsible for carrying out duties to manage, utilize and protect all the natural resources within their respective jurisdictions. Local communities are further divided into various demand-driven units (such as trails, homestays, etc.) to manage the various components of tourism services in their respective regions.

NTNC receives no regular funding support from the government for the operation of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project but has been granted the right to collect entry fees from visiting trekkers. One hundred percent of the revenue is dedicated

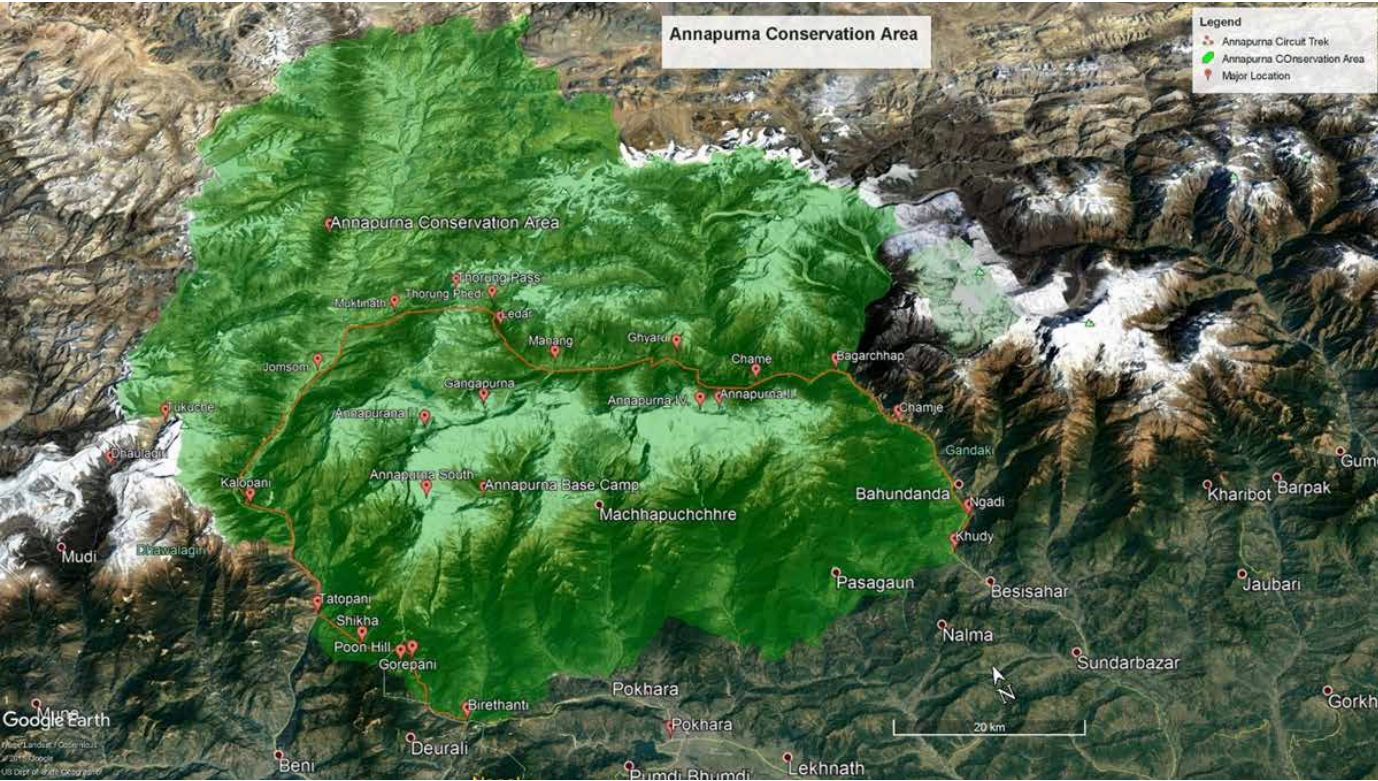


to implementing conservation and development activities in ACA. Additional funds are raised from national and international donors. This is an exemplary achievement of a non-profit institution’s ability to manage a significant portion of the protected area system in Nepal.

The ACAP along with the local communities have invested in micro-hydropower projects to supply electricity to the region. This has allowed hotels to provide a better service to tourists and households to benefit as well. The health of communities has improved due to smokeless kitchens, and they have reduced the need to cut down trees for firewood.

### Key Success Factors

- The trust built between NTNC and the local communities through involving them in the conservation process and understanding their needs.
- Investment of NTNC resources into capacity building of local communities and state actors.
- The government has recognized how to balance the needs of the community and trekkers, which was evidenced by changing their policy to allow NTNC to collect the ticket revenue from trekkers.





- Micro-hydro power was the tipping point which provided electricity to many communities, improving upon their health, cooking skills and general way of life.
- Support from the government, WWF and international development partners.

### Challenges and Limitations

- Spreading the benefits across the entire Annapurna region. Economic opportunities from tourism have increased access to better housing conditions, education, and healthcare in villages. However, communities in villages without tourism do not have such earning opportunities, and are, thus, still engaged in subsistence farming activities.
- Increased pressure from trekking, including pollution, trail erosion and degradation.
- Annapurna has been enormously popular with trekkers over the years and new motorable roads have opened up in previously inaccessible areas. This has brought about new challenges, including an increase of garbage (especially plastics) into the area. The ability to bring steel into the area and the construction of more

modern lodges has also caused a decrease in building traditional mud and wood houses. As the access improves, the traditional way of life is beginning to disappear.

### Lessons Learned

- It is critical to first identify the community needs and work with them in the planning of tourism so they understand the process, are involved with product development decisions, and can protect the key attractions of the area.
- Partnerships can be very powerful mechanisms to bring conservationists, the government, donors and local communities to the table.
- Land use planning should also ensure to leave natural open areas within development.
- Codes of conduct (such as building codes) and incentives should be developed from the beginning to maintain traditional housing and way of life which can provide a richer experience for tourism.

Source: (Suwal 2018) (D. S. Bajracharya 2018)



## MANAGEMENT MODEL 4: JOINT VENTURES

### Model Overview

Tourism joint ventures between communities and private operators are an emerging trend—particularly in Southern Africa. While they take different forms in each country, joint ventures between communities and tourism operators have

proven successful when designed and managed well. They bring income, jobs, and know-how directly to local residents who are often in remote areas. They also bring new products into the tourism economy while establishing a shared responsibility for managing and protecting key assets—such as land, cultural heritage, and wildlife—to the local people and the private sector players.

Two case studies from Namibia are featured under this model as the country continues to serve as a best practice example of how communities can both support—and benefit from—conservation. Namibia was the first African country to incorporate protection of the environment into its constitution and the community benefits generated from its conservancy model have received worldwide attention.





### Achieving Community Benefits from Tourism at Scale: Conservancies in Namibia

Shortly after Namibia's independence in the 1990's, the Namibian government granted communities the right to create conservancies—areas with defined borders and management structures outside of, and in some cases, adjacent to, protected areas—where communities have the right to manage and benefit from wildlife (Namibia Ministry of Environment and Tourism 2018). Conservancies are permitted to benefit from wildlife in two ways – through hunting and tourism in the locations where there is potential. There are now 83 communal conservancies throughout the country, which are self-governing entities run by their members, with fixed boundaries that are agreed upon with adjacent conservancies, communities or land owners. Conservancies are recognized (but not governed) by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). The Ministry does, however, have powers to de-register a conservancy if it fails to comply with conservation regulations. Communal conservancies follow a democratic governance system and are managed under committees elected by their members. Conservancies are zoned into different use areas, including for agriculture. To ensure compliance with MET regulations, conservancies are required to submit wildlife management plans, conduct annual general meetings, and prepare financial reports. MET also sets quotas for hunting on the basis of annual game counts.

The Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations (NACSO) is a consortium of member organizations that work together to support,

promote and strengthen community-based natural resource management (CBNRM). NACSO was formed in the late 1990s in order to serve a core coordination function within the overall CBNRM program that was being established alongside the communal conservancies. Since that time, NACSO has played a key role in the development of Namibia's CBNRM program, which today has expanded to deliver a growing suite of critical conservation, rural development, tourism investment, and economic diversification functions.

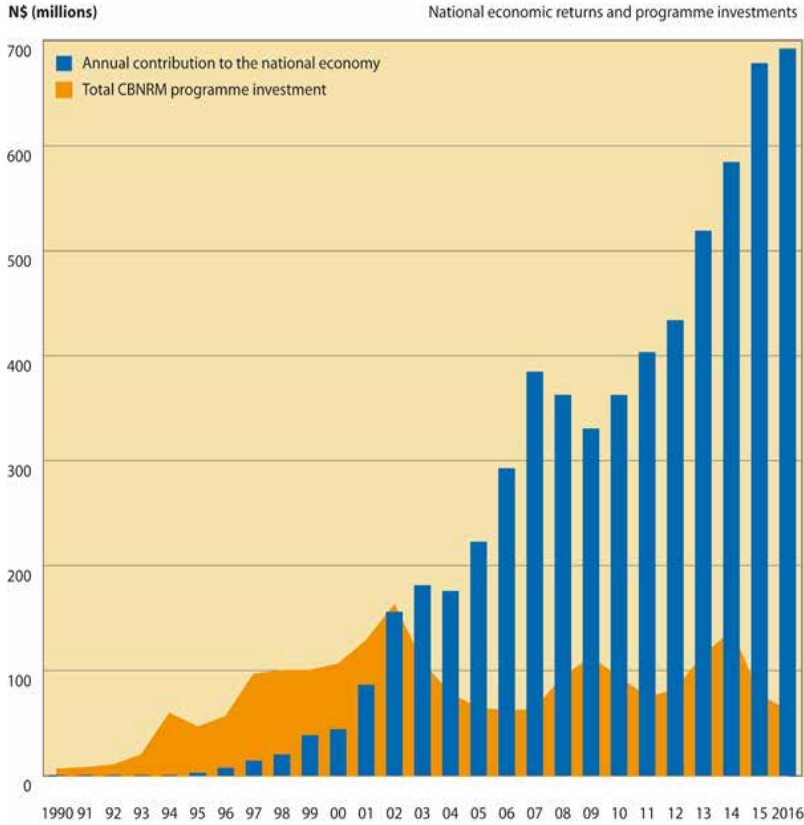
The conservancy system has worked so well that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism will often translocate animals — including the critically endangered black rhinos — out of overcrowded national parks onto unfenced conservancy land, where they have room to flourish. In addition to their environmental benefits, Namibia's conservancies generate more than \$7 million each year in cash income and in-kind benefits for local people. The money goes directly back to communities to support anti-poaching operations, wildlife management, and education and health initiatives (WWF 2018). The community's material interest in wildlife also results in more watchful eyes to limit poaching. The result is that, where Kenya and many other African nations are rapidly losing their wildlife, Namibia continues to register a dramatic increase.

The popularity of Namibia as a tourism destination continues to grow, and conservancies are joining forces with international tourism operators to provide travelers with extraordinary experiences with both wildlife and local culture. Conservancies hold the rights over their own tourism operations, including entering into joint ventures with the private sector and the specific terms of those

agreements. If the conservancy does not border a national park, the community can discuss tourism development opportunities directly with private partners. If the conservancy does border a national park, joint ventures are typically formed through a tendering process overseen by the Ministry of the Environment and Tourism (Humke 2011).

A combination of strong managing organizations, enabling policies and community involvement along with the support of donor funding have all contributed to the success of sustainable tourism growth within Namibia's protected areas. The financial circumstances to fund this development have changed considerably during the past five years. Up until 2014, when the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) program concluded, NACSO members funded much of their activities through large-scale external donor financing, with N\$1.9 billion invested in total since the outset of the CBNRM program. After the end of the USAID-LIFE program and the conclusion of MCA in 2014, these sources of large-scale donor funding were no longer available and are unlikely to return (Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations 2016).

The graph on the following page shows the investment in the CBNRM program each year (in orange), which cumulatively adds up to N\$2.1 billion (approximately \$145 million) of investment between 1990 and 2006, supplied mostly from donors. The blue bars represent estimates of the national economic returns from CBNRM compared to those investments. While investment was required to help conservancies develop and reach scale, today roughly one-third of all conservancies are self-sufficient in terms of their operating costs, as well as generating cash and non-cash benefits for



conservancy members, ranging from social service projects to game meat. Twenty-three conservancies earn more than N\$1 million (approximately US \$68,000) in cash annually (Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations 2016).

According to NACSO, other key results of the conservancies as of the end of 2016 were (Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations 2016):

- 53 joint-venture tourism agreements in place with enterprises employing 954 full time and 72 part time staff
- 38 conservancies directly involved in tourism activities
- 55 conservation hunting concessions with 136 full-time and 179 part-time employees
- 28 small/medium enterprises with 122 full-time and 27 part-time employees

- 853 conservancy employees
- 950 conservancy representatives receiving allowances
- 1,284 indigenous plant product harvesters
- 570 craft producers
- Conservancies and private sector partners generated N\$ 64,635,710 (approximately US \$4.4 million) in tourism returns
- N\$ 11,252,045 (approximately US \$770,000) was distributed to residents either in cash or used to support community projects by conservancies

The two case studies featured in this section have contributed to the success of Namibia's tourism industry over the past twenty years, demonstrating that sequential progress that builds upon each other is the best way to achieve large-scale results.





## Case Study 4.1: GROOTBERG LODGE

Country:	Namibia
Type of Product:	Ecolodge
Landscape:	Desert/Mountainous
Protected Area:	≠Khoadi-//Hoas Conservancy
Protected Area Size:	3,364 square kilometers
Population of Local Community:	4,600
Year Established:	2005
Number of Annual Visitors:	10,000
Number of Local Employees:	53
Website:	<a href="https://grootberg.com">https://grootberg.com</a>
Recent Awards and Accolades:	2010 World Travel and Tourism Council 'Tourism for Tomorrow' award (for Community Benefits)



### Overview

In the early 1990's, game numbers found within the region now known as the ≠Khoadi-//Hoas Conservancy were at an all-time low due to human-wild animal conflict. Residents viewed wild animals as a nuisance with elephants and predators posing a threat to the farming livelihoods of local residents. As a result, the poaching of "problem" animals such as elephant, lion and other predators was rampant and unchecked. Antelope and zebra were also being unsustainably hunted for their meat and skins until almost all but the smallest of invertebrates disappeared from the area (Grootberg Lodge 2018).

Thanks to the determined efforts and cooperation of forward-thinking conservationists, government, the private sector and once marginalized community members, game numbers have now made a significant turnaround. This includes endangered species such as black rhino, desert-adapted lion and elephant (Grootberg Lodge 2018).

Today, visitors to the ≠Khoadi-//Hoas Conservancy can stay at the spectacular Grootberg Lodge and enjoy both wildlife trekking and cultural experiences with the Damara people set amongst the spectacular landscapes of Namibia including amazing rock formations of the Etendeka Mountains and

breathtaking view of the Klip River Valley from atop the Grootberg plateau.

### History and Background

The formation of Grootberg Lodge came about through two agreements—the initial establishment of the Conservancy (an agreement between the community and the government) followed by a joint venture concession from the community to manage the lodge.

The turning point for wildlife restoration in this







region came upon the formation of the conservancy, which was initiated by the Grootberg Farmers’ Association (GFA)—an active, well-organized local farming group established in 1990. GFA made the first independent request to the Government of Namibia to form a conservancy within the country. Many of the GFA committee members also were elected to the first conservancy management committee (including a Chairperson, Vice Chair and Treasurer) which served to make decisions on behalf of the larger community.

GFA wanted to bring tourism into the conservancy as a source of income, and in 2004, the European Union-funded Namibia Tourism Development Program (NTDP) invested approximately N\$4.5 million in the building of a 100% community-owned lodge. Given its limited management capacity, the ≠Khoadi-//Hoas conservancy sought to enter into a partnership with a private sector partner who could manage the lodge on their behalf. A public “request for expressions of

interest” was launched in national newspapers to invite proposals from private companies interested in entering into a management agreement with the conservancy. The conservancy was approached by EcoLodgistix (which would become Journeys Namibia in 2012) and they negotiated an agreement in the beginning of 2005.

Financially, the profits of the lodge belong to the conservancy with Journeys Namibia receiving a flat monthly fee for management services. Initially, the agreement was strictly to manage and operate the lodge, however recent renewals of the contract have requested Journeys Namibia to conduct improvements to the lodge site as well as help the conservancy expand to the nearby Hoada campsite. Through the JV agreement, Journeys Namibia is incentivized to continue expansion and bring in more visitors through a bonus structure should the lodge meet certain sales targets.

### Current Management and Approach

The Grootberg Lodge is currently managed on behalf of the community by Journeys Namibia, who provides training, specialist staff and other infrastructure to the lodge. To ensure the partnership remains on track, a Joint Management Committee was set up, consisting of three representatives from each partner, which meet at least once per quarter to review financial information and address issues as they arise—including anything that might not be directly addressed through the Joint Venture Agreement.

Currently 54 people are employed by the lodge and conservancy. The reform in conservation efforts has placed the community as the overall custodians and beneficiaries, allowing them to truly understand the value of conserving wildlife populations. With community members comprising up 98% of the employees at the lodge, even former poachers have become passionate conservationists as guides (a natural fit given their excellent bush knowledge and tracking capabilities). A covenant of the JV agreement ensures the lodge will continue to maximize employment opportunities for the local community.

Since the lodge was built to benefit and uplift the local community, various initiatives have also been launched since its creation:

- The Grootberg Lodge Education Fund assists with the renovation of the primary schools in the area as well as provides support to promising students whose parents cannot afford tuition fees and other requirements for their education

- (such as uniforms and books). This program also encourages the youth to come back to the conservancy and work in the tourism industry.
- To further add to conservation efforts, a Predator’s Fund was established that takes the cost of living with wildlife into account and compensates farmers for livestock killed by predators. For each guest’s sighting of a lion, cheetah, leopard, elephant, rhino, wild cat, caracal or spotted hyena while on an activity through the lodge, Grootberg donates N\$25 to this fund. Environmental shepherds visit the villages to investigate predator incidents through monitoring tracks to verify how the livestock was killed. Compensation is then given to farmers to go towards purchasing more livestock or investing in infrastructure needed to minimize the risk from predators.
- A soup kitchen has also been started for elderly people where they can get a meal while socializing with other members of the community.

Today ≠Khoadi //Hoas Conservancy stands proudly as an international example of how conservation efforts can be successful and sustainable in the long run. By visiting this breathtaking part of the world and enjoying all it has to offer, visitors are contributing to the long-term sustainability of the area, its wildlife and the local people living among them.

### Key Success Factors

- The community fully owns the lodge infrastructure under this agreement, and therefore has a stronger sense of responsibility

- and willingness to contribute to both the project’s development and ongoing success.
- EcoLodgistix had the assistance from both lawyers and the World Wildlife Fund during the negotiation process to help serve as mediators with the conservancy.
- The regular quarterly meetings between the business and the conservancy—as well as the ongoing success of the lodge—has helped to grow the relationship.

### Challenges

- For several years after its establishment, ≠Khoadi-//Hôas relied on a small trophy-hunting quota for its main income. Mixing hunting with visitors (such as photography and wildlife enthusiasts) was an initial challenge as tourism to the region became more popular.
- In the beginning, the conservancy members did not understand all of the issues that can come with starting a business—particularly cash flow difficulties and the time it would take to repay the loans they had received for the start-up. Training workshops were arranged to help community members better understand financial projections.

### Lessons Learned

- It is critical to understand the culture of the local community and the way they think, which is influenced by how they have been living for thousands of years. At times we can think that

- our explanations will solve the problem, but local communities do not always see things the same way.
- Partnerships are essential and so much more can be achieved by working together with NGOs and the private sector, as everyone brings a different skill set.

Source: (Du Raan 2018)





## Case Study 4.2: HUAB UNDER CANVAS

Country:	Namibia
Type of Product:	Tented Safari Camp
Landscape:	Desert
Protected Area:	//Huab Conservancy
Protected Area Size:	1,817 square kilometers
Population of Local Community:	5,000
Year Established:	2016
Number of Annual Visitors:	300-380 (approximately 1,000 bed nights)
Number of Local Employees:	9 (4 employees and 5 rhino rangers)
Economic Impacts:	In 2017, the combined total financial benefits to the conservancy was 1,156,020 NAD (approximately \$94,000 US)
Website:	<a href="https://www.expertafrica.com/namibia/damaraland/huab-under-canvas/in-detail">https://www.expertafrica.com/namibia/damaraland/huab-under-canvas/in-detail</a>



### Overview

Ultimate Safaris has been a key player in pioneering safaris within Namibia. Driven by an explorer-type enthusiasm and determination to provide high-quality service, they started by operating relatively lightweight mobile camps in remote corners of the country. They have since committed to help preserve some of these wild places where they operate—including paying their fair share towards conservation efforts (Ultimate Safaris 2018).

The //Huab Conservancy in Namibia is the first of the exclusive-use areas from which Ultimate Safaris operates one of their “Under Canvas Camps”. This area is home to desert-adapted black rhino, seven of which were relocated from Etosha National Park over

ten years ago with the promise of bringing tourism to local communities. The community has looked after the rhinos which are now thriving in the area, however tourism visitation has been limited due to the difficulty of reaching this remote desert area north of Damaraland.

//Huab Under Canvas is redefining luxury through their tented camps and focusing on the experience of a remote Namibian safari. Their own definition encompasses privacy, exclusivity, and experiential focus while maintaining a level of comfort expected by guests. They are able to provide this at a relatively moderate cost as they attempt to move away from the opulence and consequent high pricing that is today generally associated with a luxury African safari. Their guests are taken care of by local people

whose desire is to ensure that each moment spent is as perfect as possible. Guests are pampered in camp and have their days filled with wildlife encounters. Every stay is arranged on an exclusive basis regardless of the number of guests in order to provide a more personal experience.

### History and Formation

Before //Huab Under Canvas was formed, Ultimate Safaris was looking for a private campsite where they could take visitors on rhino safaris. They visited the //Huab Conservancy, where the local community was extremely welcoming, understood their concept and were eager for tourism to the region. In May of





2016, pioneering both community development and conservation, Ultimate Safaris entered into a nearly 10-year concession agreement with the local conservancy which secured an area for their exclusive use. The agreement was forward-thinking, providing a model they hope to replicate in other areas of Namibia. It has already been hailed as a great achievement and one that has highlighted how small-scale tourism can have big conservation impact.

Ultimate Safaris agreed to an arrangement that includes a monthly fee for the privilege of operating in the conservancy as well as per client fee for rhino trekking and bed nights. To ensure fair terms for the conservancy, the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management Support Organizations, and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) all played a role in reviewing the agreement. The contract between Ultimate Safaris and the local community was signed in three months, showing what can be achieved when you have willing partners and an enabling environment in place to facilitate community-based tourism in a destination.

### Current Management and Approach

Ultimate Safari's belief is that the investment into their camps should be moderate from both a financial and environmental perspective, ensuring sustainability on all levels without the pressure of having to recoup large financial investments. This has allowed the company to focus on re-investing revenue into conservation and the provision of truly unique experiences. As a result, Ultimate Safaris



provides approximately 20% of revenues to the local conservancy—whereas most private partnerships with conservancies average around 10%. The financial benefits to the conservancy include a monthly rental rate for use of the land, a nightly rate per guest, a fee per guest for rhino activities, salaries for rhino rangers and camp staff, and food and wood supplies purchased from conservancy members. In 2017, the combined total financial benefits to the conservancy was 1,156,020 NAD (approximately \$94,000 US).

Ultimate's first and foremost involvement and investment in the //Huab Conservancy is in conservation, where they have employed five rhino rangers to safeguard the local rhino population and to assist with tracking them. They equip the rangers with solar powered mountain bikes to traverse the area in an environmentally conscious way and installed VHF radio communication for patrols to

use. They have also invested in the supply of open water for wildlife. In addition to the black rhino, the area is home to Hartmann's mountain zebra, oryx, springbok, steenbok, klipspringer, elephant, spotted and brown hyena, jackal, leopard, cape fox and African wild cat, and their presence in the area has already seen a change in the frequency of wildlife sightings. Four full-time employees from the local community look after the camp and the needs of guests.

The camp is nestled in a grove of Mopane trees on the banks of a tributary of the //Huab River. Protected from the prevailing winds and sun, the camp is virtually invisible from anywhere around and it carries arguably the lowest environmental footprint of any camp in Namibia. Tents are raised on mobile platforms and have basic infrastructure that allows for important comforts such as en suite flush toilets and bucket showers, but the essence of

the camp remains Under Canvas, semi-permanent, seasonal and experiential. With provision for up to eight tents, two of which are family units, this camp is only booked on an exclusive basis (tiered pricing for varying pax numbers) for each group and can currently only be used as part of one of Ultimate Safari's privately guided or fly-in safaris. The camp is open seasonally between April and November. All employees are paid while on extended leave during the low season.

### Key Success Factors

- Creating a model that required a low initial capital investment for infrastructure and a philosophy that luxury experiences do not need to cost a lot. Their location and exclusivity policy help create the atmosphere and they have very well-trained

staff who are able to create touch points that turn into lasting memories (for example, taking a break to serve guests cold lemonade or ice cream in the middle of a rhino trek).

- Unique selling points are an important draw for visitors. It is very rare that someone can have a place all to themselves and have this experience for a relatively moderate price. The fact that there are black rhinos in the area helps the success of the camp in terms of the experience.
- Ultimate Safaris has built a reputation over the past 10 years in Namibia and has the ability to move the market. They were able to sell the camp to visitors before it was even built and there continues to be high demand for the experience.



### Challenges and Limitations

- Obtaining a consensus between Ultimate Safaris and the community on the concession agreement took tact, building a trust and patience.
- As the main source of income in the region, the community can often make additional requests beyond the agreement. Expectations of what the business is able to provide need to be managed.
- The community conservancy does not always feel the immediate benefits. The funds go into the conservancy accounts which have their own priorities for conservation. Unless employed by the enterprise, the average individual on the ground does not necessarily see the benefits from the business directly.

### Lessons Learned

- It is critical to get both conservation organizations and the government to buy into what you are trying to do from the very beginning. Ultimate Safaris spoke with representatives from both prior to approaching the community conservancy and they feel this was critical in them serving as a facilitator for the agreement because they believed in what they were trying to do.
- It is almost important to make everyone aware of the risks involved and be open and honest in expectations and strive to over-deliver. This was critical in building trust with the community and eliminating any resentment.

Source: (Crowley 2018)



# 05 ENABLING CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO BENEFIT COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIORNMENT

While much of the discussion on tourism concession policies relates to how tourism development can benefit communities and the environment, it is critical that protected area authorities have the autonomy, capacity, government support, and resources to effectively implement the tourism concessions in the first place. Without first recognizing and addressing the following enabling conditions, achieving sustainable tourism development at scale will be difficult for any destination.

## ENABLING CONDITION 1: Partnerships

Along with a commitment to sustainable tourism development that supports communities in the environment, protected area authorities need to ensure they have the support of the local and national governments and strong partnerships in place before embarking on a journey to sustainable tourism development. Upon doing so, protected area managers have the challenging responsibility of balancing many competing pressures. This challenge grows as visitor numbers increase along with the demands for higher standards in conservation management. This challenge of protected area management, especially dealing with the pressures from tourism, can only be met effectively through building strong partnerships between all interested stakeholders including governments, local communities, the private sector, conservation groups, and tourists themselves.

## ENABLING CONDITION 2: Mandates

The mandates of protected area management agencies often convey a lot about their approach to tourism. Some agencies are mandated, for example, to ensure that natural and cultural assets are first and foremost protected but that they are also enjoyed by the general public. This is the case, for example, for the United States National Park Service (NPS), which has the following mandate: “The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.” This mandate has allowed the NPS to plan for visitor’s use of the park while ensuring that the Parks are well preserved.

Protection and conservation are the main mandates of many agencies, with little consequent emphasis on tourism development. The mission of Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority is “to scientifically conserve and manage Ethiopian wildlife and its habitats in collaboration with communities and stakeholders for the ecological, economic and social benefits of the present generation, and pass to the next generation as a heritage”.

For others still, their mandates allow for tourism but only with the involvement of local communities and with the objective of enhancing their livelihoods. The main focus of the 2005 Eco-tourism Policy of Himachal Pradesh was to promote with the sole purpose of developing the local area, generating income for local communities and generating resources and funds for the effective creation and

maintenance of assets. Ecotourism policies of most states in India and guidelines of the National Tiger Conservation Authority, tasked with overseeing tiger conservation in India, lay emphasis on balancing tourism with conservation, with an emphasis on the latter, and using tourism as a tool to enhance the livelihood of local communities. The mission of National Trust for Nature Conservation, the agency tasked with managing Conservation Areas in Nepal, similarly is to conserve nature and natural resources in Nepal while meeting the needs of local people in a sustainable way.

## ENABLING CONDITION 3: Policies

Natural resources can only be sustainably used if effective management structures and policies exist to guide their use. As demonstrated through the case studies within this publication, market-based solutions can greatly benefit protected areas, however without the proper policies in place, they can also bring significant risks such as the degradation of the natural resources on which tourism depends.

For this reason, it is critical that tourism development include a policy framework for how the concessions programs are defined and regulated, a process that outlines how concession opportunities are identified, how suitable operators are selected, and how concessions management and oversight will be conducted once an operator is in place. As seen in the Coconino National Forest example, the United States Forest Service requires a number of “decision documents” (including a needs assessment and visitor capacity assessment) to be completed before determining what visitor services are needed within a national forest.

In the concession agreements signed with the tourism operator, the following basic components or “covenants” (among others) should be addressed:

- **Financial Responsibilities** – to help provide a sustainable source of financing for the administration of the concessions program and/or the protected area authority itself, a concessionaire typically pays a fee that can range from a set annual fee, a percentage of profits, or a percentage of all revenue earned.
- **Environmental Responsibilities** – to ensure environmentally-responsible tourism practices, the concession contract should include measures that protect natural resources such as management plans for areas such as how infrastructure will be developed, recycling efforts, and sustainable waste management, water and renewable energy use.







- **Local Community Responsibilities** – to ensure that local communities are benefitting from tourism development in their backyard (and conversely that it does not compromise their quality of life through issues such as over-crowding), certain covenants should be included. These may include a certain level of community involvement in decision-making, that a certain percentage of employees or supply chain needs must come from the local community, or that a portion of the revenue generated from the tourism operation support local needs or infrastructure development (such as a school or health clinic).

**ENABLING CONDITION 4: Healthy Ecosystems**

Protected area authorities have the primary responsibility of ensuring the protection of the natural resources upon which tourism depends. Ensuring that tourism contributes to the sustainable management of protected areas requires the cooperation and strong partnerships among the tourism industry, government, local communities, protected area managers and planners, concessionaires and the tourists themselves. Protected areas are often zoned for specific uses, so an understanding and adherence to land ownership rights and tenure is also critical. Upon developing tourism, managers must first define how tourism development will contribute to better protecting and managing a healthy ecosystem; and second, how tourism will either complement or be impacted by existing or future land use plans for the area.

**ENABLING CONDITION 5: Visitor Infrastructure**

For a protected area to succeed in attracting a critical mass of tourists, visitors need to feel as though they are in a welcoming destination. This can be achieved through the development of basic park infrastructure including roads, trails, restrooms, interpretation and signage, visitor information centers, viewing decks, picnic areas and campgrounds. Communications, transportation and waste management are also among the services essential to tourism.

While it is recommended that more basic infrastructure is in place prior to attracting concessionaries for accommodations and activities, this is not always the case. In Ethiopia, for example, a private investor noticed the lack of accommodations within protected areas and made a personal investment in order to capitalize on the opportunity. While the protected area was accessible to visitors in the beginning, infrastructure improvements from the government (such as better airport access and improvements to the main road running north to south) have served to enhance access and contribute to the success of the lodge.

Inadequate infrastructure and basic services can hinder or stall the development of a tourism destination, even those with unique or existing attractions. Continued visitor infrastructure development is necessary for a destination to continuing attracting investment and development in order to reach scale. This visitor infrastructure may require financing from either the government or an outside source, such as donors.

**ENABLING CONDITION 6: Market Demand**

Demand for tourist activities related to protected areas has increased over recent years. Travelers interested in nature-based tourism visit a destination to experience natural areas, view and photograph wildlife, learn about nature, and be physically active through activities such as hiking and kayaking. For protected areas to boost their tourism market demand, they will need strong partnerships with those agencies directly responsible for marketing the larger destination to travelers in order to integrate nature-based tourism into the destination’s offerings and marketing materials. It is crucial to determine the potential demand for the protected area and work with destination marketers to develop a strategy for meeting this demand. Understanding who visitors are and their motivations for traveling to a destination will also be critical to reveal new or improved tourism products that can build upon each other and help the destination reach scale.

**ENABLING CONDITION 7: Skilled Workforce**

Tourism is a people and service-oriented industry, and the success of its workforce is based directly on the available opportunities for the available workforce to acquire and maintain relevant skills. Understanding the actual and potential human resource base of a destination is critical in determining to what degree a community can meaningfully participate in the development of sustainable tourism. Tourism businesses will require people skilled in operations, management, administration, maintenance, guide services, and transportation, among other fields. Institutional support is also an important enabling factor as informal and formal tourism training programs may be available within the destination through local universities, technical schools, and industry associations.

**ENABLING CONDITION 8: Inclusive Supply Chain**

While there are financial limitations to how many individuals any business can actually employ, its impact can be larger through involving the local community through the various supply chain needs of a tourism business. Supply chains are comprised of the suppliers of all goods and services that go into the delivery of tourism products to consumers. These supply chains involve many components including agricultural products, transport, ancillary tours and excursions, handicrafts, furniture, provisions such as gas and firewood, and services such as construction and waste disposal.

For example, as a result of the various supply chain linkages that the Feynan Ecolodge has with the local community (including the purchase of transportation services, bread, candles and furniture, for example), the lodge directly benefits around 80 families (approximately 400 people) and around 50% of what the guest pays stays in the immediate local community.

Supply chains operate through business-to-business relationships, and tourism development often fosters the development of new micro-enterprises, which may require access to outside capital.



# 06 ACTION STEPS

## Twelve Action Steps

It is important to note that any tourism development within protected areas should first and foremost be compatible with the protected area’s primary objective of conserving biodiversity. For governments looking to develop nature-based tourism that supports local communities, the following actionable steps are recommended:

### STEP 1: Create an Enabling Environment for Tourism Development

This includes creating the policies to enable concessions along with the management of these agreements in a manner that is open, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to both the government, concessionaire and community’s needs.

### STEP 2: Assess the Region’s Tourism Potential

This should include engagement of tourism stakeholders to discuss the benefits and shortfalls of tourism as well as community-based management of natural resources. In a workshop setting, government officials should ask community

participants to identify the tourism assets of their destination (such as culture, natural landscapes, and wildlife) as well as opportunities to create additional employment linkages between other sectors. Examples of supply chain connections might include the production of handcrafts for sale at tourism hubs or the sale of agricultural products to hotels or restaurants.

### STEP 3: Assess the Region’s Conservation Threats

The assessment should develop a comprehensive understanding of the direct and indirect threats to biodiversity at a site, with a focus on the human socio-economic conditions that often lead to environmental degradation such as lack of economic alternatives, awareness, and industry standards. This assessment should be done in close collaboration with conservation partners.

### STEP 4: Assess the Product’s Market Potential

This includes what type of tourist will visit, how many will come, when are they going to visit the region and how long will they stay? An evaluation team should contain someone who understands tourism in the destination along with current trends and potential for new developments. The tourism ass should also know the existing competitors in the local area.

### STEP 5: Assist the Community to Organize Themselves

Depending on the tourism development model used in the destination, the community may need to be organized in such a way that it can make decisions and enter into legal contracts on behalf of the community. In other cases, they may just need an elected leadership team to represent themselves and ensure benefits are equally distributed. Once an area is identified to have tourism potential—and an interest in tourism—a community constitution should be drafted to include (Spenceley, Rylance, et al. 2016):

- A clear description of the objectives of the community
- A written definition of the boundaries of the community
- A definition of who can be a member
- A clear system for decision making within the community
- A set of guidelines for electing or appointing community leaders
- A clear description of the rights and responsibilities of the community organization and members
- Guidelines on how meetings shall be conducted
- Rules for the financial management of the community (which may include appointing a Treasurer, keeping good financial records, etc.)
- The rules and regulation on how to run the community organization to ensure good governance
- The rules and regulations for dispute resolution and amending the constitution.

### STEP 6: Plan for Tourism Development

The selection of a site for tourism development or concessions should be done within the framework of existing tourism policies, strategies and other tourism, economic, or regional development plans and should also show awareness of any other infrastructure plans or projects contemplated in the area that may have an influence on the proposed tourism operation. Certain projects planned for an area may be conflicting or competing (e.g., hydro projects, mines, clinics, schools, etc.) with the intended tourism operation or, conversely, may create new opportunities.



### STEP 7: Identify Legal Status of Available Land

It is important to know what protected area land is available for development within a community and who has rights over a particular piece of land, and what form these rights take. Land to develop a tourism operation may be communally owned, publicly owned (where a concession or transfer of land to the community would be required), or privately owned (where landowners could provide land in exchange for project equity or purchased and transferred to the community). In addition, it is important to ensure there are no other land-use rights that could have a negative impact on the development of a tourism operation (such as mining rights, land re-allocation, or existing land-use rights).





### STEP 8: Cultivate Private Sector/Operator Interest

Several different approaches can be used to attract potential concession or joint venture partners. The approach used to attract an operator will vary from place to place, and will depend mainly on the value of the site on offer, as follows.

- **Request for Proposals:** When the site has high tourism potential because of its proximity to existing tourism circuits and attractions or if the tourism

potential is unknown because of limited tourism development in this area. In these cases, a “Request for Proposals” (RFP) in the form of a formal competitive bidding (tendering) process can be used. This could be an ‘open’ or ‘closed’ process depending on the likely level of interest. This will encourage competition between potential operators, which should help to obtain the best offer for the site.

- **Operator-Initiated Approach:** When site is assessed to have limited potential or has been previously put out for an RFP with no bids received or interest shown, an operator-initiated approach that responds to interest on a case-by-case basis or approaching operators directly will have a greater impact. An operator-initiated process could be quicker than a competitive bidding process and can still result in a good offer.
- **Unsolicited proposals:** An unsolicited proposal is a concessions proposal received by the protected area or Government Authority outside of a formal process or request for proposal (RFP). The entity may have already identified a site or opportunity, and may be looking for a means to negotiate directly. This is often seen with more mature tourism concession programs when demand from the private sector is high.

Regardless of the chosen method of finding suitable partners, it is important that the entire process is completely transparent with all parties involved held accountable. It is also important to use a facilitator who has the technical expertise that the community might lack, and to use the same facilitator throughout the entire process.

### STEP 9: Finalize Agreements

A formal agreement or contract documents what has been agreed between the two parties. It should be drafted after proposals have been assessed and a negotiation has taken place. It is this agreement that puts the legal framework

around what has been offered in the proposal from the operator, and what the community or protected area authority has agreed to undertake. It should clarify who does what and when, where, and for how long. In addition, it should state clearly what each party must and must not do, and what will happen if the parties do not comply with the agreement.

### STEP 10: Facilitate Communication

Once the agreement has been signed, it is crucial that the partners continue to communicate with each other on a regular basis. Typically, some sort of committee is formed to allow this to happen. This committee should include representatives from each party and serves to manage the implementation of the agreement only and not the direct management or operations of the tourism enterprise.

For the committee to work effectively, it is important to develop a relationship of trust and honesty – to see the agreement as a partnership with all entities being critical to the success of the tourism operation. The agreement should include a section that describes how the committee should be structured and operate.

- The committee provides a forum and opportunity to:
- Provide regular feedback and exchange information that may be helpful to either partner;
  - Obtain feedback regarding the performance of the tourism operation and employees from the community;
  - Discuss issues related to the agreement;
  - Resolve disputes related to the agreement;
  - Better understand the issues affecting all parties;
  - Nominate new community members for potential employment;
  - Make suggestions that could improve future renewals of the agreement;
  - Discuss any new tourism development opportunities within the community;
  - Develop rules and regulations related to tourism operations within the community.

### STEP 11: Evaluate Progress and Adapt

Monitoring and evaluation helps track progress when compared to the agreement and identify any discrepancies or issues early on. Regular monitoring and evaluation should assess the:

- Economic, social, environmental and political impacts of the agreement;
- Performance of the partner to meet its contractual obligations (including non-financial covenants such as sustainability and staffing codes of conduct);
- Success of a tourism strategy within protected areas.

The findings can be later used to adapt future renewals of the agreement—or the process for future partnerships and policy making.

### STEP 12: Assist with Marketing and Ensure Community Benefits are integrated into the Destination’s Conservation Story

There are an equally significant number of strategies and approaches that can be used to brand and promote a tourism product. A web-based platform and social media are critical tools in creating and promoting tourism experiences, but more traditional forms of brand development and promotion are also needed. Tour operators should be engaged in the strategy development, branding and marketing process and incentivized to market and promote the nature-based tourism enterprises.

Community benefits should also be integrated into the destination’s conservation success story as travelers are increasingly motivated by sustainable options. According to a TripAdvisor survey, nearly two-thirds of travelers plan to make more environmentally sound choices in 2018. This choice of more responsible tourism destinations is key to the continued success of nature-based tourism that supports local communities.



# 07 KEY TAKE-AWAYS

Across the different frameworks explored—and over the course of speaking with representatives from each of the case studies—there were a number of lessons learned that were repeated on multiple occasions. The following represent the key takeaways for developing successful nature-based tourism that supports local communities:

## Public financing is key to reaching scale.

- Most national park systems—particularly those in developing countries—tend to be critically underfunded. Tourism and concessions are an important component of financing parks, however protected area systems also need investments from the public sector that can trigger greater economic activity and returns for surrounding communities.
- The United States Park Service, for example, receives approximately 85% of its annual budget through government appropriations (\$3 billion), of which they receive a return in the form of a sector that contributes \$34 billion back into the United States economy.
- To make this public financing available, Governments must prioritize conservation and recognize the importance of their protected area systems.
- In developing countries where governments have prioritized needs other than tourism and conservation, outside support from donors has also been

critical for to provide for the initial capital and/or capacity-building for local communities.

## Different partners bring different strengths and perspectives to the table.

- Governments can help stimulate investment through providing legal certainty, transparent concessions policies and procedures along with solid contracts that protect the interests of all parties.
- Given their expertise of the industry and different travel markets, the private sector is often in the best position to develop visitor services within protected areas.
- **Communities** play an important role in ensuring the quality of the product and experience and safeguard the way their local culture is presented to visitors. In cases where they are given more ownership rights of this tourism product, their benefits and scalability of the model is exponential.
- Technical support and outside expertise from **donor organizations** can help identify the threats to biodiversity conservation and help communities mitigate those threats through a larger stake in tourism—such as facilitating joint ventures or communal conservancies.
- A harmony should be fostered between the local people, environment,

conservation and development. In many cases, utilizing an independent **third-party facilitator** who has the technical expertise can help guide all parties towards reaching an agreement.

## A successful tourism product does not necessarily need a large amount of initial capital investment.

- At times it is best to start small and grow from there. The idea of “luxury” can also be redefined to provide guests with the ability to experience the striking solitude, space and wilderness of a protected area destination.
- The ability to identify and build upon what exists in the destination and capitalize on the region’s ability to provide authentic interactions with nature, local people and culture is a true competitive advantage.
- It can be helpful to utilize a consultant who has the technical tourism product development expertise that the community or a new operator might lack.

## There can be wishful thinking around community-based tourism.

- Rural communities around protected areas may not have the capacity to develop products that meet the expectations of foreign visitors, particularly for luxury products. Outside input from concession partners is vital not just to physical infrastructure built but to the ambience, presentation and marketing of a project.
- Initial consultations from the very beginning are critical to help local people understand how they can manage their local resources and ensure desired outcomes from tourism are in alignment with the community’s values.
- All partners need to seek to understand the culture and history of the local community and the way they think. At times people believe their own explanations will help to solve conflicts, but rural communities may not always see things the same way.
- With creating tourism in a region—often for the first time—local



communities are expected to perform a range of duties that may require new skills. Both patience and capacity building are often required in these situations.

## Tourism is not an economic panacea.

- Starting a business within a protected area can bring about a dramatic mix of hopes and desires between the government, protected area managers, local community and the investor. All of these expectations need to be properly managed.



- There can be a misconception in terms of how much money will be generated through tourism enterprises. Tourism development should be viewed and communicated as one opportunity to lessen the pressure on resource extractive activities and generate alternative sources of income for conservation and local populations.
- Sustainable tourism, particularly with rural communities, often begins small with a limited number of new jobs that can also be part-time and seasonal. However, through the expansion of tourism products and services over time (such as tours, lodging, dining, transportation and related supply chain industries such as handicrafts, construction and agricultural products) tourism has the potential to generate sustainable economic benefits for a growing number of local community members.

Conservation of protected areas should always be the main priority.

- For the environment to truly benefit, tourism numbers may need to be limited. To manage visitation property, protected area authorities need to effectively regulate within the protected areas and maximize benefits outside of them.
- For local communities to protect their natural resources, they must first understand their value and be able to derive economic benefits from them. There must be a strong link between the management of the resource and the benefits generated from them.



- Strong covenants within concessions agreements can help ensure tourism operations are putting the natural environment first.
- It is important for members of the larger community (beyond just those employed through tourism or representing the community through a committee) to see the benefits from tourism and generate a sufficient sense of ownership to tolerate wildlife and reduce resource extractive behaviors.

Tourism development happens in stages.

- Tourism development is a process that requires time, investment and the thoughtful cooperation of a number of entities—including governments, protected area authorities, communities, the private sector and NGOs.
- While some of these case studies highlighted in the publication represent smaller, “boutique” examples, this can be the reality of nature-based tourism. Through increased development and the addition of more businesses and services into the tourism economy, destinations and investors can realize the overall potential for scaling-up.
- In many destinations, the collective power of these smaller investments made during the early phases of the tourism lifecycle serve to propel destinations into reaching their greater economic potential.
- These sequential projects that build on each other are the most effective way to achieve large-scale results.

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