BOTSWANA ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

Presentation by: Botswana Tourism Organisation

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Content

- Background – Tourism Development and Sustainability in Botswana
- Legislation & Strategies relating to Sustainable Tourism in Botswana
- Implementation of the National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) of 2000
- Development of Ecotourism Standards – Collaboration & process
- Eco-certification Levels & Ecotourism Standards
- Facilities Eco-certified in Botswana
- Global Awards & Participation
- Challenges & Successes
Prior to 1990s tourism development was under the control of private sector with little interventions from the government.

Government was preoccupied with more pressing developmental priorities such as infrastructure, education and health.

The explosive growth of the industry in 1980s led to the proliferation of camps/lodges in the primary tourism area (the Okavango Delta). There were then about 60 facilities, now there are 130 facilities.

A host of problems gradually came to the fore: serious land use conflict, over-use of some tourism areas, unsustainable tourism development etc.

Intervention by Government to regulate the country’s main tourism assets.
General Tourism Planning Approach in Botswana

• **Sustainable Planning Approach** vs Boosterism (tourism inherently good, exploitation of cultural and natural resources); Economic (tourism equal to other industries, create employment, earn foreign revenue); Community (need for local control, community development).

> Integration of economic, environmental and socio-cultural values

➢ Protection of human heritage and biodiversity

➢ Tourism planning integrated with other planning processes
LEGISLATION AND STRATEGIES DIRECTLY RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

• **Tourism Policy, 1990** – The Policy recognises the country’s tourism resources such as the scenic beauty, wildlife and unique ecological, geological and cultural characteristics. The main objective is to ensure that tourism activities are carried out on an ecologically sustainable basis: i.e. utilising the natural resources on a “yield” basis, but also strictly observing the rules for environmental protection and conservation.

• **Tourism Master Plan, 2000** – outlines four main guidelines to drive tourism development in Botswana (product diversification, community empowerment, PPP and the protection and conservation of Botswana’s natural environment).
LEGISLATION AND STRATEGIES DIRECTLY RELATING TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT cont--

- **Ecological/Economic Sustainability** - tourism has a tendency to destroy or at least endanger its own assets, the protection and conservation of its natural environment is imperative.

- **National Ecotourism Strategy, 2002** - A key recommendation of the National Ecotourism Strategy was to establish and maintain Botswana as a genuine and successful ecotourism destination.
Implementation of the National Ecotourism Strategy

- BTO has already made a serious commitment:


- Purpose of the manual is to provide ecotourism guidelines/criteria that would contribute to environmentally responsible tourism operations;

- Assist in the protection of Botswana precious resources and;

- To attract environmentally responsible clients/tourists

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3. **Ecotourism Feasibility Analysis**

**Main objective:**
- to determine in consultations with relevant stakeholders the potential for introducing and implementing a successful eco-certification system in Botswana.

**Main recommendation:**
- Botswana to develop its own program rather than importing an international model.
- Botswana eco-certification program to be managed by Eco-certification Council (international practice, successful programs are industry driven, independent from government)

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4. **Development of Ecotourism Standards**

[Images and logos related to tourism and eco-certification]
Definition - Ecotourism

Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people.’ (NES 2002 and The International Ecotourism Society).

Botswana ecotourism refers to:

• The country’s cultural as well as natural heritage.
• Active involvement of host communities in all aspects of the industry’s management and development (as opposed to mere participation).

Goal: 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.

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Benefits of introducing an Ecotourism Standards/Program

Environmental Benefits
- Certification of ecotourism products protect both the environment and the socio-economic structure of communities associated with certified businesses.
- Water conservation, recycling and reduction in waste can have a direct positive impact on the protection and conservation of resources.

Community Benefits
- Increased respect for local culture
- Contribute to community projects strengthening the sense of ownership

Industry Benefits
- Reduces operating costs in the area of energy, waste management and water reduction.
- Marketing advantage (provide additional marketing lift from the use of the logo).
Development of Ecotourism Standards – Guiding principles


◆ Minimising negative social, cultural and environmental impacts.
◆ Maximising the involvement in, and the equitable distribution of economic benefits to host communities.
◆ Maximising 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.

(Further Integration with internationally recognized schemes e.g. Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria, the principles of sustainable development (Earth Summit), the Mahonk Agreement, Agenda 21).
Development of the Ecotourism Standard Processes

- Engagement of a consultancy company (by BTO and UB/BIOKANGO).
- Project Steering Committee (to guide the process approval of standards and related documentation e.g. logo)
  - Industry associations – HATAB and BOGA
  - Tourism Training institutions
  - NGOs, parastatal and government departments
- A series of industry and other relevant stakeholders workshops conducted. Unanimous agreement and interest by tourism suppliers on the criteria and standards presented.
- Piloting of Standards (12 facilities volunteered – guesthouses, hotels and lodges)
Mutual Interest by BIOKAVANGO

Goal; to ensure sustained natural integrity and ecological services of the Okavango Delta
Tourism

Improved liquid waste polishing systems

Eco-certification Programme

Reinvestment in Conservation of the Delta

Joint Management Systems Developed

GREEN PRODUCTS FOR A CLEANER FUTURE

TOURISM FOR TOMORROW
Awards 2010 WINNER

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Collaboration of BTO and BIOKAVANGO

Interest by Biokavango Project in a cooperative agreement with BTO

• Biodiversity issues within the Okavango Delta
• Desirous to develop ecotourism standards
• Avoidance of duplication of effort and resources
• Elected to collaborate with BTO and pool together resources
Eco-Certification Levels

- **Level 1 referred to as (Green)** - This is the basic entry level and reflects all of the mandatory criteria that are necessary for all facilities to be considered for certification. The standards for this level deal primarily with the environmental management systems of the facility.

- **Second level referred to as (Green +)** - This level provides higher standard for those who have achieved the first level.

- **The third level referred to as (Ecotourism)** defines those facilities that have met all the principles of ecotourism. The level reflects the facilities’ commitment and involvement of communities including cultural resources enhancement and socio-economic responsibilities, nature conservation, environmental management and interpretation of the surrounding.
Preconditions for Ecotourism (Level 3)

- **Location:** Only those accommodation facilities with direct access to a natural environment will be accepted as an ecotourism facility.

- **Eco-tours:** A facility must also make significant attempts to help interpret the surrounding environment for its guests. This should be done through eco-tours into the surrounding environment.

- **Green benchmarks:** A facility must have attained the proposed benchmarks for all green facilities and the additional compulsory ecotourism criteria.

Not all tourism facilities in Botswana will be able to meet these pre-conditions and criteria, and therefore would not be recognised for their rigorous environmental policies without a multiple tier system.
Eco-Certification Logo

- Reflects the three tiered approach

- Linked to:
  - sustainable use of the palm fronds which are used to weave the basket.
  - Basket – iconic, home made, community empowerment and upliftment, gift, container and one of true and authentic products of Botswana
  - Importance to community based tourism
THE 7 PRINCIPLES OF ECO-CERTIFICATION

• **Principle 1**: Operate a Sustainable Management Policy
• **Principle 2**: Green and responsible Marketing
• **Principle 3**: Minimize negative impact on environment produced by operations
• **Principle 4**: Visitor experience, impact and interpretation
• **Principle 5**: Maximise local (District community benefits)
• **Principle 6**: Contribution to conservation
• **Principle 7**: Tour execution

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PRINCIPLE 1:
Operate an effective and Sustainable Management Policy

- **Legal Compliance**: company declare compliance with environmental laws and regulations of Botswana
- **Environmental Management Plan**
  - Energy Conservation Plan
  - Water Conservation Plan
  - Waste Management Plan
  - Operational Action Plan for all facility Depts.
  - Employee Environmental Management Manual
  - Suppliers Compliance Manual
  - Purchasing Plan
  - Environmental Emergency Response Plan
PRINCIPLE 2:
Maximise Local (District) Community Benefits

- Contribution of specialist staff and appoint a Community Liaison Officer
- Portion of profits to Community Projects
- Fair employment practices
  - Training and payment of a fair wage
  - health care, gender and generation equity
  - employment opportunities for the disabled
- Local community involvement and awareness
- Promotion of local cultural craft and performing arts
PRINCIPLE 3:
Environmental Impact: Design and Operations

- Site Development
- Comprehensive site selection process
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Screening + visual integration with landforms
- Facility location, layout and orientation e.g. access to natural environ.
- Natural, cultural, archaeological resource protection measures are incorporated
- Energy Conservation
  Use of Solar Panels, Photovoltaics, Wind Turbine
  Use of low energy consumption appliances

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PRINCIPLE 3:
Environmental Impact: Design and Operations

- All of the hot water pipes insulated
- Visitor energy-use awareness program
- Purchasing Practices
- No-smoking rooms + guest areas
- Waste Management and Recycling
  - Biodegradable waste is composted and used on the landscaping
- Separation and Recycling program
- Guests informed about recycling activities
- Use of biodegradable cleaners and pesticides
PRINCIPLE 4: Contribution to Conservation

• Direct support for nature conservation
  – financial and/or logistical support for at least 1 local nature conservation project
  – environmental and ecological monitoring, as stated in the local area management plan
Principle 5

Visitor experience, impact and interpretation

• Visitor code of conduct e.g. how to minimize negative impacts on local population; how to protect natural areas and heritage and;

• Interpretation and information about the local environment (ecological and social).
PRINCIPLE 6:
Green and Responsible Marketing

- Target environmentally responsible (eco-tourists) and green markets
- Promotional materials are accurate and do not promise more than can be delivered
- Use of low impact marketing mechanisms
  - maximise the use of web-based marketing
PRINCIPLE 7
Ecotour and Nature interpretation

• Tour management and monitoring eg groups limited to 16 people
• Impact on wildlife eg. All flashlights fitted with a red filter.
• Bush walks and camping trips eg. Camping permitted in designated areas.
• Vehicles and aircraft eg. No driver to leave the motor running for more than 3 minutes when stationery.
• Community relations eg. No activities will be undertaken with traditional communities unless approved by local leader.
Implementation of the Eco-certiﬁcation System

Short-term

▪ Botswana Tourism Organisation
(Quality Assurance Committee)
  ➢ HATAB
  ➢ Gaborone Technical College
  ➢ University of Botswana
  ➢ BTO
  ➢ Botswana Bureau of Standards

Long-term

▪ Botswana Eco-certiﬁcation Council
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Green**           | Entry level certification  
|                     | Primarily focused on meeting all BASIC standards criteria for the environmental management systems of the facility. |
| **Green +**         | Middle level certification  
|                     | Meets all Green level standards criteria, plus additional enhanced standards criteria for the environmental management systems of the facility. Encourages, where appropriate, additional focus on visitor experience and/or community benefits standards criteria. |
| **Ecotourism**      | Top level certification  
|                     | Facilities and ecotour operators that have met ALL the principles of ecotourism, as defined in the Botswana National Ecotourism Strategy (2002)  
|                     | Reflects supplier commitment and involvement of communities including cultural resources enhancement and socio-economic responsibilities, nature conversation, environmental management and interpretation of the surroundings. |

**Botswana Certified Camps and Lodges (as of at March 2012)**

- **Green Certified**  
  Vumbura Plains Camp

- **Green + Certified**  
  Camp Kalahari  
  Tubu Tree Camp

- **Ecotourism Certified**  
  Abu, Banoka, Chobe Game, Jacana, Jao, Kalahari Plains, Kwetsani, Little Vumbura, Mombo, Meno A Kwena Tented, Savuti Bush, Seba, Xigera, Xarana, Xudum & Zarafa Camps
Status of Eco-Certified Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecotourism</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Green +</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Award</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award Pending</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total No. of facilities assessed</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eco-Certified Facilities in Botswana

- Ecotourism: 36%
- No Award: 44%
- Award Pending: 13%
- Green: 2%
- Green +: 5%

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WASTE MANAGEMENT & ECOCERTIFICATION:

Solid Waste Management at industry level

- Waste separation temp. storage
- Closed waste storage

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Bio-friendly products & Use of Refillables

An example of a bio-friendly product

Refillable dispensers
Liquid Waste Management

Waste treatment plant

Sprinklers from the waste treatment plant
GLOBAL TOURISM AWARD

- World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)
- At the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Travel and Tourism Summit, held in Beijing, China in May 2010, Botswana thorough the Okavango Delta Ramsar Site (ODRS) won the Tourism for Tomorrow Awards Destination Stewardship an award for the in recognition of a destination, country or region with a network of tourism enterprises and organizations that show dedication to success in maintaining a programme of sustainable tourism.
GLOBAL TOURISM AWARD continued

- **Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)**
- GSTC is a global initiative dedicated to promoting sustainable tourism practices around the world. BTO has been a member of GSTC since March 2011 and has participated in the GSTC programs by the Okavango Delta Ramsar Site (ODRS) as one of the **First Adopters of the GSTC Destination Criteria**. This was followed up by the site verification visit in July 2012. BTO participated at the GSTC 3rd Annual General Meeting in September 2012 in Washington DC, USA.
Condé Nast Traveller invited Botswana Tourism to participate in the 2013 World Savers Awards. The Awards recognize travel companies that do well in five categories: environmental and cultural preservation; poverty relief; education initiatives; health initiatives; and wildlife conservation. This year for the first time, Conde Nast Traveler is launching a new award for the category of Sustainable Destination. The Destinations Award is for tourism destination that is implementing impressive environmental & social policies, as well as tourism planning that guarantees the destination will continue to improve on those fronts. It is on this backdrop that the Botswana Tourism participated with Okavango Delta Ramsar Site (ODRS).
CHALLENGES & SUCCESS

**Challenges**
1. High number of “No Awards” (*Not adequately prepared*)
2. Low number of participating facilities (*Perception of high cost associated with participation in the Eco-certification System*)
3. High cost associated with participating in both Regional & International bodies that promote & market participants

**Successes**
- Increased number of participants (Mainly Lodges attaining high levels)
- Increased number of Global Awards, hence increased Market Share
THANK YOU