



SUSTAINABLE & RESPONSIBLE TOURISM as a Business Strategy

Why doing the right thing is also the smart thing — and how to prove it.



Don Scott | Co-Owner, Tanda Tula Safari Camp | Timbavati Private Nature Reserve



A BIT ABOUT ME



TANDA TULA Co-Owner of Tanda Tula Safari Camp, Timbavati Private Nature Reserve



Executive Committee Member, Timbavati Private Nature Reserve — since 2011



Served on the Steering Committee for the Greater Kruger Strategic Development Framework



Fair Trade Tourism — Tanda Tula Safari Camp fully certified in 2025



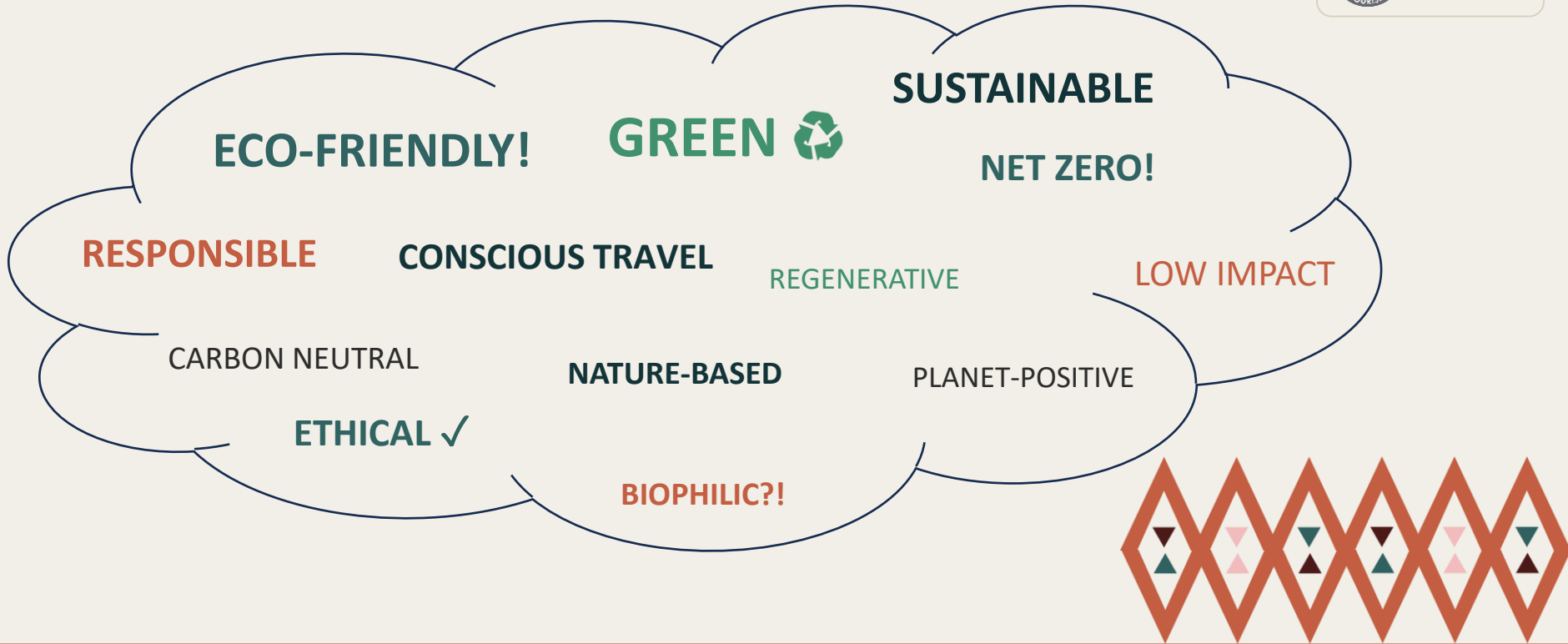


Let's start by Framing the Landscape

Marketing language that tells the underlying truth - Doing good is good business practice.



MODERN TOURISM MARKETING LANGUAGE:



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(and somewhere under all of this... there is an actual business.)

THE FLIP SIDE: GREENWASHING IS BAD BUSINESS



Making claims you cannot substantiate carries real risk

Reputational Risk



Today's guests are savvy.

Unsubstantiated claims are increasingly being called out — by guests, by journalists, by NGOs, and on social media. The reputational damage from being exposed as a greenwasher can be lasting and severe.

Legislative Risk



Our source markets are legislating:

- Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive ('25-'26)
- Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive ('24-'26)
- Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive

Your guests and their agents legal obligations are becoming your commercial reality.

NOW LET'S TRY THE OPPOSITE:



Does any of this describe a healthy, viable, long-term business?
Would you put these words in your brochure?

OUR SPECIFIC CONTEXT: THE KRUGER LOWVELD



Why sustainable practices are particularly logical here



Most businesses are in some way linked to nature and the outdoors



Many operate in remote areas with low human population density



Most offer nature-based, wildlife or adventure experiences as their core product



Most operate in areas of low economic output and relatively poor rural communities



FIVE OBVIOUS BUSINESS QUESTIONS



You don't need a business guru to answer these

Would nature-based activities be enhanced or degraded by mass tourism?



Preventing over-tourism is a good regional business strategy. (The Maasai Mara should be a warning sign.)

When operating remotely, is it wise to source goods and services from far away?



Shortening supply chains and sourcing locally is obviously better for price and delivery time.

When your business operates in a rural community, is it wise to alienate that community?



Local employment, community partnerships and cultural respect are good business practice.

Is there any business reason to allow your core tourism attraction to be degraded?



Minimising environmental impact to protect your core product is obviously the smart move.



Doesn't it follow, then...

**...that doing the right thing
is also the smart thing
as a business strategy?**

*All of the above represent sustainable and responsible tourism principles.
The logic is self-evident.*





So Why Aren't More of Us Doing It?

The barriers to certification — and why they're more myth than reality.



THE FOUR BARRIERS TO CERTIFICATION



Common concerns — and why they're less daunting than they seem

01 Not knowing where to start

Which organisation? What process? How do we even begin?

02 Concern about the cost

Will achieving the standard require significant investment?

03 Concern about the effort

Do we have the time and capacity to implement everything?

04 "We probably don't meet the standards anyway"

Fear that the bar is too high for where we currently are.



The Tanda Tula Experience

What we actually found going through the Fair Trade Tourism certification process.



BARRIER 1: NOT KNOWING WHERE TO START



Fair Trade Tourism — an African solution for African businesses



Why Fair Trade Tourism?

- Home-grown: understands the African landscape and its unique challenges
- Tourism-focused: specifically built for our industry
- Scalable: designed for businesses from the smallest SMME to large corporates
- Tiered: you work at your own pace, you don't start from scratch, you build on your experience
- **Tanda Tula: fully certified May 2025**

What we found:

- ✓ Online system is fully guided — no guesswork
- ✓ Self-assessment before audit — removes the fear
- ✓ Best practice examples in every section
- ✓ Knowing there are tiers made it feel achievable

"The guided process took the mystery out of it."

BARRIER 2: CONCERN ABOUT THE COST



What we actually found — the process revealed savings, not just expenses

Certification with FTT is tailored to the size of your business. But the real surprise was what we discovered about our own costs.

Water Measurement

Measuring water use at different points gave us a clear view of where the bulk of our water was being used — and allowed us to focus our saving efforts accordingly.

Electricity Monitoring

Measuring electrical usage identified areas of unnecessary load — leading to some surprising reductions in our monthly electricity bills.

Supply Chain Visibility

Separating out supplier delivery costs identified the saving potential of reducing supply chain distances — motivating further local buying.

*Often, unidentified wasteful practices cost the business **MORE** than it costs to implement responsible ones.*

BARRIER 3: CONCERN ABOUT THE EFFORT



Less than you think — and it gets easier as you embed it



"The only thing really required is a mindset change — instead of 'I'm too busy running my business to implement certification requirements', shift to: 'running my business already ticks most of the boxes — I just need to start writing it down.'"



FTT provides online training resources to upskill your team — making it easy to embed understanding across your operation, not just at management level.



As you proceed, practices become embedded into day-to-day operations. It doesn't have to be 'all at once' — it is genuinely incremental and progressive.



Guidance and support from FTT is available throughout. You are not navigating this alone.

BARRIER 4: "WE PROBABLY DON'T MEET THE STANDARDS"



The most revealing — and reassuring — part of the process



✓ Already doing it well

Local staff employment — 98% from within region

Sustainability levy programme — funds Timbavati, supports community, supports Tanda Tula Education Foundation

Wildlife policy — Timbavati Field Guide Protocol already covers all aspects of best practice.



📄 Doing it — not documenting it

Some HR Policies practiced, but without a written policy — all required policies are now documented

Local supplier relationships were informal — now documented and tracked

Training happening but not always recorded — all aspects of team training now recorded and reported on.



🔧 Genuine gaps to address

Formal environmental management plan for the company required adoption

HR policies needed updating

Carbon footprint not calculated



The most valuable thing we gained

was not the certificate.

*It was the confidence to say, clearly and credibly:
"We do this. Here is the evidence. You can trust us."*

Documentation transforms good habits into institutional knowledge.
And institutional knowledge is a competitive asset that survives staff changes.



A JOURNEY, NOT A DESTINATION



The most important principle to internalise

Sustainable and responsible tourism practice is a journey — not a destination.

01

You don't need to have everything in place before you start.

02

You don't need to achieve 100% to be recognised and certified.

03

Every gap identified is an opportunity — often a necessary business improvement in any event.

04

The framework grows with you. Your certification reflects where you genuinely are.

CLOSING



The Bottom Line

For the businesses that will thrive in the next decade of tourism.





TANDA TULA

*Whilst I'm probably preaching to the converted,
my hope is that more businesses in the Kruger Lowveld will realise that
sustainable, responsible tourism is central to their own survival —*

**...and therefore doing the right thing
and the smart thing are the same thing.**

*The businesses that will thrive in the next decade of tourism
will be the ones who can prove it.*



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