by Judy Kepher-Gona

Ecotourism & People Empowerment Examples from the South

Probably the best way to appreciate ecotourism is to experience what goes on behind the exquisitely designed lodges, the great service, the personal attention to guests and the serene environment. I came to this conviction during a recent visit to South Africa.

I was on a World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) assignment as assessor for finalists in the 2007 Tourism for Tomorrow Awards. I also noted that there was a relationship between responsible tourism and certification/wards. The WTTC, the SA finalists had been short listed for the Investor in People Award and the Conservation Award. My appointment as an assessor was by extension an appreciation of the programmes and experience of Ecotourism Kenya in the field of responsible tourism. Maybe I should add that we are presently assessing applications for eco-rating from two lodges in Tanzania, again in recognition of our expertise in responsible tourism.

The investor in people award is open to tourism initiatives that spread the benefits of Travel & Tourism widely and effectively, and provide support for maintaining local cultural traditions. The winner must demonstrate a positive contribution to cultural preservation and commitment to building capacity required for Travel & Tourism in

Cont. on Pg 2
destination areas, along with providing fair wages, developing careers, training and educational opportunities. They should also promote employee relations that result in economic and social benefits for employees.

As part of assessing the finalist in the Investor in People Award, I visited three city hotels and four lodges. Each of these had unique and innovative approaches to empowering local people, preserving cultures and transferring or upgrading skills of local people to participate in tourism. The first lesson I learnt was the difference between CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), CSI (Corporate Social Investment) and Investment in People. These terminologies are interchangeably used by responsible tourism businesses to mean some kind of support to destination residents. Yet there is a difference between these three when it comes to responsible tourism as seen in examples that follow.

More often than not, city hotels will make excuses for not being able to directly engage with local residents except through employment. A 300 bed hotel in Capetown had an inspirational approach to investing in people. Aware that most of the hotel employees come from the nearby township and considering they could not offer employment to everyone, the hotel invented ways to economically empower the local people (township residents). Among the hotels many outstanding programmes, is a laundry initiative that has not only addressed the need to have trade linkages with local communities, but has also empowered women economically. The hotel supported a women group from the township (read slum) near the hotel to set up a laundry facility by providing the equipment and training as a grant. Today the enterprise not only caters for the hotels laundry needs but provides laundry services to the residents of the township and other restaurants in the area. The lives of these women and their dependants have changed forever through an investor in people program. I choose to call this investment plan- “invest and stay”. Many hotels and lodges prefer “invest and disengage” so as not to take blame for failure. It’s been five years and the women are going strong, thanks to responsible tourism.

It is fallacious to have outstanding community or environment programmes and ignore staff welfare. The hotel referenced above knows this too well and equally has impressive workplace policies covering wages, training, health and gender mainstreaming. Its HIV/AIDS work place policy is supported by a staff clinic manned by a qualified counsellor and a nurse. About half the staffs have attended the VCT centre at the clinic to know their HIV status. Many more access the clinic for counselling on various needs. This year the hotel has donated a new car as motivation to staff and will be won by the best employee as nominated by staff themselves through a well established staff forum. The staffs of this hotel were elated about their employer. To crown their good work, the hotel had been eco-rated by Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa (FTTSA) a confirmation of the relationship between being responsible and certification.

One may be quick to argue that size, resources and market served are factors when it comes to initiating community programmes. The arguments are that large establishments make huge profits so they can set aside some funds for CSR and they have more employees and can dedicate some to these programmes. When it markets, it is argued that facilities with high end of market products are lucky because their high paying guests can contribute extras to support any ‘good’ course by the establishment. A backpack hotel with less than 15 beds in the outskirts of Cape town disapproved these assumptions. Through support from their clients (backpackers), they had built child care centre in a nearby township to provide care for toddlers and allow single mothers to work, thus addressing poverty. They continue to support the centre. They had no size, no huge turnover, no high paying guests and few employees.

Are approaches by lodges situated in remote areas different? Incidentally the lodges had strong environment and cultural conservation programs as well as people empowerment programs. One lodge had a unique approach to empowering the youth in a neighbouring township. It had started an adult training programme to give life skills to youths with no academic qualifications. The easy way out would be to have non-government accredited courses. Most community training programmes in the tourism industry have this weakness. For this lodge it was not an image building

"The commitment of this lodge in developing a curriculum that met government standards for adult training and having the school accredited as a training centre is more than CSR. This is investing in people."

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exercise. They tailored the training to meet needs of youth from the township and had the curriculum and approved by the adult learning department and the school accredited as an adult learning centre. Graduates from the school could go on and attain college diplomas and get employment in the civil service. When the school started four years ago, it had only expert (foreign) instructors. Since then, some of the graduates have gone through government accreditation and become instructors at the school. All the 48 graduates of the school have been employed in various sectors including the police force. This is because the training is skill-based to ensure that graduates can get employment outside the tourism industry. The commitment of this lodge in developing a curriculum that met government standards for adult training and having the school accredited as a training centre is more than CSR. This is investing in people. This is different from buying a few desks for a local school near your lodge!

And this is not all, this lodge has also raised funds and constructed a FIFA standard football field in the township (the only such field in SA and the entire Southern Africa). The township is gearing to host teams participating in the 2010 World cup, a clear case of sharing tourism benefits with local communities and tourism being used to address poverty. An initiative by a lodge has propelled a poor village into global limelight and the future can only be brighter. In return, the local residents have developed a deep appreciation for conservation, because the business behind their new lives is based on nature. This is the work of two family owned lodges each with about 24 beds. These lodges too had been certified by FTTSA. These are only few examples from the south.

The moral of the story: when it comes to ecotourism what a business does with the people and the environment, is more important that what a business does for people and for the environment.

Kenya’s lodges and camps too have amazing stories, but how is this information relayed to the traveller? Travellers look for responsible travel information from responsible travel organisations. Do you have a CSR, CSI or investor in people story? Share it with us and we will share it with the world. More so, apply for your certification (eco-rating) and authenticate your responsible practices through a third party evaluation.

NB: send an e-mail to info@ecotourismkenya.org to apply for your eco-rating or to become a member of Ecotourism Kenya.

For more discussions on CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), CSI (Corporate Social Investment) and investment in people in responsible tourism, Come to EK evening talks in May 2008
Coral reefs form an integral component of the marine ecosystem due to the fact that they offer food and shelter for numerous marine organisms, act as a form of coastal protection, and provide a means of livelihood to a multitude of individuals, businesses and organizations. With all these benefits also come the numerous threats that coral reefs face such as overuse, destructive fishing and recreation practices and pollution. In Mombasa the coral reefs play a vital role in recreation (diving and snorkeling operations) and fishing (artisanal and commercial) activities. With the decline of coral reefs, and the associated productivity, the end result is lower economic benefits to all those who use the coral reefs as a resource. One solution that could prove beneficial is the introduction of artificial reefs. Thus, the Mombasa Marine Park Artificial Reef Project will have three main goals: to increase the substrate available for corals and fish to recruit and grow, thereby increasing their biomass and diversity; to enhance the value of the sites for diving and/or fishing; and to initiate a continual monitoring plan that will examine the organisms affiliated with the artificial reef and gauge the accrued benefits to the resource users as a result of the project.

The Mombasa Marine Park and Reserve already has an affiliation with artificial reefs as it houses the MV Dania, a cattle freighter that was intentionally sunk nearly 6 years ago by Buccaneer Diving. Over the years the MV Dania has become a popular dive destination, Kenya’s best wreck dive, and hosts a large abundance of fish to marvel at. And now, once again, Buccaneer Diving together with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Bamburi Cement and CORDIO – East Africa are currently engaged in this new project. This initiative is a first in Kenyan and East African history. So far its success has already resulted in interest from other locations in East Africa to create a similar project. The awareness this initiative will create amongst visiting tourists, both national and international, will be invaluable to marine conservation, and in particular to coral conservation. It will result in the creation of new dive and snorkel sites and as such will be able to show investors that marine conservation and business can go hand in hand.
Visitor interpretation in ecotourism

Visitor interpretation is a form of communication that helps visitors understand and appreciate a place and its people. It combines entertainment and education as part of a recreational experience — it should connect visitors with the various cultural groups, their technologies and habits, natural resources, wildlife, economic activities, forms of transportation, politics, history and architectural styles found in an area. One of the reasons for traveling is to gain knowledge, to compare experiences, to review one’s set of values and references — ultimately, to become a wiser human being.

Interpretation is about bringing different cultural universes (technologies, cultures, needs and expectations) to a common denominator. Providing an effective interpretation program that is educational, interesting and meaningful to the tourist can be helpful in destination management and conservation. A good interpretive program will encourage tourists to respect the attraction and the community and also promote feelings of pride and awareness within the local population. A good interpretive program will also:

• Provide a management tool to control ecotourism and its impacts;
• Provide the opportunity to explain cultural values and traditions;
• Set physical and social limits to manage the impacts of tourism in sensitive areas;
• Structure operating hours that suit the attraction; and
• Increase tourist spending

The Role of the Guide in the Visitor Experience

Other than the attraction the interpretive guide plays a key role in the success of the visitor experience during an interpretive tour. Guides are defined as someone who is employed on a paid or voluntary basis and who conducts paying or non-paying tourists around an area or site of natural and/or cultural importance utilizing ecotourism and interpretation principles. Three main ways in which interpretation can contribute to the quality of visitors’ experience. These are: (1) providing information on the available options so tourists can make the best choices about what they do and where they go;
(2) providing information to encourage safety and comfort so tourists know how to cope with and better manage encountered difficulties (e.g. seasickness) and understand messages given by the warning signs (e.g. ‘you cannot swim here’); and (3) creating the actual experience so tourists can participate in activities such as guided walks, ecotours, visit art galleries, fauna sanctuaries or zoos, and learn in areas of educational interest.

The guide therefore, is the facilitator of the intangible aspect of the ecotours. The guide defines the quality of the product, shapes the visitor experience and contributes to the conservation of the attraction and economic gains for the business. The key actor in ecotourism is the guide who can inform, involve, and offer the traveler a meaningful experience through his/her interpretation and can contribute to the success or failure of the attraction. Guides must also be versatile and adapt their presentation based on the information needs and skill level of the group. The guide’s interpretation, demonstrations, and personal environmental practices must be pedagogically sound, academically accurate, captivatingly interesting, and very customer oriented. Impossible as it may sound ecotourism operators’ economic success may be dependent on how well employees achieve these standards.

Kenya Professional Safari Guides Association

KPSGA is a professional-guide accreditation body operated by the private sector. It awards Bronze, Silver and Gold accreditation to guides based on qualification. To date there are about 2000 bronze accredited guides, 135 Silver and one (1) gold. KPSGA accredited guides are both knowledgeable and responsible. A safari with a professional guide is not only recreational, but also educational and safe. KPSGA accredited guide can be identified by special badges issued by the association.

For more information on KPSGA, e-mail kpsga@wananchi.com or visit www.safariguies.org or call Tanwira on 0202342426 / 0721448428

by Dr. Roselyne N. Okech
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New Executive Board at Ecotourism Kenya
At the most recent Annual General Meeting of Ecotourism Kenya, a new executive committee was elected to office as outlined below:

Chairman: Adam Jillo - Nature Expeditions
Treasurer: Alan Dixson - Lets Go Travel
Secretary: Ben Malasi - Express Travel Group
Members: Arundhati Inamdar-Willetts - Environmental Consultant
Shafique Ebrahimjee - Turtle Bay Beach Club
Chris Campbell-Clause - Malewa Bush Ventures
Stephen M. Mwangi - Anste Tours & Travel
Humphrey Mwambeo - Ngare Ndare Forest Trust

The Kenya Green Directory
It is said that going green is like trying to lose weight – plans to embark on it are constantly postponed as other things always get in the way. Going green is about ensuring that the choices one makes have the least negative impact on the environment and that these choices represent the most sustainable way of using available resources. One of the ‘other things’ that get in the way of many who wish to go green is lack of information, including not knowing what is green and where to get green products and services.

The Green Directory, another first by Ecotourism Kenya, is a guide to those who are looking for green products and services in Kenya. It contains information on businesses that provide green products and services. It also includes information on organizations or companies that make items from natural and recycled material. While the focus is on services and products relevant to the tourism industry, the directory is a resource for all environmentally conscious consumers. Members of ecotourism Kenya get a free listing on this special publication.

Advertise in the Kenya Green Directory and reach a listening audience
The 2008 Ecotourism Kenya Green Directory was received with excitement at the International Tourism Bourse (ITB) fair, in Berlin. It will now be made available at all major international and local travel fairs. This Directory, the first of its kind that promotes responsible tourism businesses alongside green products, services and activities, gives priority listing to EK members. Advertising in this directory gives members a chance to share their green products and services with a listening audience.

For further information on advertising in the Green Directory, contact Grace on info@ecotourismkenya.org

Equator Prize 2008 - Call for Nominations
The Equator Initiative has announced the call for nominations for the Equator Prize 2008. The Equator Prize which is awarded every two years recognizes community-based initiatives that demonstrate extraordinary achievement in reducing poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the equatorial belt. Shompole Community Trust won the award in 2007.

Prize winners receive worldwide recognition for their work as well as an opportunity to help shape national and global policy and practice in the field. Twenty-five community organizations will be honored with the Equator Prize 2008 and US$5,000 each. Five of these communities will receive special recognition and an additional US $15,000.

Special recognition will be given in the following categories:
• one for each region of eligibility (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean);
• one to the initiative that best exemplifies community approaches to adapt to climate change; and,
• one to the initiative that best exemplifies the conservation of agricultural biodiversity.

Community initiatives that are active in environmental conservation and sustainable development are qualified for nominations. However, self-nominations are also welcome. The Equator Prize 2008 nomination process will be open through May 31, 2008. Details on the criteria for the Prize, information on the award process, and the online nomination system can be accessed through the Equator Initiative website at www.equatorinitiative.org.
Conferences & Seminars

Travellers Philanthropy Conference - Tanzania

Traveller’s philanthropy is an increasingly important source of development assistance for communities located near tourism destinations. Yet many tourism businesses are ignorant of this potential. The Center on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development (CESD) a non profit research institution based in Washington D.C who promotes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the travel industry, and encourages individual businesses and their travelers to give “time, talent, and treasure” to support social service and conservation projects in host communities, is organising a Travellers’ Philanthropy Conference to share with tourism businesses in Eastern Africa, this new and growing concept in responsible tourism.

The 2008 conference under the theme: Making travellers’ Philanthropy work for Development, businesses, and conservation will be held at Arusha, Tanzania from 3rd – 5th December 2008.

Online registration for the conference is now open. Visit the special conference registration site [www.travelersphilanthropyconference.org](http://www.travelersphilanthropyconference.org) to access information about the program and speakers, hotel and meeting venue, flight information, pre- and post- conference safaris, list of co-sponsors, and the latest updates. Email Whitney Cooper, CESD Washington, D.C on [wcooper@ecotourismcesd.org](mailto:wcooper@ecotourismcesd.org) for further information. Ecotourism Kenya is proud to be a partner and sponsor of the conference

Eco-storm Kenya!

Eco-storm is a term used to describe interactive forums designed to create models for sustainable destination management. Conceptualised by Basecamp Foundation, the first Ecostorm took place in India from 24th – 28th March 2008 where a blue print for transforming the House of Peace and Dialogue (venue of Ecostorm India) into a sustainable destination was developed.

The second Eco-storm is coming to Kenya from 17th – 20th November 2008 and the target is Maasai Mara! Ecotourism Kenya and Basecamp Explorer are looking at tapping into the expertise of professionals in sustainable tourism to come up with guidelines for investing in people and the environment in the Mara, thus transforming the Mara into an authentic sustainable destination. The secret lies in considering people and planet alongside profit in a business model. Eco-storm will show you how. Look out for registration information in upcoming E-letter and Newsletter

Report of the 2007 National Ecotourism Conference

This report is now available on-line and at EK resource centre. Please download a copy from [www.ecotourismkenya.org](http://www.ecotourismkenya.org) or visit our resource centre for a copy.

EIA Process Under Review

In 1999, Parliament enacted the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA), which created NEMA as an institution to supervise and coordinate environmental management issues. To address specific environmental challenges, NEMA developed several subsidiary legislations. One such instrument is the legal notice number 101 of 2003 on Environmental Impact Assessment and Audit (EIA/EA).

The purpose of environmental impact assessment is to determine potential environmental impacts of a project and the adequacy of proposed mitigation measures. Consequently, all projects are required to develop an action plan for the prevention and management of environmental impacts during and after implementation. The projects are also expected to ensure the health and safety of the workers and neighbouring communities.

NEMA notes that in the recent past, there has been concern among the general public about the EIA licensing process. Some members of the business community have had the impression that the EIA is an obstructive tool that prevents development. In order to address the concerns raised by the public, and the challenges faced by the NEMA in administering the EIA process, The PS constituted a taskforce to review the EIA process.

Specifically, the EIA Review Taskforce was required to review NEMA’s internal quality control processes for reviewing of EIA/EA reports and make appropriate recommendations for the amendment of the Legal Notice 101 on environmental impact assessment and auditing.

The first national stakeholder’s forum was held on 13th March 2008 to give stakeholders feedback on the key issues raised during the consultative process undertaken since November 2006. (This report is available at EK resource centre). The report of the taskforce will be made public after approval by the relevant departments and officials. For more information on the review contact NEMA on telephone 605522/605526.
Maasai Centre for Field Studies

Maasai Centre for Field Studies is a community owned educational facility located in Kuku Group Ranch, mid-way between Amboseli and Tsavo West national Parks. The centre, constructed in 1996 offers unique fieldtrip opportunities for schools, colleges, universities and independent groups. Until now the centre has been catering for international students but plans to cater local groups and tourists are underway.

The centre is registered as a non-governmental organisation, and income generated from visiting groups' supports social and environmental projects, contributing to sustainable development and environmental conservation.

Maasai centre resources include:
• A 15 acre enclosed camp constructed to blend with the surrounding environment.
• Accommodation for up to 50 visitors with walk-in canvas tents and Chales (bandas) built of timber and volcanic rock.
• Dedicated space for dinning and group activities, a library and resources to support educational activities.
• Bush camp style showers and toilets
• Solar power sufficient for lighting and computing.

Clean treated water, piped from a source on Mt. Kilimajaro
A team of 12 full-time staff, all community members, catering for, domestic, educational and security needs

Ecotourism Kenya Assessment
• Accessible by 4-wheel drive
• No signage anywhere- Ask for directions from Kimana Town
• Comfort- suitable for students & adventure groups (bring own beddings)
• Rates –US$ 45 per person per night in tents or Bandas.
• Advance booking possible
• Food – Kenyan cuisine
• Attractions-Wildlife, Mt. Kilimanjaro, Maasai culture
• Activities – hiking, game viewing, village tours/stays

For more information and booking, contact Jackson Kilinga on 0723383785

Amboseli Campsite

Amboseli campsite is a community owned campsite located on Olgulului Group Ranch, adjacent to Amboseli National Park. Started in 1983 with support from donor funds, the campsite is mainly visited by foreign tourists and depends on repeat visitors. The campsite is one of many income generating projects of the Group Ranch which covers approximately 147,000 hectares and has 11,854 members.

The campsite is not independent of the group ranch in terms of management. The Group ranch committee oversees management and is responsible for distribution of revenues by the campsite. The funds generated by the campsite are used for social development projects including education, health and water. In the recent past, the funds have been used to pay salaries of 18 community teachers who complement government teachers, construct three new boreholes, support repairs and maintenance of eight existing boreholes, provide bursary for secondary and college education, support local clinic and pay medical bills incurred by members.

Amboseli campsite facilities include:
• An 85 acre enclosed campsite
• Has 5-double walk-in tents erected on wooden decks.
• Open camping grounds under trees.
• Bush camp style showers and toilets.
• Clean treated water, piped from a source on Mt. Kilimajaro
• Kitchen facilities available for campers.
• A modest dinning facility with benches and table.
• Hosts the baboon research centre that has been on site for 30 years.
• A recreational centre that offers catering services on request
• Camp is serviced by 8 local staff members

Ecotourism Kenya Assessment
• Accessible by 4-wheel drive all year round
• Located 8 Kms from Amboseli Serena Lodge
• Signs within Amboseli park read Public campsite
• Traditional bush camping experience, (bring own beddings)

For more information and booking, contact Joseph Melompuki on 0711674435

Would you like to be featured on this page? email info@ecotourismkenya.org or call Philip on 2724403
Three Porini Camps; Amboseli Porini Camp in Enselenkei Group Ranch, Mara Porini Camp in Ol Kinyei Conservancy and Porini Lion Camp in Olare Orok Conservancy are Silver Eco-rated. To attain this level of certification, these camps have been evaluated for practices that demonstrate commitment to responsible tourism in the areas of resource use, environmental conservation and benefits to local people including investor in people programmes. Below is a summary of some of the exemplary practices that earned Porini camps certification.

Sustainable use of resources
1. Use of solar energy for lighting in the camp
2. Energy conservation initiatives, including the use of energy saving bulbs, use of energy efficient water heaters and use of ‘green’ charcoal briquettes to heat water
3. Water conservation through use of safari showers. This controls amount of water used per guest.

Environmental conservation
1. Porini camps are strategically located away from developed areas, mainly in community land.
2. The conservancy approach increases land available for wildlife. It involves amalgamation of several individual plots to form wildlife conservancies.
3. Having small camps (6 to 10 tents) and no permanent structures minimizes impacts associated with large scale permanent developments.
4. Maintenance of the environment’s natural character by ensuring minimal clearing of vegetation around structures.
5. Compliance with statutory requirements related to environmental conservation e.g. carrying out annual Environmental Audits (EAs)
6. Visitors are made aware of their environment and the challenges in keeping it pristine through literature and discussions to enable them support the camps’ sustainability policies.

Social-economic benefits
1. The conservancy approach ensures that benefits are equitably distributed. Each individual land owner receives their due directly.
2. Consistency and timeliness in paying landowners enables landowners to effectively plan the use of their income. Landowners are paid monthly
3. Giving priority to locals during employment. Over 90% of the employees at the Camps are from the local communities.
4. Paying employees above the union rates
5. Training local staff through internal skill upgrading programmes

Local people investment programmes
1. Porini Camps believe in supporting education and have built a nursery school and a classroom for the primary school at Selenkay as well as providing school supplies, over the years.
2. Together with the UNDP, “Growing Sustainable Business Program”, we are working to provide 2 bore-holes for the Ol Kinyei community so that they can have a source of clean drinking water and water for their livestock even during the dry season. We have had a hydrological survey done and identified 2 sites suitable for a borehole, which also fits in with where the community would like them in terms of access to the greatest number of families.
3. Porini Camps, in conjunction with the Aureos Value Added Program, are currently working on an HIV / health-care program that will extend to the communities that own the conservancies. We plan to start on this by June 2008 and will be using the Ol Kinyei Conservancy to kick-start this program.

Would you like to be featured?
The Featured Eco-rated Facility is a new column of the EK Newsletter. It is available for eco-rated lodges/camps only. If you would like to be featured in the next newsletter, email info@ecotourismkenya.org
Further the workshops were used to evaluate market readiness of the CBTS. The evaluation considered a number of factors among them the existence of marketable tourism product, possession basic business skills, an understanding of commissions in tourism, ability to take advance bookings, customer care, knowledge of (local) marketing channels and the ability to identify and use an enterprise’s unique selling points. A number of interesting findings emerged from this survey.

A total of 226 representatives of 134 CBTS attended the workshops.

The survey identified several impediments facing the growth of CBT in Kenya. Key among them was a general lack of business ethic. The problem lies in the approaches so far used by NGOs and other groups who introduce CBTS to tourism. Unless there is a change to approach, CBTS will find it difficult, not only to access the market, but to run profitable businesses.

Therefore, the future CBT in Kenya lies not only in creating advocacy groups of CBTS, but in building the capacities of local communities – including inculcating a business ethic and outlook in them – to enable them to participate and derive a significant level of returns from CBT. There is also need for a countrywide programme to enhance market access for CBT initiatives in Kenya, especially the ones considered ‘market ready’.

Ecotourism Kenya’s community programme has come up with unique approaches to address the weaknesses inherent in CBTS and concepts on how to best advance CBTS. Organizations wishing to partner with Ecotourism Kenya in advancing CBT in Kenya should contact Judy or Philip on info@ecotourismkenya.org
Kenya is an exceptional destination by all standards. The terms unique and magical do not sufficiently describe Kenya- the cradle of ecotourism. They fall short of telling the whole story; that responsible tourism in Kenya is more than an eco-lodge with fine cuisine and five star accommodations, and interesting nature-based activities coated with cultural experiences.

Behind the beautifully designed lodges, the fine cuisine, the knowledgeable guides and pristine surroundings, are real conservation and social investment projects that are changing lives and saving our environment. This is ecotourism; an experience only Kenya’s eco-rated lodges/camps can guarantee travelers to Kenya.

Ecotourism Kenya, through its eco-rating scheme, awards certification to lodges/camps based on their social and environmental performance. The eco-rating label is a guarantee to green travelers of an experience that is uniquely Kenyan.

A first in Africa, eco-rating offers travelers an opportunity to choose from a growing number of Bronze, Silver and Gold eco-rated camps/lodges in Kenya. Gold is the highest level of rating. A higher rating is guarantee of a truly exceptional experience.

There are only 30 eco-rated lodges/camps and hotels in Kenya. See listing on page 12 or visit www.ecotourismkenya.org