

Tourism for Tomorrow Awards

Business Winner 2014



Asilia Africa

As it enters its tenth year of business, Asilia Africa can boast a Big Five that is about so much more than wildlife. Community, conservation, capacity, certification and commitment are five of the core principles running through this organisation. These not only engender sustainable tourism throughout the destinations where Asilia operates, but also ensure a fine and fair safari product for future generations.

Asilia has thirteen properties in Tanzania, Kenya and Mozambique, and employs 600 permanent members of staff, 95 per cent of whom have an African nationality and 30 per cent are employed locally. Asilia realises that there is no future for sustainable safari businesses unless conservationists, community members and business experts work hand in hand towards creating lasting conservation economies.

For example, Asilia operates in regions which they define as critical conservation areas, where wildlife is severely under threat and, therefore, local economic prospects are rapidly diminishing. These regions, although riskier in terms of investment, have flourished under Asilia's guidance, such as Naboisho private conservancy in Kenya, which has protected 200 km² within an important wildlife corridor in the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem and which had no tourism income before 2010. It now generates close to US\$1M through tourism. Or Rubondo Island camp, in the continent's largest island National Park, which is now a reputable sustainable tourism destination in an extraordinary location on Lake Victoria, Tanzania.

Within these pristine habitats, Asilia not only monitors and manages its resources and waste, using solar energy, practising minimum waste programmes and carbon offsetting, but it also sources camp supplies locally when possible, and supports the work of important NGOs such as the Koiyaki Guide School, which trains the Maasai youth in ethical and sustainable guiding practices, and provides internships to students of the school. Education is key to conservation and thus Asilia spends 4 per cent of their pay roll on staff training and development while also supporting Tanzanian education charities such as the Kamitei Foundation and Interpretive Guides Society. Such actions have contributed to Asilia being in receipt of a high rating from both the Global Impact Investing Ratings System and B Corporation, ensuring its status in a growing community of socially and environmentally aware companies to watch, learn from and invest in.