

***A community-based ecolodge in the Cubango-Okavango
River Basin***

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Supervision

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Angola's enormous tourism potential has been kept from the world for decades, which the 27-year-long civil war further delayed. And yet, its vast unexplored territory and its underlying need for an economic development paradigm shift places tourism, especially ecotourism, in a privileged position to help the country move away from fossil fuels' dependency and towards a more diverse economy. The community-based Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge is set within the Cubango-Okavango River Basin that is the lifeline of the world-famous UNESCO World Heritage Okavango Delta—where one of the last strongholds of biodiversity and the ever-expanding world of tourism meet. It intends to provide the tools for a community-focused and conservation-oriented ecolodge strategy for developing countries, capable of empowering communities everywhere to contribute to and benefit from tourism as a means for sustainable development, while protecting biodiversity and raising awareness on the importance of climate resilience.

Keywords: community-based tourism; ecotourism; protected area; transboundary conservation area; Angola; Okavango Delta

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List of Abbreviations

ACADIR – Environment Conservation and Integrated Rural Development Association

ANAGERO – National Agency for the Development of the Okavango Region

AWF – African Wildlife Foundation

BNA – Angola National Bank

CBD – Convention on Biological Diversity

CBI – Center for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CORB – Cubango-Okavango River Basin

CREST – Center for Responsible Travel

FIT – Free Independent Traveler

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GEF – Global Environmental Fund

HALO – Hazardous Area Life-Support Organization

INBAC – National Institute of Biodiversity and Conservation Areas

IRDNC – Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation

IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature

KAZA TFCA – Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area

LCA – Limits of Acceptable Change

MTCA – Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment

NBSAP – National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

NEMP – Angola's National Environment Management Plan

NGO – Non-governmental organization

NGOWP – National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project

OKACOM – Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission

PDE CC – Cuando Cubango Strategic Development Plan

PDN – National Development Plan

PDT CC – Cuando Cubango Provincial Tourism Plan

PESAP – Angolan Strategic Plan for Protected Area

PLERNACA – Strategic Plan of the National Network of Conservation Areas of Angola

PTDA – Angola's National Tourism Plan

SADC – Southern Africa Development Community

SAREP – Southern Africa Regional Environmental Programme

SDG – Sustainable Development Goals

SMME – Small Medium and Micro Enterprises

TFCA – Transfrontier Conservation Area

TIES – The International Ecotourism Society

TNC – The Nature Conservancy

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNWTO – United Nations World Tourism Organization

USAID – United States Agency for International Development

WHO – World Health Organization

WTO – World Tourism Organization

WWF – World Wildlife Fund

“Wilderness is our natural habitat, too. We need these last wild places to reconnect with who we really are. We—all seven billion of us—must never forget we are a biological species forever bound to this particular biological world. Like the waves connected to the ocean, we cannot exist apart from it, a constant flow of atoms and energy between individuals and species around world in a day and out into the cosmos. Our fates are forever connected to the millions of species we rely on directly and indirectly everyday.”

Dr. Steven Boyes

Leader of the National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project

Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 – Foundations and Background

Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in Africa and it is one of Angola's best-kept secrets. Angola has enormous potential as a tourism destination (Manuel, 2016; Miezi, 2017; Costa, 2020), mostly due to its numerous and extremely diversified natural resources: the untouched landscapes combined with unique wildlife and a fantastic 1.650 kilometers of Atlantic Ocean coastline. Likewise, its rich cultural and historical heritage composed of a fascinating ethnic diversity, local events and fabulous cuisine. Angola has the capacity to become a new frontier of the 21st century tourism (World Tourism Forum, 2019), by and large in regards to cultural, nature, sun and beach tourism, but business travel too. However, we still need to consider the fact that a 27-year-long civil war was just ended on 2002, resulting in 90% of its tourism infrastructure destroyed (Manuel, 2016). Until 1975, Angola had developed tourism to a certain extent, successively canceled by the war afterwards. Its great tourism potential remained closed to the world for decades. Nonetheless, and paradoxically, this is exactly what makes Angola a particularly interesting place of choice to sustainably develop tourism, respecting both the environment and the local community: its vast virgin and unexplored territory yet to be discovered by tourists, isolated from the world for many years.

This business plan intends to address the evolving needs of a paradigm shift for the sustainable economic development of Angola. Through which the country could minimize its current economic and financial crisis caused by the 50% decrease in oil prices on the world market since 2012, as well as the ongoing structural recession (Ezequias, 2020). Thus, working towards economic diversification; from an extreme dependency on fossil fuels to a more strategic multi-sectoral approach, in which tourism plays a role of utmost importance, especially ecotourism. Angola's National Tourism Plan 2011-2020 recognized several tourism growth poles (Miezi, 2017), including one in the Cubango-Okavango River Basin, in the Cuando Cubango province.

1.1.1 – Ecotourism and Community-Based Tourism

Tourism is considered an effective method of reducing poverty in traditional economies (Croes, 2014; Lee & Jan, 2019; WTO, 2002) and community-based tourism, particularly, has been promoted as a mechanism for sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and biodiversity conservation in wildlife-rich community lands in Eastern and Southern

Africa (Adams, 2004; Imbaya et al., 2019; Kiss, 2004; Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007; Western & Wright, 1994), where Angola is located. Furthermore, community-based tourism has been widely identified for its ability to improve rural and indigenous communities (Wang et al., 2016; Reggers et al., 2016), which is the case of the peoples of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin, including both Bantu and non-Bantu ethnic groups.

The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people, and involves interpretation and education (TIES, 2015). The term “community-based ecotourism” takes this social dimension a stage further. According to Goodwin & Santilli (2009), the concept of community-based tourism has been used to describe projects and initiatives which have one of these characteristics: (1) benefits going to individuals or households in the community, such as collective benefits resulting from the creation of assets which are used by the community as a whole (e.g. roads, schools, clinics, parks, recreational and cultural attractions, etc), and community benefits where there is a distribution of benefit to all householders in the community; (2) conservation initiatives with community and collective benefits; (3) joint ventures with community and/or collective benefits, including an anticipated, transfer of management; (4) community owned and managed enterprises; (5) private sector enterprises with community benefits; (6) product networks developed for marketing tourism in a local area; (7) community enterprise within a broader co-operative; and (8) private sector development within a community owned reserve.

A common thread in community-based projects is the mutually reinforcing relationship between environmental conservation and socio-economic development (Lee & Jan, 2019; Reimer & Walter, 2012), most notably in and around protected areas (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). In order for those projects to succeed, local communities must be active participants and direct beneficiaries (Mogelgaard, 2003), followed by capacity building, skills transfer and a fair income distribution/sharing model to the community (Stone & Stone, 2020). Apart from local participation, Mitchel & Muckosy (2008) highlight the importance of linking poor people to the major tourist flows rather than pursuing a quest for “alternative” tourism, as well as accessing direct jobs in the tourism sector (e.g. craft stalls, activities, taxis, local food supplies, hotels, restaurants, etc); the quickest and most effective way of achieving a financially viable and sustainable coalition for change in the local economy. A diversified approach can result in the creation of more employment and significantly larger benefits (WTO, 2006) and the integration with other sectors of the rural economy (e.g. agriculture) creates mutually supportive linkages and reduces

financial leakages (WWF International, 2001). Strengthening the capacity of local communities also lies at the heart of these initiatives, according to Mitchel & Muckosy (2008), allowing them to access the tourism value chain through technical support (e.g. product development, customer care, hospitality skills, marketing and communication, guide training, environmental management, negotiating with commercial operators, etc) and language training. Moreover, it enables infrastructure development and the use of tourist taxes, fees, concessions to private businesses and shared revenue, in order to spread benefits within a community, which Ashley & Garland (1994) consider fundamental. As a result, barriers to market access would then be removed, making it much easier for local communities to actively take part and benefit from the tourism industry.

WWF International (2001) established basic preconditions for community-based ecotourism that should be considered beforehand: (1) landscapes or flora/fauna which have inherent attractiveness or degree of interest to appeal either to specialists or more general visitors; (2) ecosystems that are at least able to absorb a managed level of visitation without damage; (3) a local community that is aware of the potential opportunities, risks and changes involved, and is interested in receiving visitors; (4) existing or potential structure for effective community decision-making; (5) no obvious threats to indigenous culture and traditions; (6) an initial market assessment suggesting a potential demand and an effective means of accessing it, and that the area is not over supplied with ecotourism offers. The strategy should be community-led and community-focused. People involved should include representatives of the local community, knowledgeable tourism operators, local entrepreneurs, relevant NGOs, conservation agencies including protected area managers, and local authorities. According to Tubey et al. (2019), community conservation can only truly and fully be achieved through the protection of biodiversity, land use planning, mitigation of community-wildlife conflict, empowerment of the local community as well as the use of traditional knowledge.

1.1.2 – Protected Area Tourism, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

A protected area is an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means (IUCN, 1994). National parks, wildlife reserves, and other types of protected areas are at the forefront of efforts to conserve biological diversity. But many protected areas are in crisis. Already underfunded, they

have come under increasing pressure from the expanding scale of human activities outside—and sometimes inside—their boundaries (Wells & Brandon, 1992).

Tourism provides a crucial and unique way of fostering visitors' connection with protected area values, making it a potentially positive force for conservation. Protected area tourism's economic benefits—which depend on beautiful natural areas, healthy wildlife and nature, and authentic cultures (unlike many extractive industries)—can also be a powerful argument for conservation. Therefore tourism's capacity to generate national income and generate jobs can act as a major driver to conserve and manage intact natural areas rather than to modify or destroy them to produce other commodities. Tourism in protected areas is a major part of the global tourism industry—an industry whose scale and impacts are enormous. Done sustainably, tourism can contribute directly to the objectives of global agreements such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Muscat Declaration on Tourism and Culture (Leung et al., 2018).

The forward-looking accounting of tourism's potential benefits and negative impacts has to be grounded on a fundamental principle: for tourism in protected areas to be sustainable, it must, first and foremost, contribute to the conservation of nature over the long term, not just briefly or sporadically, and ensure that conservation is not compromised by inappropriate or poorly managed visitor use. Therefore, sustainable tourism in protected areas should: (1) safeguard the environment and/or cultural qualities that attract tourists by maintaining essential ecological processes and aesthetic and spiritual qualities, and by helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity; (2) respect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and their sociocultural authenticity, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance; (3) ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing fairly distributed socioeconomic benefits to all rightsholders and stakeholders that are affected by tourism, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation; (4) provide appropriate opportunities to facilitate meaningful and high-quality visitor experience that will contribute to an increased sense of stewardship for nature and protected areas—many people participate in “voluntourism” programmes in and near protected areas to gather scientific data and monitor wildlife, therefore supporting protected area conservation projects (Leung et al., 2018).

Indigenous and local communities are the “natural” and most ancient managers of natural resources, and these relationships are the roots of their perceived rights over land and natural resources. In some places, mostly in the developed world, community ownership and resource management have been almost entirely replaced by those of the state and individual and corporate land-owners, who have thus become the managers of natural resources. In other countries, mostly those in the South, the process remains unfinished and contested, and a conflict-rich interface exists between traditional (community-based) and “modern” (i.e. state and property-based) natural resource management systems. Some communities have been expelled from newly protected territories and involuntarily resettled; some traditionally mobile populations have been forced against their wishes to abandon their nomadic existence and adopt a sedentary lifestyle; communities in many countries have been disrupted and impoverished by being forced to abandon the use of resources upon which their livelihoods depended on—action often taken without any redress through compensation (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2004). The growing resentment against conservation by local communities is then intensified when they receive little of the substantial financial income generated by tourism within protected areas, but are the ones carrying the costs of living with wildlife (e.g. damage to people, crops, livestock and property), as stated by Fynn et al. (n.d.). Now that the international policy circles are committed to the eradication of poverty, this position is no longer defensible: it would make little sense to set up poverty-eradication programmes alongside conservation initiatives that result in greater poverty (Cernea & Schmidt Soltau, 2003). There are four cornerstones factors that should be integrated into community conservation initiatives for local communities to sustainably manage natural resources and wildlife: (1) they are devolved autonomy of management and decision-making rights over a clearly-defined area of sufficient size (i.e. that they can call their own); (2) they are able to form institutions to develop rules about how to manage the resources sustainably; (3) they have strong traditional leadership and social norms of working in institutions; and (4) they are able to derive sufficient benefits from the resource to outweigh the costs of damage caused by the resource, as well as the costs of managing and monitoring the resource (Fynn et al., n.d.). Traditional knowledge, customary laws and institutions, and biodiversity names and uses are interconnected and inseparable from local languages and dialects—their survival and vitality acquire a central role in maintaining alive entire bodies of cultural and biological knowledge. A simple measure of great value for conservation is to maintain, respect and restore the local, ethnic names of species and places, and of protected areas in particular (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2004).

As visitors numbers increase, protected areas become more crowded, leading to increasing environmental and social impacts that can pose threats to protected area values. At some point, the impacts may become unacceptable based on physical evidence or visitors' evaluations of their experience (Whittaker et al., 2011). In other words, the number of visitors may have exceeded the visitor carrying capacity—referring to the maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination (a protected area in this case) at the same time without causing (1) destruction of the physical, economic and sociocultural environment, and (2) an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors' satisfaction. Contemporary approaches to understand and apply visitor capacity rely on determining Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), a well-developed tourism and visitor management framework. It establishes measurable limits to human-induced changes in the natural and social settings of protected areas, and uses these to create appropriate management strategies to maintain or restore acceptable conditions. When applying LAC in protected areas, management objectives are statements about the desired conditions of protected areas and outdoor recreation, including the level of protection of resources and the type and quality of the recreation experience so that conservation always has primacy (Manning, 2017). Entrance fees and user fees are among some mechanisms that can help manage numbers of visitors (Leung et al., 2018).

Public–private partnerships are formal agreements between the protected area authority and private sector in which the private partner is able to deliver a particular tourism product or service within the managed protected area. Concessions are one type of public–private partnership and are an important means of engaging the private sector in protected area conservation (Thompson et al., 2014). Concession agreements for businesses operating in protected areas may be structured as formal public–private partnerships, leases, licences, permits or easements. These legal agreements stipulate the key terms and conditions, such as duration, type of operation, environmental conditions and fees under which the business must operate (Spenceley et al., 2017). Concession fees are a type of user fee because concessionaires are paying for the exclusive right to use the protected area to conduct business. A concession may involve providing such services as accommodation, food and beverage, recreational activities, educational and interpretive programmes, and retail merchandise (Eagles et al., 2009). Concessionaires can provide a number of important opportunities for assisting park agencies to manage appropriate tourism and achieve their conservation goals. In developing countries, best-practice concession activities can provide a vital link between local communities, rural development and conservation (Leung et al., 2018).

Regarding the creation of a sustainable tourism venture within a protected area, Dedeke (2017) found a number of risks that were not necessarily common in a typical tourism business: (1) the product being marketed by a sustainable tourism business is the undisturbed nature itself; (2) the inherent remote location; (3) the limited transportation infrastructure; and (4) the lack of formally trained experts, skills and knowledge at a local level—which results in a dependence on global actors. Additionally, the paper stated that networking with researchers and the scientific community in general can produce meaningful results in the areas of conservation, environmental education, research and rural community outreach.

1.1.3 – Tourism, Biodiversity and Transboundary Conservation

At this time in our history, we find ourselves at a crossroads in many biodiversity hotspots (i.e. Earth's richest and most endangered terrestrial systems like the Caribbean, Mesoamerica and the Tropical Andes) and wilderness areas (i.e. rich in endemic species but, in contrast, still largely intact—and important for the world's remaining indigenous people—like the Amazonia and the great Miombo-Mopane Woodlands and Grasslands of Southern Africa, including the Okavango Delta), where the last strongholds of biodiversity, the make-or-break world of basic survival for millions of people, and the ever-expanding world of tourism meet. Most of these high-priority areas for biodiversity are also key regions for tourism development, often in large part because of the wonderful and unique species and ecosystems that they harbor (Christ et al., 2003).

Ecotourism can link tourism to biodiversity conservation. It is not simply another niche market within the tourism industry like nature and adventure tourism; rather, ecotourism is a philosophy, a set of practices and principles that, if properly understood and implemented, can transform the way we travel (Honey, 2002).

According to Christ et al. (2003), tourism can impact biodiversity hotspots in multiple ways: (1) government-financed infrastructure-related development, including methods of access (e.g. roads, trails, airports, and transportation), water sourcing and treatment facilities, energy production and distribution, and waste processing, but also private investments like interpretation and visitor management structures—these developments often result in landscaping and construction-related impacts on biodiversity; (2) construction of facilities directly related to tourism (e.g. accommodation and meeting structures, catering, shopping centers, marinas, and administrative facilities); (3) indirect developments from tourism, such as urban development for employee housing,

secondary real estate mainly for tourist homes, and urban sprawl; and (4) indirect influences on economic and trade policies and strategies related to tourism development (e.g. changes in local traditional economic practices due to transition to tourism-oriented activities, changes in conservation-related investment, such as park management, and in environmental management due to financial burdens from tourism-related loans, etc).

Ecosystems across the globe are divided by political boundaries, and exposed to many different policy, legal and institutional structures, management and governance regimes. Furthermore, they are affected by various social, cultural and economic contexts, as well as impacted by complex relations between countries. Transboundary conservation has emerged as a practical way to overcome these differences and encourage cooperative working across international boundaries so as to achieve shared conservation goals. A “Park for Peace” is a special designation applied to transboundary protected areas that are formally dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and to the promotion of peace and cooperation. Approximately 1/3 of all terrestrial high-biodiversity sites straddle national land borders. For this reason alone, there is a compelling need for neighbouring states to collaborate in conservation. In Africa, where most boundaries were drawn by colonial powers, transboundary cooperation has been promoted to support joint efforts to protect common natural and related cultural values across boundaries. So while it can protect species and ecosystems, it can also help divided communities come together, connect people of different cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds, stimulate social and economic benefits, strengthen political relations and mitigate tensions (Vasiljević et al., 2015).

According to Vasiljević et al. (2015) transboundary conservation can bring the following benefits: (1) enable greater ecological integrity and contribute to the long-term survival of species, enhancing the connectivity of areas under conservation management, reducing the fragmentation of habitats and allowing increased dispersal opportunities—which in turn supports higher resilience within ecosystems and among species, and greater genetic exchange among populations; (2) contribute to securing the survival of migratory species, allowing them to occupy suitable habitats—especially critical breeding, feeding and resting areas; (3) has the potential to generate substantial socio-cultural and economic benefits—even though biodiversity is the primary goal, it acts as a catalyst driving other benefits; and (4) enhanced cooperation in day-to-day management (e.g. sharing heavy equipment reduces the cost, joint patrols enable better law enforcement, and management efficiency is enhanced through cooperation).

1.1.4 – Tourism for Sustainable Development in Developing Countries

In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, tourism explicitly features as a target in Goals 8, 12 and 14 on inclusive and sustainable economic growth, sustainable consumption and production, and the sustainable use of oceans and marine resources, respectively. Yet, given the sheer size (i.e. tourism is estimated to represent around 10% of global GDP) and the cross-cutting nature of the sector, it has the potential to contribute directly and indirectly to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to UNWTO et al. (2017).

UNWTO defined the following key dimensions and themes of sustainable tourism to be applied to least developed countries: (1) tourism policy and governance, concerning the recognition of tourism in sustainable development policies and the implementation of a clear tourism strategy embracing sustainability principles; (2) economic performance, investment and competitiveness, considering the business environment and the position of trade liberalization in the tourism sector (e.g. market access, product quality, sector resilience); (3) employment, decent work and human capital, related to capacity building, employment conditions, human resources planning according to the needs of the sector; (4) poverty reduction and social inclusion, focusing on specific pro-poor tourism strategies, developing community-based initiatives, working with the informal sector, strengthening local supply chains and securing collateral benefits from tourism; and (5) sustainability of the natural and cultural environment, including resource efficiency and relation to climate change, measuring and monitoring tourism impacts (UNWTO et al., 2017).

One of the cornerstones of sustainable tourism is the well being of poor communities and their environment. There are a number of pro-poor tourism strategies (i.e. focusing specifically on unlocking opportunities for the poor within tourism) that can be used to enhance economic benefits (WTO, 2002): (1) attracting higher yield market segments, with a stronger focus on international arrivals most likely to benefit the poor (i.e. those predisposed to visit local markets and seek tourism experiences of nature, culture and daily life that can be provided by poor people); (2) increasing tourist length of stay, that can result in more employment, and greater opportunities to sell goods and services; (3) increasing visitor expenditure, encouraging a more active holiday experience and with a greater involvement (i.e. developing more activities and attractions, with interpretation and guiding services, using natural and cultural heritage more extensively); (4) developing complementary products, either tourism services (e.g. craft and cookery

classes, drumming and dance classes, village tours, language classes, guided walks to learn about plants and their medicinal uses) or goods (e.g. crafts, local delicacies and other traditional specialties); (5) spreading the benefits of tourism geographically, by encouraging holidaymakers to travel further beyond established destinations; (6) infrastructure and planning gain (e.g. roads, electricity, piped and treated water supplies, waste disposal, recycling and sewage treatment); (7) local management of tourism and partnerships, through which local communities are involved and empowered; (8) small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME) development, that can provide accommodation and food service, handicrafts, furnishings and other hotel consumables, transport, local tour operating, guiding and attractions—though in the context of developing countries, capacity building is necessary; (9) reducing seasonality; and (10) employment and training (i.e. beyond hotels, particular effort should be made to train and employ local guides, artists, performers and craft workers who are able to interpret their heritage and maintain control over it).

Post-war destinations have a unique challenge to ascertain security and counter visitors' perceived risk, and therefore need to work twice as hard to rise above their competitors (Fernando et al., 2013; Jacinto, 2017). Within this post-war setting, tourism comes to play as a tool for development, and it has been instrumental in this regard for many decades around the world, especially in African countries (Aslan, 2014). Countries such as South Africa, Rwanda and Namibia are among the most popular African post-war countries involved in community-based and cultural tourism for the development of disadvantaged areas as a result of a period of conflict (Stone & Stone, 2011).

The above literature review will serve as the fundamental basis for the business plan, with an academic and scientific foundation supporting each and every decision taken. Its underlying purpose is to analyze the technical, economic and financial feasibility of the community-based ecolodge and to secure investment, cooperation or support of any kind for its development—considering its very particular characteristics (i.e. being located in a wildlife-rich protected area within a transboundary conservation area, in a developing country in a post-war context). Simultaneously, a balance must be found between people, planet and profit, which summarizes Elkington's (2002) triple bottom line framework—a model focusing on inserting sustainability principles within business organizations (Pereira & Martins, 2021). Additionally, it will be structured according to the U.S Agency for International Development's *Sustainable Tourism Enterprise Development: A Business Planning Approach* (USAID, n.d.), considering the very specific context of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin.

1.2 – Concept

The community-based ecolodge is deeply rooted in the source of the Okavango wilderness, an untapped territory in Angola teeming with biodiversity that is the lifeline to Botswana's world-famous Delta. It is the main source of water for a million people and is one of the most biodiverse places in Africa, supporting the world's largest remaining elephant population as well as lions, cheetahs, wild dogs, hundreds of species of birds, and much more. It is among the world's last undisturbed river systems, but faces threats due to development pressure (UNESCO, 2019). And while the Okavango Delta is protected within Botswana, the greater Okavango Basin in Angola is not, which includes the critical rivers and lakes that supply the delta. The formal protection and improved management of the Okavango River Basin in Angola is one of Africa's biggest conservation opportunities. Otherwise, the future of the Okavango Delta is at risk (Quammen, 2017). Communities along the southeastern corner of the Angolan highlands have maintained a lifestyle intertwined with the rivers and the ecosystem they support. But as the landmines from the decades-long civil war are decommissioned and more roads open up, the outside world is encroaching into these isolated communities and the surrounding wilderness. As a result, the illegal commercial bushmeat trade has picked up, as have unregulated development, charcoal production, and logging. Human-set fires from hunting, slash-and-burn agriculture and charcoal production represent one of the greatest threats to the source waters (National Geographic, n.d.). This is why the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge's purpose is to bring the communities of the area together and help them use their environment and resources sustainably, making sure it brings the concrete benefits they need. Through the sustainable development of tourism in which they are active participants, an alternative income source to activities that negatively impact the river system would then be generated, contributing to the protection of the Okavango River Basin in Angola.

The Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge is inspired by the unforgettable surrounding landscape and wildlife, visible in its architecture, built with biodegradable materials sustainably sourced from the area, and resting amid a canopy of indigenous woodland savanna trees. The lodge consists of 14 guest suites raised off the ground, for minimal ecological footprint and unobstructed views from the outdoor decks. The suites and public areas have an organic and sculptural quality, blending seamlessly with the breathtaking surroundings, and are connected through a wooden pathway. There is a family suite composed of 2 interconnected guest suites linked by an enclosed walkway, which are much more spacious and can host up to 4 guests. The Okavango Wilderness'

hidden gem is a secluded treehouse guest suite for a once-in-lifetime experience among the stars. The ecolodge has a planned capacity of 28 guests.

Built with sustainability in mind and at the core of its heart, the ecolodge is solar-powered and has its own water and sewage treatment system, a waste recycling and repurposing station, as well as organic waste composting, later used in the organic vegetable garden that supplies the restaurant.

A stay in this remote ecolodge is a quintessential Okavango river and land safari experience, where hospitality meets conservation, and guests act as changemakers that create meaningful and long-lasting positive impact to both the environment and the local community. This purpose-driven accommodation offers a variety of land, water, sky and cultural activities, which will be presented in detail in the Business Description chapter of this business plan.

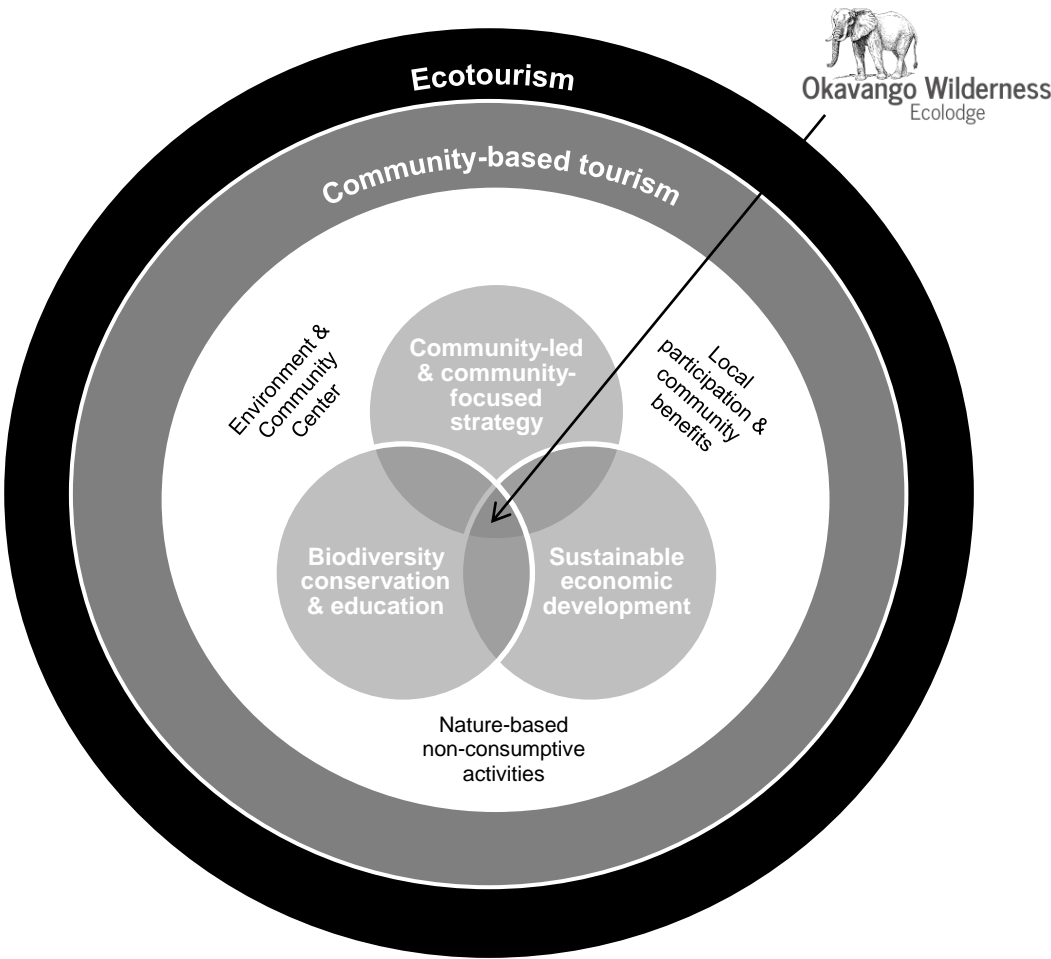


Figure 1. Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge's concept representation.

Section 2 – Tourism Site Assessment

2.1 – Angola

Angola, officially the Republic of Angola, is located on the west coast of Africa and has a land area of 1.246.700 km². It is the world's 23rd largest country and is bordered to the north by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Congo, the east by Zambia, the south by Namibia, and the west by the Atlantic ocean, with a coastline of 1.650 kilometers (UNDP, 2019). The total population of Angola is estimated to be 32.866.272 inhabitants unevenly distributed through the country with an average population density of 26 people per km² (Worldometer, 2021). 33% of the Angola's population lives in rural areas and the human population growth is very high (it is the 4th country in the world in terms of growth rate after South Sudan, Burundi and Niger) and is estimated to be 3.38% annually (World Bank, 2020a; CIA, 2021a). The country is divided into 18 provinces and concentrated in urban areas such as Luanda, Huambo, Lubango and Benguela, and in the central plateau region (USAID, 2008).

According to CIA (2021b), Angola's economy has been driven by the oil sector (provides 50% of the GDP and more than 90% of the country's exports) and diamond extraction (additional 5% to exports) with average economic growth of 17% in 2004-2008 and 1.3% in 2015-2017, as a result of the continuous decrease in oil prices and the depreciation of the kwanza. Agriculture (mainly subsistence) provides the main livelihood for 85% of the country population and contributes to 10.2% of GDP (2011), but half of the country's food is still imported. Despite Angola being Africa's 2nd biggest oil producer, 32.3% of the population lives below the poverty line (2018) and the country's Human Development Index is still low (0.581, ranked as 148 among countries of the world), according to the UNDP (2021). Much of the country's infrastructure is still damaged or undeveloped from the long civil war, and land mines remain in the countryside (USAID, 2008).

Angola's civil war had a profound impact on all aspects of social and economic life in the country. Approximately 4 million people were internally displaced and 600.000 left the country as refugees—of these, about 80% have since returned to Angola (UNHCR, 2006). Most internal displacement was from rural to urban areas. Whereas the expectations were that most people would settle back in the rural areas with the onset of peace (IUCN, 1992), current trends indicate that the rural-urban migration continues. This is explained by the lack of basic services in rural areas, the lack of roads and

economic opportunities, and reflects the fact that Angolan society lost much of its agricultural knowledge and tradition due to forced migration into urban centers and the collapse of the country's agricultural sector. Thus, the country is left with a sparsely populated countryside and congested urban centers (USAID, 2008).

According to Huntley et al. (2019), Angola has one of the highest ecosystem diversities in Africa, with humid tropical forest in the north and desert in the south, although much of the country (45%) is covered by miombo forest, dry tropical woodland (24%), and miombo-savanna mosaic (20%). Of the estimated 8.000 plant species that are believed to exist in the country, 1.260 are endemic (the 2nd highest number of endemic plants by African countries), according to USAID (2008). The diversity of mammals is also one of the richest on the continent with 275 recorded species, including the famous giant sable antelope (*Hippotragus niger variani*), the African savanna and forest elephants (*Loxodonta africana africana* and *Loxodonta africana cyclotis*), the western gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla*), the chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), the African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*) and various species of marine turtles (Figure 2.). The exceptional biodiversity in Angola is due to a combination of a number of factors: the large size of the country, the inter-tropical geographical location, the climatic and altitude variation and the types of biomes. The geographic position of Angola, stretching from near the Equator to close to the Tropic of Capricorn influences the strongly seasonal climate, with hot wet summers (October to May) and mild to cool dry winters (June to September), with an annual average of above 23°C. Furthermore, Angola is notable for having representatives of 7 of Africa's 9 biomes, and 15 of the continent's ecoregions, placing Angola 2nd only after South Africa for its diversity of African ecoregions (Huntley et al., 2019).



Figure 2. Angola's rich biodiversity.

Nonetheless, there are several direct threats for wildlife in Angola represented by poaching, human-wildlife conflicts, and degradation of habitat caused by deliberate and wild fires, expansion of agriculture based mostly on the unsustainable slash-and-burn practice, charcoal production, expansion of settlements, unsustainable timber logging, diamond mining and fishing practices, livestock overgrazing and invasive species (UNDP, 2019). Illegal wildlife hunting and trade is one of the most serious threats for wildlife, especially bushmeat hunting. The capital, Luanda, has long provided an open market for ivory, rhino horn and teak especially, and it has been described as the biggest ivory market in Africa. Following international condemnation of the practice, trading ivory has been banned in Angola since 2017 (Huntley et al., 2019). The effective management of protected areas is one of the key mechanisms that governments have available to achieve biodiversity conservation goals (CBD, 2010). In fact, rehabilitation and extension of the protected areas network for wildlife restoration in Angola are key objectives of the Angola's National Environment Management Plan (NEMP 2009), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2007-2012), Strategic Plan of the National Network of Conservation Areas of Angola (PLERNACA 2011), and the Angolan Strategic Plan for Protected Areas (PESAP 2018-2028). Currently there are 14 protected areas with a total area of 92.409,5 km² (*Table 1. & Figure 3.*) covering 11% of the country. The PESAP foresees the extension of the national protected areas system to cover 17% of the country's area, as well as the establishment of marine protected areas (UNDP, 2019). However, Huntley (2017) challenges and criticizes this target by calling the protected areas "paper parks", considering the government has limited conservation resources, difficulties attending limited budgets, weak technical capacity and poorly trained human resources.

Name	Category	Date established	Area 1, km ²	Area 2, km ²
Iona	National Park	1937	15,150	15,196
Cameia	National Park	1938	14,450	14,688
Quiçama	National Park	1938	9960	9227
Mupa	National Park	1938	6600	6039
Bicuar	National Park	1938	7900	6748
Cangandala	National Park	1963	650	637
Mavinga	National Park	2011	Unknown	Unknown
Luengue-Luiana	National Park	2011	45,818	22,720
Maiombe	National Park	2011	1930	2074
Chimalavera	Regional Nature Park	1971	150	102
Luando	Integral Nature Reserve	1938	8280	9930
Ilhéu dos Pássaros	Integral Nature Reserve	1973	2	1.5
Búfalo	Partial Reserve	1974	400	405
Namíbe	Partial Reserve	1957	4450	4642
Total Area, km²			115,740	92,409.5

Table 1. Protected areas of Angola. *Source: Huntley et al., 2019.*

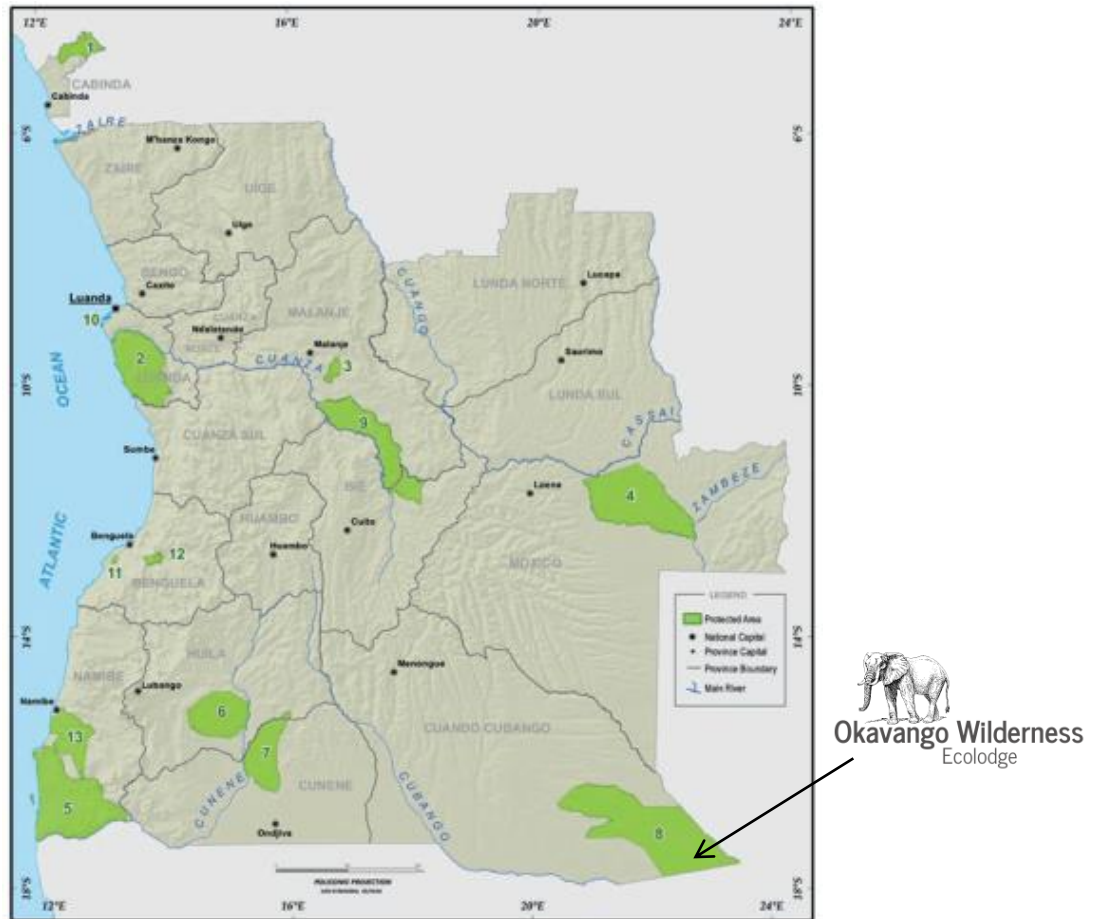


Figure 3. Map of Angola's provinces and protected areas. *Source: Huntley et al., 2019.*

There has been a controversy among environmentalists regarding the government's approval of oil exploration in protected areas in 2020, justified by the Minister of Natural Resources, Petroleum and Gas as the need to keep up production levels (Lusa, 2021). Consequently, there will be a protected area legislation revision in which the extractive activity will be allowed—the executive director of Angola's NGO Kissama Foundation considers this a setback to biodiversity conservation initiatives (Paulo, 2021).

In Angola's 2015 Tourism Act the country recognizes tourism as a sector capable of creating jobs, uplifting gender equality, fighting poverty, attracting external currency and disseminating the country's image to the world, while recognizing the need to create conditions for its sustainable development. It further states the existence of cultural, historical, natural and touristic resources that could place Angola in a privileged position in the tourism market internationally (Decreto-lei nº 9/15, 2015). In spite of the enormous potential as a tourism destination, the destruction caused by the 27-year-long civil war, the resulting infrastructural deficiencies and the economic dependence on oil and diamonds are some of the reasons behind Angola's underdeveloped tourism sector (Miezi, 2017; Ezequias; 2020). Nonetheless, Angola's incredibly rich natural resources

and their ongoing wildlife repopulation originate optimum conditions for tourism's growth (Miezi, 2017). Some examples are listed below (*Figure 4.*), representing several of the 7 Natural Wonders of Angola (Embassy of the Republic of Angola, n.d.) and its landscape diversity: the Tundavala Gorge (Huíla), the Maiombe Forest (Cabinda), the Nzenzo Caves (Uíge) and the Calandula Falls (Malanje).



Figure 4. Natural wonders of Angola.

Angola's National Tourism Plan 2011-2020 (PDTA), the country's first strategic tourism promotion document, established tourism growth poles, illustrated in *Figure 5.*, associated to culture, sun & beach, and nature tourism (Costa, 2020).

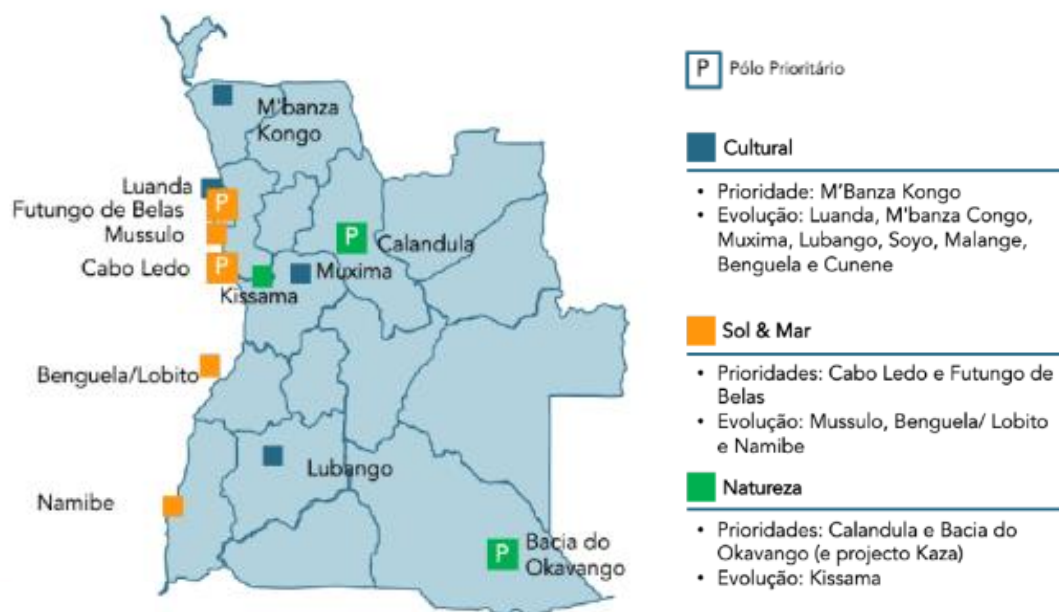


Figure 5. Angola's strategic tourism growth poles. *Source: Costa, 2020.*

The Okavango Basin in the Cuando Cubango province was considered one of the 4 priority tourism growth poles in which the main goals were to integrate the local community and protect biodiversity while simultaneously sustainably developing the needed infrastructure for the proper functioning of the tourism activity (Costa, 2020). However, the project was interrupted for some years due to lack of funding. The government picked it up again in 2019 and it is currently working towards better accessibility with the construction of roads, electric power and potable water systems,

administrative buildings and accommodation, among other infrastructures (Ver Angola, 2018). The Angolan representant of the Tourist Guide Association stated that the Cuando Cubango province has the potential to become the ecotourism capital of the country (Jornal de Angola, 2017).

2.2 – Cubango-Okavango River Basin

The transboundary Cubango-Okavango River Basin is a large river system in Africa of approximately 700.000 km² that extends across 3 countries, from the forested mountains of central Angola through ecologically rich wetlands in northeastern Namibia and northern Botswana, to the Okavango Delta (*Figure 6.*). The Delta is the jewel of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin, recognized globally as a unique inland delta with a valuable ecosystem—epitomised by its status as a Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar Site), one of the largest in the world, and UNESCO'S 1.000th World Heritage Site (OKACOM, 2021). The Delta's source waters originate from a vast water tower in Angola and flow through the Cubango (referred to as Kavango in Namibia, and Okavango in Botswana) and Cuito Rivers, which are near pristinine and supply the lifeblood to the Cubango-Okavango River Basin ecosystems. These source waters are however at risk of degradation due to competing demands and ongoing threats caused by development pressures (OKACOM, 2019), despite being among the world's last undisturbed river systems (UNESCO, 2019). Its location, variety of habitats and resulting biodiversity turn it into one of the unique areas for biodiversity conservation globally (OKACOM, 2011).

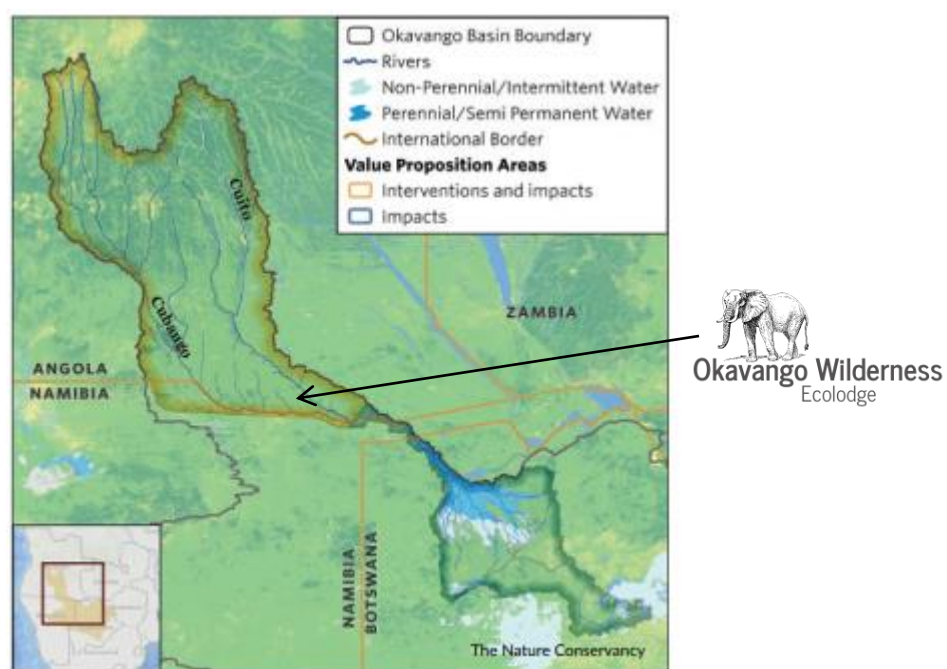


Figure 6. Cubango-Okavango River Basin map. Source: OKACOM, 2019.

In 1994, the governments of Angola, Botswana and Namibia established the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) by the 1994 Founding Agreement, with the mandate to advise the Member States on conservation, development and sustainable utilization of water resources in the Cubango-Okavango River Basin. The OKACOM has a shared vision to achieve an economically prosperous, socially just and environmentally healthy development of the basin. The basin-wide commission's goals are divided into key thematic areas: livelihoods and socio-economic development, water resources management, land management, environment and biodiversity (OKACOM, 2021). Furthermore, development indicators were defined to reflect the impact of the shared vision in the basin, associated with economic prosperity, social justice, environmental health and climate resilience (World Bank, 2019).

The basin supports predominantly rural communities most often located either adjacent to the river or along roads. In general, the people of the basin are poorer, less healthy, and less well educated than other groups in their respective countries. This is particularly the case in Angola where the war curtailed social and economic development (OKACOM, 2011). According to Saraiva (2009), there is wide ethnic diversity among the peoples of the Cubango-Okavango Basin, including Bantu and non-Bantu ethnic groups. In Angola particularly, there are 5 major ethno-linguistic groups living in the basin: the Umbundo occupy the upper reaches of the Cubango in fairly dense settlements (about 16% of the basin's population) and mainly use the *eloka* farming methods; the Nganguela (nearly 50%) are mainly traditional farmers in the east and cattle breeders in the west; the Lunda-Tchokwe (nearly 33%) are farmers who occupy most of the centre of the basin; the Ambó live on the Namibian border to the west, with a strong reliance of cattle breeding; and there are a few Xindonga people living in the Namibian border to the east, between the river courses of the Cubango and Cuando, and are cattle farmers.

<i>Characteristic national values</i>	<i>Angola</i>	<i>Botswana</i>	<i>Namibia</i>
<i>Total population</i>	32.866.272	2.351.627	2.540.905
<i>Basin population</i>	822.080	164.202	233.421
<i>Proportion of national population (%)</i>	3.2%	7.1%	9.2%
<i>Basin population living in poverty (%)</i>	75%	54%	60%
<i>Households in basin</i>	94.885	18.096	21.129
<i>Average household size</i>	6.5	4.9	6.6
<i>Land area (km²)</i>	151.406	345.704	162.274
<i>Land area proportion (%)</i>	23%	52%	25%
<i>Literacy rate, ages 15-24, female (%)</i>	63%	93%	94%
<i>Literacy rate, ages 15-24, male (%)</i>	83%	86%	91%
<i>Population using improved drinking water (%)</i>	39%	90%	90%
<i>Undernourished population</i>	35%	32%	24%
<i>Life expectancy at birth</i>	60.4	69.59	63.71
<i>Gini Coefficient</i>	51.3	53.3	59.1
<i>Human Development Index</i>	0.581	0.735	0.646
<i>Human Poverty Index</i>	0.282	0.073	0.191

Table 2. Comparative social, education and health indicators for Angola, Botswana and Namibia.
Source: adapted from OKACOM (2011) & World Bank (2019).

Table 2. illustrated above compares national-level and basin-level social, educational and health indicators from Angola, Botswana and Namibia. Generally speaking, the indicators of Botswana and Namibia are better than those in Angola, which further sets the country apart from the other basin Member Parties development-wise. Figure 7. showcases the contrasting contribution of Cubango-Okavango resources to livelihoods, represented by the estimated proportion of household income provided by river and wetland natural resources, in which we can conclude the massive untapped potential of Angola's basin tourism.

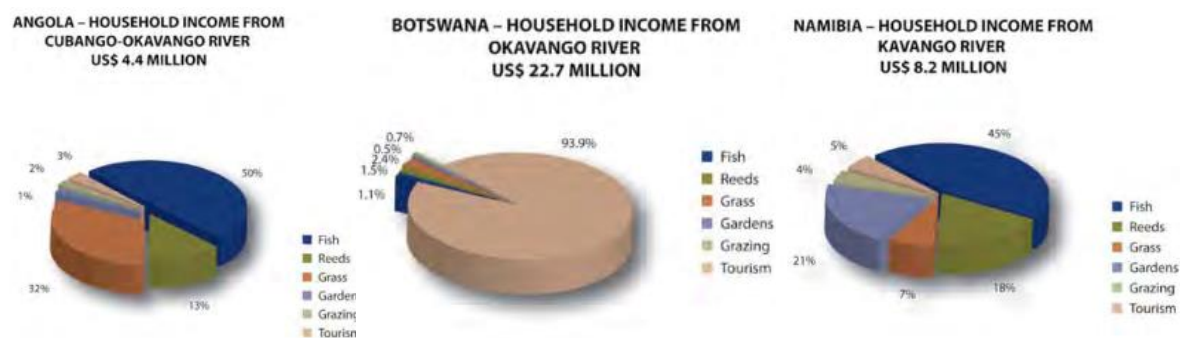


Figure 7. Estimated proportion livelihood value of river and wetland-based natural resources in Angola, Botswana and Namibia. *Source: OKACOM, 2011.*

Addressing the underlying issues of poverty within the Cubango-Okavango River Basin is fundamental to securing the basin's long-term sustainability in order to improve the lives of the basin population within ecologically acceptable limits of change. This can be done through livelihood improvement programs, especially in the Angolan part of the basin, where 2/3 of the basin population reside. Food security and nutrition, biodiversity conservation, water supply, public health, household energy needs and income generating activities are key areas. Conservation agriculture is an important livelihood strategy and it has been successfully applied in 5 communities clusters in the Angolan river basin by ACADIR (Environment Conservation and Integrated Rural Development Association), an NGO financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Southern Africa Regional Environmental program (SAREP), according to the World Bank (2019). Furthermore, direct employment options could be increased in areas such as tourism and related service industries by targeting training and capacity building. Nature-based tourism is the largest economic activity in the Cubango-Okavango River Basin and community-based tourism, particularly, provides important opportunities with several broader associated benefits and can help enhance livelihoods—like ongoing regional initiatives aimed at improving tourism built on sustainable development and conservation such as the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier

Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA). It is the world's largest transfrontier land-based conservation area, spanning the borders of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, situated in the Okavango and Zambezi river basins (*Figure 8.*). It is one of the 18 transfrontier conservation areas of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). The area covers nearly 520.000 km² and comprises 20 National Parks, 85 Forest Reserves, 22 Conservancies, 11 Sanctuaries, 103 Wildlife Management Areas and 11 Game Management Areas, and Communal Lands as well. Some of these protected areas have designated concessions for non-consumptive tourism development. It boasts 3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the Okavango Delta, Victoria Falls (which is also one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World) and the Tsodilo Hills (KAZA TFCA, 2016). KAZA TFCA's mission is to sustainably manage the Kavango Zambezi ecosystem, its heritage and cultural resources based on best conservation and tourism models for the socio-economic wellbeing of the communities and other stakeholders in and around the eco-region through harmonization of policies, strategies and practices. The treaty formally establishing KAZA TFCA was signed in 2011 (KAZA TFCA, 2020). The creation of transfrontier conservation areas is largely attributed to the increasion recognition that conservation initiatives also need to consider the maintenance of large-scale ecological processes that extend beyond the boundaries of protected areas and international boundaries, including animal migrations and seasonal movements across habitats, like the elephants and buffalos from KAZA (KAZA TFCA, 2016). Essentially, this ensures the connectivity of sensitive ecological corridors (IUCN, 2020).



Figure 8. Map of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area. *Source: KAZA TFCA, 2020.*

2.3 – Cuando Cubango

The Cuando Cubango province is located on the southeastern corner of Angola and is the 2nd largest of the country with an area of 199.335 km², representing 16% of the national territory. Despite its size, it has long been known as “the land at the end of the Earth” due to having the lowest population density of Angola, 5.93 inhabitants per km², and a population of 534.0002 in 2014 (Cazalma, 2016; Alexandre, 2020). Many of the small, isolated villages in the area were abandoned during Angola’s civil war, considering it was one of the most badly affected provinces. Few people in the region have much contact with others outside of their communities, and local villages lack access to education and health care resources, among other needs (Quammen, 2017). This is a result of Cuito Cuanavale, the site of the largest battle on African soil since World War II that became a flashpoint for the Cold War conflict. Large parts of the province are inaccessible because of landmines, a legacy of the civil war that ended in 2002 (Relief Web, 2018). Local people live in fear of death and injury, and local development is severely restricted. And yet, Cuando Cubango has some of the world’s most important remaining wilderness that is critical to biodiversity. In fact, it is considered to be one of the world’s last wild places. Clearing the mines is the first step towards developing a conservation-based economic model—through which wildlife can be protected and local economic development can thrive using the best models of sustainable tourism. There is an ongoing ground-breaking conservation initiative between landmine clearance charity The HALO Trust and the Government of Angola to clear landmines surrounding the Angola Okavango headwaters. By clearing the mines, HALO can lay the foundation for life, agriculture and ecotourism to return and thrive in this rich and varied landscape (Relief Web, 2019). In June 2019, Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, pledged his support to the cause (HALO Trust, 2019).

Cuando Cubango is divided into 9 municipalities and Menongue is the capital. 57% of the employed population works in agriculture, livestock production, hunting, fishing and forestry—and those are mainly of subsistence nature, thus not contributing to the country’s production or poverty reduction. The tourism sector has little to no significance in the Cuando Cubango’s economy, employing a total of 299 people in the entire province, spread across 29 tourism establishments, from hotels to holiday villages, restaurants and other tourism-related services (Alexandre, 2020). Despite the enormous untapped potential to sustainably develop tourism, particularly nature-based tourism, Cuando Cubango has a significantly small-scale tourism offer.

A major challenge for Cuando Cubango's development is its accessibility. Only 400 km of its more than 4.000 km road network is asphalted. Accessibility by means of motor vehicles is limited and in urgent need of road construction connecting the municipalities and the tourist attractions alike—cars with four-wheel drive and jeeps are hence recommended. The province is connected to Namibe and Huíla provinces by railway line, but within Cuando Cubango, the train only reaches the municipalities of Cuchi and Menongue. There are 2 airports in Menongue and Cuito Cuanavale, and 2 aerodromes in Dirico and Rivungo. However, none of the previous are international—a connection with Luanda's airport is therefore mandatory (Alexandre, 2020).

Angola's National Tourism Plan 2011-2020 (PTDA), Cuando Cubango Strategic Development Plan 2013-2017 (PDE CC), Cuando Cubango Provincial Tourism Plan 2013-2014 (PDT CC) and the National Development Plan 2018-2022 (PDN) recognize tourism as a means of improving infrastructure, diversifying the economy and reducing poverty. An important strategic focus is developing the Okavango Basin tourism growth pole, while simultaneously enhancing the Luengue-Luiana National Park and the river corridors of Cuito and Cubango—as a consequence, wildlife protection is reinforced and tourism support equipment can be installed (Alexandre, 2020). In the context of the KAZA TFCA, some protected areas were identified for development to ensure that elephants and other wildlife thrive while generating income from tourism for local communities. The Luengue-Luiana National Park in Angola is one of them, alongside the Sioma Ngwezi and Kafue National Parks in Zambia (*Figure 9.*). Active protection of wildlife and biodiversity will encourage migratory animals to the safe havens, which in turn will open the door to increased tourism revenues (Peace Parks Foundation, 2020).

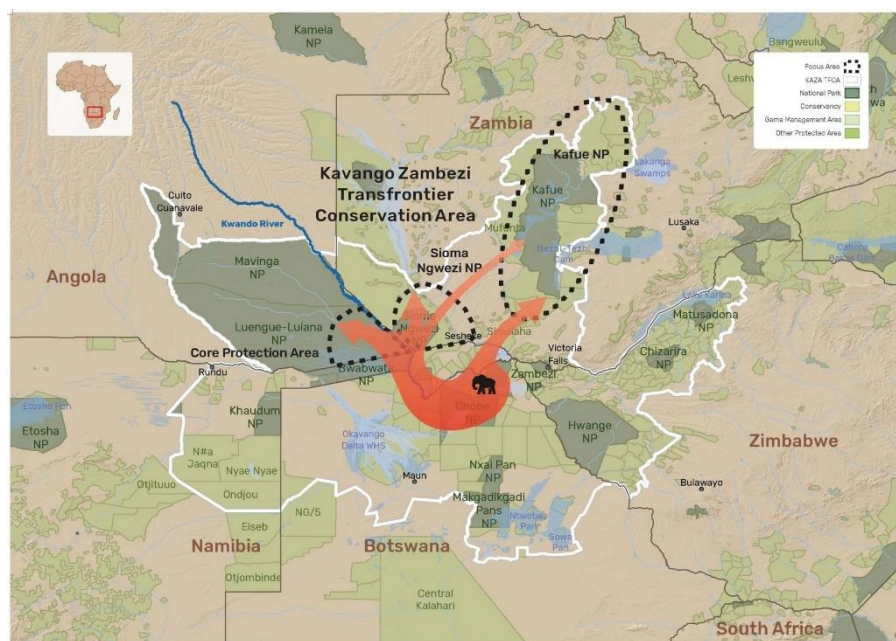


Figure 9. KAZA TFCA elephant migration corridors and safe havens.
Source: Peace Parks Foundation, 2020.

2.4 – Site Profile

The Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge is located in Cuando Cubango's Dirico municipality, where the Okavango Basin tourism growth pole is set. Angola's Ministry of Tourism developed a masterplan to facilitate land-use planning (Governo de Angola, 2019) and it is positioned in a mixed use zone focusing on ecotourism, within the lodges and campsites development sites (*Figure 10.*).



Figure 10. Masterplan of Cuando Cubango's land-use planning.
Source: Governo de Angola, 2019.

The ecolodge stands within the limits of the Luengue-Luiana National Park and, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Environment (Decreto Executivo Conjunto nº 470/15, 2015), the concessions of protected areas spaces can only be approved for the following activities: construction and installation of tourism enterprises and restaurants, sustainable tourism animation and entertainment activities, repopulation of wildlife for hunting tourism, promotion of capacity building to local communities regarding tourism resources and conservation in social responsibility initiatives, promotion of environmental awareness activities and the employment of local people, promotion of other activities related to biodiversity protection and conservation and ecotourism

development, as well as the usage of eco-friendly technologies to preserve biodiversity and tourism resources. The perimeter of tourism enterprises concessions is from 30 to 50 hectares. *Figure 11.* illustrates the approximate area of the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge, near the Cubango River and the Namibian border.



Figure 11. Aerial view of the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge location and area. *Source: Google Earth, n.d.*



Figure 12. Zoomed in aerial view of the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge location and area. *Source: Google Earth, n.d.*

2.5 – Cuando Cubango Tourism Inventory SWOT Analysis

In the following tables, Cuando Cubango’s tourism inventory will be thoroughly analyzed against the backdrop of 6 different categories of its supply-side.

Biodiversity			
Attraction	Description	Strength / Opportunity	Weakness / Threat
Protected status	Quando Cubango is the water source of the Okavango Delta, a Ramsar Site and the 1.000 th UNESCO World Heritage Site	Home to some of the world's most endangered species of large mammals (cheetah, white rhinoceros, black rhinoceros, African wild dog, lion), long-term conservation is ensured through government policy and legislation, almost intact wetland system, considered to be the "jewel" of the Kalahari Desert, game viewing, birding, boating in traditional mokoro	Lack of formal protection of the Delta's lifeblood in Angola, invasive species, mining licenses overlapping buffer zone, oil exploration, transboundary management of water resources, engagement of local communities and indigenous peoples, management and governance
Transboundary cooperation	The Cubango-Okavango River Basin is a transboundary basin with the one of the largest river systems in Africa, traversing through Angola, Botswana and Namibia	Livelihoods and wellbeing of basin peoples enhancement, sustainable management of the natural resources and biodiversity of the basin, basin-wide cooperation and joint action within existing national legislative and policy frameworks, pollution prevention measures, droughts and floods alleviation measures, scientifically based technical support	Population dynamics, land use change, poverty, climate change, variation and reduction of hydrological flow and water quality, changes in the abundance and distribution of biota, lack of human capacity expertise to implement the programmes, communication between stakeholders needs improvement
	The Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area spreads across Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and is world's largest transfrontier land-based conservation area	Largest contiguous population of African elephant, has more than 3.000 plant species of which 100 are endemic to the sub-region, large-scale migrations of mega fauna including several Red Data List species, transboundary capacity building for local communities, employment creation, tourism destination development, sustainable tourism network creation, rehabilitation of tangible and intangible heritage, cooperation between the countries and international agencies, population living conditions improvement, common mechanisms to tackle climate change	Weak institutional and legislative framework, lack of supporting infrastructure for the tourism activity, lack of skilled labor, lack of educational establishments and hospitals, bureaucratic procedures, lack of efficient strategies to fight poverty and social inclusion, lack of local investment in small businesses, weak local business community, lack of accessibility by land, the region's plurality of peoples lack of institutional recognition, political agenda overlapping the region's needs, landmines, potential tourism massification and pressure on the environment, seasonal phenomena, climate change-related catastrophes
Fauna	Wildlife diversity: elephants, hippopotamus, otters, crocodiles, buffalo, zebra, sable antelope, sitatunga eland, lechwe, reedbuck, wildebeest, roan, wetland birds	Lueghe-Luiana National Park being an elephant migration corridor and safe haven, conservation initiatives, media attention from the National Geographic's "Into the Okavango" documentary, potential for land and water safaris, wildlife photography	IUCN'S long Red List of endangered species in Angola, poaching, hunting, fires, deforestation caused by human-led fires and slash-and-burn agriculture, habitat loss and destruction, human-wildlife conflicts, landmines
Flora	Important tree species acting as one of the biggest carbon sinks of sub-Saharan Africa: mussivi, girassonde, muiumba, mussissi, mamué, maku and mupanda	Utilization by local communities as medicine, food (fruits, roots and honey), construction, manufacture of tools, potential utilization in the tourism industry creating an alternative income source for locals, potential dynamism through tree-planting initiatives	Unsustainable resource utilization by local communities for timber and charcoal production, unsustainable logging practices, deforestation caused by human-led fires and slash-and-burn agriculture, habitat loss and destruction
Ecosystems	Great variety of ecosystems: water-logged grassland, miombo woodland, dry woodland, savanna mosaic, woodland savanna, reed beds, sedges, permanent swamp with oxbows, channels and sandbanks	Wide range of habitats and biodiversity, landscape variety, potential for tourism related activities and services	Overgrazing by cattle and smallstock, deforestation caused by human-led fires and slash-and-burn agriculture, habitat loss and destruction

Table 3. Cuando Cubango's biodiversity SWOT Analysis.

Natural Attractions			
Attraction	Description	Strength / Opportunity	Weakness / Threat
National Parks	The Luengue-Luiana National Park is located within the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area and is a core protection area for elephant migration. Luengue-Luiana and Mavinga National Parks make up the largest, contiguous protected area ecosystem with National Park status in all of Africa	High ecological and biological value, opportunity for research, ecotourism development, potential for safaris, river excursions, bird observation, wildlife photography, regulated use of wild plants, highly regulated use of timber	Lack of qualified park staff and an organized structure, lack of tourism supporting infrastructure, fires, poaching, illegal hunting, human-wildlife conflicts, landmines, the spread of urban and cultivation areas
Rivers	The Cuito and the Cubango Rivers are the lifeblood of the Okavango Delta and are near pristine	Water source for locals and wildlife, irrigation, hydropower, contains sacred and cultural sites for locals, crucial habitat for pollinators, important carbon sinks, potential for non-consumptive water-based tourism activities like traditional mokoro boat rides	Lack of formal protection of the river systems upon which the Delta depends on, increasing development pressures, unsustainable fishing, diamond mining and oil extraction practices, encroachment, landmines, changes in habitat due to agricultural demands, river flow changes, human-caused pollution, drought
Climate	Hot wet summers (October to May) and mild to cool dry winters (June to September), with an annual average of above 23°C	Ideal for year-round visitation, good conditions for nature-based outdoor activities	Heat-related illnesses, heavy rainfall can cause mosquito-borne diseases, climate change-induced phenomena like storms, droughts, soil erosion, reduced crop yields and food insecurity, increased hunger and malnutrition, increased wild fire risk
Landscape variety	A variety of river islands and islets (São Vicente, Lyapeka, Tchinguanja, Cuangar, Ndamu-Ndamu, Tchiputo and Hippopotamuses Islands), rapids and whitewaters (Cuebe, Rudhiva and Tchipuku Rapids), lakes and lagoons (Dangane Lagoon), falls (Makulungungu, Lomba River, Maculungungu and Tchitchalala Falls), waterfalls (Cueve Waterfalls) mountains (Malova, Tchawandjamba and Mbototo Mountains)	Virgin territory, potential for non-consumptive nature-based activities: land and river safaris, traditional mokoro boat rides, rafting, horseback trails, hiking trails, mountain biking	Failure to exploit the potential for nature tourism, lack of conservation and care, lack of accessibility and supporting infrastructure, lack of local strategies and land-use plans

Table 4. Cuando Cubango's natural attractions SWOT Analysis.

Cultural Attractions			
Attraction	Description	Strength / Opportunity	Weakness / Threat
Ethno-linguistic diversity	Quando Cubango's population is mainly Nguanguela, but there are other Bantu groups like the Ovimbundu, Tchokwe, and the Xindonga (composed of Dirico, Mbucusso, Kuangar, Shambiu), the Kwamashi, and non-Bantu like the Khoi-San. Nguanguela is the most spoken national language, apart from official Portuguese. Some dialects spoken in the region include the Lucaze, Mbunda, Ambwela, Kamashi, Ndungo, Nyengo, Nyemba and Aviko	Safeguards the cultural identity of each group, their customs, ethnic values and traditions handed down from generation to generation, potential to use tourism as a means of promotion and appreciation of Angola's multi-lingual and multi-cultural reality	Conflicts between ethnic groups, no formal teaching of languages and dialects at schools, agglutination of dialects to make communication easier, high illiteracy rate among ethnic groups who only speak their mother tongue, urgent need of bilingual education (especially in rural areas), colonial discourse of racial inferiority
Gastronomy	Local cuisine has elements of the African, the Portuguese and the Brazilian cuisine. In the Cuando Cubango province, typical dishes from Angola are offered in restaurants, but also region-specific delicacies like the <i>mufete</i>	Unique characteristics of local products and dishes, gastronomy as the longest-surviving part of a culture and tradition, sense of community, bringing people and tradition together potential for authentic culinary workshops and other activities the visitors can participate in	Globalization and increasing changes in eating habits, produce unavailability as a result of climate change-induced phenomena
Festivities, traditions and rituals	Menongue's city festivities, the Ovamba (male rite of passage from childhood to youth based on the circumcision), the Ofico (transition from childhood to youth), the Alambamento (offer of marriage), the Kuvvavwa Vunga (ethnic festivity that honors the ancestors' spirits), the succession festivities of kings and <i>sobas</i> (traditional chiefs/authorities that guide and solve community matters)	Community-building fostering local identity, cultural values that pass onto the next generation, source of community pride, potential for genuine cultural events and experiences visitors can participate in and learn from responsibly	Loss of authenticity and commercialization, disrespect from tourists who don't share the same beliefs and values
Traditional dances	Kawale (performed in the Ovamba), Mingolo (performed in the female rite of passage), Mivandje (performed to welcome visitors). Other traditional dances include the Tchianda, Kamandada, Maku, Katanga, Lipera, Makopo and Muxelemeka	Represent elements of local identity, visitors can experience the distinctiveness of Angolan culture, cultivates the importance of sustaining traditional culture and arts, potential for performances, workshops and creative activities for "prosumers"	Dances can be taken out of their traditional context and performed as theatrical presentations for time-pressured tourists, adverse effects to the originality of the dances, commercialization and loss of meaning
Handicraft	The majority of the craftworks are wildlife-inspired and carved from local woods. There is also the <i>batuque</i> , an instrument commonly used in typical dances and festivities	Promotion and preservation of traditional techniques, reinforcing cultural identity, history and tradition, authenticity and singularity, potential to use as genuine souvenirs for visitors and creative activities for "prosumers"	Loss of authenticity, exploitation, overcommodification

Table 5. Cuando Cubango's cultural attractions SWOT Analysis.

Historical Attractions			
Attraction	Description	Strength / Opportunity	Weakness / Threat
Cuito Cuanavale Battle Memorial	The Memorial symbolizes a turning point in Southern Africa History, contributing to the end of the apartheid and Namibia's independence. Cuito Cuanavale became a Cold War battleground and now visitors can remember the fallen soldiers with the monuments, the open-air museum, the library and military equipment exhibition	Represents the collective memory of Angola, South Africa and Namibia's people, and is a reference for peace and dialogue, place for remembrance, efforts for international solidarity, great access and location, conservation state and signage, Angola's Ministry of Culture UNESCO's World Heritage application for the Memorial	Controversy among the involved parties of the accuracy of the events
Tombs and sacred rocks	The tombs honor important people that became a symbol of the anti-colonialism fight, according to the Ngaguela tradition (Mwangana Mucuva, Mwangana Mpande and Mwangana Mbunza). The rocks are considered to be sacred by the local community (Vingulumanha Sacred Rocks, Tchawanjamba Rock and White Rock)	Reinforces local beliefs, strengthens cultural identity and pride	No signage, bad conservation state, difficult access
Bototo cave paintings	Figures and abstract drawings tell the story of the ancient peoples of the country	Enhances heritage values, ancestral linkages, geological wonder, reasonable access	No capacity to receive tourists, lack of signage, bad state of conservation, needs restoration
Colonial and wartime heritage	Missombo's Colonial Repression Prison is a symbol of resistance for the Angolans. The Mwene Vunongue Fortress was strategically used by Portuguese forces and later renamed to pay tribute to the Nganguela's King, which also has a bronze statue in Menongue	Strengthens feelings of national identity, places for remembrance, education in history, consciousness about human suffering, good access	Bad conservation state and maintenance, lack of signage and tourist information

Table 6. Cuando Cubango's historical attractions SWOT Analysis.

Tourism Facilities			
Attraction	Description	Strength / Opportunity	Weakness / Threat
Access	Quando Cubango is 800 km away from the capital Luanda. A flight to Menongue takes about 1h30. There are 2 airports in Menongue and Cuito Cuanavale and 2 aerodromes in Dirico and Rivungo. The province is connected to Namibe and Huila by railway. Wilderness Safaris have their own inter-camp and inter-country bush airline, flying to some of Africa's most pristine wilderness areas	The construction and rehabilitation of roads is an investment priority in Angola's National Development Plan, as result of the Okavango Basin being elected as a tourism growth pole as well as being part of the transboundary KAZA TFCA, access by Wilderness Air connecting different camps and countries	Only 400 km of its more than 4.000 km road network is asphalted, accessibility by means of motor vehicles is limited, urgent need of road construction connecting the municipalities and tourist attractions alike, the railway line only reaches the municipalities of Cuchi and Menongue
Lodging	There are 13 accommodation establishment in the entire province, including lodges, pensions and guesthouses	The construction of more lodges and campsites is a strategic goal of the Okavango Basin tourism growth pole, KAZA TFCA as a tourism destination, geographic proximity to the Okavango Delta	Underdeveloped industry, lack of qualified personnel, capacity training needed, lack of conservation initiatives and local community involvement, lack of tourism supporting infrastructure, difficulty of energy, water and internet supply in rural areas where most lodges are set
Food and dining	There are 11 official food and dining establishments in the entire province. Food is also offered by the informal trade through street vendors and open-air markets, which is deeply ingrained in Angola's culture	Authentic local food and delicious cuisine, most vegetables can be locally grown, fish can be sustainably harvested	Lack of qualified personnel in restaurants, poor service, barely any options for alternative diets and intolerances, risk of foodborne illness from food sold in outdoor markets and street vendors without access to refrigeration and food quality control
Transportation	Car rental service is offered at the Menongue and the Cuito Cuanavale Airports. Four-wheel drive and jeeps are recommended for people traveling further from the urban centers	Possibility to explore uncharted territory and virgin landscapes, access to faraway tourism attractions	Limited accessibility by means of motor vehicle, gas prices, lack of signal away from urban centers
Medical facilities	There are 104 health units in Cuando Cubango, including hospitals, health centers and med stations	Colossal government investment in the health sector to build more hospitals, reinforce the healthcare provided and increase the population's access to it, the progressive increase of the health sector in the state budget, Wilderness24 incident management system and tailor-made emergency plans in areas in which Wilderness Safaris operate and medical guidance, support and response by Park Doctor	Frequent lack of materials and medicine, urgent need of qualified personnel, infrastructure degradation, rehabilitation needed, lack of bed capacity, reduced health coverage no English spoken

Table 7. Cuando Cubango's tourism facilities SWOT Analysis.

2.6 – Partner Profiles

Partner Profiles			
Category	Partner	Description	Potential Benefits
NGOs	Kissama Foundation	Kissama Foundation is an Angolan non-governmental organization promoting the protection, conservation, management, study, research and balance of the country's fauna and flora. It focuses mostly on the conservation of the Giant Stable Antelope (<i>Hippotragus niger variani</i>), the country's national symbol	Sharing of wildlife conservation initiatives good practices. Promoting its importance to local population, park staff and stakeholders
	ACADIR (Environment Conservation and Integrated Rural Development Association)	ACADIR is a Cuando Cubango-based non-governmental organization committed to environmental protection and conservation, and the sustainable development of local communities and poverty reduction according to Angola's national legislation. It focuses especially on the economic and social wellbeing of vulnerable populations	Implementing solutions on the spot to help local communities develop and conserve biodiversity. Including community-based natural resource management, conservation agriculture, water-saving farming techniques, sustainable drinking water and sanitation, local community capacity building, solving human-wildlife conflicts, training of community park rangers, poaching reduction and animal repopulation. Acting as the responsible NGO in Cuando Cubango for OKACOM and KAZA TFCA's international projects' implementation and technical support
	IRDNC (Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation)	IRDNC strives to improve the lives of rural people by diversifying the socio-economy in Namibia's communal areas to include wildlife and other valuable natural resources. It pioneered one of Africa's leading models of community-based natural resource management	Supporting transboundary natural resource management with a focus on KAZA TFCA, achieving tangible progress in communal lands in neighboring countries, particularly Angola, and strengthening ties between communities in that country and those in the Zambezi Region
	Panthera	Panthera is the only organization in the world that is devoted exclusively to the conservation of the world's 40 wild cat species and their ecosystems	Assessing the status and distribution of lions, and other large carnivore and key mega-herbivores in Luengue-Luiana and Mavinga National Park. Documenting all human activities that may have adverse effects on the occurrence of these species. Assessing the integrity of wild ecosystems and develop strategies for conserving not only lions, but the entire landscapes they require to survive. Training of community guards to prevent human-wildlife conflicts
	HALO Trust (Hazardous Area Life-Support Organization)	HALO Trust is a non-political and non-religious registered British charity and American non-profit organization which removes debris left behind by war, in particular landmines, protecting lives and restoring the livelihoods of those affected by the conflict. It recruits and trains local men and women to clear landmines in their own communities, and with their earnings rebuild their lives	Clearing the landmines in the Okavango headwaters, which make it impossible to conserve and protect the habitat and wildlife to lay the foundations for conservation-led development. "100 Women in Demining in Angola" is a project training all-female teams to clear the landmines and empower women with skills, income and status, whilst making a safer future for the country
	Elephants Without Borders	Elephants Without Borders is a charitable organization dedicated to conserving wildlife and natural resources, through innovative research, education, and information sharing with all people, striving to encourage mankind to live in harmony with wildlife and the natural world	Restoring cross-border natural elephant movement patterns driven by seasonal availability of food and water across the region collectively known as KAZA TFCA (Botswana, Namibia, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Creating ecological corridors linking key protected areas across and within the 5 countries, allowing unimpeded movement of wildlife while simultaneously bringing tourism-related opportunities to improve livelihoods, amongst local communities and sustain natural long-term habitat dynamics

	WWF (World Wildlife Fund)	WWF is an international non-governmental organization and the world's largest conservation organization aiming to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature	Creating wildlife dispersal corridors connecting protected areas so that elephants and other species can travel safely. Human-wildlife conflict mitigation, increasing the participation of local communities in natural resource management and contributing to species conservation and transboundary water and land-use planning. Supporting the Angolan government and KAZA TFCA in its work with small and medium-sized Angolan businesses to look at bankable projects in the tourism, energy, agriculture, and fisheries sectors that will deliver services and support livelihoods without jeopardizing conservation
	AWF (Africa Wildlife Foundation)	AWF is a non-governmental organization focused on developing innovative conservation strategies so wildlife, wild lands and people can thrive. It addresses not only direct threats to wildlife like poaching and habitat loss, but also working with communities and governments to ensure that African conservation is truly African owned and led	Enabling wildlife conservation-friendly community empowerment so members make sure they get direct benefits from conserving wildlife and protecting natural habitat. Building conservation partnerships and spreading awareness across the continent and the world to meet sustainable development goals. Equipping wildlife rangers and training law enforcement officers to stop wildlife crime
	TNC (The Nature Conservancy)	TNC is a global environmental non-profit working to create a world where people and nature can thrive	Partnering with the government of Angola and OKACOM to balance the needs of people and nature across the Okavango River Basin. Planning low-impact renewable energy sources like solar power over traditional large-scale hydropower. Community-based conservation through capacity building, teaching people that are dependent on natural resources to take full ownership of them, manage and derive a livelihood from them. Co-developing a long-term financial plan to support the sustainable use of natural resources
	NGOWP (National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project)	NGOWP is a partnership between the National Geographic Society and the Wild Bird Trust to explore and survey and least know and most inaccessible parts of the Okavango River Basin spanning across the countries of Angola, Namibia and Botswana. It focuses on the 4 most important conservation priorities on the African continent today: water security, carbon storage, wildlife corridors and biodiversity corridors	Surveying and collecting scientific data to protect the remote watersheds, developing and implementing a conservation plan for the Okavango system. Establishing community-based alternative livelihoods cooperatives for sustainable agriculture and forestry, watershed management, infrastructure development, education outreach, healthcare, energy and information technology, and protected area management to support a conservation-based local economy
Protected Area Management	African Parks	African Parks is a non-profit conservation organization that takes on direct responsibility for the rehabilitation and long-term management of protected areas in partnership with governments and local communities	Establishing a public-private partnership for the long-term co-management, rehabilitation and development of the Luengue-Luiana and Mavinga National Parks. Funding and technical expertise needed to conserve and manage vast areas under increasing threats of deforestation, fire and poaching
	Peace Parks Foundation	The Foundation is a non-profit organization aiming to re-establish, renew and converge large ecosystems in Africa, transcending man-made boundaries by creating regionally integrated and sustainably managed networks of Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs)	Assisting transboundary conservation areas in identifying key projects, designing plans and securing the necessary funds. Implementing innovative strategies that revitalize habitat integrity, restore ecological functionality and protect biodiversity. Developing nature-based tourism and enterprise opportunities to ensure the long-term sustainability of protected areas. Providing technical and financial support
Industry Associations	OKACOM (Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission)	OKACOM acts as the technical advisor for Angola, Botswana and Namibia on matters relating to conservation, development and usage of water resources of common interest in the Cubango-Okavango Basin	Promoting coordinated and sustainable water resources management of the basin, while addressing social and economic needs of the 3 Member States. Establishing a water quality monitoring programme. Establishing livelihoods improvement projects related to tourism, fisheries and agriculture. Training for ecological monitoring and citizen science monitoring

	KAZA TFCA (Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area)	KAZA is the world's largest transboundary terrestrial conservation area where 5 countries of Southern Africa converge: Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe	Collectively managing shared resources for conservation, tourism, and sustainable development by the governments of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Turning conservation into the region's economic driver, resulting in thriving landscapes where wildlife and human communities co-exist
	Wilderness Safaris	Wilderness Safaris is widely acclaimed as Africa's foremost luxury and sustainable safari operator, across 7 countries and 40 luxury camps located in some of the continent's most remote, pristine and game-rich wilderness areas. It offers high-end ecotourism adventures that help preserve biodiversity, conserve wildlife and uplift local communities	Operating lodges and camps in life-changing game-rich destinations. Journey planning, booking and guest services. 24/7 support and incident management system tailor-made to ensure guest safety and care (Wilderness24). Emergency response plans in all areas in which Wilderness Safaris operates. Medical guidance, support and response with Park Doctor (a non-profit organization linking medical professionals to the world's protected areas). Own Wilderness Air, an inter-camp and inter-country bush airline, flying to Africa's most pristine wilderness areas
Ministries & Government Agencies	INBAC (National Institute of Biodiversity and Conservation Areas)	INBAC is a public institution within the Ministry of Environment that ensures the implementation and coordination of the National Biodiversity Conservation Policies and the management of the national protected areas network	Promoting scientific research to improve the knowledge of the national biodiversity. Promoting an inclusive and integrated management of protected areas ensuring a fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of biodiversity resources
	MTCA (Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Environment)	Ministry responsible for the formulation of legislative framework to govern culture, tourism and the environment.	Conducting strategies, programmes and projects promoting the sustainable development of the culture and tourism sectors, as well as the environment, ensuring compliance with national legislation and international conventions and agreements
	ANAGERO (National Agency for the Development of the Okavango Region)	ANAGERO is a government agency responsible for the promotion, attraction and facilitation of private investment in the Okavango Region	Organizing visits to entrepreneurs, in conjunction with Cuando Cubango's Province Government and the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Environment, to showcase the region's on the field tourism potential, and to inform them of the obligations under national law (Conservation Areas Law, Land Law and Private Investment Law)
International Development Organizations & Agencies	USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development)	USAID leads international development and humanitarian efforts to save lives, reduce poverty, strengthen democratic governance and help people progress beyond assistance	Providing technical and financial support to establish programs to protect ecosystems and the environment in general, while creating jobs for local communities
	Conservation International	Conservation International works to protect the critical benefits that nature provides to people. Through science, partnerships, and fieldwork, Conservation International is driving innovation and investments in nature-based solutions to the climate crisis, supporting protections for critical habitats, and fostering economic development that is grounded in the conservation of nature	Strengthening the resilience of local communities to climate change in targeted protected areas. Improving conservation area management and wildlife conservation in the Luengue-Luiana and the Mavinga National Parks. Enhancing the technical and institutional capacity of Angola's climate change and conservation institutions. Development and implementation of training for park staff, local communities and stakeholders. Boosting investments in nature-based tourism enterprises in and around the parks
	GEF (Global Environmental Facility)	GEF was established 30 years ago on the eve of the Rio Earth Summit to tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. It is the largest multilateral trust fund focused on enabling developing countries to invest in nature and supports the implementation of major international environmental conventions including biodiversity, climate change, chemical and desertification	Funding of projects to improve the management of Angola's protected areas, climate-resilient management of community lands, enhanced protection for 17 endangered wildlife species. Helping the transition to a resilient economy and low carbon pathway through building climate change and conservation initiatives, promoting entrepreneurship and ecotourism in conservation areas, strengthening public-private partnerships

Table 8. Partner Profiles.

Section 3 – Business Description

3.1 – Needs Statement

The Cubango-Okavango River Basin covers 125.000 square miles in Angola, Namibia and Botswana, and provides water for 1 million people. Widespread poverty plagues the upper basin, and the majority of people rely on livelihoods like agriculture, fishing, forestry and tourism that draw on the region's natural resources. The Okavango Delta itself is largely protected by a mosaic of game reserves, wildlife management areas and community trusts, but most of the biodiversity-rich lands, rivers and lakes in Angola that are its lifeline are not. These source waters are under increasing threats from deforestation, uncontrolled fire, the rising commercial bushmeat trade, and unchecked development. As the country emerges from decades of civil war, more than 50 large-scale water infrastructure projects are under consideration, including dams for hydropower, commercial irrigation works and municipal water storage. These projects could divert floodwaters away from the Delta, disrupting one of the most magnificent large-animal migrations in the world and crippling the livelihoods of the people who depend on it. Therefore, the time is now to protect the Okavango by creating viable alternatives for Angola to grow and develop—otherwise, the future of the Okavango Delta is at risk (Smith, 2021). The government of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe collectively manage KAZA TFCA's shared resources for conservation, tourism and sustainable development—a vision based on the confluence of rivers and elephant migration patterns (i.e. more than 220.000 African elephants, which is half the continent's total population). This part of southeastern Angola is locally known as “the land at the end of the Earth”, which was sparsely settled before the Angolan Civil War (Woods, 2020). The Luengue-Luiana National Park is inhabited by local communities that depend on slash-and-burn agriculture, charcoal production, poaching wild animals for subsistence and commercial purposes, and illegal logging of valuable timber. The major drivers of deforestation and land degradation, wildlife habitat loss and fragmentation, and poaching are mostly linked to poverty and limited livelihood options. Plus, there is the increasing threat of human-wildlife conflicts (i.e. as humans and wildlife move in search of resources, particularly water) and climate change. The development

of the area's economy requires careful integration of the considerable ecotourism potential within the biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood objectives (Global Environmental Facility, 2021).

3.2 – Mission and Vision Statement



MISSION

The Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge is a community-focused and conservation-oriented company, driven by a purpose to help communities sustainably manage natural resources and protect biodiversity, by offering a once-in-a-lifetime tourism experience deeply rooted in the Okavango Basin, where travellers act as changemakers that positively impact the land, the people and the wildlife.

VISION

We strive to be a catalyst for community-based tourism locally, nationally and globally in 10 years, inspiring impactful and purpose-driven ecotourism experiences in developing countries, capable of empowering communities everywhere to contribute to and benefit from tourism as a means for sustainable development, as well as protecting and conserving biodiversity within and outside protected areas. We envision we become a blueprint of how tourism can be a force for good and set the example of an environmentally-conscious and socially responsible accommodation internationally, while simultaneously raising awareness on the importance of climate resilience.

VALUES

Our sustainability keystones are the foundation on which we base all of our decision-making—the values translating our reason for being.

Community: we seek to actively involve the local community—which is also the main beneficiary of the ecolodge's activity—, respect and empower its traditional structures, knowledge, cultural identity and territory. We do this by employing and consulting with them regarding matters they are directly affected by, giving them representation in the decision-making process, and improving their livelihoods and well-being through several initiatives and projects.

Education: we look to raise awareness and cultivate knowledge about the global challenges the world is facing while working to find local solutions to address them. We do this by actively engaging tourists in impactful activities, frequent training and capacity building for employees, organizing workshops and other initiatives for local communities, hosting researchers and other members of the scientific community in our facilities, partnering with universities and funding scholarships for local students, and offering voluntourism opportunities.

Purpose: regardless of being a for-profit corporation, the ecolodge's cornerstone is, notwithstanding, to create and maximize positive social and environmental impact. We do this by reinvesting earnings back to the community. Guests staying with us know they are part of something bigger—and that they are actually making a difference on the land, people and wildlife.

Table 9. Mission and vision statement of the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge.

3.3 – Business Description

The Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge offers a purpose-driven community-based tourism experience set among the unique biodiversity-rich landscapes of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin, in Angola's near pristine ecosystems of the Luengue-Luiana National Park. The ecolodge has a total capacity of 28 guests spread through 14 guest suites. There is a family suite composed of 2 interconnected guest suites for multi-generational travellers, and a secluded treehouse guest suite for an unmatched ecotourism experience under the stars. Apart from eco-friendly and socially responsible accommodations services, the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge provides food and beverage services in the Restaurant overlooking the unforgettable scenery, a Library, a Market, a Firepit, an Environment & Community Center located further away from the main premises, and a selection of non-consumptive nature-based activities (i.e. land, water and sky activities) as well as cultural experiences deeply rooted in the ethno-linguistic variety of the territory (i.e. local communities spread across the territory where the ecolodge is located are mainly Nganguela, Xindonga and Khoisan populations). Guests become stewards of the land, the wildlife and the people once they step in the ecolodge's premises.

3.3.1 – Design

Drawing inspiration from its breathtaking surroundings and wildlife, warm wooden tones sculpt this Okavango hideaway and blend seamlessly with the landscape—as if the ecolodge was an extension of nature itself. The organic and harmonious design was built with biodegradable locally sourced materials and recycled building materials wherever possible. The entire infrastructure is a result of local and traditional craftsmanship, to which environmentally advanced construction and systems for energy and water self-sufficiency were applied. All the woodwork used in both the architecture and the interior design was carefully handcrafted by local artisans according to their traditions and knowledge passed on among generations.

The Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge is entirely raised off the ground for minimal ecological footprint and unobstructed views from the outdoor decks, resting amid a canopy of indigenous trees, miombo woodland and savanna mosaic. A wooden pathway connects the guest suites to the public areas—both of which have a natural and sculptural quality to them. It is equally a celebration of African conservation and culture.

Local wooden carved flora and fauna handicrafts and National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project wildlife photographs bring the rooms to life, as well as maps of all sorts (i.e. elephant migration patterns, the Luengue-Luiana National Park, the entire Cubango-Okavango River Basin) and antique-inspired wildlife illustrations, safari lanterns and a small hand-picked collection of books. The Reception, the Library and the Market are located near each other, next to the building's main entrance. The Restaurant offers al fresco dining tables spread across the lateral spacious deck overlooking the scenery, and beside it, there is a sunken traditional African boma with a firepit—a communal area for gatherings. The Environment & Community Center is set further away from the main premises and has a circular design, surrounded by the equally circular community vegetable garden and the beekeeping facilities.

3.3.2 – Products and facilities

Guest Suites. Each of the 14 spacious air-conditioned suites offer privacy and seclusion overlooking the Okavango wilderness. Guests can enjoy a king size or twin beds, an open-plan lounge area and ensuite bathroom. All of them have a private outdoor deck offering uninterrupted landscape views with a plunge pool, a seating area and an outdoor shower. Additionally, all the rooms have internet access and are equipped with mosquito nets, overhead fans, an in-room safe, personal bar, telephone and safari binoculars for game viewing and birding. Full room service is available upon request.

Baobab Treehouse Suite. Offers a multi-level deck spread across the centuries-old baobab tree, a prehistoric species predating mankind and native to the African savannah—known as the iconic “tree of life”. The facilities and amenities are essentially the same as the other guest suites, but there is an outdoor bath instead of a shower and a telescope for stargazing. It is set further apart from the main building of the ecolodge and higher up in the tree. It is a once-in-a-lifetime experience to sleep under the stars—the true gem of the lodge.

Restaurant. Locally and responsibly sourced food, mainly from our own community vegetable garden and local suppliers following the slow food movement—that works towards making sure everyone has access to healthy and fresh food that does not harm the environment and is fair to communities—is served al fresco in the outdoor decks. There is a 40-person seating capacity. Traditional dishes are offered as well as alternative options to accommodate everyone's diet (i.e. vegetarian and vegan, gluten-free, allergy-free) in ever-changing a-la-carte menus that follow the seasons' rhythms.

There is also an in-suite dining menu for lighter options and snacks. Guests can participate in farm-to-table culinary experiences, in which they accompany the Chef in the entire process—from picking the ingredients from the garden to the execution of the dish they will later savour knowing the history behind.

Firepit. A typical African boma where guests and staff gather after meals and long adventure days to trade stories and stargaze. This daily evening event is called “Circle of Fire” and is usually accompanied by local myths and legends’ storytelling and a cup of African wine on the house.

Market. To showcase the products resulting from several community-based projects supported by the ecolodge (e.g. locally made honey, beeswax candles, lotions bars and natural cosmetics, local medicinal plants, unique pieces created from repurposed materials), to empower and give visibility to local artisans (e.g. handicrafts like hand carved wooden wildlife sculptures and hand woven baskets, paintings, traditional fabrics and clothing) for impactful souvenirs, local delicacies and local wildlife photography prints.

Library. Guests can dive in a collection of books about biodiversity, conservation, sustainable development, nature, research and scientific expeditions, Angolan and African literature, history and culture, among many others, endlessly inspired by the breathtaking surrounding landscape—the perfect reading getaway. There are also weekly events in which a conservation-themed documentary or film is projected and later on discussed.

Environment & Community Center. This is where the core of the ecolodge’s sustainability (both the environmental and the social part) is located. Its outskirts are surrounded by the organic community vegetable garden supplying the Restaurant as well as local communities, and the community-based beekeeping facilities, which produces honey and other honey-based products used in the ecolodge and by local communities. Local community capacity building by NGOs is done in this area of the ecolodge—and they also benefit from the products resulting of their skills training. The alternative technologies to manage the ecolodge’s energy, water and waste are also located here—the solar panels, the rainwater harvesting and the greywater reusing systems, the water treatment systems, and the solid waste disposal and management (i.e. including the recycling, the composting and the repurposing stations). Furthermore, the center provides workshop rooms for the ecolodge’s activities with guests, as well as meeting rooms for the community decision-making process involving various

stakeholders, lab rooms for the resident researchers, and accommodation for the 2 researchers positions and 2 voluntourists that help them gathering scientific data and monitoring wildlife, as well as the staff canteen.

Activities and Experiences

Land activities are perfect for those who want to experience Africa's unspoilt wilderness. It includes early-morning or late-afternoon 4x4 safari game drives for adventurous travellers or expert wildlife photographers, walking safaris in the company of expert local guides for those who prefer a slower pace, hiking and biking interpretative tours, and bird watching. A river excursion is the quintessential Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge **water activity**, providing an unforgettable opportunity to discover wildlife in a different perspective, gliding along flooded channels by *mokoro*—a traditional dug out canoe used by generations as transportation in a region where there are many more rivers than roads. At the lodge, where there is little to no light pollution, clear skies make for sensational viewing of the stars, and our guides are equipped with laser pointers and are well versed in pointing out interesting features of the night sky, from unique stars to the Milky Way, constellations and planets. Stargazing at the traditional boma is a unique **sky activity** offered by the lodge, as well as the astrophotography guided tour allowing travellers to capture otherworldly views of the night sky. As for the **cultural activities**, we have the cultural village tour, where guests are welcomed with a traditional dance by local communities and invited to participate, followed by local delicacies tasting and a glimpse of their history, traditions and local languages. On top of that, there is also the medicinal plant guided tour and workshop, where locals teach guests how to identify them and how to use them (i.e. as both food and medicine). Local artisans also teach their craft and the meaning behind it to travellers who wish to have a more engaging experience in a handicraft workshop.

3.4 – Business Structure

The Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge is a joint-venture partnership between the private sector and the local community, in which their members also become concession holders. A concession is granted by the Angolan Government, which is the protected area authority along with African Parks, to finance, build and operate a tourist accommodation for a period of 40 years in the Luengue-Luiana National Park. The typical length of a Pure Concession or Public Private Partnership (PPP) concession model is usually 25 years. However, because it is partially a community concession—where

considerable capacity building and skills transfer is required—this period can be extended to 40 years and more, under the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) contract (Spenceley, 2014). The Angolan Land Act (Decreto-lei nº 58/07, 2007) recognizes the rights of rural communities and indigenous peoples to their land, and the entire recognition process is free of cost. However, the site in question has yet to be recognized as Communal Land due to a lack of formalization by the local community. If it were, the concession would therefore be granted by the local community itself, and they would consequently be at the receiving end of the concession fee, resulting in more benefits for them. This would mean that, under a BOT contract, the community would assume ownership of the property at some established date in the future (International Finance Corporation, 2004)—which is be the ultimate goal of the ecolodge.

A revenue-sharing agreement was negotiated with full community participation. The local community holds 50% equity and also benefits from: (1) direct employment, including training, capacity building and advancement to managerial level positions; (2) supplying products and services directly to tourists (e.g. guiding, handicrafts, workshops) and the concession operators (e.g. fresh produce, maintenance, transport); (3) community development projects from philanthropy (e.g. schools, health clinics, water treatment facilities, waste management and composting, conservation agriculture, scholarships), corporate social responsibility, spending by concessionaires or their clients, or contributions (i.e. in case or in-kind) by tourists (Spenceley, 2014). The local community is involved, collaborates and is empowered in the decision-making process—its level of stakeholder engagement is extremely high.

A fundamental concept within the community-based ecolodge is shared participation in the decision-making process, regarding work procedures, infrastructure, project policies, marketing strategies, itinerary development, hiring, solving staff problems, among many other responsibilities. And so an Ecotourism Committee was created, composed of 5 representatives of local communities to decide and approve the aforementioned matters, alongside the ecolodge managers. This approach makes community members increasingly aware of their status as partners and reveals a sense of ownership. Employees (which are mostly from the local community) are specifically trained for their positions at the ecolodge and go through frequent capacity building programs to improve their skills. Furthermore, a full-time community outreach manager is employed by the lodge to assist with community development initiatives according to community needs, and the Okavango Wilderness Trust was created to help finance those projects, as well as wildlife conservation.

In the ecolodge’s organizational structure represented in *Figure 13*, there is no sustainability department, because each and every team member has an intrinsic triple bottom line approach to their work responsibilities, and has their own functions connecting them to the Environment & Community Center, apart from their core tasks.

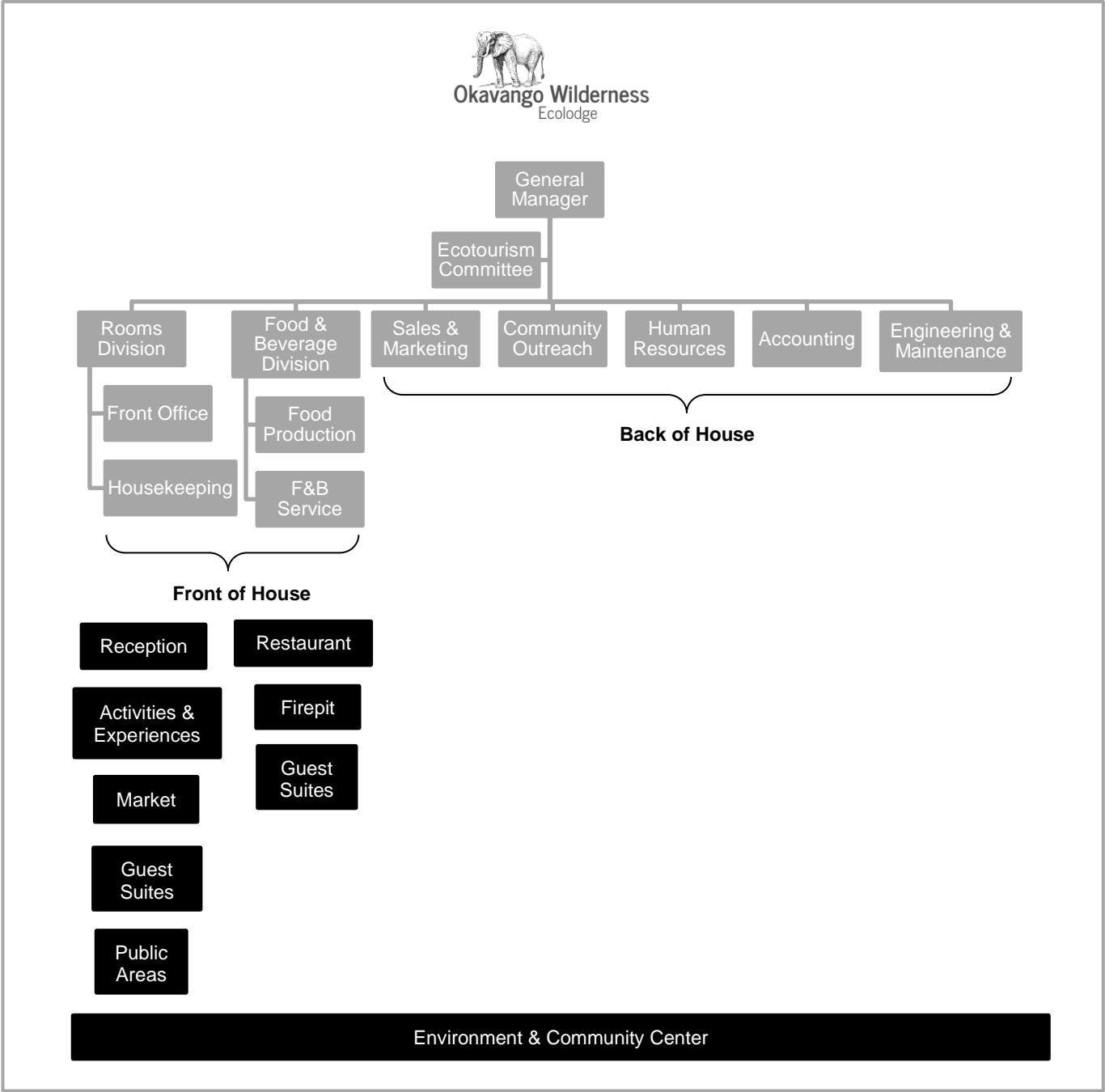


Figure 13. Organizational structure of the ecolodge.

Section 4 – Market Analysis

4.1 – Geographical Analysis

4.1.1 – Global Tourism

According to UNWTO (2020), 2019 was the 10th consecutive year of sustained growth of tourism at a global scale, with a total of 1.460 million tourist arrivals and a 4% growth rate. It grew faster than the world economy. It was also the year of major shifts in the sector with the collapse of travel group Thomas Cook and several low-cost European airlines. Against the backdrop of global economic slowdown and the uncertainty surrounding Brexit, tourism spending continued to grow nonetheless. These statistics now represent tourism in pre-pandemic times (UNWTO, 2021a) with the unprecedented fall of international tourism in -74% in 2020—going back to 1990s levels. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March and every destination worldwide had to introduce travel restrictions, and 27% of them kept their borders completely closed.

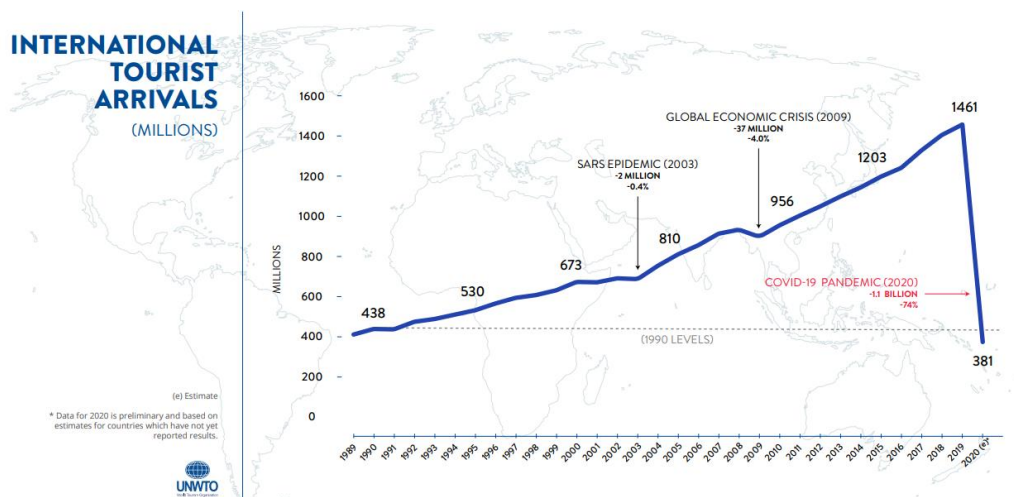


Figure 14. International tourist arrivals evolution. *Source: UNWTO, 2021a.*

In 2021, there was an improvement seen in the 3rd quarter of the year, but the pace of recovery remained slow and uneven across world regions. This is due to the varying degrees of mobility restrictions, vaccination rates and traveler confidence (UNWTO, 2021b). Most tourism experts do not expect international tourism to return to pre-COVID levels before 2023 (UNWTO, 2021a).

4.1.2 – Regional Tourism

In 2019, Africa received 70 million international tourists, representing a 2% growth rate from the previous year and a 5% share of global tourism (UNWTO, 2020). In contrast, it fell to -75% in 2020 due to the pandemic outbreak (UNWTO, 2021a). *Figure 15* showcases the subregion shares of Sub-Saharan Africa international tourist arrivals in 2019 between Eastern, Southern and Western Africa, in which Southern Africa is the most competitive of the 3 with a 49% share. However, South Africa alone accounts for approximately 70% of Southern Africa travel and tourism GDP (World Economic Forum, 2019).

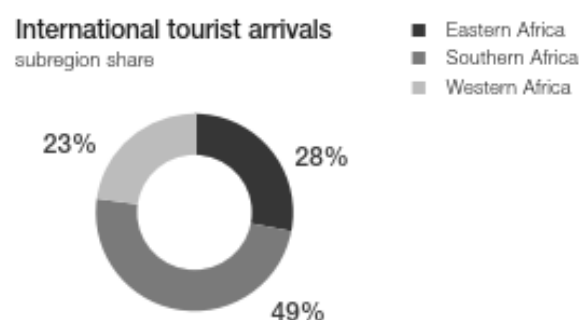


Figure 15. Sub-Saharan Africa international tourist arrival subregion shares.
Source: World Economic Forum, 2019.

Prior to the pandemic, travel and tourism revenues were instrumental in the restoration and expansion of natural parks and the protection of wildlife in many African countries, and in supporting local communities' livelihoods through tourism projects. Governments prioritized sustainable tourism, with real and tangible impacts both in terms of community development and conservation—with COVID-19 related restrictions keeping tourists away, these impacts were jeopardized. Therefore, the safe restart of international mobility is essential given the sector's potential to play a significant role once again (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021b).

4.1.3 – National Tourism

In 2019, Angola had a total of 218.000 tourist arrivals as represented in *Figure 16*., according to WTO (2020), from which 51% were from Europe (*Figure 17*.). Furthermore, this outbound market has consistently occupied the largest share of arrivals throughout the years, as seen in *Table 10*.

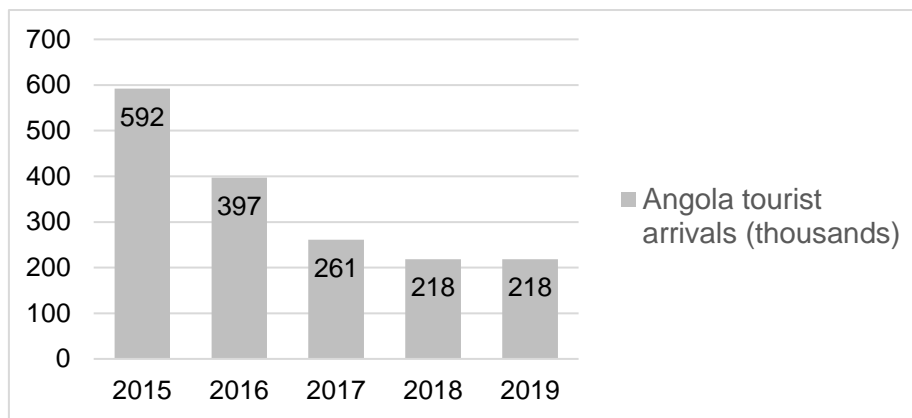


Figure 16. Angola tourist arrivals evolution. *Source: adapted from WTO (2020).*

The degrowth in tourist arrivals is explained by the economic downturn caused by the decline in international oil prices and consequent foreign currency shortages, which hampered economic activity. Furthermore, the slow pace of economic diversification, adverse business conditions, lack of skills and inadequate infrastructure have constrained non-oil sector growth (Muzima, 2018). The transformation of a state-led oil economy to a private-sector-led growth model is a complex and long-term process and the oil sector will continue to play an important role during this transition period (World Bank, 2020b).

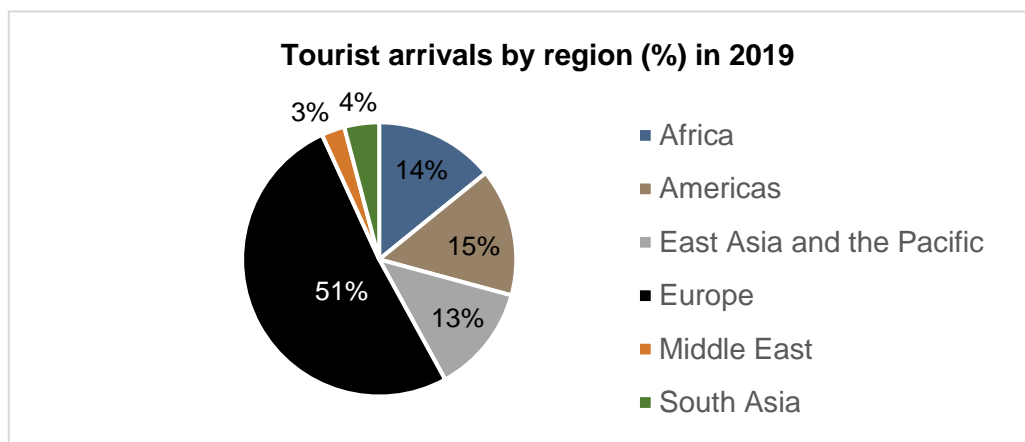


Figure 17. Angola tourist arrivals by region in 2019. *Source: adapted from WTO (2020).*

Tourist arrivals by region (thousands)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Africa	176	53	41	35	31
Americas	105	62	34	38	33
East Asia and the Pacific	96	51	40	29	28
Europe	198	213	135	106	112
Middle East	5	10	5	4	6
South Asia	10	9	7	6	9

Table 10. Evolution of Angola tourist arrivals by region. *Source: adapted from WTO (2020).*

Findings from the World Travel & Tourism Council (2021a) indicate the top 5 countries of inbound arrivals to Angola as follows: in 2019, Portugal (30%), China (8%), Brazil (7%), France (6%) and the United Kingdom (4%); in 2020, Portugal (31%), China (7%), Brazil (6%), Macau SAR, China (5%) and France (4%). Other key highlights are summarized in *Figure 18*. below.

Angola Key Data			
2019		2020	
	Total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP:		
	3.0% of Total Economy Total T&T GDP = AOA1,174.6BN (USD2,032.6MN)	2.0% of Total Economy Total T&T GDP = AOA740.6BN (USD1,281.6MN)	-36.9% Change in Travel & Tourism GDP vs -5.7% real economy GDP change
	Total contribution of Travel & Tourism to Employment:		
	436.3 Jobs (000s) (3.6 % of total employment)	333.2 Jobs (000s) (2.7 % of total employment)	Change in jobs ² : -23.6% -103.1 (000s)
	Visitor Impact International:		
	AOA159.7 BN Visitor spend 1.1% of total exports (USD276.3MN)	AOA68.9 BN Visitor spend 0.6% of total exports (USD119.2MN)	Change in international visitor spend: -56.9% -USD 157.2 MN
	Domestic:		
	AOA661.5 BN Visitor spend (USD 1,144.8MN)	AOA393.9 BN Visitor spend (USD 681.7MN)	Change in domestic visitor spend: -40.5% -USD 463.1 MN

Figure 18. Angola tourism key highlights. *Source: World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021a.*

4.2 – Market Trends

Global concerns for safety, security and health: crisis is the new norm. Visitor safety, security and health are paramount in travel planning and the ability to manage crisis is becoming increasingly important (SADC, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a significant toll on communities across the world and a devastating effect on the tourism sector. Its swift recovery will only be possible if leaders and public officials have a coordinated response to the resumption of international travel (e.g. clear roadmaps, rules, mobility protocols, providing certainty and restoring consumer confidence). We must learn to co-exist with the virus, manage the risk and offer a safe travel experience

and ease the restrictions—therefore powering global economy recovery through tourism. On top of that, there are new travelers' expectations related to more hygienic, touchless and digital experiences (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021b).

Sustainability goes mainstream. There is an increasing awareness among travelers that their choices have an impact—a rise in responsible travel choices, a desire to get off the beaten path, and prolific social media and press around sustainability issues (SADC, 2019). Responsible, ethical and sustainable travel can no longer be a niche or a luxury, but rather the rallying cry for the entire industry—from the smallest independent operators to the largest companies. Tourism must respond to the long-term impacts of overtourism, climate change and global warming. In an era of climate crisis and mass migration, leaving no footprints is no longer enough. Responsible tourists should leave solidarity footprints behind—a positive, progressive and green impact tourism is needed (Center for Responsible Travel, 2019). COVID-19 also emphasized the urgency of “building back better” on solid foundations, with sustainability and stewardship—a responsibility to take care of the planet and its inhabitants, from sustainable destination development to waste management, climate neutrality, inclusivity and mental wellbeing across the world (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021b).

The rise of staycations. While this form of tourism is not new, “staycation” (i.e. local travel activities that a tourist/resident partakes of on day trips at or near home without traveling abroad) has gained popularity in the marketplace in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic—becoming a buzzword as it offers a means of sustainable tourism, providing an affordable yet safe conduit of traveling within a domestic tourism bubble (Wong et al., 2021). This is one of the ways the travel industry adapted to new ways of holidaying in a post-COVID world (Rokou, 2021).

Shortened booking windows. The time between the initial search and the travel date has compressed considerably. Long-term planning is out the window with health advice and traveling restrictions changing on a seemingly daily basis (Skift, 2020).

Blurred line between leisure and business travel. Digital nomads and bleisure (i.e. hybrid between business and leisure travel) predate COVID-19. However, the pandemic and the rise of remote work seems to accelerate their growth and will likely further blur the lines between business and leisure travel. Many professionals moved or experimented with leaving behind expensive urban centers in favor of locations with lower costs or more outdoor recreation. The idea of working from home will transform into working from anywhere—a “workation” (Skift, 2020).

Travelers are increasingly seeking authentic and life-changing experiences. In an era of “tech burnout”, travelers are beginning to seek refuge from their screens in favor of real-world experiences. The demand for more remote destinations where people can unplug and reconnect with themselves is increasing. Modern travelers are focused on having local, authentic and unique experiences—and often can’t help but become aware of environmental or social issues in the places they visit—they want to learn and establish meaningful connections when they travel, aligned with personal values. But they don’t just seek an internal transformational journey. Rather, they want to know their travels are, in some way, just as fulfilling for others, too (Center for Responsible Travel, 2019).

4.3. – Market Segments

The Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge has 2 major overlapping tourism forms, ecotourism and community-based tourism, and has links with a wide range of different types of tourism (i.e. wildlife watching tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism and volunteer tourism). Essentially, their commonality and foundation is set on being (1) nature-based and (2) non-consumptive. And while there are a plethora of ways to segment markets, our segmentation will divide distinct groups based on demographic characteristics and motivations (Visser, 2021).

Community-based tourists share many of the features of adventure tourists and free independent travelers (FIT), but a key motivation is the feel-good factor of an immersive cultural experience and making a difference to local lives. Based on age (CBI, 2020; Skift, 2019; Young, 2019), there are 3 main groups for community-based tourists, as explained in detail below:

Baby Boomers	Examples
Largest community-based tourism target groups. Well-educated, travel frequently, have more disposable income and travel budget, and often like to combine authenticity with luxury. Willing to go the extra mile by opting for longer trips and upgraded accommodations. Noted fans of active relaxation. Usually travel as couples or in small groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Germany - Netherlands - United Kingdom
	Key Drivers/Motivators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trip of a lifetime - Authentic and luxurious experience - Desire to disconnect - Check destination off their bucket list
	Potential Products
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baobab Treehouse guest suite - 4x4 safari game drives & walking safaris - Hiking & bird watching - Cultural village tour

Table 11. Market Segment: Baby Boomers.

Gen X	Examples
Generally well-educated and well-traveled, but have less time than Baby Boomers as most of them have full-time jobs. Comparatively more price-conscious. Like to be engaged in educational and cultural content that immerses them in the local lifestyle. Usually travel as couples or as a family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic visitors - Portugal - Brazil
	Key Drivers/Motivators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See how other people live - Give something back - Family-oriented trip - Explore off-the-beaten-path activities - Educational factor - Culture immersion
	Potential Products
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family suite - Biking interpretative tours - Mokoro boat ride - Medicinal plant guided tour & workshop - Local handicrafts workshop - Guided stargazing

Table 12. Market Segment: Gen X.

Millennials	Examples
They are also well-educated but are more budget-conscious of the 3 groups since the majority of them is still studying or on a gap year. Like to experience and explore the outdoors, fun and interactive activities. Usually travel solo or in groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - France - China - USA
	Key Drivers/Motivators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal development - Support local communities - Learn new things - Interactive experiences
	Potential Products
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntourism experience (gathering scientific data & monitoring wildlife) - Astrophotography tour - Circle of Fire event - Local handicrafts workshop - Cultural village tour

Table 13. Marker Segment: Millennials.

A behavioral approach can be used to identify different visitor types according to their motivational characteristics (Carrascia-López et al., 2021). Therefore, we segmented them into the following groups (1) **naturalists**—whose enjoyment of nature and wilderness is the most important factor; (2) **escapists**—who wish to enjoy solitude and disconnect, and are moderately interested in nature; (3) **ecotourists**—who enjoy nature, novelty and seek educational experiences—that can be divided into **tough ecotourists** (those willing to perform more physically challenging activities) and **soft ecotourists** (those who prefer the learning component over physical effort); (4) **want-it-all tourists**—motivated by multiple reasons including enjoying nature, gastronomy, visiting villages and discovering their culture and traditions.

Section 5 – Competition Analysis

5.1 – Competition Assessment

This section of the business plan should mainly focus on local competitors—those competing directly with our products, services and markets, located geographically close to us (USAID, n.d.). However, due to a lack of local competition within national borders, the geographical scope of the analysis will therefore be extended to the Cubango-Okavango River Basin, including accommodations from Namibia and Botswana.

Name	Namushasha River Lodge (Namibia)	Mombo Safari Camp (Botswana)	Sandibe Okavango Safari Lodge (Botswana)
Years Operating	13 years	+30 years	24 years
Overall Reputation	4.5 / 5 TripAdvisor score (516 reviews) & #1 of 5 hotels in the Caprivi Region	5 / 5 TripAdvisor score (282 reviews) & #6 of 31 hotels in the Moremi Game Reserve	5 / 5 TripAdvisor score (311 reviews) & #16 of 75 accommodation specialized in the Okavango Delta
Product	25-bungalow lodge and campsite on the banks of the Kwando River	9 luxurious tented suites camp on Chief's Island	12-bungalow lodge raised above the papyrus on the Chitabe Concession
Pricing	\$190 / night	\$2.350 / night	\$1.350 / night
Target Markets	Group safaris Adventurous families	Honeymoon couples Wildlife photographers	Nature-loving families Adventurous couples
Promotion Methods	Website (Gondwana Collection), social media, online travel agencies, tour operators (Go2Africa, Rhino Africa), online travel portals (Info Namibia, Conservation Tourism Namibia)	Website (Mombo Camp & Wilderness Safaris), social media, online travel agencies, tour operators (Okavango Delta, Luxury Safari Camps, andBeyond), destination management organization (Botswana Tourism), travel magazines (Condé Nast Traveler)	Website (andBeyond), social media, online travel agencies, tour operators (Okavango Delta, Go2Africa, Matriarch, Natural World Safaris, Africa Travel, Journeys by Design), travel magazines (Luxury Travel Magazine), sponsored blog posts (World of Wanderlust)
Overall Strengths	Deck overlooking hippo pool, excellent bird watching destination with +400 bird species	Flagship Botswana camp, firm reputation as the finest game viewing in Botswana's Okavango Delta and on Earth	Unique and striking design resembling a pangolin, the suites mimic the nests of golden weaver birds, magnificent Delta views
Overall Weaknesses	Does not offer same levels of personal service as smaller, owner-run lodges	Too expensive	Attention to detail doesn't match other andBeyond lodges
Rankings (1 to 5; 1 = lowest, 5 = highest)			
Tours	5 (excellent trained guides and different activities: guided hiking, boat trips, fishing trips, game drives)	5 (complete focus on game drives—which are extraordinary and world-class)	5 (high-standards game drives and guiding, walking safari, fishing, bird watching, mokoro ride, helicopter rides)
Food	3.5 (food rated the best of Gondwana Collection but the service isn't excellent)	4.5 (delicious and thoughtful selection of food appealing to anyone)	4.5 (interactive kitchen, buffet bar with daily changing menu, individual tables instead of more typical communal ones)
Lodging	5 (unique venue, idyllic destination)	5 (eclectic mixture of old and new design, spacious room and unforgettable views)	5 (outsanding design bleding with the landscape and offering unrestricted views)

Transportation	4 (nicely equipped 4x4 game vehicle)	5 (exceptionally comfortable and spacious open-sided land rovers)	5 (customizable safari vehicles to cater for specific day or night drives, on-site scenic safari helicopter flights)
Customer Service	3.5 (friendly staff but lack of personal service)	5 (highly-quality service, experienced and knowledgeable staff)	5 (warm hospitality and high-standards service)
Cultural Authenticity	4.5 (joint venture agreement with the Mashi conservancy and employment, sales of local goods and services)	N/A	3.5 (local handicrafts sold in the safari shop, interacting kitchen celebrating local cuisine)
Natural Attractions	5 (Bwabwata National Park, stop-over en route to the Victoria Falls)	5 (The UNESCO World Heritage Okavango Delta—the Moremi Reserve covers about 40% of the Okavango and is known as the “Garden of Eden” offering stunning landscapes of floodplains, lagoons and wildlife-rich dense forests)	5 (golden-grassed floodplains and lush palm islands amid wildlife-rich ancient paths where elephants have often tread)
Community / Conservation Support	5 (close cooperation with the Mashi Conservancy, nature and wildlife conservation, and the creation of the Namushasha Cultural Village together with community members to celebrate Eastern Zambezi diversity)	5 (site of reintroduction of the black and white rhino in the early 2000s, home to the most endangered species of large mammals, including the cheetah, the African wild dog and lion)	5 (community access to private concession area to harvest grass and reed for added income, basketwares made by the Tsutsubega and Gogomoga communities are sold in the safari shop, skills development and educational programmes, boreholes were drilled for a stable source of water for the communities)
Marketing	4 (great collection website and online presence, but the lodge should have its own social media)	4.5 (the camp has its own website but the social media is from the Wilderness Safaris with over 40 camps in 7 countries)	5 (the lodge has a curated and engaging social media presence, and benefits from and Beyond already-established brand reputation)
Sales	4 (easy to buy book / buy but customer facing service could improve)	5 (extremely easy to book / buy with superb service)	5 (high-end booking process with travel specialists from award-winning organization)
Average Score	4.3	4.8	4.8

Table 14. Competition Analysis chart.

5.2 – Competitive Advantages

Competitive Advantages	
Product	Education as a foundational value: hosting researchers and other members of the scientific community in the ecolodge, offering voluntourism experiences to budget-conscious travelers looking to make a difference, weekly conservation-themed events for guests.
Staff & Training	Being a community-focused and community-led organization: employing people from the local community, frequent capacity building, empowering them in the decision-making process through the Ecotourism Committee's participation. Resulting in a much more authentic and impactful experience for the guests looking for purpose-driven experiences.
Operations	Community-driven business structure: the existence of the Community Outreach department making sure the ecolodge's operations are benefiting local communities according to their needs.
Sales & Marketing	Appealing to eco-conscious consumers and stakeholders: by being the only enterprise in the region directly supporting the protection of the Okavango Basin in Angola and its biodiversity—which ultimately safeguards UNESCO's World Heritage Okavango Delta—and providing sustainable livelihoods to local communities.
Infrastructure	Environment & Community Center: a space dedicated to eco-innovation and social impact projects within the ecolodge, where local communities, staff and guests come together.

Table 15. Competitive Advantages chart.

Section 6 – Sales and Marketing Strategy

6.1 – Product

The Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge offers a quintessential river and land safari experience deeply rooted in the source of the world-famous Delta with 14 raised off the ground guest suites—including a treehouse to sleep beneath the African starry sky. The community-based ecolodge is located in a remote and untapped territory of Angola teeming with biodiversity, where hospitality meets conservation, and guests act as changemakers creating meaningful and long-lasting positive impact to both the environment and the local community. It is a purpose-driven accommodation offering a once-in-a-lifetime experience filled with land, water, sky and cultural activities. In the Business Description chapter of this business plan you can find a more comprehensive and thorough explanation of the product—that is one of the key elements of our Marketing Mix.

6.2 – Placement

Table 16. illustrates the distribution channels proposed by the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge through which customers will be able to find, book and purchase our products and services.

Category	Distribution Channel	Description
Direct	Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge Front Office	Clients will be able to book and purchase directly through our website, email, phone or as walk-in clients, seven days a week. Contact by phone is available from 8:00 to 17:00, with the help of qualified and knowledgeable bilingual staff.
	Wilderness Safaris Sales office	Clients would be able to book and purchase through Wilderness Safaris—the company that would operate our ecolodge—and their Sales office in Angola, from Monday to Friday, between 8:00 and 17:00 for phone contact, with the help of travel specialists, and an emergency afterhours available 24/7. Other booking and purchase options include their website and email.
Indirect	Cuando Cubango Airport	The airport information kiosk sells the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge experiences for a 10% commission, which they collect from clients upon reservation as a deposit, and the remainder is paid directly to the lodge.
	Online Travel Agencies	Booking, Expedia, Hotels.com, Agoda, Trip.com--which charge a 15% commission for each reservation.
	Tour Operators	Okavango Delta, andBeyond, Southern Destinations, Go2Africa, Matriarch Africa, Africa Conservation Travel, Responsible Travel, African Impact (wildlife conservation volunteering tour operator)—charging a 25% commission for each reservation.

Table 16. Marketing Strategy: Placement (Distribution Channels).

6.3. – Pricing

The rates described in *Table 17*. include accommodation, all meals, daily scheduled lodge activities, park fees, community and conservation fees, laundry and all local drinks (excluding premium imported brands), in accordance with Wilderness Safaris' conditions. Access to and from the lodge is excluded in nightly rates below. The time period and price range were set taking into account other Wilderness Safaris' lodges in Botswana, in the Okavango Delta region, according to their published recommended selling rates for this year (Wilderness Safaris, 2022).

Nightly rates						
Kavango Zambezi Seasons	Wet Season	Flood Season	Dry Season		Wet / Green Season	
Time Period	6 Jan-31 Mar	1 Apr-30 Apr	1 May-31 May	1 Jun-31 Oct	1 Nov-19 Dec	20 Dec-5 Jan
Guest Suites	\$890	\$1140	\$1490	\$1840	\$970	\$1230
Baobab Treehouse	\$1020	\$1300	\$1710	\$2110	\$1120	\$1410

Table 17. Marketing Strategy: Pricing (Nightly Rates).

In the Kavango Zambezi region, the warm Summer months begin at the end of October until the end of March. Higher temperatures, humidity, mosquitoes and a thicker bush that makes it more difficult to spot animals explain the lower prices in the so-called Wet or Green Season—however, there is the arrival of migrant birds to swell the species list. In the Dry Season, extending from May to October, safaris are rewarded with excellent sightings, considering animals congregate in huge numbers along rivers and inland water sources dry up—it is the best time for game drives, walking safaris, events and cultural festivals. From April to September, during the Flood Season, enormous volumes of water are released into the river system, saturating floodplains—water-based activities are recommended at this time (KAZA TFCA, 2020).

6.4 – Promotion

Target Market Segment	Who Are They?	Potential Products	Key Motivations for Buying	Key Messages	Key Images	Promotional & Marketing Activities
Baby Boomers	Soft ecotourist/escapists couples and small bird watching groups from Germany, Netherlands, United Kingdom	Baobab Treehouse guest suite, 4x4 safari game drives, walking safaris, hiking, bird watching, cultural village tour	Trip of a lifetime, authentic and luxurious experience, desire to disconnect, check destinations off their bucket list	Sleep under the stars and the magic of the wilderness / Experience Africa at its most raw and remarkable	Treehouse under starry sky, guide pointing to a bird, wildlife-rich game drive, elder couple relaxing	Responsive website design (to check on PC), Facebook content over other social media, Google paid ads, Facebook advertising, Youtube slow-paced videos, brochures, email marketing
Gen X	Tough ecotourist couples and want-it-all tourist families from Angola, Portugal, Brazil	Family suite, biking interpretative tours, mokoro boat ride, medicinal plant guided tour & workshop, local handicraft workshop, guided stargazing	See how other people live, give something back, family-oriented trip, explore off-the-beaten-path activities, educational factor, cultural immersion	Go beyond the expected safari experience / Experience community and culture in the heart of Africa	Local communities and their villages, family stargazing in the typical boma, people enjoying adventure activities	Responsive website design (to check on smartphone/tablet) with loyalty programmes, Facebook content over other social media content (e.g. real-world narratives), email marketing with discounts, review platforms, search engine optimization
Millennials	Naturalist photographer students traveling solo or small want-it-all tourist groups on a gap year	Voluntourism experience, astrophotography tour, Circle of Fire event, local handicrafts workshop, cultural village tour	Personal development, support local communities, learn new things, interactive experiences	Come protect this pristine wilderness and ensure the future of Africa's wildlife	Young people monitoring wildlife, workshops with local community, exchanging experiences with other travellers	Responsive website design (all devices), blog posts with good storytelling, interactive and authentic Instagram/TikTok content, fast-paced entertaining Youtube videos, e-books with relevant information, inviting user-generated content
Conservation-based & Community-focused Tour Operators	Okavango Delta, andBeyond, Southern Destinations, Go2Africa, Matriarch Africa, Africa Conservation Travel, Responsible Travel, African Impact	Overnight stay in the ecolodge with all meals and daily activities included, multi-lodge safari packages in the Okavango Delta region, voluntourism wildlife conservation experience	25% commission, diversifying their destination portfolio by adding Angola, cross-selling with other Okavango region lodges	Let's put Angola on the map together / We offer unbeatable commissions to partners making a difference with us	Lodge facilities, guest suites, local staff receiving guests, wildlife spotted on game drives, volunteers monitoring wildlife	Print/digital catalogues, sell sheets with cutting-edge design and persuasive call-to-action, broad and niche trade shows

Table 18. Marketing Strategy: Promotion (Promotional Strategy Worksheet).

Section 7 – Operations Planning

7.1 – Staffing and Training Plan

The ecolodge's operation is in compliance with other Wilderness Safaris lodges and camps. Employees, which are mostly from local communities, are specifically trained for their positions and go through frequent capacity building programmes to improve skills. However, there are other positions that require previous experience, like most of back of house positions and the general manager. Nonetheless, the advancement to managerial positions of local community is the ultimate goal. The Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge offers department-specific training, but the entire staff must also go through transversal training regarding the following subjects: environmental education, biodiversity conservation, protected area management, natural resource management, visitor carrying capacity, sustainable development goals, human-wildlife conflicts, conservation agriculture, community engagement and leadership, health and safety procedures and first aid.

The backbone positions of our community-led and community-focused strategy are explained in detail down below:

Ecotourism Committee. Composed of 5 representatives of local communities that participate in collective decision-making along with the ecolodge managers—the general manager and the department managers. They decide on matters such as work procedures, infrastructure, project policies, marketing strategies, itinerary development, hiring, solving staff problems. Traditional knowledge, values, norms and structures are respected and empowered to guarantee the focus on community benefits and local participation. Training includes hospitality management skills (e.g. product development, customer care, marketing, human resources), as well as the aforementioned cross-departmental training. Capacity building is implemented to avoid any skills gap within the Committee, as they represent a cornerstone of the ecolodge.

Community Outreach. Assists with community development initiatives to bridge the gap between community's needs and the services they can usually access, thereby improving local livelihoods and their wellbeing. Works closely with community members and NGOs, and is responsible for the allocation of Okavango Wilderness Trust funds to support development projects (e.g. schools, health clinics, roads, water treatment

facilities, waste management and composting, conservation agriculture, scholarships) and wildlife conservation. This positions requires previous experience in the field. Training includes subjects such as advocacy and conflict resolution, partnership and coalition building, human rights and community organizing, social justice, community project management—on top of the cross-departmental training—and capacity building further reinforces these skills.

7.2 – Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan

Potential Risk	Description	Risk Mitigation
Safety and health-related incidents	Fires and explosions, tour and activities accidents, foodborne illness, and any other unexpected event or emergency	<p>Wilderness Safaris offer Wilderness24, an incident management system with years of experience operating in remote areas. Taylor-made emergency response plans are in place for all areas in which Wilderness operates.</p> <p>When necessary, Park Doctor (non-profit healthcare organization connecting doctors to protected parks) provides the necessary medical guidance, support and response. Plus, all staff is trained on health and safety procedures and how to respond in case of accidents and unexpected events like fires and explosions. They are also trained on first aid to respond to emergencies. The ecolodge will establish a nearby clinic to attend to guests and staff. It complies with local building and fire protection legislation, regular inspection of utilities, equipment and evacuation drills. The Engineering & Maintenance department has a preventive measures programme. In addition, kitchen health inspections are performed by using the Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP) system</p>
Resource over-utilization: water and energy	The hotel industry is one of the most resource-intensive branches within the tourism sector. Substantial quantities of water and energy are consumed in providing comfort and services to guests, many of whom are accustomed to, and willing to pay for exclusive amenities, treatment and entertainment. However, properly planned, designed and operated sustainable hotel facilities can offer convincing environmental and socio-cultural advantages	<p>The ecolodge will monitor water use with daily records. Rainwater harvesting will be undertaken, as well as greywater reusing. Appropriate plunge pool sizing and optimized operations (e.g. low evaporation, zero-spillage options). Guests will be sensitized on water conservation (especially regarding laundry). Guest suites will be fitted with low-water use dual water cistern systems</p> <p>The ecolodge will adopt total resilience on solar power (e.g. lightning, borehole water abstraction and distribution, water-heating, phone charging, laptops, internet). Low wattage energy saving bulbs will be used throughout the premises, and the ecolodge will make maximum use of natural lightning during the day. Guests will be sensitized on the importance of energy conservation</p>
Deliberate and wild fires	Fires caused by lightning typically occur during the Wet Season, but most fires in the Luengue-Luiana Park are purposefully ignited by humans, used to enhance the subsistence livelihood through slash-and-burn agriculture, grazing	Respect burning seasons established by park authorities. Conduct public awareness campaigns within local communities and traditional leaders. Create firebreaks by clearing vegetation manually or using road networks.

	enhancement (domestic and wildlife), driving wildlife for hunting, honey gathering and pest control. This also leads to degradation of soil productivity impacting both sustenance for humans and wildlife	Transboundary cooperation regarding cross-border fire management with the help of NGOs: ACADIR (Angola) and IRDNC (Namibia).
Poaching	Over the past 30 years, poaching depleted all species of wildlife in the park. Organized hunting parties poached for meat and to sell elephant and hippo ivory and rhinoceros horns. A lesser concern is low-intensity hunting by local communities for own consumption, but this should not be allowed to escalate. Transport of bushmeat originating from the park to any other country is prohibited	Notify law enforcement (i.e. park authorities and the police) of illegal commercial hunting, supported by local people. Develop initiatives which create tangible benefits to communities in return for them helping to conserve wildlife. Strengthen the involvement in KAZA TFCA's transboundary conservation
Illegal logging	Illegal logging is prohibited, and so is the transport of logs/timber/wood originating from the park to any other country	Notify law enforcement (i.e. park authorities and the police) of illegal logging. Develop initiatives which create tangible benefits to communities in return for them helping to conserve forests
Wildlife movement barriers	Barriers to wildlife corridors must be removed in its entirety or in strategic places to allow for cross-border mega fauna migration—as the park was identified to be one of the 3 elephant safe haven within KAZA TFCA	Working closely with park, veterinary, security authorities and local communities to determine which boundaries/fences to remove
Human-wildlife conflicts	Crop-raiding elephants and hippos negatively impact local community livelihoods. Predation of livestock by hyenas is also a concern. Human-wildlife conflicts will continue to increase if cultivation and livestock numbers escalate and they occur in areas increasingly utilized by wildlife	Helping authorities that allocate land to limit the spread of human settlement in important habitat zones of the park by raising awareness within local communities. Mapping wildlife corridors as unavailable areas for new developments. Educating communities in methods to protect crops and livestock from predators. Promote conservation agriculture within local communities to improve their livelihoods without expanding their land-use footprint (i.e. by using the unsustainable slash-and-burn method)
River flow variation and reduction	There are several large-scale irrigation schemes to be developed in the park which may interfere with the natural river flow and ecosystem—thus becoming unsustainable. This could result in water quality reduction, river banks collapse, biodiversity loss, impact on river navigation, increased water-borne diseases. The growth in domestic and livestock demand for groundwater abstraction has a minimal impact comparatively	Developing a water monitoring programme. Conducting public awareness campaigns regarding water resources usage within local communities, NGOs and the private sector
Climate change and related disasters	Greater intensity of droughts, floods, soil erosion, outbreaks of water-associated diseases (e.g. cholera), expanding the geographic range and prolonging the seasonality of disease vectors (e.g. malaria-carrying mosquitoes), heat stress negatively affecting crops and livestock—which increases mortality for local communities, water supply shortage, resource distribution shift, natural resources scarcity—which increases human-wildlife conflicts	Development and adoption of climate-smart technologies and biodiversity-compatible practices, conservation agriculture (i.e. climate-resilient crops), responsible water-use planning and storage (i.e. to maintain adequate water supply through drought events). Knowledge-sharing and awareness campaigns between local communities, local government, NGOs, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders

Table 19. Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan chart.

Section 8 – Sustainability Planning

8.1 – Tourism Conservation Models and Strategies

Conservancy is proposing a new paradigm for tourism in protected areas in developing countries (Drumm, 2008)—which is the case of the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge, located in the Angolan Luengue-Luiana National Park. The sustainability threshold therefore lies in the mutually reinforcing relationship between environmental conservation and socio-economic community development. This linkage underpins the concept of community-based tourism, the foundation upon which the ecolodge is set. *Table 20.* outlines the tourism conservation models and strategies based on USAID's (n.d.) resources, built on valuable work by Brandon & Margoluis (1996).

Tourism Conservation Model	Description	Tourism Conservation Strategy
Improve Tourism Operations & Guidelines	Develop and adopt sustainable operating principles and practices that reduce tourism's negative impact on species and their habitat	Eco-innovative alternative technologies to manage the ecolodge's energy, water and waste, focus on non-consumptive and non-extractive nature-based activities (e.g. wildlife viewing, traditional mokoro boat ride), raised off the ground architecture and design for minimal ecological footprint, the Wilderness Safaris Ethics Charter and Codes of Conduct (<i>Appendix</i>)
Increase Conservation Awareness & Constituencies	Increase the conservation awareness of both local residents and visitors, as well as the number of local residents benefitting from sustainable tourism activities	Weekly conservation-themed events for guests (i.e. documentary/film projection and discussion), conservation and biodiversity book collection in the Library, local community capacity building (e.g. avoiding human-wildlife conflicts, conservation agriculture, beekeeping), local community supplying products and services directly to guests (e.g. guiding, wildlife-inspired handicrafts, workshops), Community Outreach department focusing on community development projects (e.g. schools, health clinics, water and waste treatment facilities, scholarships), wildlife advocacy in social media
Increase Income Diversification	Create sustainable tourism jobs, products and services for local community members that directly reduce biodiversity conservation threats	Mission statement and overall community-focused and conservation-oriented strategy, direct employment, training and advancement to managerial positions of local community members giving them alternative livelihoods to extractive activities (e.g. hunting and poaching, fishing, slash-and-burn agriculture, charcoal production, illegal logging). Revenue-sharing agreement with local community in which they hold 50% equity
Improve Monitoring & Research	Increase the monitoring and research presence of trained guides, visitors and/or researchers in critical natural areas threatened by illegal resource extractive activities	The Environment & Community Center hosts researchers and other members of the scientific community in residency programmes to study the remote wildlife-rich area of the Cubango-Okavango Basin with access to lab rooms and the necessary equipment. Voluntourists assist them by gathering scientific data and monitoring wildlife. Trained guides have ancestral hunting skills that can be put to practice to monitoring instead
Increase Tourism-Generated Conservation Financing	Increasing the financial support for conservation that tourism-generated profits, donations and fees can provide	The Okavango Wilderness Trust is composed of the conservation fee charged by the ecolodge with the goal to finance wildlife conservation, as well as community development initiatives, in-case or in-kind visitors' contributions and donations, and the Luengue-Luiana National Park entrance free finances park-wide conservation
Increasing Conservation Partnerships	Facilitate collaboration between protected areas, NGOs, the private sector	The Ecotourism Committee's empowerment and participation in fundamental decision-making, public awareness campaigns and capacity building (e.g. human-

	and/or community partners to strengthen biodiversity efforts	wildlife conflicts, biodiversity-compatible practices and climate-smart technologies) among the local community, NGOs, local governments, park authorities and the private sector, transboundary conservation in the context of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area
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Table 20. Tourism Conservation Models and Strategies.

8.2 – Sustainability Plan and Budget

A sustainability plan is a roadmap for achieving long-term goals that outlines the strategies, activities and partnerships needed to reach them (Rural Health Information Hub, 2017). *Figure 19.* is a graphic representation of the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge's conservation threat assessment and sustainability plan based on USAID's (n.d.) model.

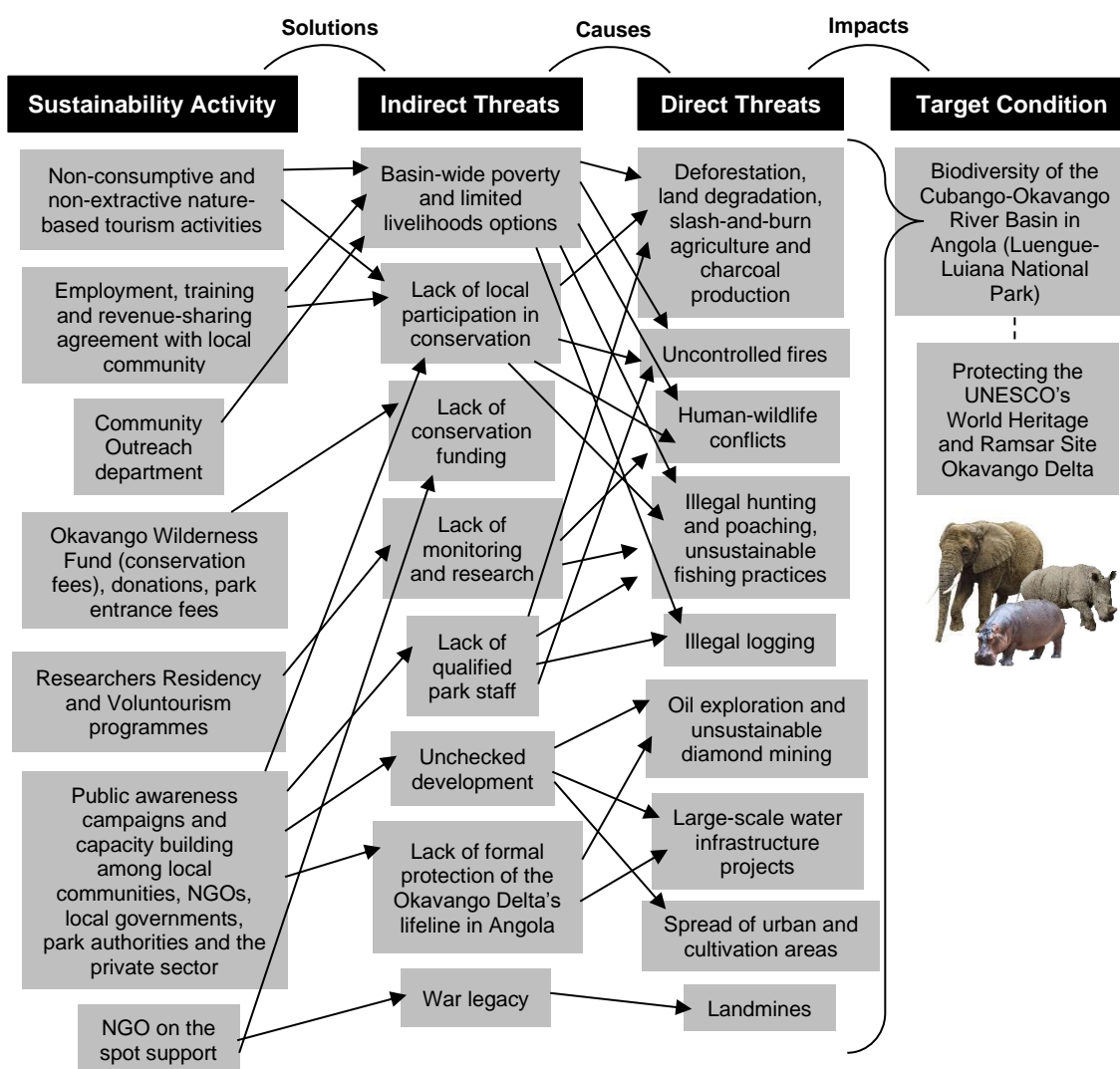


Figure 19. Conservation Threat Assessment and Sustainability Plan.

Before implementing the sustainability plan developed above (*Figure 19.*), we need to identify and budget the costs needed to support it.

Item	Units	Cost per Unit (US \$)	Total Cost (US \$)	Notes
Research & Monitoring				
Researchers accommodation	24	\$40,00	\$960,00	We host up to 2 researchers per month all-year long. Accommodation costs only refer to monthly housekeeping and laundry provided because the rooms in which they stay are part of the ecolodge's infrastructure costs. This is a yearly cost.
Researchers meals on staff canteen	24	\$90,00	\$2 160,00	The cost per unit is the monthly meal value. The total cost a yearly cost the ecolodge needs to cover.
Research lab room equipment	1	\$1 000,00	\$1 000,00	One-time cost.
Binoculars	4	\$50,00	\$200,00	One-time cost.
Telescopes	2	\$150,00	\$300,00	One-time cost.
Field photography	1	\$700,00	\$700,00	One-time cost.
Camera traps	5	\$80,00	\$400,00	One-time cost.
GPS transmitters	2	\$100,00	\$200,00	One-time cost.
Public Awareness Campaigns & Capacity Building				
In-house awareness raising events	6	\$70,00	\$420,00	Yearly cost. Involves local communities, NGOs, local governments, park authorities and the private sector. By using in-house facilities and services costs can remain relatively low.
Online awareness raising campaigns	12	\$50,00	\$600,00	
In-house capacity building events & workshops	4	\$60,00	\$240,00	
Virtual capacity building events & workshops	3	\$20,00	\$60,00	
Total Costs			\$7 040,00	
Yearly Costs			\$4 440,00	
One-Time Costs			\$2 800,00	

Table 21. Sustainability Plan costs.

Sustainability costs breakdown in *Table 21.* only account for activities that are external to the main operation of the ecolodge and its very nature, that are already budgeted separately. Thus, the tourism product (i.e. non-consumptive/non-extractive nature-based activities), the business structure (i.e. revenue-sharing model and Community Outreach department), operations planning (i.e. training and capacity building), the Okavango Wilderness Fund and the NGO support—which is free of charge—weren't included in the sustainability plan budget. Additionally, the Voluntourism Program is charged to interested clients and, thus, it does not represent a cost .

Section 9 – Financial Projections and Forecasting

9.1 – Start Up Costs

The estimated initial investment needed to make the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge fully functional is \$429.900 as explained in detail in *Table 22*. below.

Item	Units	Cost per Unit (US \$)	Total Cost (US \$)
Infrastructure			
Eco-friendly and biodegradable architecture	1	\$300 000,00	\$300 000,00
Local artisan interior design	1	\$5 000,00	\$5 000,00
Energy, water and waste eco-innovative technologies	1	\$30 000,00	\$30 000,00
Organic vegetable garden design	1	\$500,00	\$500,00
Plunge pools	14	\$300,00	\$4 200,00
		Subtotal	\$339 700,00
Equipment			
Guest Suites equipment	13	\$1 000,00	\$13 000,00
Treehouse equipment	1	\$1 200,00	\$1 200,00
Kitchen equipment	1	\$30 000,00	\$30 000,00
Cleaning equipment	1	\$1 000,00	\$1 000,00
Laundry appliances	1	\$1 000,00	\$1 000,00
Electronic devices	1	\$3 000,00	\$3 000,00
Phone and internet installation	1	\$350,00	\$350,00
Hotel software	1	\$100,00	\$100,00
4x4 Safari vehicles	2	\$10 000,00	\$20 000,00
Traditional mokoro canoes	5	\$50,00	\$250,00
Organic vegetable garden equipment	1	\$30,00	\$30,00
Beekeeping equipment and protective gear	1	\$500,00	\$500,00
		Subtotal	\$70 430,00
Constructions Costs			
Construction materials transportation	3	\$50,00	\$150,00
Meals for construction workers	650	\$3,00	\$1 950,00
		Subtotal	\$2 100,00
Legal Fees / Insurances / Licenses / Taxes			
Business registration	1	\$200,00	\$200,00
Building permit	1	\$300,00	\$300,00
Fire safety permit	1	\$70,00	\$70,00
Health trade license	1	\$100,00	\$100,00
Service tax and VAT registration	1	\$100,00	\$100,00
Insurance	1	\$200,00	\$200,00
		Subtotal	\$970,00
Marketing & Promotion			
Website domain and design	1	\$8 000,00	\$8 000,00
Google and social media paid ads	1	\$200,00	\$200,00
Photography and videography content	1	\$2 000,00	\$2 000,00
Brochures / catalogues / sell sheets	1	\$500,00	\$500,00
Trade shows	2	\$500,00	\$1 000,00
		Subtotal	\$11 700,00
		TOTAL	\$424 900,00

Table 22. Okavango Wilderness Lodge Start Up Costs.

9.2 – Cash Flow Statement

	Year 1												Year 1 Total
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Beginning Cash Balance													
	\$0,00	-\$26 550,00	-\$64 690,00	-\$109 570,00	-\$170 218,00	-\$300 058,00	-\$472 718,00	-\$649 848,00	-\$835 408,00	-\$1 016 288,00	-\$1 192 668,00	-\$1 290 688,00	
Cash Receipts													
Core Products & Services													
Guest Suite accommodation (all meals, daily activities, laundry, local drinks, community and conservation fees)	\$20 470,00	\$28 480,00	\$31 150,00	\$41 218,00	\$89 400,00	\$115 920,00	\$117 760,00	\$121 440,00	\$119 600,00	\$117 760,00	\$67 900,00	\$86 100,00	\$957 198,00
Baobab Treehouse accommodation (all meals, daily activities, laundry, local drinks, community and conservation fees)	\$9 180,00	\$11 220,00	\$13 260,00	\$18 200,00	\$37 620,00	\$52 750,00	\$54 860,00	\$59 080,00	\$56 970,00	\$54 860,00	\$26 880,00	\$28 200,00	\$423 080,00
Volutourism Program	\$1 700,00	\$1 700,00	\$3 400,00	\$3 800,00	\$4 000,00	\$4 000,00	\$4 000,00	\$4 000,00	\$4 000,00	\$4 000,00	\$3 800,00	\$3 800,00	\$42 200,00
Cultural village tour	\$400,00	\$680,00	\$800,00	\$920,00	\$1 200,00	\$1 320,00	\$1 360,00	\$1 400,00	\$1 320,00	\$1 280,00	\$1 280,00	\$1 280,00	\$13 240,00
Medicinal plant guided tour and workshop	\$250,00	\$400,00	\$500,00	\$600,00	\$1 000,00	\$1 150,00	\$1 200,00	\$1 300,00	\$1 150,00	\$1 100,00	\$1 100,00	\$1 100,00	\$10 850,00
Handicraft workshop	\$350,00	\$400,00	\$450,00	\$650,00	\$1 150,00	\$1 250,00	\$1 350,00	\$1 450,00	\$1 350,00	\$1 250,00	\$1 250,00	\$1 250,00	\$12 150,00
Total Sales	\$32 350,00	\$42 880,00	\$49 560,00	\$65 388,00	\$134 370,00	\$176 390,00	\$180 530,00	\$188 670,00	\$184 390,00	\$180 250,00	\$102 210,00	\$121 730,00	\$1 458 718,00
Additional Sales													
Local products from the Market	\$150,00	\$170,00	\$140,00	\$180,00	\$230,00	\$650,00	\$800,00	\$850,00	\$750,00	\$650,00	\$550,00	\$950,00	\$6 070,00
Premium imported beverages	\$300,00	\$350,00	\$390,00	\$400,00	\$430,00	\$900,00	\$1 050,00	\$1 300,00	\$950,00	\$800,00	\$450,00	\$600,00	\$7 920,00
Total Additional Sales	\$450,00	\$520,00	\$530,00	\$580,00	\$660,00	\$1 550,00	\$1 850,00	\$2 150,00	\$1 700,00	\$1 450,00	\$1 000,00	\$1 550,00	\$13 990,00
Total Cash Available	\$32 800,00	\$43 400,00	\$50 090,00	\$65 968,00	\$135 030,00	\$177 940,00	\$182 380,00	\$190 820,00	\$186 090,00	\$181 700,00	\$103 210,00	\$123 280,00	\$1 472 708,00
Cash Payments													
Start Up Costs													
All costs listed in "Start Up Costs" budget													
Total Start Up Costs	\$424 900,00												\$424 900,00
Fixed Costs (Annual)													
Phone and internet	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$50,00	\$600,00
Hotel software	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$30,00	\$360,00
Legals fees / insurance	\$1 000,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$1 000,00
Maintenance	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$1 800,00
Marketing and promotion	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$150,00	\$1 800,00
Salaries	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$4 500,00	\$54 000,00
Total Fixed Costs	\$5 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$4 880,00	\$59 560,00
Other Costs													
Researchers Residency Program	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$260,00	\$3 120,00
Public Awareness Campaigns	\$50,00	\$120,00	\$50,00	\$120,00	\$50,00	\$120,00	\$50,00	\$120,00	\$50,00	\$120,00	\$50,00	\$120,00	\$1 020,00
Capacity Building	\$60,00	\$0,00	\$20,00	\$60,00	\$0,00	\$20,00	\$60,00	\$0,00	\$20,00	\$60,00	\$0,00	\$0,00	\$300,00
Total Other Costs	\$370,00	\$380,00	\$330,00	\$440,00	\$310,00	\$400,00	\$370,00	\$380,00	\$330,00	\$440,00	\$310,00	\$380,00	\$4 440,00
Total Cash Paid Out	\$6 250,00	\$5 260,00	\$5 210,00	\$5 320,00	\$5 190,00	\$5 280,00	\$5 250,00	\$5 260,00	\$5 210,00	\$5 320,00	\$5 190,00	\$5 260,00	\$64 000,00
Cash Balance													
	\$26 550,00	\$38 140,00	\$44 880,00	\$60 648,00	\$129 840,00	\$172 660,00	\$177 130,00	\$185 560,00	\$180 880,00	\$176 380,00	\$98 020,00	\$118 020,00	\$1 408 708,00
Equity Deposits													
Project Grant Funds	\$500 000,00												\$500 000,00
Ending Cash Balance													
	-\$26 550,00	-\$64 690,00	-\$109 570,00	-\$170 218,00	-\$300 058,00	-\$472 718,00	-\$649 848,00	-\$835 408,00	-\$1 016 288,00	-\$1 192 668,00	-\$1 290 688,00	-\$1 408 708,00	-\$7 537 412,00

Table 23. Okavango Wilderness Ec lodge Year 1 Cash Flow Statement.

To assess the ecolodge's ability to generate cash and cash equivalents and its uses, a Cash Flow Statement was projected for the first year of operations (*Table 23.*). The negative cash balance at the end of each month essentially means the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge will need to set aside some cash for the first operational year. The categories under Cash Receipts are the core revenue-producing activities which fluctuate in price according to wildlife viewing seasonality of the Kavango Zambezi region—this is explained in detail in the Sales and Marketing Strategy chapter of the business plan. The Dry Season (extending from May to October) offers the best game sightings, which justifies why this time period is projected to be the most lucrative in the Cash Flow Statement. Besides, this project received a funding of \$500.000 US dollars from the Cubango-Okavango River Basin Fund (CORB), a fully independent hybrid fund that aims to enhance livelihoods, improve ecosystem resilience and provide equitable benefits to the Angola, Botswana and Namibia states. Some of the development interventions supported by the fund include conservation agriculture, sustainable beekeeping, sustainable energy, rural water supply, communal sanitation infrastructure, community climate adaptation projects and biodiversity and ecosystems conservation—and particular focus will be given to training and capacity building (OKACOM, 2020).

9.3 – Five-Year Projections

The long-term potential of the ecolodge is represented on *Table 24.* based on the revenue projection of 20% sales increase on average each year. Annual indirect costs and other costs (i.e. from the Sustainability Plan) will also increase each year at a steady rate of 18% to reflect inflation. This is the projected average inflation rate for Angola in 2022 as projected by Angolan National Bank (BNA), according to Lourenço (2021). On top of that, there is a 5-year-long financial incentive represented by a 17,50% tax for SMMEs in the Cuando Cubango province (Administração Geral Tributária, 2020)—which explains an average net profit margin of 79% for the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge. Furthermore, the ecolodge's community-led and community-focused strategy is illustrated in the 50% share of net profit for the local community.

Based on 20% annual increase in sales volume and 18% annual increase in fixed and variable costs					
Revenue					
Net Sales					
Core Products & Services					
Guest Suite accommodation (all meals, daily activities, laundry, local drinks, community and conservation fees)	\$957 198,00	\$1 148 637,60	\$1 378 365,12	\$1 654 038,14	\$1 984 845,77
Baobab Treehouse accommodation (all meals, daily activities, laundry, local drinks, community and conservation fees)	\$423 080,00	\$507 696,00	\$609 235,20	\$731 082,24	\$877 298,69
Volutourism Program	\$42 200,00	\$50 640,00	\$60 768,00	\$72 921,60	\$87 505,92
Cultural village tour	\$13 240,00	\$15 888,00	\$19 065,60	\$22 878,72	\$27 454,46
Medicinal plant guided tour and workshop	\$10 850,00	\$13 020,00	\$15 624,00	\$18 748,80	\$22 498,56
Handicraft workshop	\$12 150,00	\$14 580,00	\$17 496,00	\$20 995,20	\$25 194,24
Total Sales	\$1 458 718,00	\$1 750 461,60	\$2 100 553,92	\$2 520 664,70	\$3 024 797,64
Additional Sales					
Local products from the Market	\$6 070,00	\$7 284,00	\$8 740,80	\$10 488,96	\$12 586,75
Premium imported beverages	\$7 920,00	\$9 504,00	\$11 404,80	\$13 685,76	\$16 422,91
Total Additional Sales	\$13 990,00	\$16 788,00	\$20 145,60	\$24 174,72	\$29 009,66
Gross Sales	\$1 472 708,00	\$1 767 249,60	\$2 120 699,52	\$2 544 839,42	\$3 053 807,31
Gross Profit					
Expenses					
Indirect Costs (Annual)					
Phone and internet	\$600,00	\$708,00	\$835,44	\$985,82	\$1 163,27
Hotel software	\$360,00	\$424,80	\$501,26	\$591,49	\$697,96
Legals fees / insurance	\$1 000,00	\$1 180,00	\$1 392,40	\$1 643,03	\$1 938,78
Maintenance	\$1 800,00	\$2 124,00	\$2 506,32	\$2 957,46	\$3 489,80
Marketing and promotion	\$1 800,00	\$2 124,00	\$2 506,32	\$2 957,46	\$3 489,80
Salaries	\$54 000,00	\$63 720,00	\$75 189,60	\$88 723,73	\$104 694,00
Total Fixed Costs	\$59 560,00	\$70 280,80	\$82 931,34	\$97 858,99	\$115 473,60
Other Costs					
Researchers Residency Program	\$3 120,00	\$3 681,60	\$4 344,29	\$5 126,26	\$6 048,99
Public Awareness Campaigns	\$1 020,00	\$1 203,60	\$1 420,25	\$1 675,89	\$1 977,55
Capacity Building	\$300,00	\$354,00	\$417,72	\$492,91	\$581,63
Total Other Costs	\$4 440,00	\$5 239,20	\$6 182,26	\$7 295,06	\$8 608,17
Net Profit Before Taxes	\$1 408 708,00	\$1 691 729,60	\$2 031 585,92	\$2 439 685,38	\$2 929 725,53
Taxes (17.50%)	\$246 523,90	\$296 052,68	\$355 527,54	\$426 944,94	\$512 701,97
Net Profit After Taxes	\$1 162 184,10	\$1 395 676,92	\$1 676 058,38	\$2 012 740,44	\$2 417 023,56
Net Profit Margin	78,91%	78,97%	79,03%	79,09%	79,15%
Local Community's Share (50% of net profit)	\$581 092,05	\$697 838,46	\$838 029,19	\$1 006 370,22	\$1 208 511,78

Table 24. Okavango Wilderness Project Five-Year Projections.

Section 10 – Conclusion

Developing countries often rely on tourism as a means of reducing poverty but rarely know how to maintain its sustainability over time—and this is exactly when triple bottom line approaches should be used. In Eastern and Southern Africa particularly, this challenge can be overcome through community-based tourism, through which rural communities in wildlife-rich lands forge a mutually reinforcing relationship between environmental conservation and socio-economic development, most notably in and around protected areas. However, these projects can only be successful if local communities are active participants and direct beneficiaries, capacity building and skills transfer are implemented, and there is a fair income distribution/sharing model towards the community.

This body of work explored how a developing African country lacking skilled labor and under increasing pressure from an oil dependency-induced financial crisis can move towards a more sustainable and diverse economy through tourism. Our proposal focused on the creation of a community-focused and conservation-oriented ecolodge, the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge, located in a wildlife-rich protected area within a transboundary conservation area, in Angola's post-war context. This business plan analyzed whether the basic preconditions for community-based ecotourism existed against this very specific backdrop, apart from the technical, economic and financial feasibility of the project.

The ecolodge was conceptualized to be a purpose-driven venture throughout the entire document. Essentially, the focus was set on bringing the communities of the area together in a plethora of different ways and help them sustainably manage the natural resources upon which their livelihoods depend on, while simultaneously making sure their participation brought them the concrete benefits they needed—thus giving them an alternative income source to activities that would negatively impact one of the world's last undisturbed river systems and its wildlife. Through the sustainable development of tourism in the Cubango-Okavango River Basin in Angola, we could contribute to the protection of the Okavango Delta's source waters, which would otherwise be at risk.

In conclusion, while investing in Angola comes with a myriad of challenges, the Okavango Wilderness Ecolodge's projections look promising to people, planet and profit—the ultimate goal of the triple bottom line approach.

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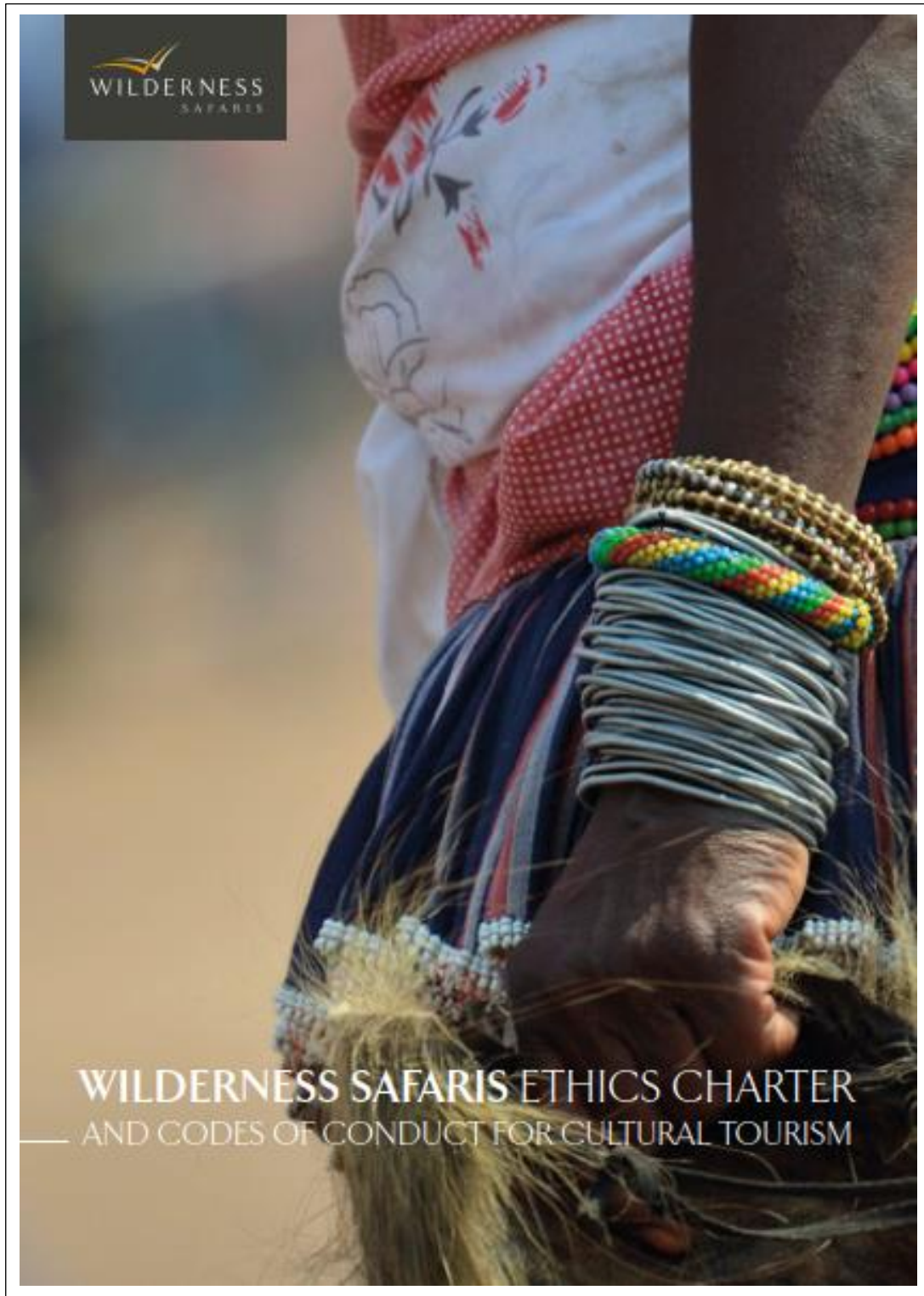
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Wilderness Safaris Ethics Charter & Codes of Conduct for Cultural Tourism



I. INTRODUCTION

The Wilderness Safaris Ethics Charter and Codes of Conduct for Cultural Tourism outlines the general principles relating to Wilderness Safaris' cultural tourism and community engagement. The document covers the main areas of operation with respect to cultural tourism and reinforces the aims and principles of the company's cultural tourism programmes and community engagements.

Tourism has become an increasingly complex phenomenon with political, economic, social, cultural, educational, biophysical, ecological and aesthetic dimensions. In order for tourism to be sustainable it must bring direct, as well as indirect, short- and long-term benefits to host communities. The aim is to provide an important means and motivation for communities to care for and maintain their heritage and cultural practices. The cultural heritage of a country is the result of its historical and social evolution and, as such, is the custodian of ethnic identities.

Cultural tourism results in an encounter with a new and often different culture. Cultural tourism is about immersion in, and enjoyment of, the lifestyle of people in a particular geographical area and what constitutes its identity and character. The natural and cultural heritage of a country is available to all people, ensuring everyone a right and responsibility to understand, appreciate and conserve its values.

At a time of increasing globalisation the protection, conservation, interpretation and presentation of the heritage and cultural diversity of any particular place or region is an important challenge for people everywhere. Management of that heritage and cultural diversity, within a framework of appropriately applied standards and codes of conduct, is usually the responsibility of the particular community or custodian group. A primary objective for managing cultural tourism and heritage is to communicate its significance and the need for its conservation to the host community, to staff and to guests.

Cultural tourism should always increase knowledge, raise awareness and enrich all involved.

The increasing number of tourists, and their concomitant desire to engage with communities and cultures in the countries that they are visiting, necessitated the development of a group protocol, as well as an ethics charter and codes of conduct for cultural tourism. This document incorporates the main principles that govern Wilderness Safaris' codes of conduct, in terms of cultural tourism and engagement with communities living in and around the conservation areas in which we operate.

This document serves to detail the kind of community engagement and cultural interaction that Wilderness Safaris would like to promote, as well as to ensure that there is no degrading or exploitation of people and cultures. Along with the basic tenets of common courtesy and respect for one's fellow human beings, this Charter is based on our collective experience and ingrained respect for indigenous communities – many of whom are also shareholders, partners and colleagues.

2. GENERAL AREAS OF OPERATION

The Wilderness Safaris Ethics Charter and Codes of Conduct applies to all sites where Wilderness Safaris offers cultural or village tours, and serves as the guide for all engagements with communities in all countries in which we operate.

Cultural tourism is a sensitive subject. Care must be taken by all Wilderness Safaris staff and guests to ensure that there is always respect and sensitivity in all forms of engagement, and that all involved parties are enriched by the experience. Cultural tourism involves any guest activity that results in engagement with a host community, e.g. a village visit or cultural/traditional activity.

3. WILDERNESS SAFARIS ETHICS CHARTER

- 3.1 Wilderness Safaris aims to ensure a high-quality experience which brings satisfaction and enrichment to guests, as well as greater knowledge and appreciation of Africa's natural and cultural heritage. Cultural tourism at Wilderness Safaris camps must promote an understanding and appreciation of the host communities and their culture.
- 3.2 Wilderness Safaris must uphold a corporate identity that provides authentic experiences while respecting the values and wishes of the people whose culture and history form part of the cultural tourism experience.
- 3.3 Wilderness Safaris must maintain and continuously develop marketing and promotional strategies that contribute to both environmental and cultural awareness.
- 3.4 Wilderness Safaris must encourage tourism development that is compatible with host community culture, values and lifestyles and that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.
- 3.5 Wilderness Safaris must maintain and encourage an appreciation of, and respect for, all natural, cultural and aesthetic heritage among our guests, staff, all other stakeholders, and within the communities with whom the company engages.
- 3.6 Wilderness Safaris must respect the values and aspirations of host communities and strive towards providing services and facilities in a way that contributes to community identity, pride, aesthetics and quality of life.
- 3.7 Wilderness Safaris must strive to achieve tourism development in a way that harmonises economic objectives with the protection and enhancement of natural, cultural and aesthetic heritage.
- 3.8 All tourism activities must be conducted with due respect for all host community customs, laws, practices and traditions.
- 3.9 Guests and all stakeholders in tourism development must respect, and recognise the worth of, social and cultural traditions and practices of all people.

- 3.10 Tourism activities must respect the equality of men and women and must promote human and cultural rights, individual and collective. At all levels, through education, training and the creation of employment opportunities, gender disparities must be addressed.
- 3.11 Tourism projects, activities and developments must always strive to achieve positive outcomes and minimise adverse impacts on the heritage and lifestyles of host communities.
- 3.12 Tourism products such as various crafts and curios that are used in Wilderness Safaris camps must be made from sustainable materials, with limited imported crafts/artefacts.
- 3.13 Wilderness Safaris pledges to contribute to the protection of sites that are of local, historical, cultural, spiritual or archaeological importance, located in the areas in which the company operates.
- 3.14 Wilderness Safaris pledges to work together with host communities to help them to reflect on, and define their goals with respect to, a tourism development vision.
- 3.15 Wilderness Safaris pledges to help host communities to gain a better understanding of tourists and the tourism industry, and enable them to optimise the benefits that flow to the community from tourism.
- 3.16 All stakeholders, including Wilderness Safaris, guests and the communities, should ensure that cultural tourism is a mutual learning experience as well as a potential economic opportunity for host communities.
- 3.17 Financial resources derived from cultural tourism should, in part, be used for the upkeep, safeguarding, and development of the community's heritage. Where possible, guests must be informed of this process, as well as any relationships/partnerships with the community and the value of cultural tourism experiences, such as village visits.
- 3.18 Tourism activities must be planned and conducted in such a way as to allow traditional cultural products, activities, crafts and folklore to survive, flourish and develop, rather than causing them to degenerate, become standardised or lose their authenticity.
- 3.19 Host communities must, where necessary, be assisted with marketing, hospitality training and improving quality standards for cultural tourism products.
- 3.20 Constructive engagement with host communities, including managing expectations of all stakeholders, will lead to realistic goal-setting in terms of tourism and the associated benefits. Continuous dialogue with communities is, therefore, essential.
- 3.21 Wilderness Safaris staff must be educated on the cultures of the area in which they are working.
- 3.22 Wilderness Safaris will provide, where applicable, reasonable access for the host communities to sites of social, cultural, spiritual, religious or historical significance that are located in the areas in which Wilderness operates.

- 3.23 Donations, either in cash or kind, must be encouraged to be directed through the Children in the Wilderness, Wilderness Wildlife Trust or the Wilderness Safaris Community Development department, all of which have good track records of sustainable interventions.

4. WILDERNESS SAFARIS CULTURAL TOURISM CODES OF CONDUCT

4.1 Pre-visit procedures for Cultural Tourism/Village Visits

- 4.1.1 Conduct and encourage research in host communities. Research is necessary to provide a knowledge base for sustainable, ethical tourism and ensure a greater understanding of the communities with whom we engage.
- 4.1.2 Coordinate with host communities to ensure that guest visits are welcome and are not in any way disrespectful, disruptive or intrusive to the community.
- 4.1.3 Through consultation with the host community, arrange what activities will be done on a cultural/village tour, and be sure that the community, relevant stakeholders and community leaders have granted permission to undertake the planned activities.
- 4.1.4 Give all guests a thorough cultural briefing before visiting host communities. Where possible, hire or use local guides to conduct the briefings as well as the tour/visit. This will enhance guiding and other skills within the community and provide further employment opportunities.
- 4.1.5 Where relevant, all guests are to receive a full explanation of the relationship between Wilderness Safaris and the community, including any fee payments, projects, etc.
- 4.1.6 Prepare guests with pre-visit information on the host community's customs, traditions and proper etiquette. If the visit is a 'contemporary encounter,' which could include Western clothing, modern structures, and other non-traditional elements, this should be explained to the guests beforehand.
- 4.1.7 Appropriate dress code must be adhered to when visiting rural communities, based on the practices and traditions of the relevant community. Guests must be informed of this prior to the activity.
- 4.1.8 Inform guests of the price range/quality of the crafts that will be available so that they are not over- or under-charged. The guide must inform his/her guests of any restrictions on export or import of craft materials.
- 4.1.9 The guides must explain the local concept of 'trade' to ensure that neither the guest nor the host community feels like they have been taken advantage of.
- 4.1.10 Encourage guests to select tourism products and services that demonstrate social, cultural and environmental sensitivity.



- 4.1.11 Visitors must be encouraged to behave as welcomed guests, respecting the values and lifestyles of the host community at all times. Cultural tours should be mutually respectful cultural exchanges.
- 4.1.12 Planning for cultural tourism activities must provide appropriate facilities for the comfort, safety and wellbeing of the guests, which aim to enhance the enjoyment of the visit but do not adversely impact on the significant features or ecological characteristics. It is important to inform guests about what facilities are available, such as toilets and drinking water, in the villages.
- 4.1.13 Guests must also be informed of the negative long-term consequences of hand-outs to individuals in villages, and be advised to make any donations through formal channels (Children in the Wilderness, Wilderness Wildlife Trust or Wilderness Safaris Community Development departments).

4.2 During-visit procedures for Cultural Tourism/Village Visits

- 4.2.1 Ensure that all guests receive permission to photograph and/or video. This can be a serious invasion of privacy and is very important to manage and control. This is to ensure that respect is shown to the host community.
- 4.2.2 Religious, moral traditions and beliefs of host communities must be recognised and respected at all times. Ensure that all guests respect religious grounds, e.g. churches and burial grounds, as well as other areas of cultural significance (e.g. the 'fire line' in a Himba village), and that they do not remove artefacts or any other material from the communities/villages.
- 4.2.3 Ensure that guests do not 'trespass' or 'invade the privacy' of people in the villages by wandering away from guided tours into private homesteads and restricted areas.
- 4.2.4 Encourage and support efforts in schools and communities, as well as amongst staff, in increasing awareness of the potential contribution of tourism and conservation to the concept of sustainable development.
- 4.2.5 Encourage guests to enjoy the diverse natural and cultural heritages and to help Wilderness Safaris to protect and preserve them through awareness raising.
- 4.2.6 The promotion, distribution and sale of local crafts and other products must provide a reasonable social and economic exchange to the host community, while ensuring that its cultural integrity is not degraded.
- 4.2.7 Crafts sold in Wilderness Safaris camps and the host villages that guests visit must be of good quality and culturally relevant to the local community.
- 4.2.8 Interpretation of host community life by the guides during the activity must be factual, honest and informative.

- 4.2.9 If this has not taken place before the visit, guests should be informed of the negative long-term consequences of hand-outs to individuals in villages, and be advised to make any donations through formal channels (Children in the Wilderness, Wilderness Wildlife Trust or the Wilderness Safaris Community Development department).

4.3 New community engagement procedures

- 4.3.1 All new developments that are entered into by Wilderness Safaris in areas where potential host communities reside must be done according to all legal and cultural requirements that are in place in the relevant country.
- 4.3.2 All new developments that are entered into by Wilderness Safaris in areas where potential host communities reside must include regular engagement and consultation with the community, prior to, during and post development.
- 4.3.3 For all new developments, Wilderness Safaris takes account of all legal/moral claims relating to the new development and/or land area.
- 4.3.4 Wilderness Safaris will always negotiate with the relevant entity that has legal claim to the land relating to the development.
- 4.3.5 New developments must always attempt to incorporate host community traditions and crafts, e.g. décor, architecture, etc.
- 4.3.6 New developments must, as much as possible, use local suppliers of goods and services without compromising the quality of the Wilderness Safaris brand.

5. MAINTENANCE OF THE ETHICS CHARTER AND CODES OF CONDUCT

- 5.1 Periodic independent monitoring and evaluation of cultural tourism experiences, policies and practices must be undertaken to ensure compliance with the Wilderness Safaris Ethics Charter and Codes of Conduct.
- 5.2 Wilderness Safaris will protect and enhance natural, historic, cultural and aesthetic resources as a legacy for present and future generations.
- 5.3 Wilderness Safaris will encourage the development of tourism projects with relevant authorities, facilities and infrastructure, which are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable and which secure the future of rural communities.
- 5.4 Wilderness Safaris will, where relevant, ensure community involvement and participation in all stages of tourism projects: planning, development, implementation and maintenance.
- 5.5 Wilderness Safaris will respect natural and cultural landscapes in the scale, design, operation and siting of new facilities, expansions and renovations.



- 5.6 Wilderness Safaris will take the host community's culture into account and, where possible, use local artisans to enhance camp designs through the use of local materials in construction.
- 5.7 Heritage interpretation and education programmes for the host community must continue to have the involvement of local site interpreters and guides. The programmes must promote a knowledge of and respect for their cultural heritage, encouraging host community members to take a direct interest in its care and conservation.
- 5.8 Development and updating of all cultural or ethnic information available in camps and websites must continue to serve to increase knowledge and raise awareness.

6. REFERENCES

This document drew on a number of sources, which are listed below:

An Ethics Charter for Cultural Tourism, in alliance with Alliance Internationale de Tourisme, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile and Automobil Club d'Italia

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