

Nkasa Lupala Tented Lodge

EMP Monitoring Report



<https://www.google.com.na/maps/@-18.3293998,23.6721015,15z?entry=ttu>

Jo Tagg, August 2023

Introduction

Nkasa Lupala Lodge is a joint venture (JV) between Wuparo Conservancy and the Micheletti family and became operational in 2011.

The lodge has an environmental clearance certificate which was renewed in 2016 and in accordance with the Environmental Management Act of 2007 this needs renewal. The Covid-19 Pandemic delayed the renewal of the EMP for valid reasons.

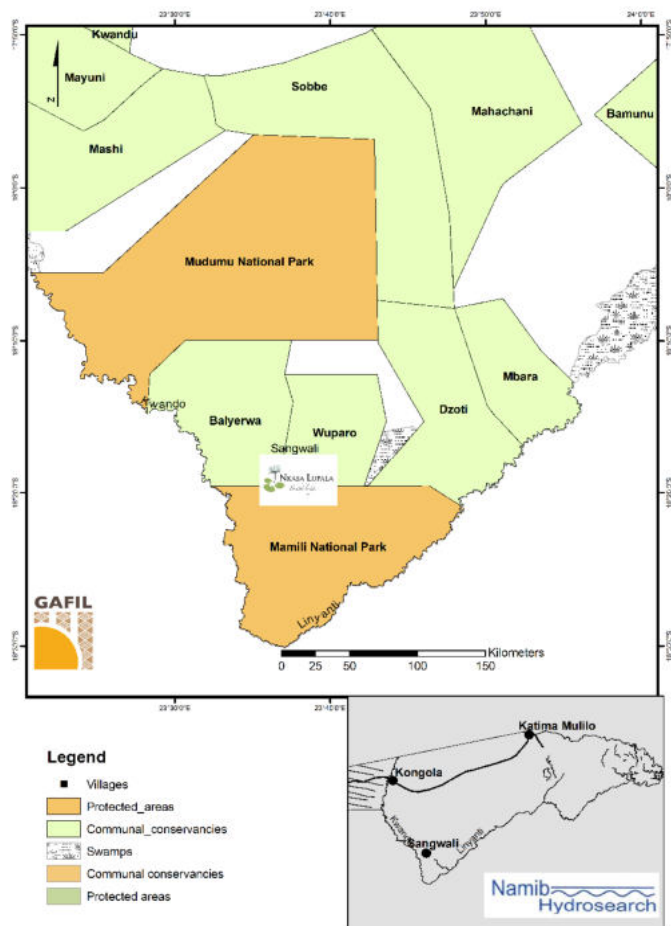
The author was requested by the lodge to undertake an independent review of the existing EMP and to make the required application for renewal.

The tented lodge includes:

- a) Ten tented accommodation units
- b) Central lounge and dining and deck
- c) Office
- d) Kitchen and food storage area
- e) Workshop and laundry
- f) Staff quarters
- g) Two management houses

Locality

The selected lodge site (GPS location: -18.329582° , 23.670884°) is located approximately 9 km south east of Sangwali Village within the Wuparo Conservancy.



Source: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR NKASALUPALA TENTED LODGE, CAPRIVI REGION, NAMIBIA
Commissioned by: Gafil cc, PO Box 11470, Windhoek, Namibia

Approach for Review of EMP

The author conducted a site inspection on the 16th August, 2023. In preparation for the inspection a table was developed whereby all issues covered in the original EIA and EMP were captured. Each of these elements was reviewed on site both independently and together with assistant manager Mr C Fry and Maintenance Supervisor, Mr Samuel Makata. Clarity was sought, where required, on issues from Mr Micheletti.

Findings were captured in the table below.

I have further attached the original Scoping Report that details the development.

The author further reviewed each element in terms of present appropriateness. This was done to ensure that the EMP remains relevant and that future monitoring does not have to deal with superfluous issues. Issues that no longer have relevance, in the opinion of the author, have been signified by a “~~strike through~~” in the table.

General Findings

- a) The Micheletti family’s investment in the JV operation was their first initiative. For experienced operators such investments can be daunting. The family, however, have shown remarkable resolve in making a success of the operation with a “triple bottom line” approach where social, environmental and financial components are integrated and approached in a manner that promotes sustainable tourism. The developers have added an additional two joint ventures with conservancies since this original development. Mr Simone Micheletti is now the Managing Director at Wild Waters Group of Lodges The family’s commitment to the region is further exemplified by Ms L Erculei, also prominent in the Wild Waters Group, who developed a private school in Katima Mulilo that places a strong emphasis on developing environmentally conscious learners. <https://www.facebook.com/wildkidsacademy/>
- b) In 2016, following an assessment by Eco-Awards Namibia, the lodge was awarded a rating five flowers out of a maximum of five. This assessment is aligned with the author’s findings of a tangible commitment to environmental and social “best practice”.
- c) The lodge does not operate in isolation and cooperate with all stakeholders, including other lodge operators, in the Zambezi region to address matters of mutual concern. Mr Micheletti plays a leading role in promoting the Zambezi Region as a tourism destination through the “Namibian Wetlands Route” initiative.
- d) Mr Micheletti is also a founder member of Zambezi Anti-Poaching Team (ZAST) which is a partnership between MEFT and private sector partners in Zambezi Region to fight wildlife crime in Zambezi. This is an innovative approach that raises funds and provides rewards to individuals who provide information on wildlife crimes in the regions. This initiative enjoys the support of wide-ranging private sector partners in the region and Mr Micheletti has been a driving force behind the formation and implementation of this noteworthy activity.
- e) The lodge has gone beyond what is required in terms of social investments – see findings in table below. The development and ongoing support of the kindergarten in Sangwali is a demonstration of this commitment as well as the support for an additional kindergarten in the area.

Recommendations

- a) A renewal of environmental clearance certificate is issued for a further three years.

EMP Compliance Table

Potential Impact	Causes	+ve/-ve	Findings	Comments
Ground water pollution	Inefficient septic tanks	-ve	Operating – no odours when inspected. Septic tanks at individual units checked during inspection.	Constantly monitored by operator
	Leaking pipes	-ve	None observed	Constant monitored by operator
Damage to access road and to park boundary	Increased traffic to lodge	-ve	Nothing above the ordinary	The access to the lodge is used by a range of users to the park and lodge is thus a limited user.
Soil contamination	Poor management at workshop (drip trays etc.) that results in hydrocarbon spills	-ve	The lodge no longer uses a bulk 500 liter storage tank hence a bunded area not required. Fuel stored in 100 liter drums on concrete floor. Area well away from tourist facilities.	Timber off-cuts stored close to fuel area and these shall be removed to reduce risk of fire.
Solid waste pollution	Kitchen & office waste blown around	-ve	Site secure	
	Wildlife attracted to solid waste site (baboons, porcupines etc.)		“Badger proof” cage built secure	Need to ensure that area always secure from baboons
	Waste falls from removal vehicle		Trailer conveying waste from lodge is covered	
Soil erosion	Heavy vehicle use on access roads	-ve	Lodge does not use heavy vehicles	
	Creation of tracks causes run-off		Nothing noted – flat terrain	
	Paths to main area and staff quarters		Nothing noted	
Water loss	Leaking pipes	-ve	Nothing noted	Regular checks made
	Damage by elephants		Not an issue as plenty of water in the area for elephants	

	Absence of automatic switch-off at tanks		Not an issue	
Noise pollution	Human activity at the lodge	-ve	Not an issue	The lodge has an impressive solar system for lights while water for tourists and lodge largely solar-heated. Two units have traditional “donkey boilers” which use wood but the design allows for minimal use of wood. Donkeys only used on demand.
	Vehicle movement		Not an issue	
	Generators		Limited use of generator that is largely used when no guests in lodge. Furthermore, generator has very low noise output.	
	Workshop		Not an issue	
	Staff village		Not an issue	
Air pollution	CO2 from old vehicles	-ve	Not an issue	Difficult to monitor and not in the interests of operator to allow undue pollution as impacts on tourist satisfaction
	Burning combustible waste		Very limited burning and far enough from lodge to have no impact	
	Boma fires		Not an issue	
	Pesticides for mosquitos		Not an issue	
Use of natural resources	Lodge uses surrounding dead wood for fires	-ve	Lodge uys from an individual in the conservancy	Lodge limits use of wood. Boma fires are extremely modest while donkeys are of a very fuel-efficient design
Killing of fauna on site	Staff kill wildlife (snakes, scorpions, tortoises etc.) through fear or superstition	-ve	No – contrary to lodge policy	One member of staff trained to remove snakes from lodge. These are live removals and snakes moved away from lodge site.

Wildlife disturbance and habitat loss	Activities disturb mammal, nesting birds and amphibian habitat	-ve	Not an issue	
Wildlife movement disturbance	Blocks off animal (elephant & buffalo) pathways to grazing areas and water sources	-ve	Not an issue — wildlife passes freely past lodge	Lodge is well-established and no longer a concern
Wildlife problem animals	Access to refuse sites	-ve	Refuse well-secured	
Wildlife mortalities	Use of pesticides (guest tents) and herbicides	-ve	Not an issue	
Vegetation destruction	Destruction from off-road driving – e.g. preparing for bush meals	-ve	No off-road driving allowed in Nkasa-Rupara National Park	Guides are reminded of this regularly, any non-compliance monitored by MEFT staff.
Vegetation: introduction of alien species	Introduced to gardens	-ve	Just a modest herb garden	Plants unlikely to spread and nothing was noted. Herbs are not known to be invasive.
	Escape from kitchen waste		Nothing noted	
Trampling and clearing grass	Guests and staff using walk ways	-ve	Not an issue	
Fire risk to habitat & wildlife	Accidental start by lodge equipment	-ve	Lodge has careful management	Fire-break noted just beyond precincts of lodge.
	Boma fire		Well-contained	
Proximity to park	Deterrent of lodge activities	+ve	It appears that presence of lodge and game drives etc. may be a deterrent to poachers	Difficult to measure
Wildlife monitoring	Sightings reported to MEFT	+ve	Guides report rare sightings	Also, Lodge contributes to “wildlife credits” scheme on behalf of Wuparo Conservancy

Proximity of trophy hunting lodge	Disturbance from hunting shots etc.	-ve	Good cooperation with hunter but conservancy zonation a good tool for reducing potential conflict	
	Danger of wounded animals		Informed by hunter of any potentially dangerous incident	
Health & safety: dangerous game	Old buffalo, hippos, scavengers, predators close to the camps	-ve	The lodge does not attract old animals but staff are vigilant to the possible presence of aggressive animals	Guests receive an introduction to safety issues relating to wild animals around the lodge.
Health & safety: drinking water quality	Poor quality water in channel	-ve	Use borehole water that is treated through reverse osmosis – used for drinking water and in kitchen	
Health & safety: Transmission HIV	Between staff members	-ve	Lodge conducts awareness while there is also national and regional awareness campaigns	Infected staff members are supported
Health & safety: Lodge accidents	During lodge activity or in camp	-ve	First-aid kit at lodge, manager received training from SOS	
Health & safety: Environmental conditions	High temperatures cause heat exhaustion among staff members and guests	-ve	Not reported	
Health & safety: Malaria area	Staff & guests exposed	-ve	Information is available to guests; staff are from the area and know the risks	
Health & safety: lack of communication	Lack of communication between lodge & guests regarding environmental hazards (e.g. swimming in channels etc.)	-ve	Staff are informed that they may not leave the lodge area while guests are briefed upon arrival	
Health & safety: Noise disturbance	Use of generator	-ve	Used only for washing machine and, as far as possible, when guests are on game drives although not always possible	

Visual impact	Proximity to park boundary	-ve	No undue visual impact for park	Lodge now established and no longer an issue
Loss of archaeological artefacts	Lodge uncovers artefacts during excavations for building	+ve	Nothing found during construction	No longer an issue, no further excavations
Community attitude	Possible resent from exclusion from development; lack of benefits	-ve	Lodge pays benefits according to JV contract	
Community: employment	Increase in local employment	+ve	35 local jobs created including management positions	
Tourism diversity	Development improves product diversity in the region and impacts on operators and communities	+ve	Wildwater Lodges has contributed to developing the Zambezi as a destination rather than a stop-over	Mr Micheletti continues to market the Zambezi Region as a notable destination.
International/national/local marketing	Positive impact on awareness of lodge and area	+ve	Lodge pursues a strong social media campaign that highlights Zambezi and the country	
Community-based tourism projects	Crafts etc.	+ve	Supports the community sport events and local cultural festival (craft is closed).	
Community: educational facilities	Community has access to study materials, kindergarten & educational upliftment	+ve	Lodge built a kindergarten in Sangwali that cost N\$400,000. They employ a manager and a cook while also providing for a meal for 30 children every day. A second Kindergarten was built in Samundunu area. Lately school chairs were donate to Sangwali Secondary School.	
Lack of transparency between proponent & conservancy	Theft & distrust	-ve	The joint management committee consults on issues regarding transgressions at lodge	

Competition between trophy hunting & lodge	Contribution of different benefits from different enterprises	-ve	There is regular contact between proponent and trophy hunter and the relationship is sound.	
Conservancy does not meet contractual obligations of JV partner	Broken contract, broken trust, lack of transparency	-ve	Conservancy sometimes slow with responses but probably due to institutional considerations but operator is satisfied	
JV operator does not honour contract	Broken contract and lack of trust	-ve	All compliance requirements met.	
Accessibility to lodge site	Lack of good roads for tourists and self-drives	-ve	Entrance improved, two bridges built	
Community skills base increases	Local community members continue to gain skills	+ve	Assistant manager from local community and all staff receive on-going skills enhancement. 2 previous Nkasa Lodge assistant managers have been promoted to Camp Manager in the other 2 Lodges of the same group. During inspection the Maintenance Supervisor, Mr Makata, mentioned that he had started at the lodge working in the scullery and was promoted on merit follow training to his present position	
Financial impact of visitors to the Sangwali area	Lodge development affects visitor numbers to the area		Significant inflow of cash into local economy through wages, payments to conservancy	
Revenue to local trade	Increased business to local trade	+ve	Reeds and other local products are regularly bought from local residents	
Increase in crime due to wealthy resource	Development attracts criminals	-ve	Nothing to report	