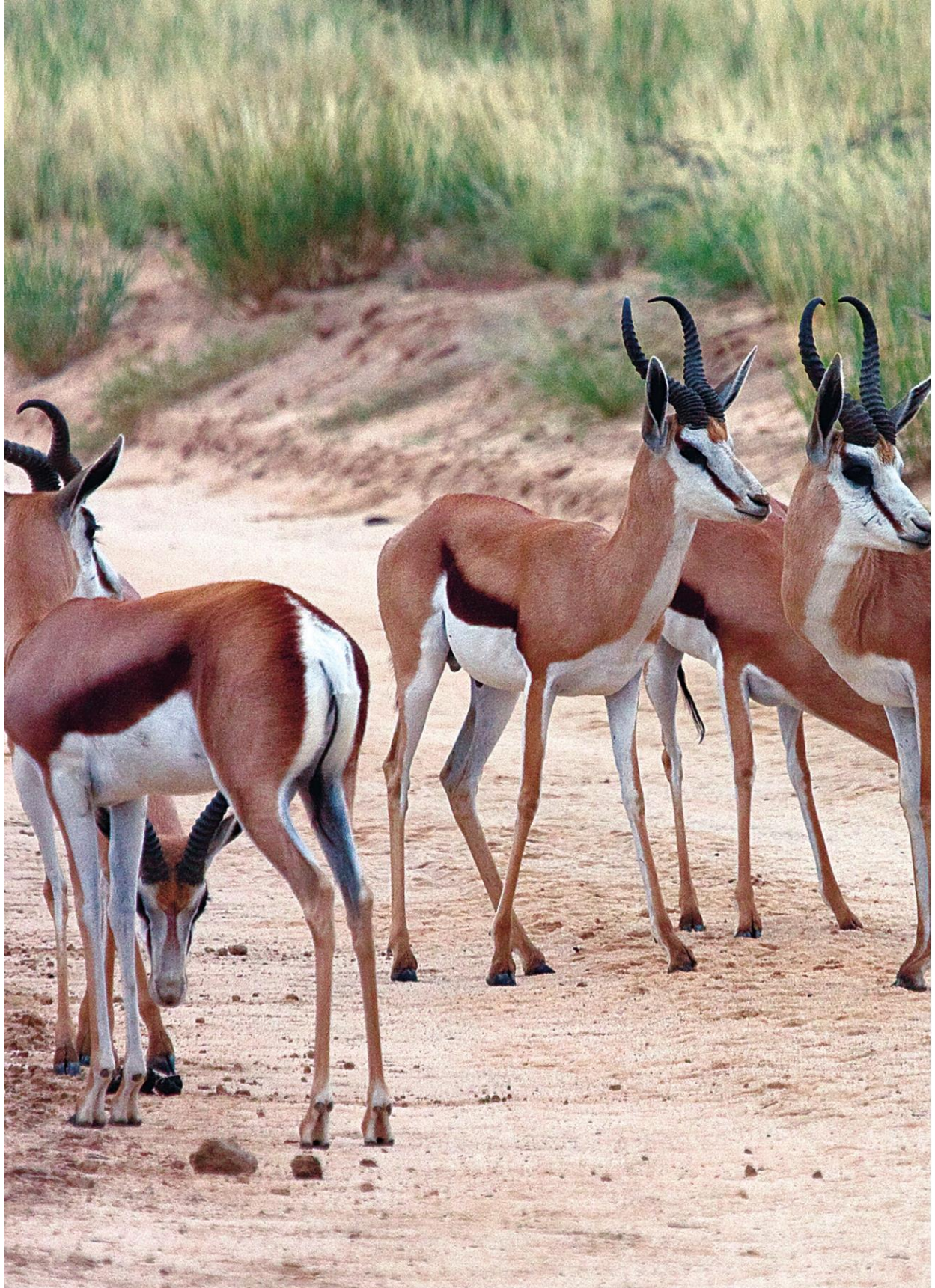




BOTSWANA
ECOTOURISM
BEST PRACTICES MANUAL

botswana
tourism



Foreword

Botswana is blessed with a wonderful and diverse environment. The protection of its precious resources requires dedication and action in many different ways, from water and energy conservation, to waste management, elimination of hazardous chemicals and providing environment for both our visitors and local people. Recognition and meaningful involvement of host communities that tourist establishments and services operate in is all part of the equation of defined working definition of ecotourism.

It is a pleasure to present to you this exclusive Botswana Ecotourism Best Practices Manual. The Botswana Tourism Organisation is a strong proponent of environmentally responsible tourism and this document represents part of our commitment to working with you on the development of facilities and services that can position Botswana as an exemplary and leading sustainable tourism destination.



I express our sincere appreciation to the Commonwealth Secretariat who provided funding for the development of this manual; Mr. Chris McHugo and Mr. James MacGregor (Discover Ltd. and Ecoplannet) the consultants who facilitated the development of the manual. The tireless commitment and high professional input from the Project Steering Committee who will be covered more under acknowledgements enhanced the project process towards production of this Ecotourism Best Practices Manual.

With technological trends forever developing it is our intention to enhance the manual as necessary in the future, you will however find it fairly comprehensive yet deliberately simple to read as it is designed to assist the tourist operator achieve tangible results in a practical, realistic manner within local conditions. The Manual also outlines the requirements of good eco-business practices; a strong business plan and marketing strategy as well as working closely with host communities to protect the environment are of an ecotourism sustainable enterprise.

As you start to implement the recommendations of the Manual you should also know that you have a commitment partner in the Botswana Tourism Organisation. Our staff has been an integral part of the preparation of this Manual and they are eager to assist you, when possible, in moving your tourism product forward as a responsible tourism operation.

Together we can assure future generations of Botswana that the remarkable natural and cultural resources on which we have built this great industry will forever be available to them and their visitors.

Best wishes for a successful ecotourism venture.

Myra T. Sekgororoane

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Myra T. Sekgororoane'.

Chief Executive Officer
Botswana Tourism Organisation





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1.0 Introduction

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual



©Yare

Fascinating wilderness worth exploring & conserving. ©Yare

The Botswana Ecotourism Best Practices Guidelines Manual was prepared in partial completion of the Botswana National Ecotourism Strategy (2002). The document was designed for and in cooperation with the Botswana Tourism Organisation (BTO) and financed by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Ecotourism is a response to the growing concern for the state of the environment and the wellbeing of the host communities within tourism areas. Through this movement, travellers seek to support environmentally responsible tourism operations and businesses.

The purpose of the manual is to identify those ecotourism guidelines or criteria that would contribute to environmentally responsible tourism operations, attract environmentally responsible clients and assist in the protection of Botswana's precious resources for future generations. In addition to this manual, a Technical Report that was used to inform the preparation of this manual is available on request from BTB.

In order to achieve the purpose outlined above, the user manual is presented in themes. Preceding these thematic areas is the introduction of ecotourism principles and concept. The themes describe, in detail, the planning, development and operational requirements of an ecotourism business.

The set of criteria and supporting guidelines associated with these thematic areas were reviewed by over hundred (100) participants who attended stakeholder consultation workshops in Gaborone, Maun and Kasane during the development of the manual.

These guidelines can be applied to any tourism operation or service including hotels, lodges and resorts, tour operation, visitor attractions and transportation services. While it is understood that ecotourism is a desirable market for Botswana, it must be appreciated that there is a much larger group of travel consumers that are inherently interested in booking with responsible tour operators and staying in a property that adheres to the highest standards of environmental protection. The Manual also recognizes both the current trend towards more sustainable

tourism operations as well as the Botswana government's interest in promoting and supporting tourism development that protects and conserves the environment; and it builds upon the Botswana National Ecotourism Strategy.

Further to the above, the layout of this manual reflects the manner it is intended to be used by tourism and ecotourism operators, tour operators, NGO's and Community Trusts. In fact it is in the best interest of all tourism operators to make an effort to implement these guidelines in order to achieve a greater level of environmental protection, social and economic development through tourism.

It is therefore hoped that the user of this manual finds the necessary information to substantially improve upon current development and operational practices and commits to support 'eco-business' facilities and services that have a smaller footprint and minimize the serious environmental challenges that face our planet.





2.0 Background

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual



Ecotourism is a concept that in its entirety put into operation one among many segments of tourism within the context of Agenda 21. Agenda 21 is a comprehensive programme of action adopted by governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Brazil in 1992. In this regard, it is appropriate to highlight that ecotourism is a sub-category of sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism endeavours to;

- Maintain and protect **essential ecological processes** and help to conserve the natural heritage and biodiversity of the site, community and region.
- **Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities**, conserve their living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance,
- Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, **providing socio-economic benefits** that are fairly distributed to **all stakeholders**, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.



Sustainable tourism model

Following on the broader concept of sustainable tourism, the term ecotourism is now used to address the socio-cultural and economical benefits derived by the local communities and environmental protection resulting from tourism activities. To this end, ecotourism is defined as *"responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people."*

The term is further defined by the IUCN - The World Conservation Union, as *"environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy, study and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations"*

For the purpose of this User Manual, ecotourism will be synonymous with the definition in the Botswana National Ecotourism Strategy where it has been described as following: "ecotourism refers to tourism to areas of natural and cultural heritage that is planned and managed with the objective of:

- Minimizing negative social, cultural and environmental impacts.
- Maximizing the involvement in, and the equitable distribution of economic benefits to, host communities.

- Maximizing revenues for re-investment in conservation.
- Educating both visitors and local people as to the importance of conserving natural and cultural resources
- Delivering a quality experience for tourists

Ecotourism also ensures that the natural and cultural heritage is enhanced, historic and archaeological resources are protected and restored, host communities are engaged and the local economy benefits directly (salaries, jobs, and training) from ecotourism revenues.

Environmentally responsible business practices are a fundamental component to the visitor experience and the ecotourism product and must reflect 'green' management procedures within the day-to-day operations.

In this regard, Botswana is well positioned to meet (and offer) both these sustainable tourism and ecotourism conditions to the environmentally responsible national and international tourist. This is borne out the fact that the country is already a popular nature based tourism destination hence it can be assumed that most clients are potentially very concerned about the quality of Botswana's environment, including the protection of biodiversity, reduction of pollution, conservation of wildlife and a decrease in green house gases.



2.1 Status of Ecotourism: the international perspective

Ecotourism and ecologically conscientious operations are no longer the penchant of niche markets as it was in the 1990's. Consequently this Ecotourism Best Practices Guidelines User Manual, or 'the Manual', has been designed to reflect the current concept of ecotourism (and sustainable tourism) with the understanding that responsible tourism facilities and services can appeal to all travelers.

There is good reason for this broader approach because, to some extent, most tourists have now become 'ecotravelers'. In a recent survey by Tourism Concern, in the UK, 96% of travelers stated they would rather stay in an environmentally responsible resort than a 5-star property.

This finding is consistent with the recent European consumer research indicating that more than half of the travellers are prepared to spend up to 10% to 15% more to stay in environmentally responsible or 'green' facility. This indicates that a large portion of the market places a high value on environmental protection and is prepared to pay a supplement.

Consequently, ecotourism operators must both demonstrate that they are protecting the environment but also offering a diverse experience that intentionally broadens their client's horizons and allows them to explore beyond what is familiar. Ecotour packages must take travellers off the conventional or mainstream circuits and encourage a genuine exchange with the natural environment, local communities and culture, and provide them with a deeper appreciation of the diversity of Botswana and its people.



Zebras at a drinking hole

2.2 Status of Ecotourism: the local perspective

Botswana is endowed with great wildlife and wilderness, scenic beauty, unique ecological, archaeological and cultural characteristics which have been the basis for tourist arrivals. The presence of these resources, the steady increase in the number of holiday arrivals and the revenue generated in the process have led to the conclusion that if these resources are obtained on a sustainable basis then the tourism industry could become an important engine of economic growth alongside other sectors.

Consequent to the realisation that government needed to proactively guide the development of the tourism sector and to ensuring that the planning, development and management of tourism in Botswana is consistent with the concept of sustainability, the tourism policy of 1990 was formulated and adopted. The aim of the policy was mainly to ensure that the net social and economic benefits derived from tourism resources were obtained on a sustainable basis.

Through the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, government administers a policy in which development within ecological sensitive areas (Protected Areas) are controlled through the carrying capacity principles. These protected areas include National Parks, Game Reserves and Forest Reserves, where resource utilization is of a non-consumptive nature. The Environmental Impact Assessment Act of 2005 also makes it a requirement that all tourism development particularly in ecological sensitive areas are subjected to environmental impact assessment and thereafter environmental management plans developed and implemented on the basis of significant impacts identified.

Following on the foregoing developments, the national ecotourism strategy was developed to create an environment in which all elements of tourism development planning and management facilitate, promote and reward adherence to the key 'principles' of ecotourism by all of those involved in the tourism industry. Now with this strategy in place and being implemented, the tourism landscape is bound to change and this could only suffice if the criteria and supporting guidelines as outlined in this manual are fully embraced and implemented by the tourism industry.



3.0 Ecotourism planning, design and development

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual

This section provides the necessary guidelines associated with the development and operations of an ecotourism business. Other considerations such as the size of facilities and required equipment are dealt with in the national grading program.

3.1 Ecotourism policy and business planning

It is unlikely that an ecotourism business will succeed without a professional and well-researched business plan. Consequently the Ecotourism Business Plan is a key component to ensure the viability of the enterprise. An ecotourism business plan is a framework and blueprint for the development, marketing and management of the operation and describes the goals, tactics, strategies and management activities to achieve success. In this regard, the operator must clearly demonstrate the financial capability of the business which may include among others the following:

- An understanding of the specialty markets attracted to ecotourism businesses and regions
- A focus on sustainable landscape planning, engineering and architecture
- A commitment to sustainable practices
- A commitment to the costs associated with the management and operations of an environmentally responsible facility.
- A knowledge of the country laws and regulations



Architectural design motif

3.2 Physical design and operation

Ecotourism facilities physical designs and operations should wholly be based on sustainability principles and an in depth understanding of the potential environmental impacts. On the basis of the above and without necessarily impacting on developer's innovativeness, consideration should be made to include the following designs;

3.2.1 Site selection and EIA - It is a statutory requirement in Botswana for tourism operations to conduct environmental impact assessment of the tourism enterprise activities and thereafter develop an environmental management plan that minimizes the identified significant impacts.

3.2.2 Architectural motif- This program should include the basic requirements of an efficient, comfortable and attractive accommodation but also reflect the vernacular and traditional architecture of the region, including shape, colour and materials.

3.2.3 Material life-cycle analysis – the design and material selection should recognize the environmental impacts of the entire life cycle of all architectural resources, from extraction, manufacturing, procurement and eventually the return to nature

3.2.4 Development footprint – consideration should be given to the appropriate scale of development including mass, proportion, layout and composition

3.2.5 Building materials- the sourcing of building materials should be on the basis of sustainability and appropriateness. When possible they should be local and reflect the construction approach in the region.



4.0 Sustainable practices

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual

This section deals with environmental management plan with respect to ecotourism enterprises. This is of paramount importance given that environmental aspects of these facilities could negatively impact on the receiving environments if not managed properly. In this context, sustainable practices mean greening the ecotourism enterprise. These practices are therefore designed to protect the environment, save money, earn eco-travellers confidence, comply with and exceed standards, honour employees, boost efficiency and productivity and create market opportunities. The ecotourism developer should develop dedicated programs in an effort to achieve sustainability which may among others address the following thematic areas:

4.1 Water conservation

Water use and/or wastage in tourism establishments will be normally for personal use by guests and facility requirements such as housekeeping, laundry, cooking, swimming pools, and grounds maintenance. These departments and/or areas of operations will therefore account for the total water requirements and will also be indicative of the amount of waste water likely to be generated by a facility. Having all these water requirements in mind, the operator should always remember that water is a scarce resource hence continuous effort to devise means of water saving should be of paramount importance. In this regard, the operator should among others develop



Taps should be fitted with flow restrictors to minimise water wastage. © Gettyimages

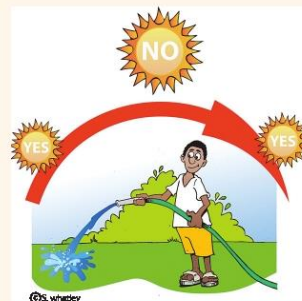
water conservation strategy for the establishment which may include but not limited to;

- Developing water use profile and forecast
- Identifying consumption levels by department
- Installing flow restrictors throughout the facility
- Monitoring the quality of potable water
- Preparing weekly recordings of total water consumption
- Implementing rainwater capture techniques
- Leak avoidance
- Developing water usage reduction targets
- Regular monitoring of meters and sub-meters,

4.2 Waste water management

Wastewater generated by tourism facilities is mainly domestic sewage from bathing and toilet flushing but it should also be noted that where facilities such as laundry and dry-cleaning, housekeeping, maintenance, and kitchen departments are well established significant waste water could be realised. Wastewater if not properly handled and disposed of with due care may become a source of both pollution and contamination hence the operators should a dedicated program with respect to the management of wastewater. In all these cases, the quality of the resultant wastewater depends on the type of cleaning agents, disinfectants, and linen washing agents used and the oils and grease release from the kitchens. Some of these cleaning agents are known to release excessive phosphates leading to possible eutrophication of natural waterways. Consequently the choice of a treatment facility will be determined by the complexity of the quality of the resultant wastewater. Further more the use of the resultant treated wastewater will be influenced by the effluent final quality. Nevertheless, the operator should develop a wastewater reuse and

recycling plan to reduce dependency on potable water.



Watering of grounds and gardens should be done either in the morning or late in the afternoon when the rate of evapotranspiration is minimal



Runoff from dirty areas such as washing bay could lead to pooling and pollution of both the soils and waterways



Washing bays bunded and fitted with oil separators could reduce pollution of both soils and waterways resulting from vehicle washing activities
© IAG New Zealand



4.4 Air quality

Air pollution is increasingly becoming a problem resulting in both health and ecosystem problems. While it is appreciated that from hitherto air quality could be impacted upon by natural phenomena such as volcanoes, manmade air pollution sources have over the years become significant in pollution problems in particularly mobile sources such as vehicles and stationary sources such as power stations. In addition to these sources, problems of indoor pollution cannot be overemphasised given numerous products used indoors which emit air pollutants. The quest of achieve responsible tourism should therefore include the ecotourism operator preparing air quality management plan for the facility. The plan should include but not limited to:

- Minimal use and eventual elimination of all volatile organic compounds (VOC's); e.g. furniture, adhesives, solvents, glues, etc.
- Timely servicing vehicles and point source facilities
- Institute dust arrest techniques
- Use natural ventilation techniques
- Use non ozone depleting substances
- Institute measures to reduce the production of green house gases

4.5 Noise management

Noise pollution can be annoying and disturbing and efforts should be made to engage in activities that reduces noise generation. It is also generally accepted that tranquility should be assured in ecotourism and/or tourism enterprises hence management should invariably ensure that noise pollution sources are controlled at all time. Noise management plan should invariably involve planning, abatement, control and partnership. In this regard, an ecotourism operator should prepare noise management



A room maximising both natural lighting and ventilation can reduce dependency on air-conditioning and artificial lighting for comfort.

plan for the facility given that ecotourism activities can sometimes generate noise that needs to be managed. The plan should include but not to limited;

- Noise abatement measures employed should achieve a maximum increase in background levels of 3 dB (A).
- Noisy construction activities should be prohibited between 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- Noisy construction activities during day time if unavoidable should be done behind sound barriers, such as sound walls, the use of temporary sound barrier curtains.
- Certified operating noise emission equipment should be encouraged.
- Construction contractors consider employing noise consultants.
- Safaris and wildlife watching activities should minimize noise generation.

- Equipment maintenance plan be developed
- Incorporate acoustic designs in building construction



A generator acoustically designed to reduce noise levels in a self generated electrical power establishment.



4.0 Sustainable practices (Continued)

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual

4.2 Solid Waste Management

Botswana like any developing country has over the years witnessed an increase in waste generation (both in terms of composition, nature and volume) mainly due to development and changing consumption patterns. Coinciding with this phenomenal, are problems of safe handling, storage and disposal of such waste and diminishing land resource for disposal. Owing to these problems, waste minimisation which generally refers to the use of procedures and/or processes which reduce, as much as possible, the amount of waste generated, or the amount which requires subsequent treatment, storage and disposal has now taken a centre-stage for effective waste management.

This is an important aspect of a true ecotourism product hence an ecotourism operator should prepare a waste minimisation plan for the facility that endeavours to take into consideration waste hierarchy. The plan should address among others the following issues;

- Establish reduced packaging measures such as bulk buying
- Monitor the type and level of waste to identify opportunities for reduction
- Install refillable amenity dispensers
- Compost kitchen waste and landscape vegetation



Solid waste separation at source can reduce waste by volume and promote reuse and recycling.

- Establish a reuse and recycling program
- Use only refillable/recyclable containers
- Purchase durable and repairable goods
- Inform guests of recycling and/or reduce program
- Train staff to recycle and reuse products and materials
- Eliminate the use of disposable items (napkins, cutlery, crockery, etc.)

4.3 Energy conservation

Botswana depends heavily on non renewable resources for energy and the demand for energy by all sectors (tourism inclusive) is on the increase. The country also continues to import energy to meet its demand. In the context of tourism enterprises far off the national grid, stand alone diesel generators are used to generate energy to meet the demand of these facilities. Botswana is a signatory to Kyoto Protocol and reducing demand on energy generated from non renewable sources (particularly of carbon origin i.e. burning natural gas, coal and oil) which contribute to the production of green house gases will go along in addressing Kyoto Protocol objectives. In view of the foregoing, ecotourism operators should accept that the industry can play a meaningful role by reducing energy demand by adopting sustainable practices that are energy efficient. An ecotourism operator therefore should prepare an energy conservation plan for the facility. The plan should include but not limited to;

- Preparation of an energy conservation measures and monitoring plan
- Use or installation of solar panels and photovoltaic's
- Use of thermal hot water heaters
- Installation of CFL's (Compact florescent lights) throughout
- Consideration of wind turbine/hybrid power source
- Install low energy consumption appliance

- Use low energy consumption fixtures and occupancy sensors
- Use solar energy for drying in the laundry department
- Install sub-metering by department
- Insulate all hot water pipes
- Conduct regular preventative maintenance programs
- Establish a visitor energy use awareness program



The use of compact florescent lights can effectively reduce energy consumption. © Gettyimages



The use of alternative energy sources such as solar energy can reduce dependency on non-renewable energy sources. © Gettyimages



4.6 Hazardous materials

This refers to a substance or combination which because of its quantity, concentration, physical or chemical characteristics may cause or significantly pose a substantial hazard to human health or the environment when improperly packaged, stored, transported or otherwise managed. Tourism facilities are invariably handling and eventually dispose of hazardous materials in their daily operations. While it should be appreciated that these facilities may handle such materials in small quantities, in view of the foregoing definition, it follows immediately that efforts should be made to ensure that proper handling and disposal of the same is done. The hospitality industry through activities such as laundry and housekeeping may use a variety of hazardous materials such as cleaning solvents and pesticides. Owing to this, ecotourism facilities may have to develop hazardous material handling protocols which may include but not limited to;

- Establish a hazardous material handling program
- Provide a register of all hazardous wastes
- Replace all hazardous substances with non hazardous alternatives
- Use of only biodegradable pesticides, herbicides and fungicides
- Use of dedicated areas for storage of hazardous materials
- Developing spill response plan



Soil soaked with petroleum product at a non-bunded onsite fuel storing facility



Bunded onsite fuel storage facility can reduce potential pollution and/or contamination of both soils and waterways



5.0 Conservation and awareness

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual

This section addresses education and awareness as it relates to both the operator and tourists. This is premised on the fact that learning is a life long process hence ecotourism enterprises should endeavour to offer diverse experience that intentionally broadens tourists horizons.

5.1 Contribution to conservation

Ecotourism operators should demonstrate that they contribute to conservation of select areas and projects that may include;

- Identifying conservation needs of the area and initiating conservation projects
- Participating in anti-poaching efforts
- Promoting the preservation of rare or threatened species
- Promoting and preserving significant cultural or heritage identity of the area.

5.2 Visitor experience, Impact and interpretation

Ecotourism facilities shall provide interpretation and/or education opportunities for visitors to learn more about the natural and cultural heritage of area. In this regard there should be an interpretation plan that addresses the following areas;

- Promotion of educational and/or conservation ideals and objectives
- Identifying target audience and preparing relevant interpretation themes, and messages and programs (including educational materials)
- Ensure that all guides are adequately informed to deliver a stimulating and informative program



Tourist guided in a canoe constitute one among activities for experience. © Illustrative options

- Preparation of interpretive methods suited to a range of visitor needs
- Preparation of interpretive content including the conservation significance of the area, minimal impact methods and appropriate behaviour in culturally sensitive regions/sites
- Preparation of a reference list and summary of available interpretive resources and materials, including published local-heritage materials, and published peer reviewed interpretive and educational resources, that are relevant to the site and audience;
- Implement low impact marketing mechanism (all promotional materials on recycled paper; use of e-marketing techniques)
- Undertake on-going green market research tourism trade shows
- Undertake regular guest survey



A habitat home to plants and animals, some with high conservation value

5.3 Responsible marketing

Ecotourism marketing materials shall provide accurate, honest and contemporary information and undertake the following:

- Target environmentally responsible markets



6.0 Participation and partnerships

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual



Tourist enjoying ambience that blends well with the surroundings. Operators should always be mindful of visual impacts of their activities. © Gettyimages

6.1 Local stakeholder involvement and benefits

Ecotourism has come about the fact that some tourism destinations were increasingly becoming notorious of ill-treating host communities hence a true ecotourism destination should without doubt distinguish itself from such notion. In this regard, the ecotourism product shall have an approach that includes the following measures;

- Community relations plan
- Stakeholder contact and awareness of any ecotourism project
- Local ownership, equity participation or co-management
- Purchase agreements with local producers and suppliers
- Contribution of specialist staff for community empowerment
- Appoint a community liaison officer

6.2 Culture and heritage

Ecotourism provides an opportunity to support the sustainable use of both culture

and heritage sites. Revenues generated from heritage sites can be used for site conservation and maintenance. Cultural values and pride in host communities can also be enhanced. The ecotourism operator therefore should endeavour to appreciate, preserve and interpret the cultural and heritage identity of the host community. Where possible such identity should be turned into business opportunities for the host community.

6.3 Visitor Code of Conduct

Ecotourism operators should endeavor to develop a Code of Conduct that address the following;

- Ensure that the tourist activity protects and supports conservation
- Expenditures are used to support conservation measures and projects
- Support the preservation of local resources
- Maintain resource protection by donating money, doing volunteer work, educating others
- Visit local parks and nature reserves.
- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Minimize consumption, waste and pollution
- Choose biodegradable or recyclable products with minimal packaging
- Limit energy consumption
- Respect local tribes and cultures
- Learn about the culture and customs of the area
- Respect the rights of the communities
- Respect historic and scientific sites
- Ensure communities benefit from ecotourism businesses
- Buy local, and choose tour companies, excursions, and suppliers that are locally-owned and that employ local people
- Buy locally-made products and handicrafts
- Choose tours with trained, responsible and professional staff



Locally made handicrafts broadening tourism products. © Illustrative options



7.0 Monitoring and evaluation

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual



Habitat providing genetic diversity

Ecotourism operators need tools to measure the results of the implementation of these guidelines. They include;

- Water conservation audit
- Energy management audit
- Employee awareness and understanding audit
- Visitor satisfaction and awareness audit
- Emergency response plan

The audits should also include a plan of action with set targets and dates

8.0 Conclusion

It is without doubt that Botswana is endowed with great wildlife and wilderness, scenic beauty, unique ecological, archaeological and

cultural characteristics which have been the basis for tourist arrivals. Sustainable utilisation of these resources is therefore not an option but a matter of priority given human pressure exerted on these resources as a result of competing values. Consequently, Botswana tourism operators must demonstrate their commitment to the conservation these resources hence this initiative.

Botswana ecotourism best practice manual was prepared through the engagement of industry stakeholders. The high turnout and participation at these meetings gave an indication that the industry needed guidance to achieve the much needed responsible tourism status. This apparently is borne out of the fact that trends across the world have shown that operators that have attained

this status not only realise savings in their operations but also increase in returns as a result of growth in confidence by traveller.

This Manual therefore has been designed to assist Botswana tourism business to achieve this higher level of environmental stewardship which is consistent with the ideals of the National Ecotourism Strategy. Consequently, all tour operations should make an effort to respond to the growing travel consumer demand for product that meets their environmental expectation.



9.0 Code of Conduct for Botswana Ecotourism Operators

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual

Ecotourism operators shall develop or where possible, adopt a code of conduct to guide their operations and the following thematic areas should be integral part of the code of conduct envisaged

Water Conservation

- Conserve water through the uses of flow restrictors, low-flush toilets and efficient kitchen equipment
- Recycle water through drip irrigation
- Monitor and continually lower consumption

Energy

- Use alternative energy sources (sun and wind)
- Use only energy efficient (Energy Star rated) appliances
- Minimize the use of fuel burning equipment (vehicles, generators, etc.)

Biodiversity

- Conduct conservation programs and support local conservation projects
- Protect and enhance existing ecosystems and species
- Never intentionally disturb or encourage the disturbance of wildlife or wildlife habitats.
- Ensure vehicles and hikers always stay within a confined trail, road corridor
- Avoid animal feeding

Manage waste and recycle

- Reduce packaging and buy in bulk
- Eliminate all hazardous chemicals
- Compost all biodegradable materials including kitchen waste
- Separate and Recycle: paper, metal, glass
- Ensure that non recyclable and biodegradable materials are sent to an organized dump site

Distribute Economic Benefits of Tourism to the Community

- More than 60% of the employees come from the local community and region
- Local businesses are used when possible to purchase supplies and services
- Provide financial and in-kind support for local community events and activities

Marketing and Promotions

- Practice 'Truth in Advertising'
- Print all materials on recycled paper using non toxic ink

- Offer a carbon-offset program to our guests
- Maximize the use of electronic marketing technologies

Offer a complete ecotourism experience

- Design and deliver quality environmental education programs, including visits to local communities, nature reserves and special features of the region
- Provide pre-trip information and adequate education materials for the guests

Employ only Trained Guides and Qualified Staff

- Provide on-going training programs for all staff
- Ensure guides are adequately trained to provide a quality ecotourism experience
- Ensure guides appreciate and understand local culture

Respect Local and Traditional Cultures

- Cooperate with local Botswana cultural groups and respect their privacy
- Provide opportunities for the production and sale of local art and handcraft
- Hire local entertainers and storytellers
- Introduce guests to the traditions and cultural heritage of the region through planned encounters with locals

Develop Partnerships and Distribute the Code of Conduct

- Establish strategic alliances with other tourism business that share a similar environmental ethic and standard
- Promote green business practices to other companies in the community and region
- Be aware of current of environmental issues, particularly within the local area.
- Inform others of our eco-friendly activities with an annual electronic newsletter and encourage partners to adopt similar initiatives

Respect Standards and Guidelines

- Comply with all Botswana Tourism Board Organisations Standards
- Adhere to the rules regulations of all reserves and protected areas.
- Implement the Ecotourism Best Practices Guidelines



10.0 Glossary of terms

Botswana Eco-tourism Best Practice Manual

Some of the terms used in this manual

Best Practice: An indicator that demonstrates the ecotourism operation is achieving exemplary performance...

Code of Conduct: Recommended practices based on a system of self-regulation, intended to affect environmentally and/or socio-culturally sustainable behaviour and outcomes within the targeted group.

Community: People living in one place, district or country, considered as a whole.

Conservation: The protection and maintenance of nature while allowing for its ecologically sustainable use.

Cultural tourism: Travel for the purpose of learning about cultures or aspects of cultures.

Ecosystem: A dynamic complex of plant, animal, fungal and microorganism communities, and the associated non-living environment interacting as an ecological unit.

Ecotourism: Ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that foster environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.

Ecotourism operation: Sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.

Environmental Aspect: A feature of the company's products or services that could have a significant impact on the natural environment

Environmental impact: Any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organization's operations

Interpretation: Revealing the significance and meanings of natural and associated cultural phenomena to visitors, usually with the intent of providing a satisfying learning experience and encouraging more sustainable behaviour.

Monitoring: Ongoing review, evaluation and assessment to detect changes in the condition of the natural or cultural integrity of a place, with reference to a baseline condition.

Renewable resources: Resources that are practically inexhaustible.

Sustainable Tourism: Using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological development processes, on which life depends, are maintained and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be sustained.



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Notes

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