

# SUSTAINABILITY

## AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



## SUSTAINABILITY is our philosophy

Gondwana Collection Namibia's sustainable hospitality business strongly promotes nature conservation and social commitment. Since our humble beginnings in 1995 when we purchased our first piece of land, we have converted several farms into nature reserves in the vicinity of natural attractions. More importantly, we reintroduced game species which had once been indigenous

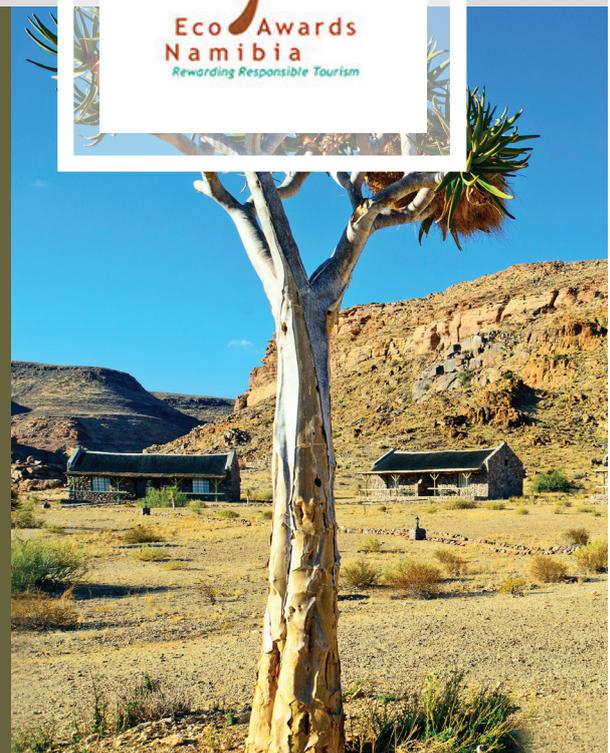
to the area. Our nature conservation endeavours are financed with the proceeds from the eco-friendly hospitality business, which in turn creates career opportunities for the local population. This success story gave us the opportunity to expand our business in tourism and with it our employment base, while enabling us to become even more involved in our social engagement.

The eco-friendly Namib Dune Star Camp offers an extraordinary desert adventure in the dune wilderness.

# Gondwana has a green heart

During the past years our sustainability efforts at the lodges have been repeatedly acknowledged with the highest seal of quality awarded by the environmental initiative, Eco Awards Namibia. Similar to the star-rating system used for tourist accommodation, Eco Awards Namibia awards up to five flowers for environmental sustainability. It is a voluntary programme. Currently, ten of the Gondwana lodges have a five-flower rating. Categories include conservation and guiding, energy, water, legal compliance as well as staff management and health, amongst others. All the above-mentioned lodges received an excellent score. In 2019, The Delight Swakopmund was awarded the newly introduced “Green 5 Flowers” for outstanding environmental compatibility at its first evaluation followed by The Desert Grace in 2020. Other lodges that had previously received a three or four flower rating are due for a new review.

2020 was the fifth consecutive year that a Gondwana Collection Namibia property has reached the final round of the Responsible Tourism Awards (RTA) and the second time to win the award. Canyon Village scooped the prestigious award in the Accommodation Establishment category. In 2018, Namib Desert Lodge was the winner and set new standards by achieving the maximum score (100%) in terms of conservation and guiding, energy, water, staff and health, legal and NTB compliance. The Responsible Tourism Awards, initiated by Namibia Media Holdings (NMH), aim to acknowledge tourism companies that practice eco-tourism and invest in the local communities where they operate.

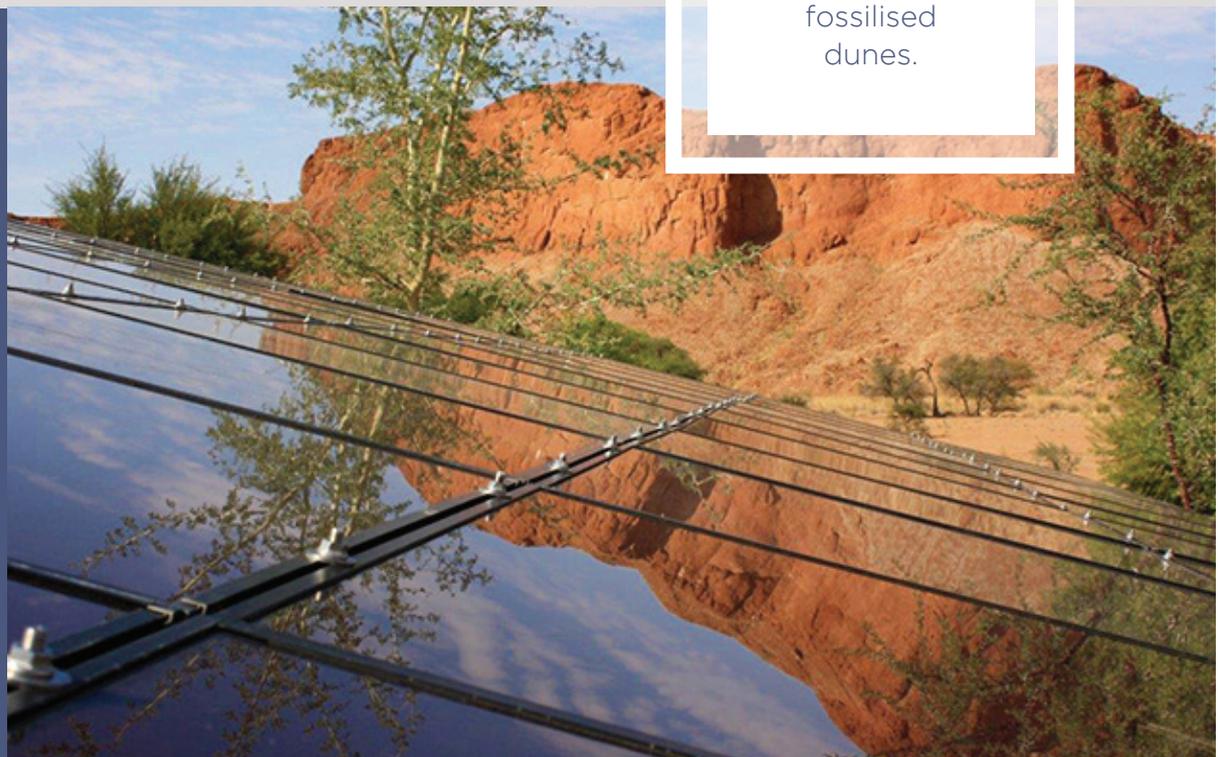


## 360 days of sunshine excellent conditions for solar energy

In 2014, Gondwana started a pilot project in the oldest desert on earth and installed 1,700 solar panels on the roofs of the main building and guest chalets of the Namib Desert Lodge, covering 50 percent of the lodge's energy needs. Our country certainly has no lack of sunshine, but a solar power plant of this size has never before been taken into operation under extreme desert conditions.

Since then Gondwana has rolled out solar energy plants at almost all of its 30 lodges, the only exception being Zambezi Mubala Camp. The excess energy is fed into the main supply system operated by Namibia's national power utility NamPower.

A modern sustainable technology in front of ancient fossilised dunes.



## Sparing use of precious water

Most of our lodges are equipped with wastewater recycling plants. The wastewater is filtered and then used to irrigate the lodges' gardens, boasting indigenous trees and shrubs. This reduces overall water consumption by more than half.

We go the extra proverbial mile to keep consumption as low as possible, also by creating awareness amongst guests to use water sparingly.

Every drop counts!



THANK YOU  
FOR HELPING US



# WATER IS A PRECIOUS RESOURCE

- Only have towels changed when necessary
- Turn the water off when lathering soap
- Please notify Reception if a toilet or tap is leaking

**GREEN HANDS**

# It'sUp2Us

## Responsible Waste Management

At our lodges, we ensure the minimisation of non-recyclable materials and the implementation of sustainable measures for proper waste management. All our lodges countrywide have eliminated single-use plastics as far as practically possible. Waste from lodges is separated according to materials - e.g. glass is crushed, sheet metal is pressed. In partnership with Rent-A-Drum, Gondwana disposes of waste in an environmentally sustainable manner. The bulk of this waste is recycled, while the rest is used to produce refuse-derived fuel.

In 2018, Gondwana and Rent-A-Drum launched the #ItsUp2Us campaign with the aim that only biodegradable waste ends up at landfills. The campaign intends to raise environmental awareness among all Namibians. Furthermore, Gondwana regularly arranges courses for the staff on environmental protection and supports the clean-up campaigns of communities in the vicinity of our lodges.

The cooperation between Gondwana and Rent-A-Drum started at The Delight Swakopmund.



Sustainable



## Construction Methods for our new lodges

Our latest lodges, The Desert Grace and Etosha King Nehale, were built using a unique environmentally-friendly construction method. The buildings were built with sandbags that were filled on site. The natural building material has excellent sound and thermal insulation qualities.

The walkways of The Desert Grace are made from recycled glass. Gondwana uses glass crushing machines to recycle the glass waste from our lodges, thereby reducing pollution. For the construction of the walkways at The Desert Grace we recycled over 200 tons of used glass bottles!

Environmentally friendly building with sandbags instead of bricks.



# Staff development

## Together we are strong

In 2017 the Gondwana Training Academy opened its doors. The lodge group's hospitality training and leadership development programme aims to provide service excellence, thereby promoting Namibia as a top African tourist destination. Course content includes introductory training in tourism and specific professional skills, as well as critical softer skills such as appreciation marketing, leadership development and communication.

Gondwana also conducts in-house training programmes country-wide at the respective lodges.



# Gondwana Care Trust

## Sharing our hearts

Gondwana lodges are closely connected to their surrounding communities. Our philosophy is fundamentally rooted in our commitment to social responsibility and community support. We have always strived to make a positive difference in our environment and communities. Several years ago, the “Gondwana Memes & Tates”, a group of dedicated colleagues, started supporting selected charities to ensure that they reach those in need.

Encouraged by the great success, we have formalised this important focus by establishing the Gondwana Care Trust in 2017 - a dedicated Corporate Social

Initiative (CSI) fund. The Gondwana Care Trust currently supports more than 20 projects across Namibia. Aside from supporting important environmental causes, we donate food, clothing, bedding, and educational materials to schools. The Trust wants to raise public awareness of its projects and to provide a channel for other like-minded people and businesses to get involved.

Our commitment to social upliftment is also visible in the wide range of Namibian products available in our lodges’ souvenir shops and in the joint projects with local communities.



## Self-sustaining supply of organic meat and fresh veggies

Guests at our lodges always marvel at the appetising buffets with large selections of fresh salads, dairy and meat products. Our secret is the Gondwana Self-Sufficiency Centre (SSC). It is a farming operation, which aside from the vegetable gardens and hothouses, includes chickens and pigs. The on-site butchery and smokehouse allow for the organic processing of meat, ensuring that we never compromise on quality.

The SSC near the village Stampriet forms part of the Kalahari Farmhouse, one of the smaller Gondwana lodges. Owing to the ready supply of water from a multi-layered aquifer system, this is the perfect location for the SSC despite its arid surrounds. From here all of Gondwana's accommodation establishments are supplied with fresh vegetables and fruit, as well as organic cuts of meat. Furthermore, it provides much needed employment for locals.

Green thumbs up for sustainable gardening.

All Gondwana lodges, if they haven't already, are in the process of establishing self-sufficiency gardens to cater for their basic fresh fruit and vegetable needs. The size and design of the garden depend on each property. At Damara Mopane Lodge, each guest room has its own vegetable garden, which supplies 80% of the lodge's required produce. Namib Desert Lodge and Canyon Lodge have netted tunnels where herbs, tomatoes, lettuce and cabbage are grown. Zambezi Mubala Lodge has an aquaponics tank that supplies herbs and lettuce. This way the lodges can reduce the carbon footprint that inevitably comes with store-bought vegetables' packaging and transport.



## Cooperation with conservancies and communities in communal areas

In recent years, Gondwana expanded its reach into the communal areas in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country. We have made the effort to build and grow equitable and sustainable partnerships with the conservancies and communities where we operate. Joint venture agreements ensure that a fair share of the financial benefits of Gondwana lodges are poured back into the respective conservancies and local communities. It also ensures local employment and empowerment, based on a sound Conservancy Employment and Skill Development Plan. Our lodges in communal areas are:

- Hakusembe River Lodge situated in the Mbunza Traditional Community
- Namushasha River Lodge & River Villa situated in the Mashi Conservancy
- Zambezi Mubala Lodge & Camp situated in the Sikunga Conservancy
- Chobe River Camp situated in the Salambala Conservancy
- Etosha King Nehale situated in the King Nehale Conservancy
- Omarunga Epupa-Falls Camp situated in the Epupa Conservancy
- Palmwag Lodge & Camp working with the Torra, Anabeb und Sesfontein conservancies

Signing of the Memorandum of Agreement for Palmwag Lodge and the surrounding concession area.



# Our commitment

## to nature conservation comes a long way

At the beginning of the 1990s the land bordering the Fish River Canyon was overgrazed and barren. At the tail end of years of severe drought farmers were putting their farms up for sale, seeking greener pastures.

A group of Namibian businessmen who had strong conservation ethics in common discovered the potential of a piece of land bordering the eastern section of the Fish River Canyon. It had previously belonged to several different farmers. It was evident that intensive farming practices were not sustainable in the long run. However, the group of businessmen bought this overgrazed farm with something else in mind - to create a conservation area that would be made possible from the funding brought in by tourism. Ecotourism was the only sustainable form of land use with the potential to balance the scales and restore the wildlife and vegetation, while nurturing the land. It would ultimately fund a larger conservation area. The vision matured over the subsequent years. Adjoining farms were acquired and the concept of a large protected area started developing. Gondwana Canyon Park expanded to an enormous area of 1160 square kilometres (116,000 hectares). After carrying out several research projects, we were able to determine which animals historically occurred in the area. Thus, red hartebeest, wildebeest, plains zebra and giraffe were gradually reintroduced.

Ai-Ais/Fish River Canyon National Park, was initiated to establish a jointly managed Fish River Canyon Complex.

Two other nature reserves belonging to Gondwana Collection are managed according to the same concept: Gondwana Kalahari Park (98 km<sup>2</sup>) northeast of Mariental and Gondwana Namib Park (127 km<sup>2</sup>) north of the Sesriem and Sossusvlei area. Another one of our nature parks is the Gondwana Sperrgebiet Rand Park (510 km<sup>2</sup>) of our marketing partner Klein-Aus Vista in the far south of Namibia near Aus.

In 2019, Gondwana acquired Palmwag Lodge & Camp and with it the management of the Palmwag concession area, a vast nature reserve that covers 5,500 km<sup>2</sup>. The Palmwag Concession consists of the Torra, Anabeb and Sesfontein conservancies and borders the Skeleton Coast Park. With over 100 lions, cheetahs, leopards and brown and spotted hyenas, Palmwag's predator population is the largest outside Etosha National Park. Birdlife is prolific and diverse, and most of Namibia's endemic species are found there. The Palmwag Concession is home to a healthy population of the desert-adapted elephant and black rhino.

A scientifically-sound game management programme resulted in increasing the number of diverse species and restoring nature's original state as far as possible. It was, and still is, monitored by qualified gamekeepers and rangers.

All fences inside Gondwana Canyon Park have been removed. Since migration is a vital survival mechanism of game animals in arid regions, a series of meetings with landowners and trustees, including the neighbouring



## Small things also matter

Visiting researchers to the Gondwana Canyon Park along with the park management were recently treated to a very rare and wonderful sighting of the shy black-footed cat in the Gondwana Canyon Park. The last recorded sighting of this cat in Namibia dates back several decades. This sighting is a compliment to the conservation efforts that were the initial reason for Gondwana Collection Namibia's establishment.

In the ever-growing battle against global warming as a result of human-induced carbon emissions, planting trees to compensate for the excess carbon in the atmosphere is vitally important. Gondwana has introduced the annual Plant-a-tree Day and managed to plant about 200 trees in 2018/19. In 2019, we envisioned to plant 2,019 trees at the various lodges country-wide. We have cultivated over 80 quiver trees at the Holoog Nursery, situated in Gondwana Canyon Park. As soon as they were big enough, they were then planted in the wild.

Gondwana promotes a healthy lifestyle amongst its staff and supports the Cancer Association of Namibia (CAN). Every year, a professional CAN team tours the country as part of their National Outreach programme providing health education and valuable advice on healthy lifestyles. The CAN team also offers cancer screening at the lodges and at nearby villages and settlements.

Gondwana Collection has partnered with BEE Biofuel Manufacturing Namibia to recycle all used cooking oil from the lodges. In 2019, we have managed to recycle up to 2,000 litres of used cooking oil.

To reduce the use of plastic bottles, we installed water dispensers at Hakusembe River Lodge and Zambezi Mubala Lodge. The dispensers provide unbottled filtered water to guests. We plan to install more at other lodges. Sustainable reusable bottles and reusable Silistraws are available at the lodge's souvenir shops.

A very  
rare and shy  
black-footed cat  
in the Gondwana  
Canyon Park.



# Acknowledgement of Gondwana's sustainability efforts

Gondwana Collection has won the Namibia Sustainable Development Award 2017 in the category for Best Social Media. The award acknowledges the lodge group's efforts to create public awareness of sustainable development via social media. This initiative of the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, the Sustainable Development Advisory Council and the Hanns Seidel Foundation is a biannual event.

The Development Bank of Namibia has presented The Delight Swakopmund, one of the newer Gondwana properties, with the "Good Business Award 2016" for large enterprises. The award acknowledges the financial viability of the hotel, its innovative brand and the developmental impact in respect to employment creation, local procurement and benefits for the local community. The DBN supported the hotel project with a loan.

In 2016, Gondwana was the first company in Africa to receive the Workshop N seal of quality and inclusion in the Council for Sustainable Development's project list of exemplary companies. Since 2011 the Council (Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung) annually honours a collection of 100 ideas and projects which bring alive a sustainable way of thought and conduct in everyday life. Gondwana received the award for its sustainable tourism products which focus on nature conservation and social commitment.

Chobe River Camp was voted "Community Joint Venture Lodge 2015" by NACSO (Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations). The award acknowledges the excellent cooperation with the Salambala conservancy and the lodge's social responsibility efforts.

In 2014 Bird Life South Africa awarded Chobe River Camp a 3-star Penguin award for being a Bird & Birder Friendly establishment and for bird conservation.

In December 2013 Namushasha River Lodge was voted Community Conservancy Lodge of the Year by NACSO in recognition of Gondwana's close cooperation with the Mashi community in terms of employment, nature conservation and support for the Namushasha Cultural Village.

In 2012 Gondwana received the Employment Equity Commission's prestigious Affirmative Action Award in recognition of its training programmes.

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