

Case Study: Doro !Nawas Lodge in the Doro !Nawas Conservancy (Damaraland area in Namibia)

In October 2004 a private led initiative received a grant for £300,000 from Department for International Development (DFID) through the Business Linkage Challenge Fund (BLCF)¹ to build a luxury safari lodge in the Doro !Nawas conservancy in Namibia. Administered by Emerging Markets Group, this 3 year project aimed at harnessing the full potential of Namibia's fastest growing industry through a project that provided jobs and skills training, and thereby diversifying livelihood options in the conservancy.



The lead partner, Wilderness Safaris Namibia (WSN), is a safari company that owns and manages twenty lodges promoting low volume, low impact and high quality tourism in remote and unspoilt wildlife areas, and matched the funding by investing £300,000 in this initiative themselves. WSN and the Doro !Nawas conservancy cater to self-drive and fly-in international guests, sharing economic and empowerment benefits with the local community.

Being the first joint venture with a conservancy this project experimented finding the right model for community based tourism. The real innovation is in the creation of a 60-40 partnership with local stakeholders and WSN has pioneered a model for engaging local communities as the camp represents the first formal enterprise in the conservancy. In addition to wages earnings, and bed-night levies, rents paid to the conservancy provide the community with a sustained revenue base to reinvest in community projects, mainly related to education.



Another key result of the project has been empowerment of the local community and in particular women. During the building phase 80 construction labourers were hired and currently 36 staff jobs have been created and mainly filled by women. Community members have been trained by WSN and in turn have had the opportunity to become trainers, thus creating a multiplier effect. One integral part of the training provided during the project related to HIV prevention.

¹ The **Business Linkages Challenge Fund (BLCF)** supports private sector partnerships that bring commercial benefits to the businesses that participate and help to reduce poverty in target developing countries. Companies have access to grants between £50,000 and £1,000,000 to increase access to markets, transfer technology, improve competitiveness, or address the policy and regulatory environment for business. The BLCF is financed by the UK Government's **Department for International Development** and managed by Emerging Markets Group (EMG) Ltd. More information on the BLCF can be found at www.businesslinkageschallengefund.org

In the future, WSN and the Doro !Nawas conservancy plan to investigate and possibly introduce an additional impact on poverty alleviation is created by Doro !Nawas fostering a market for complimentary goods such as Arts & Crafts, indirectly providing jobs for a further substantial number of women.

The project could be used as a replicable model demonstrating successful community based tourism, private sector partnership and conservation efforts in Africa.