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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This document is the culmination of work commissioned by the World Bank which set out to improve the understanding of how local communities and the environment can benefit from sustainable tourism development in protected areas and the concessions policies required to facilitate this development.

Research and interviews were conducted by Solimar International, Inc., led by Chris Seek and Natalie Selby, who also served as lead authors, Ben Zukowski, Master of Environmental Management Student at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, also served as the author for the Rwanda case study. The work was carried out under the supervision of Urvashi Narain, Lead Economist, Environment and Natural Resources, Global Practice, who provided invaluable feedback throughout the process.

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- AWC: African Wildlife Capital
- BMNP: Bale Mountains National Park
- CBNRM: Community-Based Natural Resource Management (Namibia)
- DFID: Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
- EWCA: Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority
- FIT: Free and Independent traveler
- GPA: Groundskeeping Farmer’s Association
- HP ECOSOC: Himachal Pradesh Ecotourism Society
- IUCN: International Union for the Conservation of Nature
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
- NPS: United States National Park Service
- NTCN: National Trust for Nature Conservation (Nepal)
- MSI: Mountain Shepherds Initiative
- NASCO: Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations
- PA: Protected Area
- RFP: Request for Proposals
- RSCN: Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (United Arab Emirates)
- UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization
- USAID: United States Agency for International Development
- WWF: World Wildlife Fund

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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.

Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions
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 those 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 selection 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
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).

### BENEFITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENHANCING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Increases jobs for local residents</td>
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<th>PROTECTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE</th>
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<td>• Protects, conserves and values cultural and built heritage resources</td>
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<td>• Transmits conservation values through education and interpretation</td>
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<td>• 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</td>
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<td>• Supports research and development of good environmental practices and visitor management systems to influence the operation of tourism businesses and visitor behaviour at destinations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improves productivity, transportation and communications systems</td>
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<td>• Helps develop self-financing mechanisms for protected area operations</td>
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The International Union for Conservation of Nature further describes the potential benefits of tourism in protected areas, including (Eagles, Haynes and McCool 2002):

**Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions**

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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.

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 management, concession agreement, concession 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).
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).

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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF LEGAL INSTRUMENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>LENGTH</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concession</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>10-40 years</td>
<td>Accommodation, food and beverage, recreation, education, retail, and interpretive services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>5-30 years</td>
<td>Use of fixed infrastructure such as accommodation, airports, restaurants, shops etc. for a rental fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License</td>
<td>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 fulfill a set of conditions.</td>
<td>Up to 10 years</td>
<td>Vehicle-based tours (e.g. game drives, hot air ballooning, white-water rafting, boat cruise) using operators own equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permit</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Up to 10 years</td>
<td>Activities such as guiding, canoeing, hunting, and climbing using operators’ own equipment.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions
A tourism destination can be defined as a city, town, or other area that is dependent at least in part 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 the visions have 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) Exploratory – 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, Grosberg Lodge and //HUB 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 tour 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 chain-branded 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.
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 80% 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 concessionsaires 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. Concessionsors 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.)

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: https://www.nps.gov/index.htm
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 concessionaires 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 a 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 different partners along with case studies explored of different partners along with case studies 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.

Management Model 1: Private Operators

1.1 Feynan Ecolodge, Jordan

- Locally owned and operated by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (NSC)
- Income: $90,000 US (conservation fee paid annually)
- Employment: 60 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees

Management Model 2: Nonprofit Organizations

1.2 Bale Mountain Lodge, Ethiopia

- Managed by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation (EWC) Authority
- Income: $150,000 US (conservation fee paid annually)
- Employment: 40 full-time employees

Management Model 3: Community Organizations and Community Entrepreneurs

1.3 Grootberg Lodge, Namibia

- Managed by the Grootberg Community Development Trust (GCDT)
- Income: $50,000 US (conservation fee paid annually)
- Employment: 20 full-time employees

Management Model 4: Joint Ventures

1.4 Uakari Floating Lodge, Brazil

- Managed by the Mamirauá Institute for the Protection of the Amazon (MIA)
- Income: $75,000 US (conservation fee paid annually)
- Employment: 10 full-time employees

Summary table of case studies

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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 potential of concession sites, and investor demand. The potential of concession sites, and investor demand. The potential of concession sites, and investor demand.
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

Accolades:
- One of the best 25 ecolodges in the world in 2013 by National Geographic Traveler Magazine
- Communities’ category National Geographic World Legacy Awards 2015 - Finalist
- Tourism for Tomorrow Awards 2015 – Finalist ‘Community Award’
- TripAdvisor’s “Hall of Fame” for receiving Certificates of Excellence for 5 consecutive years (2011 – 2015)

Economic Impacts:
- Approximately 400 people (80 families) benefit from tourism nowadays.
- In 2014, Feynan’s people per capita income was 15% higher than the national average.
- Approximately 50% of visitor revenue stays within the local community or supply chain linkages.
- Due to the sourcing of local products, the local savings rate in Feynan has doubled—benefitting even more families.
- The area's archaeological sites or unwinding in the tranquil surrounds. The area's archaeological sites coupled with its natural heritage and beauty has put Feynan on the map as a low-impact tourism destination.

Protected Area Size:
- 108 square kilometers

Protected Area:
- Dana Biosphere Reserve

Landscape:
- Mountainous/Desert

Type of Product:
- Ecolodge

Country:
- Jordan

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 nest 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 ecotourism in remote areas and taking travelers on exciting journeys into nature, culture and adventure” (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 ecolodge – a destination that offers a range of unique and authentic experiences. Its environmental footprint has also decreased and the number of visitors has doubled—benefiting even more families.

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In the local community. As a result of their efforts, visitor numbers increased by 13% 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 many families in 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 woman who bakes from her family tent. 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 woman who bakes from her family tent. 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 woman who bakes from her family tent.

- A shop at the lodge also showcases and sells a variety of leather and candle workshops that employ local women;

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- Local spring (Fenyan Ecolodge 2019).

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- Patrolling and law enforcement to minimize threats on species and habitats (such as hunting and cutting down trees);

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- 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 outline a shared ethos for environmental sustainability and community benefit;

- A shared ethos for environmental sustainability and community benefit;

- The diverse expertise that EcoHotels brought to Feynan to improve upon the lodge—includes vials, marketing, branding; customers service, technology, renewable energy and experiences development;

- The unique environment and setting of the lodge;

- A well-crafted relationship with the community who are able to make the product successful due to their authenticity and the experiences they provide to the guests. Feynan has also seen first-hand how 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;

- Regional political instability and its impacts on tourism to Jordan;

- Training local community members with low levels of formal education in remote areas;

- 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.

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- It was critical from the onset to involve and consult with the community who are able to make the product successful due to their authenticity and the experiences they provide to the guests. Feynan has also seen first-hand how 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.

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 26km ecotourism corridor (“Jordan’s Eastern Badia Trail”) connecting the Al Ajneq and Shanzeh reserves with a proposed Protected Area of Bani Tameem. Working with RSCN, the goal of the corridor was to develop low-impact, high-value community-centered ecotourism, and to design and implement a corridor for local communities, while contributing to conservation of the area’s biodiversity. As pilot projects, two Bedouin camps were purchased with needed equipment, range were employed, and a community liaison officer was employed to assist benefits to the local Bedouin community. The community liaison officer was employed to assist benefits to the local Bedouin community. The community liaison officer was employed to assist benefits to the local Bedouin community. The community liaison officer was employed to assist benefits to the local Bedouin community. The community liaison officer was employed to assist benefits to the local Bedouin community.

In Jordan, the local communities have limited access to modern technology, renewable energy and experiences development. 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 3.5 million was a grant from GEF and the remainder the contribution of the government.

Source: The World Bank
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 situated in a cloud forest, its location within Ethiopia’s premier wildlife conservation area and only two national parks have been legally constituted (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. 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

Stannaied in Ethiopia as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Logistic 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 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 variety of rare and critically endangered species (FZS 2018). Guests, through experienced local guides, are provided with the opportunity to engage with the local community and with scientific research and conservation teams working in this unique location.

Historically, Bale Mountain Lodge (Conservation Capital 2016) was the first private concession to ever be granted within an Ethiopian National Park and has great potential to be developed and managed as a significant economic asset through tourism. As this was the first concession to ever be granted by the Ethiopian government inside a National Park, BioLodge selected the Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP) of south-central Ethiopia. The lodge is the perfect concession to be questioned 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 variety of rare and critically endangered species (FZS 2018). Guests, through experienced local guides, are provided with the opportunity to engage with the local community and with scientific research and conservation teams working in this unique location.

Economic Impacts

Outside of those directly employed, the lodge impacts an additional 305 community members through various vertical supply chain linkages.

Website:
http://www.balemountainlodge.com

Awards:
TripAdvisor 2016 and 2017 Certificate of Excellence, 2015 Safari Awards

Stannaied in Ethiopia as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Logistic 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 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 variety of rare and critically endangered species (FZS 2018). Guests, through experienced local guides, are provided with the opportunity to engage with the local community and with scientific research and conservation teams working in this unique location.
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 vertex supply chain designed to engage community-based micro-enterprises to develop, to support an additional 100 people. As part of its conservation covenant for AWC financing, the lodge also sets up a community trust to engage local people in conservation and ensure equitable benefit distribution. By staying faithful to Bale Mountains National Park, the lodge is also increasing the park’s ability to promote best conservation practices 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. Munster 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.

Key Success Factors

• Willingness from the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority to work with the proposed concessions agreement and facilitate the approval.
• Support from the USAID-Ethiopian 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.
• Willingness from the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority to work with the proposed concessions agreement and facilitate the approval.

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.

Source: (Levene 2018)
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: https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/coconino/recarea/?recid=54892

Overview
Red Rock Ranger District of the Coconino National Forest (“the District”) is famous around the world for its iconic red rock vistas. The remnants 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 waterfalls, 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 were 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, archaeologist, 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:

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
3) Management Plan – utilizing information from the two steps above, the plan describes how to develop an outfitter/guide program along with an allocation system that supports a sustainable total visitor capacity available to outfitter-guides (in service days or range of service days). Example: https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd459199.pdf
4) Environmental Analysis – referencing the three documents above, this analysis authorizes site-specific outfitter-guide use. Source: (Rowe 2018)

Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions
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, 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 values their outfitter guide permittees as partners in 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 2016)
Model Overview

While entities that enter into concession agreements with protected area authorities are typically private operators, there can also be public entities, NGOs, non-profits, community associations, or combinations of any of these. Non-governmental organizations and non-profits 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 non-profit 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 ecotourism reserve 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, gave 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: https://www.africanparks.org/the-parks/akagera
Recent Awards or Accolades:
• Ruzizi Tent Lodge won TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence in 2015
• Successful lion reintroduction in 2015 covered by Rwanda TV, TIME Magazine, CNN, National Geographic, Yahoo, and Discovery News.
• African Parks earned the Special Award for Endangered Species Conservation in 2017 for their work reintroducing rhinos to Akagera.
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 Wide Fund for Nature (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, Akagera’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 km² national park to resettle refugees, reducing the park to its current 1,122 km² area. While the land allocation eased natural resource pressures, it did not solve human-wildlife conflict or poaching in the park. By the early 2000s, 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. In an attempt to attract greater foreign investment and tourism, in 2009, the Rwandan government established the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). In 2010, the RDB consolidated previously distinct environment, tourism, and infrastructure development agencies into one single agency with objectives to coordinate, spur, and promote economic development.

The RDB soon after formed a partnership with the non-profit, 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 Parks 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.
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 $15.6 million in support of various African Parks projects, including Akagera. Meanwhile, the Walton Family Foundation contributed $15 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 at an all-time low.

To help tourism to Akagera reach scale, African Parks also constructed two award-winning lodges, the Ruzizi Tent Lodge and Kamenge Bush Camp. Ruzizi Tent 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 designed to leave no impacts on the ecosystem. Kamenge is a seasonal camp, set up for 3 months at a time with no permanent construction materials. The camp is composed of 12 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-suite luxury lodge camp overlooking Lake Rwanyakazinga (African Parks 2018). Wilderness Safaris operates high-end lodging in seven African countries, the proposed Akagera 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 55% 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 break even 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 for Akagera purposes have markedly improved since the public-private partnership
• RDB support throughout the entire concession process – from RDB’s “one-stop-shop” that streamlines 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 giraffe, 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 allocation of farmland to the genocide refugees in 1997, there is always potential for human-wildlife pressure on its western border.

Lessons Learned

• Tourism development takes time. While African Parks could quickly establish financial backing, it took considerably longer to increase 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 future projects.
• Rwandan 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: http://uakarilodge.com.br

Recent Awards and Accolades:
- Lonely Planet Top 10 Best Places in the Amazon
- National Geographic 2012 Best Hotels in South America
-贵州省 2015 Sustainability Award
- World Responsible Tourism Awards 2015 – Best for Poverty Reduction (Silver)
- Equator Prize 2017 Finalist
- World Travel and Tourism Council Tourism for Tomorrow Awards – 2018 Community Award Finalist

Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions
The Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve (MISR) is a protected area in Brazil's Amazon region. It was formed in 1999, the largest protected forest area in the world (the Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve was formed). In 1996, 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 while leading the social development and management of the Mamirauá Reserve.

Overview

The Uakari Floating Lodge is located inside Brazil’s largest protected forested area, the Mamirauá Reserve. The Reserve is a state conservation area, made up of water channels, lakes and a seasonally forested forest. The lodge is on 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 of 20 guests. The lodge has a centric floating area with a small dock, kitchen, restaurant and bar, radicals and lizards. Activities are led by biologists in tandem with local guides from the communities. Available activities include sunsets 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 sea 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 Marcos Ayres, a PhD student studying the uakari monkey. This was first explored in 1983 by Marcio Ayres, the region's distinct drought and flooding, resulting difficulties with fishing and agriculture in the unseasonable zone 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 area. 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 (MIS, 2001; Tourism planning for the Reserve continued and in the year 2002, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) gave a grant to the Institute to construct the lodge.

Current Management and Approach

Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions

There are currently 60 people working at the lodge, 55% of which live in the ten surrounding communities. The lodge team works in rotation system for positions including management, local guides, maids, cooks, assistants and porters. Each person works approximately 10-15 days per month and returns back home. The objective of the rotational system is not to make 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 both 400 community members with each $1 generated by the lodge translating into a salary and products sold to the local communities, the facilities of Uakari Lodge’s 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 each $1 generated by the lodge, supporting the livelihoods of some 400 community members. As the community organization becomes increasingly efficient through training, full control and management of the lodge is 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 fees of Uakari Lodge’s operation are remarkably sustainable. Energy comes from the sun, rain is collected and kept, and waste is transferred directly to the organization, a process which aims to be completed by 2022.

In 2003, the Mamirauá Institute Consulted with various communities and began a study to determine how much of an economic impact tourism could have on the area. Tourism was found to be a critical source for the region’s distinct drought and flood season and resulting difficulties with fishing and agriculture in the unseasonable zone during certain times of the year. Approximately two years after the lodge opened, the Mamirauá Institute and the communities in the region consulted with various communities and formed a new category of protected area: 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 (MIS, 2001; Tourism planning for the Reserve continued and in the year 2002, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) gave a grant to the Institute to construct the lodge. The lodge received 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 both 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 ongoing 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 and 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 livelihood. In other instances, traditional communities are removed from their lands with little consultation. Irrespective, 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.

Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions
Case Study 3.1: MOUNTAIN SHEPHERDS INITIATIVE

Overview
Upon visiting the wild and pristine Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, sustainable and culturally-appropriate tourism made sense for the local communities and the homestay run by the Mountain Shepherds Initiative (MSI or the “Initiative”) in the villages of Lata and Tolma in the Dhauli Ganga (Niti Valley) in Garhwal. The company itself, while also working as cooks, housekeepers, nature guides, and mountaineering support tourism in the Himalayas including search and rescue techniques, nature guides, yoga and cooking.

The Initiative also manages two lodges built by the Nanda 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 treks and skiing in India. The Initiative also manages two lodges built by the Nanda 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

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 Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, sustainable and culturally-appropriate tourism made sense for the local communities and the homestay run by the Mountain Shepherds Initiative (MSI or the “Initiative”) in the villages of Lata and Tolma in the Dhauli Ganga (Niti Valley) in Garhwal. The company itself, while also working as cooks, housekeepers, nature guides, and mountaineering support tourism in the Himalayas including search and rescue techniques, nature guides, yoga and cooking.

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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.shepherdslodge.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 homestays in and around the region linked to MSI’s treks and tours products to provide visitors with a complete multi-day itinerary and package.

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 ways 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)
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 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 in the Nepal Himalayas drawing approximately 60% of the country’s total trekkers (NTNC 2018). Here.

The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) was the largest undertaking of the National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), an independent non-profit organization established by legislative law of Nepal in 1982. NTNC’s mission is to conserve natural 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 along with 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 1996 to pilot this concept in one village (Ghandruk). Through this pilot, which happened to be on the way to Annapurna Base Camp—the NTNC realized that traditional communities could manage their own wildlife, holy pilgrimage sites and stunning scenery 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 750 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 divided 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 reserves 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 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.

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)

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 knowledge 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 1990s, the Namibian government recognized the need to create conservancies—areas with defined borders and management structures—to address wildlife conflict. 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 then, NACSO has played a key role in the development of Namibia’s CBNRM program, which today has expanded to include a growing suite of critical conservation, social development, tourism investment, and economic diversification functions.

The conservancy system has evolved so well that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) is now managing two million hectares and 400,000 people. The conservancy system is being expanded to cover all of Namibia. The system has grown from one conservancy in 1996 to over 1,200 conservancies today. The conservancy system has worked so well that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism is now managing two million hectares and 400,000 people. The conservancy system is being expanded to cover all of Namibia. The system has grown from one conservancy in 1996 to over 1,200 conservancies today.

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A combination of strong management 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.

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A combination of strong management 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 20 years. Up until 2014, when the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) project concluded, NACSO members funded much of their activities through large-scale external donor financing, with $1.5 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, most of these sources of large-scale donor funding were no longer available and were required 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$ 6.9 billion (approximately US $680 million) in cash annually (Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations 2016).

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Case Study 4.1: GROOTBERG LODGE

Overview

In the early 1990s, 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

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region came upon the formation of the conservancy, which was initiated by the Grootberg Farmers’ Association (GFA) and a farming group established in 1990. GFA made the first request to the Government of Namibia to form a conservancy within the country. Many of the community members elected to the first conservancy management committee (including a Chairperson, Vice Chair and Secretary) were from the local community, various initiatives have also been implemented to help community members better understand their environment and wildlife in order to maintain harmony between the people and the wilderness. Currently 54 people are employed by the lodge and the community. The reform in conservation efforts has contributed to the long-term sustainability of the area, its wildlife and its natural beauty.

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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, raffles and giveaways relied on a small trophy-hunting quota for its main income. Mixing hunting with visitors (such as photography enthusiasts) was an initial challenge as tourism to the region became more popular. In today’s world, 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 Toit 2018)
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: https://www.expertafrica.com/namibia/damaraland/huab-under-canvas/in-detail

Case Study 4.2: HUAB UNDER CANVAS

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.

HUB 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 genuine interaction 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 HUB 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
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2016, pioneering both community development and conservation, Ultimate Safaris entered into a nearly 10-year conservation 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 a fee for Rhino trekking and bed nights. To ensure fair terms for the community, 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 Safaris’s belief is that the investment into their camps should be moderate from both a financial and environmental perspective, ensuring their camps should be designed to be as environmentally conscious and energy efficient as possible, including the use of waterless flush toilets and bucket showers, but the essence of the experience. They have also invested in the supply of open vehicle safaris to make the most of the wildlife. In addition to the black rhino, the area is home to Hartmann’s mountain zebra, oryx, rooibok, sable, kudu, klipspringer, elephant, spotted and brown hyena, jackal, leopard, cape fox and African wild cat, and their presence in this area has already seen a change in the frequency of wildlife sightings. Four full-time employees from the local community went off to stay with conservancies on the conservancy and they feel the immediate benefits to the enterprise, the average individual on the ground does not necessarily see the benefits from the business directly.

Key Success Factors

• Creating a model that required a low capital investment and building a philosophy that luxury experiences do not need to cost a lot. This innovation and exclusivity policy helps 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 safety points are an important draw for visitors. It is very easy that someone can have a place all to themselves and have this experience for considerably 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 13 years in Namibia and has the ability to move the market. They were able to sell the camp before it was even built and there continues to be high demand for the experience.

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ENABLING CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO BENEFIT COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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 conservation 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. The 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 unpolluted 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 Park is well preserved.

Protection and conservation are the main mandates of many agencies, with little to no prioritization given to tourism. 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 mission of National Trust for Nature Conservation, an emphasis on the latter, and using tourism as a tool to enhance the livelihoods of local communities; the mission of 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.

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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 Federal Land Policy and Management Act 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.

- Stimulation Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions

- ENABLING CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO BENEFIT COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT
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, visitor needs to feel as though they are in a welcoming destination. This can be achieved through the development of basic park infrastructure including roads, trails and amenities for visitors 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 6: Market Demand

Demand for tourist activities related to protected areas has increased over recent years. Tourists 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 formal and informal 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, pretzels such as gas and freon, 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 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. There 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).

Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions
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 team 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, mining, clinics, schools, etc.) with the intended tourism operation or, conversely, may create new opportunities.

STEP 7: Identity 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 use-abuse, or existing land-use rights).

Stimulating Sustainable Development through Tourism Concessions
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 (bidding) 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 Process:** 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 in 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 an 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 clearly state 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 serve 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 list of issues that the committee should decide and operate.

The committee provides a forum and opportunity to:

- Develop rules and regulations related to tourism operations within the area.
- Discuss any new tourism development opportunities within the community;
- Better understand the issues affecting all parties;
- Provide regular feedback and exchange information that may be helpful to employees from the community;
- Provide regular feedback regarding the performance of the tourism operation and employees from the community;
- Discuss issues related to the agreement;
- Discuss issues 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.

The agreement and committee should also be integrated into the destination’s conservation process for future partnerships and policy making.

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 or 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. These 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 support local communities.

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07 KEY TAKEWAYS

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 providing the financial capital and 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 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.

Tourism is not an economic panacea.
• Starting a business within a protected area can bring about a dramatic mix of hope and desires between the government, protected area managers, local community and the investor. All of these expectations need to be properly managed.
• 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 ambiance, 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 work 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.
Conservation of protected areas should always be the main priority. There must be a strong link between the management of the resource and effective regulation within the protected areas and maximize benefits from them.

Tourism development happens in stages.

Tourism development is a process that requires time, investment and the thoughtful consideration of a number of elements—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 potential for sustainable economic benefits from tourism and generate a sufficient sense of ownership to tolerate wildlife and reduce resource extractive behaviors.

For the environment to truly benefit, tourism numbers may need to be limited. To manage visitation property, protected area authorities need to view and communicate as one opportunity to lessen the pressure on protected areas: A Comparitive Study of the Social Impacts of Conservation in Latin America’s Mamiraua Sustainable Development Reserve and Ria Celestun Biosphere Reserve.

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.

Strong covenants within concessions agreements can help ensure tourism operators are putting the natural environment first.

Tourism development is a process that requires time, investment and the thoughtful consideration of a number of elements—including governments, protected area authorities, communities, the private sector and NGOs.

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