

# BOTSWANA

## GREEN + ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Client: Botswana Tourism Board with partial funding from the Commonwealth Secretariat

Team Leader: James MacGregor WINNER: 2010 Tourism for Tomorrow Award

### THE WORLD'S MOST COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL GREEN/GREEN PLUS AND ECOTOURISM CERTIFICATION

The Botswana Tourism Board (BTB), with the consulting services of ecoplan:net sarl, recently completed what is generally considered one of the most comprehensive eco-certification programs yet developed. Consisting of 258 standards, the program addresses all tourism services and facilities in the country, from city hotels to safari lodges to ecotours/mobile safaris and ecotourism facilities. The standards are based on the following categories: environmental management, cultural and natural resource protection, community and socio-economic development, fairtrade practices carbon reduction and ecotourism criteria.

Standards are distributed across three tiers, including a 'Green', 'Green+' and 'Ecotourism' levels. This differs from other programs that tend to be either just 'Green' or 'Ecotourism' based. The standards and certifying process were subsequently refined when field-tested at 12 different urban, rural and wilderness tourism facilities.

### COMPONENTS OF THE BOTSWANA CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

- Comprehensive Technical Guidelines Manual describing 150 sustainable planning, design, construction and green management criteria
- More than 250 standards, of which approximately 40% are mandatory
- Comprehensive 3-point rating system
- Self assessment forms, checklists and instructions
- Ecocertification Program Management Structure, Staff Requirements and 5-year Cost Estimates
- Program logo and application techniques
- Certification Program Marketing Strategy
- Auditor Training Program and Materials



*“This comprehensive ecocertification program is designed to ensure the long-term protection of Botswana’s resources, reduce the industry’s operating costs.....and position our country as an environmentally and socially responsible world-class destination”*

-- Ms. Myra Sekgororoane, CEO, Botswana Tourism Board



## STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

More than 400 stakeholders attended 10 workshops held in all regions of Botswana including the Okavango Delta. These sessions made a valuable contribution to both developing the program and advancing the concept of ecocertification amongst tourism operators. Approximately 350 of those attending the workshops were from the travel industry. Two series of workshops were offered; the first to present the criteria for sustainable tourism and the second series, to review and validate the various certification standards, rating system and certifying process.

*There was unanimous acceptance of all certification standards by the travel industry.*

## A SEVEN PHASE PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The program took approximately 1 year to develop and included the following seven phases:

1. Research and Preparation of a **Green Best Practices Criteria and Guidelines Manual** including a 15 page 'User Manual' and presentation at regional workshops
2. **EcoCertification Program Feasibility Analysis** including Assessment of all major National-based and Global Programs
3. Preparation of 258 '**Green**' and '**Ecotourism**' **Certification Standards** including identification of mandatory criteria and presentation to the travel industry
4. Preparation of all **documentation associated with the certification process** including self-assessment forms, affidavits, program logo and conditions for use of logo, certificate design
5. Design the **BTB certifying process** and testing of the standards and all associated program materials
6. Define the **certification administrative structure** within the BTB including roles, skill requirements and budget,
7. **Design program and train BTB auditors** and members of the Quality Assurance Committee.

