



CUSTODIANS

OF PROFESSIONAL HUNTING & CONSERVATION SOUTH AFRICA

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BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY & INVESTMENT INDABA

Collective action for thriving nature and people

25-27 MARCH 2024

SESSION 3 PLENARY 3: FINANCING BIODIVERSITY TO CLOSE THE BIODIVERSITY FINANCIAL GAP

ADRI KITSHOFF-BOTHA REPRESENTING CUSTODIANS ON THE PANEL DISCUSSION

1. INTRODUCTION:

Custodians will not participate in the panel discussion as a financier, but rather to provide a perspective from the wildlife industry on sustainable utilization; more specifically fair chase trophy hunting.

2. AVAILABLE SOURCES AND RESOURCES FOR NEW AND ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE USE AND THE BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY

- a. **The ONLY proven sustainable resource, in the wildlife industry, is the SUSTAINABLE UTILISATION of wildlife either through eco-tourism or fair-chase hunting.** People from all over the entire world wants to visit South Africa for ecotourism and true hunting experiences; that is our sustainable HUB.
- b. **When it comes to Previously Disadvantaged Individuals and communities entering the sector, the private sector can play an important role, through joint ventures.** Whilst the new entrants, including communities, will have the land & animals, the private sector currently has the client base for fair chase trophy hunting experiences.
When new entrants and communities adopt the South African conservation success model of the past seven decades, by re-investing income generated into their areas, success will follow. It's been proven by the private sector.
- c. **Gaps:**
We cannot go forward or make any proposals, without attending to the current gaps:

- i. Whereas new entrants and communities may receive financial assistance and/or SANPARKS game donations, they would still depend on permits and, where applicable, quotas for trophy hunting purposes.
In certain instances, there are currently challenges with permits being issued within acceptable times and we've seen the negative effect on our sector of the past two years' lack of quotas for certain species.
- ii. New entrants should also realize that it would take time before the game that they have received as donations, will be ready for hunting purposes; especially as far as fair chase trophy hunting is concerned. It can take up to 8 years for plains game, and even up to 11 years before a buffalo fair chase trophy hunt can take place.

3. **ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABLE UTILISATION AND BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY**

a. **Access to capital from Commercial banks:**

Access to capital at affordable rates, will often be the most important determining factor when promoting the establishment of biodiversity-based businesses.

Although existing and new entrants to the wildlife industry, do not qualify for the same financing support as normal commercial agriculture.

Banks see the game industry as high risk; therefore, the financing support is lower

b. **Funding mechanisms currently available for the biodiversity sector:**

This Indaba reminds us strongly of the Biolab held in 2016 and the PHAKISA, with lots of goals being set and possibilities of big companies that might invest and might donate; however there were no guarantees.

The surest thing, to make the biodiversity sector sustainable, is for the “value” (wildlife) to be utilised through sustainable utilisation, including fair chase hunting and eco-tourism.

4. **INCENTIVISING BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION:**

Incentivize those whose businesses focus on the environment and promoting biodiversity conservation.

Good examples in the wildlife industry would be the role that private rhino owners have played in conserving the iconic specie, not forgetting the efforts of other conserving a smaller species, oribi.

Such incentives could, amongst others, include:

- tax breaks / deductions
- special line of credit at better interest rates; a “green deal” initiative

- access to capital at reasonable costs

5. GROW THE BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY IN SOUTH AFRICA:

- a. **The reality is that the current regulatory environment, specifically regarding turnaround times for issuing of permits,** are in many instances not favorable for existing or new business.

Imagine how the biodiversity economy would grow:

- IF we can do away with long waiting periods for the issuing of permits throughout the full value chain.
- IF we can do away with “red tape”

b. Proposed solutions:

i. Self-Administration:

Provincial Nature Conservation authorities to introduce self-administration, by partnering with recognized organizations representing game farmers, hunting outfitters, professional hunters, recreational hunters, taxidermists, etc. The organized industry can assist government through self-administration, within a framework of reporting to the relevant authorities. The purpose would not be for the industry to take over officials’ work, but to enable them to address other important conservation issues for which they currently do not have capacity.

An effective, efficient, user-friendly permit system will make the biodiversity economy to flow.

ii. Open the corridors of communication:

One of the most difficult things when trying to deal with government from our sector, is to find the right people to liaise with. Once again, self-administration will be extremely valuable.

iii. Empowerment of new entrants:

Government to empower new entrants, communities, with the setting up of financial businesses within the wildlife sector, WITH mentors.

6. CLOSING:

There are many other issues relevant to our sector to be discussed, including the role of the State, private sector, communities and Traditional Leaders can play in adopting South-Africa’s conservation success model, in an effort to grow the Biodiversity sector. However, Custodians will be available to discuss and share these matters with the Department and will also ensure to include that in our comments to the proposed NBES.

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