



Why are concessions necessary?

The role of protected areas in Namibia is to promote the conservation of natural resources and wildlife habitat in Namibia and the sustainable use of wildlife resources. Concessions provide opportunities for business development in these areas. They allow visitors to Namibia's parks access to locations that are ordinarily inaccessible. Concessions also diversify the range of opportunities on offer and generate additional revenue from the conservation and sensible use of Namibia's indigenous plant and wildlife resources.

Concession activities generally lend themselves to high value, low impact tourism activities. The State land, including protected areas, that is potentially suitable for concession activities is located in fragile environments. The awarding of concession rights therefore requires care so as to avoid negative impacts and to maintain the value of our landscapes, scenery, culture, historic sites and ecology.

What is a tourism & wildlife concession?

A concession allows a community, conservancy or privately owned tourism business to operate a business on State land. They are a legal and binding contract between the Government and the concessionaire. Types of concessions include:

- Tourism concessions that could entail the right to develop a lodge or camps within a specified area, conduct tourism services such as guided tours or the right to offer more specialised tourism activities such as adventure tourism, aerial site-seeing or kiosks;
- Trophy hunting concessions that represent valuable hunting experiences; and
- Concessions that may also include harvesting of valuable plant material such as medicinal plants, thatching grass, or other plant and animal species for bio-prospecting.

Where rights over wildlife and tourism resources have been devolved to communities residing on communal land (conservancies and community forests), such community management bodies are responsible for awarding concessions over those lands.

Namibia's objectives for tourism & wildlife concessions are to:

- Promote economic empowerment of formerly disadvantaged Namibians and their entrance into the tourism, hunting and wildlife-based industries;
- Provide support to ensure the development of capacity, skills and to facilitate access to capital for all Namibians to meet concession requirements;
- Enhance the conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological integrity in proclaimed protected areas and on other State land;
- Enhance through concessions the economic value of proclaimed protected areas, wildlife and plant resources;
- Enhance the ability of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) to effectively manage proclaimed protected areas and wildlife resources, to control and monitor concession operations; and
- Use concessions as a means of promoting sustainable development, poverty alleviation and employment creation in protected areas and on other State land.

What are the benefits of concessions?

There are a range of direct and indirect beneficiaries (such as local stores, petrol stations, craft suppliers and others) from successful concession businesses. Some of the direct benefits are:

Benefits for a Community: Concessions awarded to communities in or adjacent to a protected area provide that community with the opportunity to generate income and employment, learn new skills and become involved in a business. They help people to value their own culture while still conserving the area in which they and wildlife live. Preference will generally be given to awarding concessions to communities immediately in or adjacent to a park where such opportunities have the potential to provide the greatest socio-economic impact at a local level. These communities can have the greatest impact on the park while they are also likely to be the most negatively affected by wildlife or by loss of access to land and resources.

Benefits for an Operator: Where the local community develops their own operation, enters into an agreement with a private operator, or if a private operator wishes to start a business then the concession provides that business with a legal and secure tenure to operate in a protected area for a specified timeframe. The concession is an asset that adds value to the operation providing a legal right that may then be used to access capital.

Benefits for a Protected Area & the State: Concessions allow activities within protected areas to take place in a manner that ensures the park remains conserved. They also provide much needed revenue for parks and allow visitors to have a safe and enjoyable visit. Concession operators may be required to assist with certain management activities such as maintaining tracks or signs or gathering information about the area.

How do I apply for a concession?

In most cases concessions will be awarded after a *request for a proposal* has been issued from MET. However, in special cases concessions may also be preferentially awarded to an affected community, tendered, balloted or applied for by a community, conservancy or the private sector. The process and procedure for awarding concessions will be transparent, objective and fair.

The empowerment of formerly disadvantaged Namibians is a priority so in some cases preference will be given to rural communities in and adjacent to protected areas or other State land (excluding land managed by conservancies), who propose their own enterprise or who have entered into a joint venture with another entity(s). In such cases, there is a need to ensure that any sub-agreement with a third party does not exploit the community.

Since the development, management, administration and particularly the monitoring of concessions have significant cost implications for the MET, one of the goals is to generate revenue for the State through concessions as a means of recovering costs. It is also important that parks contribute to State revenue so that other Namibians can benefit.



How will concession opportunities be identified?

In accordance with the policy, concession opportunities will generally be identified as follows:

1. MET will identify, generally through its management planning, a site or opportunity for a concession;
2. The concession opportunity will be thoroughly defined, including any restrictions that will apply, such as the duration of the concession, access, maximum numbers of guests, activities allowed and prohibited, and whether the concession is exclusive (e.g. in terms of access to area, or service) or not.
3. If a concession is in conflict with other forms of land use, consultation with other stakeholders and consideration of long-term local, regional and national socio-economic costs and benefits, environmental impacts or benefits will be essential.

Applications applied for outside of a competitive process will only be considered if they match the concession opportunities identified through this framework. For unique and highly innovative proposals, the Minister may grant exclusive operating rights to the proponent for a limited period, and thereafter make such rights available through public competition.

What information is needed before a concession can be awarded?

Before a concession is awarded, MET must consider the following matters:

- a) A detailed site description of the area;
- b) Management plan provisions for the area;
- c) Environmental impact of the concession;
- d) Any infrastructure implications;
- e) The institutional (MET) capacity to manage the concession;
- f) Any social or cultural issues which may need to be addressed;
- g) Legal issues which may need clarity or further investigation;
- h) A financial assessment (cost benefit analysis);
- i) A brief market assessment e.g. the likely demand for the site or activity;
- j) An initial assessment of an appropriate timeframe for the concession;

- k) Any risks that MET may be exposed to; and
- l) Based on the above analysis, a recommended strategy and concession outline must be prepared. This must detail how the concession will operate, the duration of the contract, what sort of partners may be sought and any other relevant considerations. An evaluation must also be made whether the concession should be allocated through the request for proposals or tender process, by auction or by direct allocation to a rural community.

In all awards of a concession, a comprehensive contract is to be concluded between the beneficiary and the Minister that will then be managed and monitored by MET staff.

How do I obtain further information?

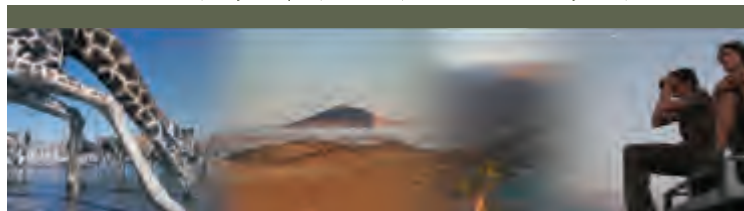
For further information on tourism, wildlife or plant collection concessions, information requirements or a copy of the Policy On Tourism And Wildlife Concessions On State Land please contact:

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Tourism and Wildlife Concessions in Namibia's Protected Areas

The Namibian Cabinet approved the Tourism and Wildlife Concessions Policy to guide the fair, transparent and efficient awarding of concessions on State lands, especially in Namibia's protected areas. This information summarises the policy, explains why concessions are necessary and how they will be awarded.

