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Executive Management

A Multiple Case Study of Corporate Social Responsibility in High-end Safari Ecotourism in Africa and its' Resilience to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

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List of Abbreviations

10 Year Framework of Programmes = 10YFP

African Conservation Foundation = ACF

Corporate Social Responsibility = CSR

Global Sustainable Tourism Council = GSTC

Gross Domestic Product = GDP

Nongovernmental Organisation = NGO

Small and Medium Enterprises = SME's

The International Ecotourism Society = TIES

United Nations = UN

United Nations Industrial Development Organisation = UNIDO

United States Dollar = USD

World Health Organisation = WHO

World Tourism Organisation = UNTWO

World Travel Market = WTM

World Wildlife Fund = WWF

Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility strategies are widely implemented among safari ecotourism companies as a tool to achieve lasting positive impacts on the environment and local communities. Their success in creating revenue for local communities and preserving the environment has had a profound effect on entire regions in Africa. Ecotourism companies' CSR strategies are generally built upon principles of maintaining biodiversity, sustainable practices and community empowerment. This multiple case investigation aims to determine the many drivers, motivators, barriers and other variables, such as, socioeconomic context, that affect CSR strategies of five different safari ecotourism companies. Secondary data was collected from sustainability and impact reports published by the companies about their CSR aims and outcomes, for which interviews with representatives from the companies provide insight into the implementation methods employed. The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented financial strain on the tourism industry, which has led to significantly reduced funding for crucial CSR initiatives. This study critically assesses the measures that the case companies, international governments and NGO's are implementing in the short and long-term to mitigate the impact the pandemic. The decline in tourism has highlighted the vulnerabilities in the current tourism-based model for conservation and warrants the development of measures to safeguard it from future crises. There is a vital need for both government and nongovernmental organisations (NGO's) to mobilise and immediately address the critical funding deficits in protected area management. The global landscape is changing rapidly making it imperative that we highlight the value of sustainable tourism, as it can be harnessed to reduce poverty and maintain biodiversity. The CSR strategies examined in this paper should further standardise their methods of measuring and reporting of their CSR outcomes, in order to deduce models of success which might be applicable on a wider scale. With the right global support and action, the pandemic can become a unique opportunity for the tourism industry as a whole to be transformed into a better and more durable version of itself. Government policy globally must support the shift to more sustainable business practices with strategic regulatory frameworks and incentives for businesses. Sustainable tourism models echoing those in this study should become the norm rather than the niche.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Wildlife tourism to Africa generates over 29 billion United States Dollars (USD) annually (Lindsey et. al, 2020, p. 1300). According to the World Tourism Organisations (UNTWO, n.d.), “wildlife tourism refers to the observation and interaction with local animal and plant life in their natural habitats.” By far the largest portion of this sector is made up of photographic safari tourism, which involves observing wildlife in protected areas in Africa; such as national parks, game reserves and private concessions. The richly biodiverse regions with high densities of large mammals across Southern and Eastern Africa attract millions of travellers from all over the world annually (World Tourism Organisation [UNTWO], 2015, p. 40-41). In order to provide exceptional safari experiences in these areas, the wildlife and habitats must be protected and maintained. There are numerous protected wildlife areas across the continent with parts of Southern and Eastern Africa far exceeding the global average (Lindsey et al., p. 1301). This study will aim to assess the role that safari tourism, and in particular certain safari operators, play in contributing to wildlife and habitat conservation, strengthening local economies, empowering communities, whilst operating viable businesses. Safari operators situated in safari destinations can have any combination of, but are not limited to, the following main functions; lodge/hotel ownership, activity management, transport supply and logistical support, bookings, providing wildlife guides and safari vehicles, and protecting wildlife areas. As with all forms of tourism, safaris range significantly in price and type, but this study will be focusing on the high-end ecotourism safari sector. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), defines the term *ecotourism* as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” (TIES, 2015). The high-end term is used to refer to a safari sector which can be categorised in an over average price segment and eludes to the companies access to significant resources. The high monetary value of the industry has the ability to transforms entire regions and significantly affect a broad range of stakeholders.

Over the last 25 years, there has been a shift in responsibility with regards to social and environmental issues globally; with many people now looking to private firms to address these significant concerns (Auld, 2008, p. 414). This change is apparent across all industries including the tourism industry. Within Africa, it has become a focus of many hotel and lodge companies to find a balance between minimising environmental footprints without comprising on high standards of service, dining and amenities. In fact, many companies, such as those that qualify as ecotourism businesses, have gone much further and positively contribute to the environment and surrounding communities within which they operate. The pillars of ecotourism are very closely aligned with most modern-day definitions of the concept *corporate social responsibility*. The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) defines *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) as “a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders.” However, this is a broad definition and further attention will be given to defining the term in more detail and in relation to the specific setting and sector to which it is being applied, safari tourism in Africa.

Some companies within the high-end ecotourism sector have based their business strategy around a holistic approach to providing exceptional experiences for tourists, protecting ecosystems, providing social support systems and empowering local communities (Wilderness Holdings, 2018). The method of incorporating corporate social responsibility (CSR), into all business operations and administrative processes can enable businesses to effectively make ethical concerns and considerations a core aspect of all of decision making processes. There are many potential motivators for a company’s efforts towards creating a positive impact from a social and environmental perspective and in the safari industry the relationship between the environment, community and tourism is perhaps more closely linked than in most other tourism sectors. This is due to the clear reliance of the industry on the protection of ecosystems for their main product offering, which is wildlife viewing. In return the tourism industry plays a crucial role in the conservation of wildlife and preservation of biodiversity in Africa (Lindsey et al., 2020, p. 1302), and in order to do so, it is essential to have the support of local communities to work towards protecting natural resources. The companies that are examined in this study incorporated the notion of CSR into their business models and have developed CSR strategies in order to practically implement initiatives that can address their aims of increasing biodiversity and uplifting local communities. The acknowledged success of these companies in improving the regions in which they operate from an environmental and social perspective is sufficient cause

for acquiring a deeper understanding of their methods (Buckley, 2010; Mwakalobo, Kaswamila, Kira, Chawala, Tear, 2016). Another integral facet of their CSR is to integrate principles of sustainability into all aspects of their business operations, including their development practices. In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations [UN], 1987). Today the UN promote the integration of their sustainable development goals (SDG’s) into countries practices, laws and regulations worldwide to safeguard future generations (UN, n.d.). The SDG’s are a complex framework designed to guide sustainable development in order to meet long-term sustainability agendas (UN, n.d.).

The global Covid-19 pandemic has a had devastating effect on all sectors of the tourism industry, with international tourism arrivals to Africa for example, declining by 69% over the first 10 months of 2020 (UNWTO, 2020). The pandemic is significantly reducing the revenue generated by tourism in Africa and will impact all the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the industry. The ongoing decline in tourism arrivals can put the financial wellbeing of the companies being studied at risk. It may be assumed that, as a result the funds available for the companies’ CSR activities will be significantly negatively impacted. The culmination of decades of work by NGO’s, private tourism companies and local communities towards increasing biodiversity will be placed in jeopardy. The protected areas in Africa are already under threat, as well as, the businesses and local communities that rely on them for the generation of income. Due to the uncertain nature of the pandemic, it will be very difficult to predict the overall effect that it will have on the companies and their essential CSR practices. The Covid-19 pandemic is a contingency factor that has the potential to cripple the tourism industry if it continues, but as it is currently ongoing, in the first half of 2021, it is difficult to forecast how the industry can or will recover. What is presently needed is an assessment of the current impact of the pandemic on the industry and their efforts towards CSR in order to determine what measures can be taken immediately and in the long term to alleviate its’ effects.

1.2 Research Problem

Although CSR in tourism has become a common theme for scholars to research, according to Coles et. al (2013, p. 123) prior to their work, there had not been a systematic analysis of the body of knowledge relating to CSR in tourism, hospitality and travel. Coles et al. (2013, p. 137)

argues that despite the prevalence of the theme of CSR within the tourism sector and its' position as a point of focus for many scholars, there has been very little empirical research conducted on the radical, innovative developments in CSR theory and conceptualisation. In more recent years, there have been a variety of case studies conducted that have analysed the CSR strategies of high-end ecotourism companies, including some of the companies examined within this study (Mwakalobo et al., 2016; Snyman, 2019). However, the amount of available research on this specific sector of CSR within the context of tourism, is limited, and generally does not provide a comprehensive overview of the numerous variables affecting the practical implementation of CSR strategies across comparable companies.

The main objectives for the implementation of CSR strategies within the high-end ecotourism safari industry, are aimed at the achievement of long-term goals that are crucial for the financial success of the companies themselves. The symbiotic nature of the relationship dictates that their efforts towards sustainable development, conservation and community development are a core function and therefore, integral to and almost indistinguishable from their business model. This sets apart the manner in which they should be examined. The formula and measurement standards for ascertaining the efficacy of western tourism operators' models of CSR cannot be applied across the board and allowances for redefining methods must be provided based upon sector and setting.

Comparing companies is challenging in this context, as many operate in multiple countries; meaning that regulations differ significantly in regards to waste disposal, environmental impact, and employment regulations. Spenceley (2008, p. 366) indicates that despite the extensive research she has conducted on eco-tourism in Africa highlights the difficulties in making comparisons between the "effectiveness of different tourism intervention strategies in generating benefits for the poor and biodiversity conservation." The varying regulations, ecosystems, project parameters, as well as, the different systems, methods of monitoring, reporting and evaluation, contribute to the difficult and complex nature of consolidating and transferring methods elsewhere (Spenceley, 2008, p. 366). The country or region, in which a company is operating can influence the CSR strategy and the resulting practices of a company, as expectations and requirements may vary due to a wide range of cultural and socioeconomic contextual influences. In addition, regulatory differences between countries affect how and to what extent companies are allowed to involve themselves in certain aspects of conservation, for example. The infrastructure and varying landscapes can also affect the ability of a company to implement certain projects. Therefore, Spenceley (2008, p. 366), stresses the value of detailed case study

reports and the importance of implementing reporting frameworks in order to analyse the case study reports more effectively and meaningfully.

While there are thresholds for what qualifies an eco-friendly lodge or ecotourism safari operator by external international bodies (TIES, 2015), the usage of the correct terminology is not upheld in many countries. Although many safari operators state that they run ecolodges and have social and environmental projects in place, very few provide detailed reports for review, allowing consumers or partners to understand the objective, scope and results of their endeavours. Many companies that may in the eyes of the industry, be considered eco-friendly or ethical operators, develop their own best practice framework in terms of their corporate social responsibility goals. Research that provides detailed information about successful CSR strategies within the sector of safari ecotourism could facilitate the development of a systematic framework for other companies within the sector to implement or to steer the progression of government policies. Over 30 African countries have identified tourism as a priority sector due to its' potential to lead to economic growth, job creation and poverty alleviation (UNWTO, 2015, p. 6). Therefore, the importance of understanding the full extent of the possibilities within tourism to have a positive economic, social and environmental impact on African countries, is vital, and demands further research to ensure Africa's future within the global setting.

Comprehending the current scale of the reliance of some African countries on tourism, paves the way to understanding the extent to which the current decline in tourism, caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, could lead to a potentially disastrous economic decline. Never has it been more important to study the success of certain models of CSR and their strategic resistance or vulnerability to varying global economic backdrops. Existing research on the topic does not assess the resilience of safari operators CSR strategies to crises. It must be noted that Covid-19 is a contingency factor, and incomparable to prior shocks the industry has faced and prepared for. However, it provides an opportunity for the CSR strategies to be re-examined as a whole and with a sharp focus on how robust they are within the context of the pandemic. It must be determined what short and long-term measures are being taken by companies to mitigate its' affects. CSR strategies that rely upon one stream of funding prove to be unsustainable and will inevitably result in funding shortages. More detailed research into effective methods implemented prior to the Covid-19 pandemic compared with how they are currently performing, will assist the industry in making the necessary transition to a post Covid-19 setting. The pandemic is testing the stability of CSR strategies and tourism operations that were acknowledged to be successful in sustaining the business, ecosystems and surrounding communities (Buckley,

2010; Mwakalobo et al., 2016; Snyman, 2019) and provides an opportunity to view these CSR strategies through a new lens. At a time in which the awareness of the need for climate action and a shift to more sustainable practices globally is gaining momentum, it is vital that attention turn to examining sustainable companies. It is essential to understand not only their successful frameworks, but their weaknesses and areas in need of re-examination. The last few decades of innovative and unique approaches within the safari ecotourism sector towards sustainable development, including partnerships with numerous stakeholders, could prove to be critical in a time of global transition to sustainable tourism.

1.3 Research Purpose

This research study aims to introduce a deeper understanding into the multifaceted aims and outcomes of the CSR strategies of companies within the high-end ecotourism segment. This study will incorporate and evaluate a variety of themes driving or inhibiting CSR initiatives; such as motivating factors, implementation opportunities and barriers, forms of measurement of outcomes, impact reporting, regulations and contextual variables. This will provide the foundation for an in-depth analysis into the full potential for safari operators to positively impact the people and environment in the regions in which they operate. Five large safari operators, either considered to be pioneers in the sector of safari ecotourism in previous research or displaying similar standards and strategies (Buckley, 2010; Mwakalobo et al., 2016), will be examined to provide a systematic analysis of the implementation of their CSR strategies. The companies whose approaches are studied in detail have been selected due to their success from a financial perspective in conjunction with the significant efforts and funding they dedicate to CSR initiatives. Four out of five of the companies publish detailed annual impact reports detailing the outcomes of their numerous sustainable development, conservation and social community projects. The company that is the youngest is working towards implementing an annual impact report in the future and currently provides detailed information regarding ongoing projects on their website. The monetary and conceptual contributions made to sustainable development, community development, carbon offsetting, education initiatives, habitat protection and wildlife conservation are determined through interviews and secondary data published by the companies themselves. The effectiveness of the projects to which the funds are being allo-

cated, must be considered. This study will also aim to analyse the existing parameters of ‘eco-tourism’ as they are currently understood and considers what measures could be taken to ensure the title is used correctly.

The manner in which the current global circumstances are rapidly evolving, poses a challenge to researchers to provide up to date analyses on the impact of the pandemic on various stakeholders of the tourism industry. The pandemic can be viewed as the litmus test for the industry as whole and for all its’ sub sections such as CSR strategies, as it tests the strength and effectiveness of the existing models by challenging any preconceived notions of stability of tourism numbers and revenue. This study will analyse the current impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on companies’ CSR strategies in the safari ecotourism sector in Africa, with a strong focus on deciphering which aspects of their strategies have proven to be robust and which need revision. The socioeconomic impact resulting from the significantly reduced operations of the tourism industry due to the current global pandemic will be taken into account. Research emerging as a result of the crisis concerning the future of wildlife conservation in Africa and local and global relief measures is incorporated into the analysis of the data that arises from this study. The researcher aims to ascertain what short and long-term measures the companies are taking to reduce the impacts of the pandemic on their businesses overall, with particular reference to their CSR strategies. The researcher will try to determine what measures the companies plan to implement to safeguard their businesses and CSR practices from the impact of future crises. Additionally, examine what measures need to be taken on a global scale to ensure the protection and safety of the vital role played by ecotourism in the future. This paper analyses the ways in which the sector can be stabilised via means of changing government attitudes, consolidation of funding streams and raising global awareness.

Research Question: How and why do high-end ecotourism safari operators employ CSR and how resilient are their CSR strategies to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic?

Sub questions:

RQ1: What are the main aims of the companies’ CSR strategies?

RQ2: What are the main motivations for the companies’ CSR initiatives and what are some driver/barriers they face in practical implementation of their projects?

RQ3: How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the CSR projects the selected companies have in place and how have they adapted their strategies as a result?

With the aim of answering the research questions and sub questions listed above, a multiple case study design is employed to analyse the selected companies CSR strategies. This design is suitable due to its' ability to incorporate two sources of data and take into consideration a variety of complex variables (Yin, 2009, p. 37). Secondary data will be collected and analysed utilising sustainability and impact reports published by the companies. Primary data will be obtained in the form of interviews which will provide context to the practical implementation methods of CSR. In an attempt to address shortcomings in available research on the subject, the study will aim to allow for the discussion of drivers and barriers to execution to be led by representatives of the companies, in the format of open-ended interviews, to determine emergent variables that either facilitate or hinder the realization of their CSR goals. Together with the primary and secondary data collected and the available emerging research on the topic, trends in theoretical and practical approaches will be put forward and compared in order to provide a framework for other businesses and policy makers to initiate.

2. Literature Review

In order to approach the individual case studies with a theoretical foundation of knowledge of the broader topic at hand 'CSR', this section will introduce various theories of CSR, and discuss how CSR is applied within the field of tourism. The specific application of CSR in the safari tourism sector in Africa, will then be examined. Consideration will be afforded to the impact of various external socioeconomic and environmental variables that influence the needs of a region and therefore, the adaptations of their CSR strategies.

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility & Tourism

The following chapter introduces CSR theories, providing information about how the definition and interpretation of the concept has evolved over time. The different forms and practical applications of CSR in various contexts are discussed, in addition to, how the outcomes of CSR practices can be monitored and regulated when applied to the field of tourism. In order to address the research questions, CSR must be analysed not only as a theoretical framework, but

according to the ways in which it can be applied to various fields of business. The scope of research pertaining to the topic CSR in tourism is examined and the potential gaps in research are highlighted.

2.1.1 Definitions and Theories of CSR

The motivations for incorporating CSR can be internal, external or a combination of both. Within certain industries, such as the energy sector, there are distinct regulations that companies have to adhere to and many CSR strategies are based upon working towards certain goals in anticipation of further implemented legal guidelines. As mentioned there has been a shift in public opinion regarding the expectations of a company to demonstrate CSR. It is a widely researched topic, but it is regularly referred to as difficult to define, due to its' broad nature and the many different ways in which it can be applied (Cole et al. 2013, Crowther & Aras, 2008). For instance, Coles et al. (2013, p. 122) describes CSR as a business administration approach, in which "consideration of ethical, social and environmental issues as well as the organisation's varied stakeholders is taken in operations and value creation," in addition to the traditional focuses, such as profitability. Whereas, Crowther and Aras (2008 p. 10), discuss the notion that it can be defined as the relationship between a business and the local society in which it operates or the relationship with its' stakeholders.

As previously stated, the concept of corporate social responsibility has been around for a long time, but it is important to take note of the way in which it has been adapted and realigned. Many firms in the past had some form of CSR within their strategy, but generally this was a philanthropic endeavour that was quite separate from their core business practices (Vogel, 2005, as cited in Auld 2008, p. 415). This 'old' form of CSR existed frequently as a result of favourable tax breaks for companies (Vogel, 2005, as cited in Auld 2008, p. 415), and therefore, must be separated from the complex concept of CSR that is understood today. Auld (2008, p. 415) asserts that the new CSR refers to firms directly addressing environmental and social concerns resulting from their core business practices by promoting standards and regulations within their business models.

In Auld's (2008, pg. 417-424) theory of the new CSR, the concept is broken down into 7 different classifications. Individual firm endeavours, refer to companies that create their own CSR strategies and set their own regulations and standards to which they uphold themselves in regards to socially and environmentally responsible behaviour (Auld, 2008, p. 417). This is a very

common form of CSR strategy and will constitute a major part of this paper, as the five companies chosen as cases, have implemented their own CSR. There are various powerful enterprises that have also opted for this approach, such as Ikea (Ikea, 2021). In order to provide a level of transparency Ikea publishes sustainability reports that provide the details about their standards of employment rights, reduction of waste, and steps towards a circular economy (Ikea,2021). Ikea offers a good example of the potential for financial benefits from a well thought out and implemented CSR strategy (Ikea, 2021). The classification ‘firm-NGO partnerships’ refers to partnerships between a company and environmental or social group, in an effort to address current issues, whereas, a ‘public-private partnership’ is a circumstance in which companies interact with various stakeholders, such as, governments or communities to work towards a common objective (Ashman D. 2001, as cited in Auld, 2008, p. 420). Firm-NGO partnerships enable a business to work closely with an organisation that can offer a level of expertise and experience in addressing complex environmental or social concerns and the company can in return offer a variety of resources in addition to purely monetary donations. This is relevant for this study, as developing or working together with an independent NGO is a method employed by a variety of safari operators and will be discussed in further detail (Wilderness Holdings, 2017, p. 17). Public-private partnerships play a significant role within the management of protected wildlife areas in Africa and will be discussed later in further detail.

Many scholars have adopted the stakeholders theory view of CSR which asserts that in order to achieve long term success, companies need to consider both, internal stakeholders for example members of staff, as well as external stakeholders such as, the broader society in which they operate (Falck & Heblich, 2007; Salzmann, Ionescu-Somers & Steger, 2005; Weber, 2008, as cited in Coles et al. 2013, p. 124) The stakeholder theory aims to identify factions within a society, to which the business has some responsibility, and many consider that this is only extended to include people (Crowther & Aras, 2008, p. 26-29). However, this can be seen as a controversial view, as environment is regularly included as an integral aspect of CSR (Buckley & Pegas 2013; Crowther & Aras, 2008; Melubo et al. 2017; Spenceley, 2008). For companies within the high-end safari sector the stakeholder base is broad and can include governments, communities, landlords, staff, shareholders, NGO’s, academic researchers, supplier’s media, consumers, trade partners and guests (Wilderness Holdings Annual Report, 2018, p. 18). For the purpose of this paper environmental concerns will be considered as an integral part of CSR, as they are for the companies analysed within this study.

2.1.2 CSR in the context of Tourism

As discussed, the overall view of CSR has changed, and this development is also apparent within its' application to the field of tourism. The old version of CSR, or CSR 1.0, as it is sometimes referred, is not an adequate approach to negate the adverse effects of tourism on communities by merely donating money or items from guests or company revenue (Snyman, 2019, p.320). Donating funds or gifts may create dependence and does not contribute to assisting with the development of sustainable income for local communities. A more strategic method with long term goals in mind of uplifting and empowering communities, is the way to create opportunities and foster independence. The concept of Visser's (2010, p. 311-316) CSR 2.0, is developed from assessing CSR 1.0, learning what was inadequate and adapting. This involves application of principles of collaborative partnerships, diversified methods, integrated frameworks, and performance driven approaches that can be applied globally (Visser, 2010, p. 311-320). Snyman (2019, p. 323-325) conducted a case study on Wilderness Safaris, a company examined within this study, concluding that an ecotourism company's approach to CSR 2.0 should include; having staff dedicated to working on CSR, implementation of a thorough sustainability model that encourages staff support, internalised CSR funding within the financial model, enablement of innovative approaches to CSR and engagement in integrated reporting. These findings strongly suggest that for a successful approach to CSR 2.0 a company must integrate it into all decision-making processes and daily operations.

It is clear that in developed countries CSR in tourism is still a significant concern. In developing countries however, there is more pressure to provide social benefits. In developed countries healthcare and education fall under private providers or government schemes, whereas, within developing countries significant portions of the population have neither access to healthcare coverage nor education opportunities. As is the case with much of safari tourism, tourism operating in developing countries regularly attracts tourists to under developed regions within those countries due to unspoiled landscapes and high wildlife populations. Therefore, there is more need for private tourism businesses to contribute to the healthcare, education of the staff they employ, their families and often the local communities (Buckley & Pegas, 2013, p. 522). Within the tourism industry what might from a theoretical standpoint be referred to as CSR regularly appears under other names, such as; social benefit programs and poverty alleviation efforts in impoverished areas (Buckley & Pegas, 2013, p. 521). In some cases, companies see

the importance of having a positive impact as a fundamental aspect of their operations, therefore, avoid the term CSR due to the connotation that it is a result of external expectations as opposed to strong conviction in line with the ethos of the company itself.

Buckley and Pegas (2013, p. 520-522), break CSR in tourism into two levels, base-level CSR and higher-level CSR. Base-level CSR refers to adherence to rules and regulations; which can include working rights, providing honest advertising as well as environmental, commercial and industrial relation laws. The standards for based-level CSR are based upon the country's laws and regulations in which a company is operating. In the situation in which a company is operating in developing countries these standards may not compare to western regulations in terms of strictness. Many tourism companies, such as those analysed in this paper, operate in a number of destinations with varying strictness in terms of governance, therefore, compliance with local laws and standards is not necessarily a good measurement of the 'responsible' nature of a company. Buckley & Pegas (2013), define higher-level CSR as a reflection of the social pressures that surpass the destinations laws and standards, both of the local residents of the destination country and the internationals who will be visiting and using the company's products. The type of social pressure put on a company depends heavily on the country and sector but can include the expectation to contribute to any number of areas, such as conservation, community development, health and education initiatives, fair land lease and ownership agreements, minimising environmental impacts, providing employment and career development opportunities, increasing biodiversity of flora and fauna, climate change mitigation, and encouraging philanthropy in cases of wealthy tourists visiting developing nations (Buckley & Pegas, 2013, p. 522).

The specific country or region in which a company is operating can affect the priorities of the CSR efforts and initiatives. This can be due to the specific needs such as tackling poaching in the local area of a lodge, infrastructure shortcomings that are necessary for both tourism operations and local communities, among others. The country or region in which a tourism property is located can also affect the CSR expectations or priorities due to cultural, religious, educational or virtue influences. Melubo & Lovelock (2018), conducted research in Tanzania about the CSR efforts of numerous foreign and local tourism companies. Their results implied that in addition to the standard aspects of CSR, such as community development and empowerment, wildlife conservation and employee welfare improvements, many companies integrated local values and virtues into their CSR perspective (Melubo & Lovelock, 2018, pp. 686-687). They found that Western-based models of CSR are not suitable for countries based in Africa and that "participants' conceptualisation of CSR more closely resembles Visser's (2006) African model

in that it draws upon embedded cultural and religious values and has been a social vehicle for helping the needy members of the community” (Melubo & Lovelock, 2018, p. 687). They found in their research that both foreign and local communities contributed to community initiatives, but the foreign companies had more of a focus on conservation and were particularly positive about their partnerships with communities due to the long-term benefits it created in supporting the business, local community and wildlife conservation (Melubo & Lovelock, 2018, p. 687).

The motivations, strategies and implementation methods differ significantly in different settings and sectors across tourism, meaning there is “no general cross-sector CSR model that can be applied ready-made in tourism” (Buckley & Pegas, 2013, p. 521). The study seeks to provide further information about successful models of CSR within the high-end safari ecotourism sector in order to illustrate the nature of successful frameworks that other companies could benefit from implementing. Due to the unique and complex nature of CSR in tourism in Africa, it must not only be compared to formal CSR frameworks for tourism but looked at specifically in reference to the sector of tourism, socioeconomic and environmental context in which the company is operating. In order to achieve this, the notion of a successful CSR framework in tourism, has to incorporate measures to protect its’ strategies from the negative impact of crises and disasters including adjust measurements for the current pandemic. Integrating environmental concerns into a company’s strategies is, as mentioned, a standard requirement of CSR. However, within safari tourism to Africa this is more than a duty and legal necessity, as protecting the environment is essential to facilitate the main offering of the company, wildlife viewing. The continual protection of wildlife and habitats are long term investments for the company operating in the area. This has resulted in the safari tourism industry and wildlife conservation developing a relationship that is undeniably mutually dependent.

2.1.3 Definition of Relevant Terminology

Conservation tourism is narrower than ecotourism and can be defined as commercial tourism that has a net positive effect ecologically, outweighing its’ negative impacts and makes a significant contribution towards the conservation of biological diversity (Buckley, 2010, p. 10).

The World Tourism Organisation defines sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities (UNTWO, 2020). According the

UNWTO (2020) sustainable tourism can contribute to sustainable economic growth; social inclusiveness, employment and poverty alleviation; resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate; cultural values, diversity and heritage; mutual understanding peace and security (Snyman & Spenceley, 2019, p. 16.).

Nature-based tourism which is a term sometimes used interchangeably with wildlife tourism comprises all forms of tourism that make use of natural resources in a wild undeveloped form, such as species, habitats, water features, landscapes and scenery (Snyman & Spenceley, 2019, p. 8).

2.1.4 Certification, Regulation & Commendation

As a result of mounting pressure for private companies to behave responsibly, certain thresholds have been created to appeal to firms to improve their employment practices and social impacts as well as their environmental management standards, via boycott campaigns, social and eco-labelling and environmental certification (Auld 2008, p. 414). Alternatively, some of the initiatives to improve transparency and maintain standards come from within the industry itself. Such as the case of non-governmental soft law, which refers to rules and regulations implemented, monitored and enforced by the private sector which provide a foundation of standards that need to be upheld. However, these vary significantly in terms of their enforceability, which is largely based upon the private sectors resources to monitor them. Additionally, the nature of the rules varies widely; as some maybe more conceptual, while others are strict detailed instructions to which companies adhere to (Buckely & Pegas, 2013, p. 525). Many companies, including those being studied in this paper, develop their own standards and expectations for environmental management, community engagement and outreach that surpass the legal standards of local governments. In the right circumstances, these rules have the potential to be incorporated into legal requirements of the destination countries by the government (Buckely & Pegas, 2013, p 526). In order to do so, they must be endorsed by the industry and the government.

There are numerous formal local and international bodies that either enforce regional regulations and laws or provide certification for companies who volunteer to be assessed to determine whether they meet certain sustainability criteria. There are a variety of certification schemes in Africa, ranging from tourism boards, national park and concession management bodies to sustainability labels (Spenceley & Rylance, 2012, p. 131-132). The Global Sustainable Tourism

Council (GSTC) has developed a complex criterion, that varies depending upon destinations and sectors within the industry, that are considered the international baseline standard for sustainable tourism and travel. They are responsible for accrediting certification bodies around the world, ensuring they are assessing tourism businesses in a competent and neutral way (GSTC, n.d.). The certification bodies that can receive accreditation from the GSTC, offer tourism enterprises the opportunity to voluntarily sign up for an assessment of their practices to determine if they meet international sustainability standards (GSTC, n.d.).

In addition to certification schemes, there are various awards in the tourism sector that are related to standards, uniqueness, and sustainability and conservation. For instance, the World Travel Market (WTM) 'responsible tourism' programme holds four international trade shows annually which are aimed at driving the responsible tourism agenda (WTM, 2021). At the trade shows a variety of awards are given for accolades such as; best for wildlife and nature conservation, best for reducing carbon and other greenhouse gases, best for transparent reporting, best for reducing plastic waste, and best for benefitting local people (WTM, 2019). There are also the 'Safari Awards' which are specific to the industry and are awarded for a number of features or achievements related to design, activities, guiding standards or dining standards (Safari Awards, 2020). Within this group of awards there are also awards for community focus and ecological responsibility (Safari Awards, 2020). Awards such as these allow properties and companies to distinguish themselves and provide motivation for companies to surpass the laws and regulations of the countries or regions within which they operate and raise awareness of the importance of responsible tourism. Maintaining a good reputation within the tourism industry overall is fundamental and achieving a status among other industry players through accolades such as those mentioned can be very beneficial. The companies examined within this study have all won a variety of awards for various achievements for both CSR and hospitality related accomplishments (World Travel Awards, 2020; Safari Awards, 2020).

One issue within the usage and definition of the term ecotourism and ecolodge is the prospect of greenwashing. 'Greenwashing' refers to a form of marketing used in the tourism industry in which lodges claim to be an 'ecolodge' without fully understanding the term and meeting any level of generally accepted or published criteria or that would qualify the property as an ecolodge (Spenceley, 2008, p. 79). The prominence of the misuse of the term ecolodge and ecotourism devalues the terms and creates an atmosphere of confusion. The lack of strict regulations in many countries worldwide in terms of classification of ecotourism and ecolodges, make it very difficult for the researchers to study it on a broader or wider scale, and leaves them

regularly resorting to measuring aspects of it in case studies (de Lima & Green, 2017, p. 34). The lack of regulations stipulating the usage of terms or labels, such as ecolodge, creates difficulty from the consumer and purchasing side. The onus must not fall on the individual, travel agent, or tour operator to determine whether or not the term is being used correctly and in good faith as this is very difficult to ascertain. Therefore, regulations ensuring the labels may only be applied and used for marketing purposes if certain standards are met is imperative to facilitate individuals, travel agents and tour operators in making informed decisions. Regardless of the good intentions of an individual traveller to have a positive impact with their journey, the question of how much effort people are willing to make to ensure this is an important one. When a person travels on holiday, particularly with a nature or wildlife focus, most people would at the very least like to think their trip is not having a negative impact on the environment. However, a holidaymaker might not want to dedicate time and effort to look into more than an outward label of 'ecolodge' provided by a tourism operator. The industry therefore, needs to uphold transparent regulatory standards that can assist the individual in making responsible travel choices. There are many moving parts involved in any journey, but ensuring that information and certification is clear, transparent and well-articulated is vital to ensure the message can travel through the network of parties involved.

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility & Safari Tourism in Africa

In the following section the nature of wildlife tourism in Africa and its' ability to impact economies, communities and the environment is discussed. The socioeconomic and environmental context of the countries in which the sector operates is analysed. The variety of potential drivers and barriers that companies face in development of CSR strategies is considered. In order to address the research questions and provide context for the emergent data derived from the multiple case study, the sectors' ability to initiate positive change from a social and environmental perspective, must be understood.

2.2.1 Wildlife Tourism in Africa & Its' Economic Impact

Safari tourism varies significantly from country to country and within different sectors from a logistical viewpoint, cost perspective and in terms the resulting environmental footprint. High-end tourism and luxury tourism are terms sometimes used interchangeably but do not necessarily represent the same thing. Many 'high-end' properties and safari operators provide a high

level of comfort and guiding without the amenities that would qualify them as luxury accommodation providers by Western standards. However, there are companies that provide extravagant amenities and activities within a remote setting such as the Singita properties. Eco-accommodation focusing on a low environmental footprint can be found within low, mid and high range segments of the industry. However, this paper is focusing on companies, with numerous properties, operating within the high-end segment due to the resources available to enable them to have a significant effect from a sustainable development, conservation and social project standpoint (Buckley, 2010, pp. 7).

The modes of transport are an area of focus as part of the process of analysing safari tourism in relation to its' environmental footprint overall. The use of 4x4 safari vehicles is a fundamental facet of a safari journey and in the high-end segment it is common for guests to have exclusive use of the vehicle. Due to the remote location in which many safaris take place, there are also commonly light aircraft charter flights included in a journey and in some cases helicopter rides. Low end safari tourism tends to use large shared vehicles which its more sustainable, however, the negative environmental impact of the high-volume tourism has to be considered. As the industry relies very heavily on these modes of transport as essential elements of the business, offsetting the carbon footprint created by their use is a way in which some companies manage to maintain a nett positive impact (Asilia Positive Impact, 2019).

The impact tourism has on national and regional economies must be noted to understand the significance of the industry, particularly for developing countries, as it can affect sales, employment opportunities, income, social and cultural structure, the environment, tax revenues, income and capital investment (Mwakalobo et al., 2016, p. 48). The private sector as a whole in Africa has attracted significant investment over recent decades with a large portion of the funding originating in Europe, the US, China and India (Christie, Fernanes, Messerli & Twining-Ward, 2014, p. 23). The increase in international investments, for which tourism is a key industry driver, has facilitated the emergence of a larger middle class, improved the climate for market orientated pro-poor reforms and led to the strengthening of interregional cooperation (Christie et al., 2014, p. 23). There are various types of tourism apparent across Africa, however, wildlife or safari tourism is the main tourism segment for East and South Africa (Christie et al., 2014, p.62). Determining an exact measurement of the economic impact of wildlife tourism in Africa would be impossible due to the missing data, and the wide range of indirect ways in which the sector generates revenue, however, there are various organisations that conduct studies with the aim of measuring its' monetary value (UNWTO, 2015, Institute for Communities

and Wildlife in Africa; as cited in Lindsey et al. 2020). The results emphasize the importance in protecting Africa's wildlife and habitats from an economic perspective, with one calculation stating that photographic tourism to protected areas in Africa generates between 10-50 billion USD annually (Lindsey et. al, 2020, p. 1301). The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2015, p. 25) report aimed at measuring the economic value of wildlife watching tourism in African countries, includes a study conducted on 14 African countries stating that at least 142 million USD was generated through the collection of entrance fees to protected areas, but as the calculation was based upon inconclusive data, they estimate that the real figure would be much higher (UNWTO, 2015, pp. 3-4). In Tanzania, the revenue created by tourism rose from 95 million USD in 1991 to 2.3 billion USD in 2012, with tourist arrivals and tourism employment seeing a significant increase over the same period (Mwakalobo et al., 2016, p. 46). The UNWTO found that in Zambia nature tourism contributed to 6.5% of the GDP in 2005 (UNTWO 2015, p. 29). In order to gain a broad perspective UNTWO (2015, p. 22) conducted a survey aiming to identify the variety of beneficiaries of wildlife watching tourism over a wide range of safari destinations. In order to do so they asked 26 governmental national tourism authorities to list who benefits from wildlife watching tourism in their country and concluded that there were a wide range of local beneficiaries from the private sector, government, as well as, international private sector companies (UNTWO, 2015, p. 22). The details of which are represented below in Figure 1. (UNTWO, 2015, p. 22).

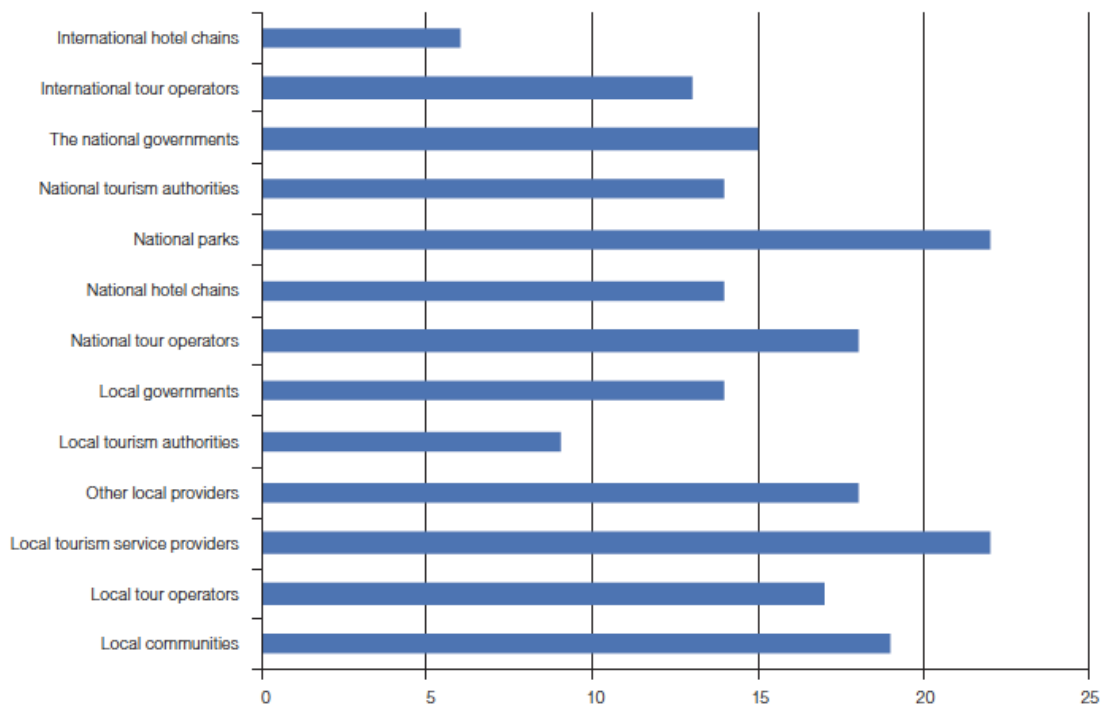


Figure 1. Beneficiaries of wildlife watching tourism (%)

From “Towards Measuring the Economic Value of Wildlife Watching Tourism in Africa,” by The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), p. 22, Copyright 2015 UNTWO.

Philanthropic donations, which may originate from individuals, corporations, foundations and zoos, constitute an average of 32% of the budget for the management of protected areas in Africa and may be as high as 70-90% in certain areas (Lindsey et al., 2020, p. 1301). It is apparent that donations make up a significant portion of the conservation funding in protected areas, however, the revenue generated by safari tourism in these areas is also vital for their maintenance over time. The private sector safari tourism in Africa has the potential to generate revenue through lease fees, joint ventures and other partnerships, and infrastructure development (Snyman & Spenceley, 2019, pp. 26-27). It is common for a safari operator to lease land from communities or the government in areas they operate and this generates income. In certain circumstances this can include a large ‘protected area’ surrounding the property and part of the agreement may involve the management of nature conservation in the area by safari operators, however, the management of the protected area can also be shared among numerous stakeholders, such as NGO’s, local communities, private tourism sector companies, and government

(Snyman & Spenceley, 2019, pp. 8-27). The intricate nature of the safari travel industry has fostered innovation in finding new solutions to complicated issues of landownership and protection of long term ‘assets’ (ex. protected areas, the wildlife that inhabits them) that have the potential to generate income steadily for the foreseeable future. In recent years there has been more attention drawn to methods of tourism in developing countries that engage numerous stakeholders of tourism to ensure the industry encourages sustainable development that is not only beneficial for the private sector, but for government and local communities as well. In the following section more detailed information will be provided about tourism’s potential to drive sustainable development through various partnership methods.

2.2.2 Safari Tourism: Sustainable Development & Protected Area Governance

When conducted ethically and with principles of CSR in mind, tourism has the potential to be a valuable tool for sustainable development. Tourism was identified by the UNTWO “as one of ten key sectors to evolve towards a Green Economy and is included as one of the initial 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns” (UNTWO, 2015, p.6). Tourism has the ability to encourage the development of infrastructure mutually benefitting tourists, tourism companies, as well as the economy and local communities. It also has the potential to accelerate economic and policy reforms that can encourage foreign investment and assist in the development of small and medium sized enterprises (SME’s) (Christie et al., 2014, p. 26). It can also aid sustainable development and alleviate poverty by creating employment, encouraging development in remote regions, and preserving cultural and wildlife heritage that has the potential to be utilised for long term economic development (UNTWO, 2015, p.6).

There are numerous forms that sustainable development through ecotourism tourism can take, but some of the methods that have become more popular over recent years are; public-private partnerships, concessions and joint ventures. A public-private partnership is an agreement between two parties, one private and one public that can be started with the aim of developing facilities, national parks or infrastructure and the agreement allows both parties to take responsibility for the policy decisions (Christie et al, 2014, p. 101). The roles within the partnership can be agreed based upon what development needs to take place. For instance, the private sector partner can take on the position of developer, builder or tenant and the government or community can outsource activities such as infrastructure development and property management

(Christie et al., 2014, p. 102). This method relies on both the public and private tourism sector, while providing potential contract employment for additional private sector companies and can even expand to include community partners. Public-private partnerships provide a robust method that engages multiple stakeholders and creates an environment for long lasting sustainable development. There are published examples of successful public-private partnerships within the safari ecotourism sector, such as, between the South African National Parks, a public organisation and the private sector companies it has created partnerships with (Spenceley, 2008, p.363). Spenceley (2008, p. 363), found that by integrating commercial and empowerment objectives into its' policies for nature-based tourism, the South African National Parks benefited from higher quality tourism products, improved conservation methods, increased income, and higher level local involvement. A tripartite venture is a type of partnership in which three different types of partners hold a share in the ownership of a lodge company (Snyman & Spenceley, 2019, p. 95), for instance in which the land is owned by both community and government and leased out to a private sector tourism lodging company.

Joint ventures are mutually beneficial partnerships between the private sector and local communities in which they form an alliance to work in conjunction with one another, allowing the communities to share in the profits generated and to empower them by providing employment and skills training (Snyman & Spenceley, 2019, p. 27). Wilderness Safaris, a company analysed within this study, was the first safari operator to negotiate joint venture agreements with local communities in South Africa and Namibia (Christie et al., 2014, p. 102). Wilderness Safaris' partnership with The Torra Conservancy in Namibia, took years to negotiate and implement, but resulted in significantly improved livelihoods for the community through employment, agricultural and subsistence hunting, which was increased by donor grants (Christie, et al., 2014, p.243). Snyman and Spenceley (2019, p. 195) conducted research into the funding sources for the various forms of tourism partnerships in protected areas and discovered that funding came from; development banks or aid agencies; impact investment vehicles; NGO's; government grants; and private investment.

In the various cases and forms of public-private partnerships recently studied by Snyman and Spenceley (2019, pp. 189-216) they found that overall there can and have been examples of companies that have had significantly positive social, environmental and economic impacts in the areas they operate via well managed public-private partnerships. A result of the case study they found that there were a number of challenges faced and two common themes that emerged

for nearly all the cases they studied were the importance of transparency and clear communication with local communities, and the importance of managing expectations in order to build trust to maintain the partnership agreements in the long term (Snyman & Spenceley, 2019, pp. 36-93). The challenges faced in the various partnerships models studied were; the need for substantial training of staff in remote areas, supply limitations, poaching, inconsistent government policies/legislation, and lack of infrastructure (Snyman and Spenceley, 2019, pp. 36-93). Overall in each model studied there were both positive and negative aspects of the type of partnership which has been illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1

Pros and cons for the private sector of different partnership models.

Partnership Model	Potential Pros	Potential Cons
Joint Venture	Smaller share of profits; social benefits; empowerment benefits; access to different areas.	More complex; potential conflict between stakeholders; sharing of profits.
Public Private Partnership	Access to protected areas (often exclusive).	Government complacency in partnership to abide by contract terms; potential conflict between stakeholders
Pure Private Sector	Simple agreement; greater share of profits; exclusive access.	Can be costly to perform all functions.
Tripartite	Diversity in product; social benefits; empowerment benefits. access to different areas.	Highly complex; potential conflict between stakeholders.

From *Private Sector Tourism in Conservation Areas in Africa* (p. 204) by Snyman, S., & Spenceley, A., 2019, Oxfordshire: CABI.

As previously specified, the value of looking at individual cases in detail cannot be understated, as the complexity of variables impedes the accuracy of a model that can be applied across the board in this sector. A study was conducted on the Mara Region of Tanzania determining the

economic impact of Singita's Grumeti Reserves, which are privately managed wildlife reserves located to the west of the Serengeti National Park (Mwakalobo et al., 2016, p. 44). They found that overall the tourism investment made by Singita produced a significantly positive impact on the regional economy in the area and they noted that their results were a gross underestimation due to the lack of inclusion of the effects of Singita's non-profit partner organisation, Grumeti Fund, on community development and improvement of natural resources (Mwakalobo et al., 2016, p. 57). That study supports the argument that high-end safari ecotourism can result in a nett positive economic impact and it is an "effective model as it can include wildlife and biodiversity conservation while at the same time investing in the principles of sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development" (Mwakalobo et al., 2016, p. 57). Such studies, can guide economic policy creation for governments and illustrate the distinction in value between different forms of tourism, which in turn can lead to governmental support or incentives for private tourism investment in ecotourism models. Singita was chosen within this study to be analysed due to the arguable effectiveness of their CSR strategy and the potential for it to guide policy making and encourage the development of similar models. In light of this, it is imperative to determine how robust their CSR system has proven to be during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The need for tourism areas to be easily accessed for guest and supply routes has a knock on positive effect for the people living in the remote areas safari operators occupy. For high-end operations in tourism there is a demand for a reliable supply chain to ensure that standards can be met. While aiming to source produce and goods locally is a key factor in operating sustainably, in order to meet luxury Western standards of hospitality, some goods need to be outsourced. In order to have regular access, roads for example, need to be well maintained. Even in an infrastructure project is purely motivated from a commercial standpoint, local communities can directly benefit from the resulting infrastructural developments. This can also apply to water and drainage and waste removal projects, as the proceeds of the development of access to resources can be shared with local communities. The upfront costs for sustainable initiatives may initially be significant, such as for solar panels for solar energy, but in the long run many projects can result in reduced operational costs.

2.2.3 Safari Tourism: Wildlife and Habitat Conservation & Environmental Impact

The protection of wildlife and habitats are critical to the future survival of the safari sector and the funds allocated to conservation can be seen as long-term investment for the industry. However, the subject goes well beyond merely far sighted investment for private tourism sector gain, as a number of high end safari operators have their founding roots established in conservation. The safari tourism sector produces an interesting business model, due to the industries relationship with conservation. Compliance with environmental regulations and meeting of industry standards is not only important from a legal and marketing image perspective in this part of the tourism sector, but conservation of the areas in which they operate is also basic to their survival. Many companies protect ecologically significant areas including the wildlife that inhabits them and therefore, set themselves individual goals for carbon offset, and wildlife conservation funding.

As discussed in detail previously, the development of partnerships to manage protected areas is an invaluable form of wildlife and habitat conservation. Buckley (2010), argues that his research has shown that the most significant benefit of tourism towards conservation is the direct revenue generated which can be used to fund private or community conservation reserves (Buckley, 2010, p. 7). According to Buckley (2010, p. 7), it seems the most successful and effective format through which to fund private concessions is through upmarket luxury game lodges, that provide excellent wildlife viewing activities with skilled staff and guides, and that boast a high density of wildlife. The ways in which high-end safari operators contribute to conservation takes a range of forms such as, the methods of protected area management discussed, creation of NGO's dedicated to conservation, developing partnerships with and committing funds to existing wildlife conservation NGO's. The funds allocated to these activities can be attained through private donors and then funnelled to projects, or via allocating funds from bed nights or spa/gift shop earnings for example. The various forms of partnerships agreements have significant impacts on conservation but do not necessarily constitute a CSR initiative, as they are formal business agreements developed between at least two parties, from which there are mutual benefits.

The CSR initiatives related to wildlife and habitat conservation can take many different forms including anti-poaching, reducing human and wildlife conflict and resource management, such as conservation of water and energy, waste management and carbon offsetting. All of the companies used for this study and many other safari businesses go to great lengths to offset their

carbon footprint. Certain aspects of safari tourism such as international flights and safari vehicles contribute to carbon emissions but are unavoidable. However, companies can still accomplish a positive net environmental impact through carbon offsetting and other means. Reducing plastic use, managing waste and water usage are integral to ecotourism. Many safari lodges use renewable energy to power their camps via solar power systems, solar water boilers and recent years have seen the introduction of solar powered safari vehicles within some companies (Asilia Positive Impact, 2019). This is an example of the potential for continuous improvement via utilising new technological solutions. Unfortunately, it can be assumed that many of the future goals to further reduce carbon footprint and increase positive impact, such as through the introduction of solar vehicles, will be postponed due to financial strain caused by the ongoing crisis.

There are numerous ways in which a safari operator can contribute to wildlife tracking and antipoaching efforts. Donating funds to an established wildlife conservation organisation is a common approach and many companies have a variety of local and international organisations to which they contribute (Asilia Positive Impact, 2019; Nomad Tanzania Trust, 2018). There are also collaborative projects initiated by tourism companies or their individually established NGO's that operate separately from the private enterprise. In some circumstances competitors within private sector tourism combine efforts to formulate an initiative with the assistance of an NGO for a specific project in an area in which they operate where there is a goal that unites them (Lion Recovery Fund, n.d.). The practice of tracking of animals can be conducted for a variety of reasons, some of which are purely for research purposes, such as population estimation and determining migratory routes and behaviour. Wildlife tracking also can assist in the reduction of poaching, and human wildlife conflict. Finding new and innovative ways to reduce human wildlife conflict is a significant focus of many safari operators and wildlife conservation organisations (Natural Selection, n.d.; Wilderness Safaris, 2018). Due to landscapes and migratory routes in can be more common in certain areas and wildlife can venture out of their normal territories to areas inhabited by humans because of a variety of reasons, such as shortage of food. Humans coming into direct contact with a certain wildlife species can result in injury or death. Another common problem that can arise, is the threat that wildlife such as carnivores and elephants pose to communities means for livelihood, such as their cattle and crops. Protecting local communities and mitigating the threat wildlife can pose individuals and livelihoods is an important part of ensuring the communities don't resent the conservation projects in place for those species (Migne, 2017). In a situation in which cattle are killed by a predator, there are schemes in place in some regions to compensate the farmers. However, in some areas these

processes can often be slow leading to retaliation killings (Migne, 2017). A study conducted on a livestock financial compensation scheme in Kenya determined that providing compensation for livestock killed by various wildlife species significantly reduced wildlife poisoning by the Maasai community inhabiting the area (Bauer, Mueller, Van Der Goes & Sillero-Zubiri, 2017, p. 110-113). They analysed the sustainability of the funding method for the scheme they were examining, which was tourism activities, in comparison to a similar scheme funded by a charity and maintained that tourism funding was theoretically a more sustainable funding mechanism (Bauer et al., 2017, p. 112). The researchers also analysed a variety of arguments for and against the compensation scheme and the only argument against that they felt was of concern, was the potential for the collapse of the project to cause a sharp decrease in lion populations (Bauer et al., 2017, p. 112). This project and study demonstrate the threat to conservation that the current tourism decline causes and further illustrates the level of reliance on the industries stability to fund ongoing initiatives. Therefore, avoiding human wildlife conflict from happening and working to ensure that communities directly benefit from protection of species and ecosystems is an invaluable dimension in reaching long term conservation goals. Synman (2014, p. 7). found that in communities in which human wildlife conflict was a common occurrence, individuals had a less positive view of ecotourism than in regions where wildlife did not pose a threat. There are a variety of cutting-edge technological solutions to tracking wildlife, as well as some simple but innovative methods that can be very successful, such as using SMS's to track sightings. Elephants are known for raiding crops repeatedly due to their ability to remember the locations that have items worth venturing out of their usual areas for. The organisation 'Save the Elephants' found that using repellents such as chilli plants or beehive fences, are 80% effective in deterring them from returning (Migne, 2017).

Many safari companies work closely with non-profit conservation organisations to develop solutions to problems that are apparent in the area surrounding their properties or in bordering communities. As mentioned, many companies have developed their own partner non-profit organisations that operate separately in order to ensure their focus is meeting the needs of the environment and communities in their area. These organisations can then for instance work closely with established organisations that specialise in conservation methods who can offer a wealth of knowledge towards the ways that certain challenges can be addressed. Using snares to catch bush meat, such as gazelles, is a serious difficulty in some protected areas and naturally it is not just the intended prey that can fall victim to a snare trap. In the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, snaring had become an issue that warranted collaborative efforts. The Frankfurt

Zoological Society partnered with the Tanzanian National Parks and a variety of tour operators, including Nomad Tanzania, to address the issue on a large scale (Frankfurt Zoological Society, n.d.). Remarkably, addressing not only the problem at hand but also one of the roots of the issue, unemployment, they hired a team of ex-poachers to walk through the park and remove snares (Frankfurt Zoological Society, n.d.). This example highlights the positive impact that innovative collaboration can have, as they have removed almost 30,000 snares and freed 286 live animals since the project was founded in 2017 (Frankfurt Zoological Society, n.d.).

2.2.4 Safari Tourism: Community Development & Empowerment

Snyman and Spenceley (2019, pp. 27-29.) have conducted extensive research on the potential within the private sector in Africa to generate social benefits and they categorise the main ways in which it can do so as; through employment opportunities, skills training and development and capacity building, local empowerment, local linkages/value chains, suppliers of goods and services, and philanthropy/donations. In order to understand the large-scale effect of tourism on surrounding communities, looking at specific measurable examples lays the groundwork for comprehending its' significance. In Tanzania, each year the Serengeti-Ngorongoro safari circuit generates around 500 million USD from inbound tourism expenditure, making up around half of Tanzania's foreign exchange earnings from tourism (UNWTO, 2015, p. 28). From these earnings about 19%, around 100 million USD, is categorised as pro-poor, meaning it directly reaches the local people via tips and wages of those employed by the industry and indirectly positively effects local communities through sales opportunities for local produce and goods; in addition to, the funds that have been funnelled to local communities that have been generated by management of protected areas (UNWTO, 2015, p. 28). The local linkages forged by tourism can create indirect employment for suppliers of services or goods, and can encourage empowerment, innovation and entrepreneurship (Snyman & Spenceley, 2019, p. 28). The skills that are gained in the tourism industry are transferrable to other industries and within the sector of tourism there is significant opportunity to grow and expand a particular skill set.

From a corporate social responsibility perspective, companies have the potential to enhance the beneficial effect of their presence in regions by directly contributing to community development projects in a variety of ways. Some companies select a variety of NGO's to support with funds and other resources. As within conservation efforts, there are also examples of companies who develop their own NGO's specifically for community initiatives that operate separately

from their safari business. The NGO operates its' finances and resources independently and has the power to select the projects they support and allocate their funds or other resources too. The projects supported can vary from local business support, health initiatives to creating educational opportunities. For example, there is a prevalence of educational sponsorship programs developed and funded through private sector companies or philanthropist donations, particularly in the area of field guide or conservation training and research, and culinary or hospitality training (Asilia Positive Impact, 2019). Offering training and educational programs increases the skill set of the employees and makes local hiring more attractive. The extent to which positions are filled with local employees varies across destinations frequently potentially in relation to varying regional education and language skills. Melubo and Lovelock (2017, p. 682), conducted a study across the hotel and lodge sector in Tanzania that found most companies hire predominantly local staff, however, some foreign owned companies hire expatriates, from countries such as Kenya, for higher skilled positions due better language skills, international understanding and knowledge. The scarcity of employees with certain skill sets in countries such as Tanzania leaves a gap that companies can fill by creating dynamic training programs that enable them to teach the skills that currently fall short of standards expected in high-end tourism. It allows for growth and development within companies for local employees who begin their employment on an entry level and have otherwise never received any formal hospitality training or had an opportunity to train as a wildlife guide. Companies such as Asilia, offer their staff members the chance to join their own management training program, as well as offering 30 hospitality scholarships annually to students for their final year of school with the most improved offered a paid internship after graduation (Asilia Positive Impact, 2019).

Employment is arguably the most significant method of contributing to livelihoods for safari operators. On average one tourism salary supports seven people in addition to the employee (Midlane, 2021). Providing training and educational opportunities and fostering an atmosphere of empowerment is an integral aspect to creating a long-term sustainable, positive impact on surrounding communities. This includes the concept of raising awareness for the importance of conservation of the wildlife and habitat amongst the local people themselves in the long run. The wilderness has the potential to grow local economies over time and sharing the understanding of the potential for long-term benefits is vital, but this involves a level of trust between the local communities and private sector. Substantiating this claim by ensuring all members of local communities, rather than just those than receive employment, can see tangible benefits is crucial to enlisting their support and working together towards common goals.

Empowering women is frequently a strong theme in many companies' community engagement efforts. This can be enacted through education and employment opportunities and local business development or support. In a study conducted in 2019 the UNTWO found that tourism is one of the only sectors in which women make up the majority of the workforce, with 54% of positions within the sector being held by women, and discovered that the gender pay gap is narrower in tourism than globally in other business sectors (UNTWO, 2019, p. 9). The same report found that 69% of employees in tourism or food services in Africa are women, however, data from South Africa suggest that women have far less opportunity to reach a professional level within the industry (UNTWO, 2019, pp. 87-88). Although women are clearly well represented within the tourism industry employment wise, the industry is generally male run with men holding most of the executive management positions (UNTWO, 2019, p. 90). The safari lodge industry in many African countries employs predominately males for most positions, particularly tour guiding positions (Meloubo & Locklock, 2017, p. 682). This could be for a combination of reasons such as cultural and religious influences and gender role expectations, as well as, the remote location of properties which creates the need for staff housing and hinders the possibility of working and looking after children. One safari operators' answer to this issue was to launch a completely female run lodge, meaning all the positions from walking guides to chefs are held by women (Asilia Positive Impact, 2019). There are a variety of other ways in which safari companies can and do empower women, such as, micro-financing women's groups and supporting entrepreneurial endeavours (Asilia Positive Impact, 2019; Nomad Tanzania Trust, 2018; Singita Conservation Brochure, 2018).

In terms of funding the CSR community development and engagement initiatives mentioned, there are different ways in which they are financed across different companies in the industry. Some companies allocate donations only, while many also assign portions of their turnover and staff time (Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007, p. 269). Some companies also create a fund to which they dedicate revenue used to provide grants for projects they want to support. In addition to contributing directly from private revenue earnings, many safari operators provide the option for guests to donate to CSR projects they have in place or NGO's with whom they have partnerships. This provides a trusted link between individuals and organisations, assisting travellers who would like to contribute, by providing them with options based upon the partners the companies know and rely upon. CSR financed by tourism turnover is reliant upon the success of the

company in question or the industry as a whole, whereas CSR funded via donations is dependent upon the good will of philanthropists, tourists and institutions (Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007, p. 269). Having donations from a number of sources to supplement the main funding channel, tourism revenue, is a more resilient method of funding CSR as it does not rely on the success or failure of one business. The detrimental economic effects globally of the Covid-19 pandemic are so far reaching that many sectors, organisations and individuals' financial wellbeing are under threat which further supports the argument for the value of diversified funding streams.

Local sourcing of produce, materials and products is not only a consideration from a sustainability perspective but can be an important driver of indirect job creation by the tourism industry. As stated, in the remote location that many safari companies operate the rural communities generally have limited access to forms of employment. Tourism companies can empower local communities through local sourcing around their properties. Assisting with the development of and supporting existing small businesses can significantly positively impact local economies. Encouraging guests to visit local villages can provide customers that can support small businesses by leading to sales of items, such as souvenirs.

2.2.5 Motivations & Barriers for CSR in Safari Tourism

Many of the motivating factors for companies to engage in various forms of CSR have been discussed in relation to the area of CSR. For instance, the long-term benefits of wildlife conservation for all stakeholders of tourism. However, some of the external more general driving forces must also be noted, such as individual tourist expectations and tour operator and travel agent expectations. When considering the numerous motivations of private sector tourism operators, thought must be given to the resulting practical implementation and the barriers faced in doing so. Through a series of interviews with hotel and lodge managers throughout Tanzania, Melubo et al. (2017, p. 6), observed a number of trends in their responses about the motivations and barriers of the companies they worked for. They found that the main reasons tourism companies engage in responsible practices are “(1) sense of care for the community; (2) influence of parent companies; (3) attracting visitors; (4) interdependence between businesses and local communities; (5) environmental management; and (6) personal commitment of company managers” (Melubo et. al, 2017, p. 6). From their questions regarding barriers to CSR they found the following common themes from the answers provided by the managers “ (1) Conflicts with local communities; (2) Lack of awareness of responsible practices; (3) Lack of recognition by

national government; (4) Lack of physical infrastructure support” (Melubo et. al, 2017, p. 8). Implementation barriers create the differentiation between the motivation and good intention and what is practically viable to implement in the long term. Certain initiatives or projects might be possible to enact in certain countries and not in others for reasons such as, government restrictions, lack of support, or infrastructure limitations, to name a few. There have been a number of countries which have utilised the model of funding private conservation areas with tourism revenue but have not been successful in their endeavours due to a number of barriers, such as; political instability, threat of terrorism, lack of infrastructure in regards to roads and airports and instability of land tenure for foreign investors (Buckely, 2010, p.7).

Private companies need the support of local communities to preserve biodiversity in the long term (Bauer et al., 2017; Hunter et al., 2007). In order to do so, communities ideally need to be involved in the decision-making processes and must directly benefit from tourism revenue. Fostering a spirit of comradery and building long-term strategic partnerships that are mutually beneficial is vital. However, building these relationships can be challenging for private tourism businesses due to a number of socioeconomic and demographic factors that influence local communities’ receptiveness towards conservation and tourism. In a study in which 1,400 interviews were conducted with people from communities around protected areas in Southern Africa, Snyman (2014 p. 1), tried to determine the factors influencing community members attitudes towards tourism and protected areas. She found that overall, community members felt that tourism could help reduce poverty and provide employment, but in communities in which tourism had been in operation for longer, the views towards conservation were less positive (Snyman, 2014, p. 8). This is a worrying discovery, as it implies that people in those communities were in all likelihood directly benefiting from ongoing tourism operations and conservation of protected areas. In line with similar studies (Anthony, 2007; Tessema, Aschenafi, Lilieholm, Leader-Williams, 2007), Snyman (2014, p. 9) found that higher education levels had a positive impact on community members attitudes towards protected areas. The study also suggested that the impact of demographic variables on attitudes towards tourism and conservation differed and can change over time (Snyman, 2014, p. 7). However, some of the factors that influence attitudes towards conservation can be improved upon, such as education, and distribution of land ownership and should therefore, be the focus of policy making (Snyman, 2014, p. 7). Many studies (Anthony, 2007; Tessema et al., 2007) stress the importance of transparency and clear communication of development and conservation goals and nurturing a collaborative approach ensuring the inclusion of local stakeholders needs and objectives.

2.3 The Covid-19 Pandemic & It's Implications for Tourism Worldwide

Travel & Tourism represent 10.3% of global GDP and support one in ten jobs on the planet (330 million) making the industry backbone of many economies around the world (The World Travel & Tourism Council, 2020). By June 2020, 100% of global destinations had imposed some form of travel restrictions, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with around 45% completely or partially closing their borders to tourists (Spenceley, 2020).



Figure 2. International Tourist Arrivals (%)

From Impact Assessment of the Covid-19 Outbreak on International Tourism by The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), December 2020. (<https://www.unwto.org/impact-assessment-of-the-covid-19-outbreak-on-international-tourism>) Copyright UNWTO.

The UNWTO reported that for the first ten months of 2020 international arrivals globally declined by over 72%, making 2020 the worst year on record in the history of tourism. Currently,

in early 2021, there are few signs of an increase in demand for outbound international tourism (UNTWO, 2020). Domestic tourism has increased in a few countries such as China and Russia but overall reports suggest that international travel may not begin to rebound until halfway through 2021 and will not reach the levels of 2019 for between two and a half to four years (UNTWO, 2020).

The full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic economically can only be speculated upon as it is currently ongoing, but it is already evident that worldwide lockdowns have negatively affected a variety of industries and increased unemployment. Some argue that the increase in global poverty due to the Covid-19 pandemic will cause the world to become further divided and this will impede a strong rebound for the tourism industry and in particular tourism with a focus on sustainability (Hall, Scott & Gössling, 2020 p. 589). However, domestic tourism is and will continue to be a focus of many government strategies to avoid additional waves of the pandemic, to decrease unemployment and boost local economies which has a knock-on effect of a significantly lower carbon footprint than international travel in which flights are necessary (Hall et al., 2020 p. 589). The standstill of modes of transport such as planes and cruise ships have resulted in lower carbon emissions globally, but whether that will be a long-term effect stemming from the pandemic seems unlikely (Hall et al., 2020 p. 589). The priorities of governments in the immediate wake of this crisis will most likely be on bolstering economies placing sustainability goals second. However, the growing pressure to commit to climate action and the global awareness of the implications of continuing on the path we're on, could assist with the very much needed shift in the global view of tourism. The tourism industry, as it has existed thus far, has been dismantled by the pandemic offering a unique opportunity to rebuild it better. The notion of shifting to a more sustainable approach to travel is rapidly gaining attention with the emergence of non-profit organisations such as 'Travalyst,' founded by the Duke of Sussex in partnership with large industry players, such as, Tripadvisor and Skyscanner, developed to facilitate sustainable tourism's evolution to the mainstream market (Travalyst, 2021, p. 3). The organisation collaborates with a variety of tourism industry partners to gather information about the impact of the crisis on the tourism industry thus far, including changes in customer behaviour and attitudes, shifts within the industry and expectations (Travalyst, 2021, p. 7-8). They put forward four pathways or trajectories, that sustainability experts have developed, forecasting the route that society, government and businesses will take in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic (Travalyst, 2021, p. 10). They detail the potential implications each can have for various forms of tourism and make suggestions for how the tourism industry can respond and

adapt to certain outcomes (Travalyst, 2021, p.10). The first of the trajectories, is ‘discipline’, focusing on a future in which the industry has to adapt to stricter regulations and more health cautious travellers (Travalyst, 2021, p. 11). In this circumstance vigilance is key and focus will be upon utilising technological solutions to meet rapidly changing travel expectations and needs. Two of the trajectories have significantly negative implications for international travel, the ‘compete and retreat,’ pathway and the ‘unsettled’ (Travalyst, 2021, p. 12-13). Compete and retreat refers to a scenario in which countries try to protect their resources and people, which for the industry would result in a surge in domestic tourism (Travalyst, 2021, p. 12). For industries, such as safari tourism, that rely almost exclusively on international travellers, domestic tourism would be insufficient to stabilise the industry. Whereas, the ‘unsettled’ trajectory would be devastating for the entire industry as it suggests an atmosphere of chaos and uncertainty (Travalyst, 2021, p. 13). The final and most positive potential road to recovery is the ‘transform’ trajectory, in which there is a collaborative global effort to shift towards a low carbon footprint and to reassess and transform industries (Travalyst, 2021, p. 14). In this circumstance, the high-end safari ecotourism sector could thrive and become an industry leader, inspiring similar models in other fields of tourism. The concept of a holistic view to CSR, in which it is integrated into all business activities and decision-making processes, could rapidly become the norm rather than the exception. This further highlights the need for a thorough understanding of not only the successful application of CSR strategies within the companies being analysed in this paper, but their shortcomings when faced with a crisis, so that the industry can learn from this and adapt to safeguard itself.

2.3.1 Covid-19 Implications for Safari Tourism in Africa

SafariBookings, the largest online marketplace for Africa safari tours, began conducting a monthly survey beginning in March 2020, that provides some insight into the magnitude of the effects the global pandemic has had on the safari industry. As the situation is rapidly unfolding and published information on the immediate impact is scarce, information gathered from regular surveys illustrate the rate at which the safari sector is being affected. The surveys were distributed to safari tour operators in Southern and Eastern Africa and based upon the estimation that there are around 4,000 in operation, their high response rate implies the results represent around 9-10% of the sector there (Beekwilder, 2020). They found that in May 2020, 94.4% of responding tour operators which makes a total of 353 operators, reported having over 75%, the

highest option provided, decrease in actual bookings due to the coronavirus outbreak (Beekwilder, 2020). Only 2.7% or 10 operators, reported having 10% or less decrease in their actual bookings due to the coronavirus outbreak (Beekwilder, 2020). Due to the rapid organisation of the company, in launching the surveys from the early stage of the outbreak, March 2020, it clearly illustrates that within a three-month period, there had been a significant decline in bookings and a significant increase in cancellations. In March 2021, a year after the first survey was circulated, the situation has not improved much with 88% of respondents reporting an over 75% decrease in their bookings (Beekwilder, 2021).

Government responses to the pandemic with regards to management of regulations have differed all over the world. In South Africa, the tourism industry stakeholders have voiced their frustration about the lack of government support mechanisms and consistent policy making in the handling of the crisis in a country that relies heavily on tourism income (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020, p. 1088). Tanzania is one of the few countries in the world that has not officially published Covid-19 cases since April 2020, has kept their borders open throughout the pandemic and in June declared the country Covid-19 free, which is a widely disputed claim (BBC, 2020). An immediate response within the tourism sector to the Covid-19 pandemic was to attempt to delay bookings to dates further into the future. The safari industry is an informal but specialised industry in which companies tend to work closely with partners, particularly in the high-end segment. Many safari companies adjusted their policies at the early stages of the crisis to allow postponements of bookings for international travellers (Spenceley, 2020). This of course is logistically complicated due the number of parties often included in one booking. A high-end safari booking can include the coordination of tour operators, travel agencies, ground handlers, transport companies, lodge companies, local communities, government tourism and conservation offices, domestic and international airlines and the customer. Delaying bookings rather than receiving cancellations, is arguably the better option for all, as generally safaris are paid via a deposit system at the time of booking followed by an approximate 80% remaining sum settled shortly before departure. Cancellations would result in a huge loss for all profiting from the journey both directly and indirectly.

The European Commission published a report in early 2021 about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on protected area tourism, within which there are the results of a study conducted, with mainly African tourism respondents, about the impact of the crisis on their operations (Spenceley, 2020, p. 3). A survey was distributed to a variety of tourism companies with the

aim of gaining insight into the impact of the pandemic on businesses, local livelihoods, conservation and environmental services (Spenceley, 2021, p. 3). The majority of the 960 usable responses were from African tourism operators, (Spenceley, 2021, p.3). The survey provides valuable insight into the effects on all stakeholders of the industry in the first phase of the pandemic. When asked in the survey about the status of current bookings, in April 2020, respondents answered that they were already seeing a significant decline in requests with an average of -72%, with around 83% of bookings for between March-June having being cancelled (Spenceley, 2021, p.3). Figure 3. below illustrate the measures the respondents implemented to mitigate the adverse effects they were facing. This survey was conducted in April 2020 and now, in early 2021, companies are having to find new ways to mitigate the impacts of the crisis. As illustrated below, in Figure 3., postponement of the bookings to 2021 were a popular option among companies. Now in the first half of 2021, it seems that travel will not increase significantly within the coming months which could pose a threat to this mitigation tactic.



Figure 3. Business measures put in place to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19

From: Spenceley, A. (2021). *COVID-19 and protected area tourism: A spotlight on impacts and options in Africa* (MN-01-20-673-EN-N). European Commission. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bda7e04d-7c9c-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-194167807>

The survey also provided insight into the direct effect of the pandemic on local livelihoods, with reports suggesting that 65% of local staff members are already being affected by reduced working hours, or salaries (Spenceley, 2021, p. 8). Their questions also asked for detailed information about the previous year's spending on local goods, produce and funds allocated to community initiatives, enabling them to make predictions for the potential future decline in this area. The information gathered and forecasts were compiled from the data about the predicted declines in spending and donations (Spenceley, 2021, p.10). The data from the sample of 428 tour operators collected suggests that there will be a decrease of 48.6 million USD on local expenditure by the respondents, including services and donations reaching local communities this FY compared to last year which amounts to a 38% decline (Spenceley, 2021, p.10). This has a far-reaching effect across many businesses as this includes procurement of food, drink, office supplies and other equipment, much of which is supplied by local producers (Spenceley, 2021, p.10). This provides significant insight into the major economic impact that disruption to the tourism sector can have on the range of direct and indirect beneficiaries of the industry.

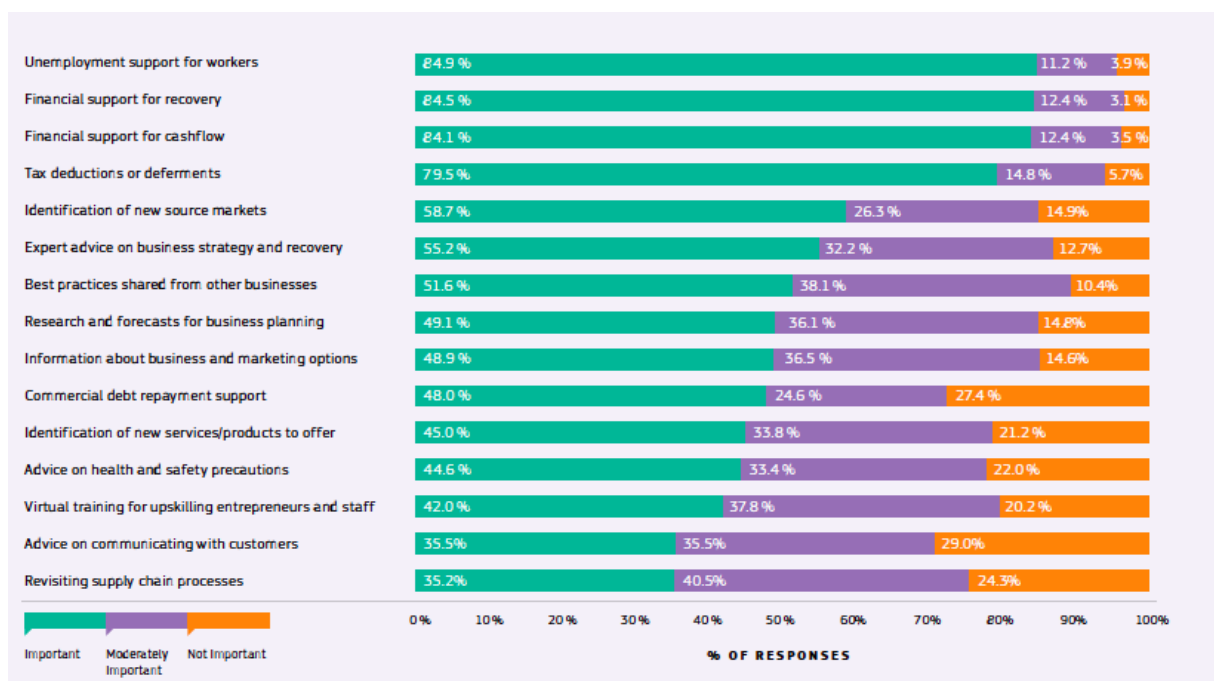


Figure 4. Types of Support Needed by Tourism Operators

From: Spenceley, A. (2021). *COVID-19 and protected area tourism: A spotlight on impacts and options in Africa* (MN-01-20-673-EN-N). European Commission. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bda7e04d-7c9c-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-194167807>

The sheer number of people employed by tourism, is an argument for governments to provide relief for an industry that has been so forcefully shaken by the pandemic. In many developed countries governments provide grants and relief funds for businesses in industries impacted by the ongoing global circumstances and workers facing redundancies have unemployment benefits available to them. In developing countries, this is generally not a reality for businesses and individuals. The socio-economic impact of the disruption of tourism activities can be devastating to entire regions. Some communities in remote locations rely solely on tourism for employment directly and indirectly. Nearly half of the respondents to the survey discussed, admitted that they have made redundancies (Spenceley, 2021, p. 8). As shown above in Figure 4., around 85% of respondents stated that unemployment for workers was an important type of support needed currently (Spenceley, 2021, p. 6). Nearly 85% of respondents reported that they need financial support for recovery and cashflow, and nearly 80% reported that tax deductions or deferments would be an important form of support (Spenceley, 2021, p. 6). The study ascertained that 66% of respondents were definitely seeking a grant in either the form of nonrepayable funds or products and that 24% were definitely seeking a loan of some form (Spenceley, 2021, p. 15). The requests were mainly directed towards donors, governments, institutional funders and angel investors (Spenceley, 2021, p. 15). A variety of organisations both non-governmental and governmental have been mobilising and developing task forces focuses on trying to ascertain the scale of the impact and needs of tourism business and conservation organisations (Advani, 2021, Spenceley, 2021). In order to address the clearly apparent need for immediate financial assistance, a wide variety of grants and stimulus packages aimed at wildlife tourism operators are being developed and offered (Advani, 2021). The variety and scope of financing options is growing rapidly, however, given the scale of the financial support needed it's not clear if the existing funding available will be sufficient in stabilizing the African tourism industry. The WWF-US, together with a network of partners, have developed an 'African Nature-Based tourism Collaborative Platform' aimed at mobilising relief funds and facilitating distribution by improving the link between donors and those in need of support (Advani, 2021). The platform is seeking to assist communities and SME's with funding proposals by directing the applications to relevant donors and continuously monitor the impact of the pandemic and effectiveness of the relief funds (Advani, 2021).

2.3.2 Covid-19 Effects on Funding Allocated to CSR Activities

The world has already seen an increase in wildlife poaching since the lockdown began in spring 2020 (Global Conservation Force, 2020). Funding through ‘bed nights’ and other tourist activities has decreased due to the significant decline in tourism. With indispensable protective gear and supplies becoming more difficult to fund, and the rates of poaching increasing, the danger to the rangers making up the anti-poaching units has increased (Global Conservation Force, 2020). The recent global situation has shed light on the vulnerability of relying too heavily on the tourism-based model for conservation, and although it has been a steady and successful method of funding for many companies over decades, the global pandemic illustrates that depending solely on tourism for the maintenance of these projects is ill advised. The Covid-19 pandemic has the potential to unravel years of dedicated effort by the sector, towards long term sustainable development and has exposed the fragility of what has long been viewed as a stable model. The reliance upon tourism for conservation funding and protected area management varies in different countries and regions and it’s clear that those that do rely heavily on tourism revenue and management will suffer significantly. As mentioned, many companies have private donor funds, or reserve funds, however, the scale and scope of the impact of the pandemic tests the buffers in place.

The data obtained through the European Commission survey cited previously suggests that there will be a significant decline in donations and CSR payments for community initiatives which is forecasted to result in a 40% decrease, equal to about 14 million USD, for that sample group alone (Spenceley, 2021, p.10). They also considered the environmental impact of the reduced funding and spending abilities of the companies surveyed and found that of the 369 operators in the data sample for environmental funds, in the last fiscal year they spent a total of 106.6 million USD on conservation initiatives such as security, park or concession fees or anti-poaching (Spenceley, 2021, p.10). The prediction made for the amount that companies felt they would spend in the current FY (2020), and their responses implied a decline spending amounting to 25.5 million USD within only the small data sample considered for that study (Spenceley, 2021, p.12). This survey clearly illustrates the extent to which the wide variety of community development, empowerment and engagement projects that safari operators and their partners develop and maintain are currently under threat. The negative impact of the reduced funding is and will continue to have immediate and long-term negative impacts on the many people that were benefitting from the projects in place. In the short term it’s imaginable that initiatives focused on addressing basic needs are becoming the main focus and recipient of the resources

available. This will certainly be at the expense of projects aimed and empowering people and creating opportunities in the long term. For instance, educational programs have the propensity to affect remarkable change over time by creating opportunities. If many of these programs are halted by lack of funding and lockdown regulations, the negative impact over time is hard to quantify. In a targeted response to the ongoing socioeconomic threat caused by the pandemic to the many communities reliant upon wildlife friendly tourism, ‘The Lion’s Share’ organisation, have developed the ‘Resilience in Wildlife Community Grants’ (The Lions Share, 2020). The grants can be applied for by non-profit organisations who work to “demonstrate innovative local-level cation to increase resilience and well-being of communities against external shocks” (The Lions Share, 2020). Providing sustainable solutions to the threat of the sole reliance on wildlife tourism is a worthy aim in need of proposals that can be applied to many communities that face this current dilemma. The need for more robust diverse income streams for communities has become evident since the pandemic devastated tourism visits across all regions. The need for creative innovative solutions led to a collaborative effort by the Luc Hoffmann Institute, WWF and the African Leadership University’s School of Wildlife Conservation, to develop and launch a challenge called the ‘Innovation Challenge, Beyond Tourism in Africa, Diversifying community livelihoods from wildlife’ (The Luc Hoffmann Institute, 2020). The challenge sought applicants with innovative concepts, models or ideas that could generate sustainable income sources for communities from wildlife conservation (The Luc Hoffmann Institute, 2020). The fifteen winning ideas, such as “community-led virtual classroom for nature-based field education,” are currently, in 2021, in development. Solutions such as these can provide long term resilience for communities around wildlife protected areas and safeguard the conservation of the wildlife.

2.3.3 Covid-19 Impact on Africa’s Wildlife Conservation

The exact source of the virus at this stage, in March 2021, is not yet confirmed, however, the WHO has determined that the virus is a zoonotic disease (WHO, 2021). As a result, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought attention to the dangers of eating wildlife and has led to newly formed regulations to halt the wildlife trade in some countries including China (African Conservation Foundation [ACF], 2020). This connection between zoonotic diseases and the illegal wildlife trade has now become well documented and has resulted in an increase in global awareness of the consequences of our impact on natural ecosystems (ACF, 2020). The current

pandemic has also brought into sharp focus the link between zoonotic diseases and biodiversity loss.

We depend on biodiversity and healthy ecosystems for our health and survival. Biodiversity, and the complexity of our landscapes and seascapes, is integral to social and ecological resilience, including the resilience of ecosystem functions and the services that they sustain. As genetic and species diversity is lost and ecosystems are degraded, the complexity of the overall system can be compromised making it more vulnerable, and potentially creating new opportunities for disease emergence and poor health outcomes both in humans and species (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2020, p. 1).

Our reliance on biodiverse ecosystems for the protection of our health is clear and there are a wide variety of examples in which human caused environmental changes can affect the emergence, threat of, or spread of certain infectiousness diseases (WHO, 2020, p. 3). The disturbances to natural ecosystems caused by humans can take the form of changes in land use via deforestation, mining, oil extraction or wetland drainage (WHO, 2020, p. 3). Introducing foreign species, causing the declining of one specific population are other ways in which humans can disrupt the fragile balance on an ecosystem causing a knock-on effect for which climate change is considered a multiplier threat (WHO, 2020, p.3). However, in the time in which governments are faced with an unprecedented variety of humanitarian concerns that are in need of immediate attention, the root of the issue is not receiving the level of attention and funding that it is due. Currently, in early 2021, there are trillions of dollars being spent on boosting economies and human health care but the ‘Preventing Pandemics at the Source’ coalition argues that the far less expensive actions needed to stop deforestation and the illegal wildlife trade are now critical (Carrington, 2021). Currently about two thirds of diseases that infect humans are contracted from animals and with the rate at which we are interfering with natural ecosystems, the probability of other pandemics caused by zoonotic diseases are increasing (Carrington, 2021). Responsible wildlife tourism contributes to the protection of habitats and reduces the chances of diverse regions becoming used for agriculture or other detrimental activities. The delicate balance of species within the ecosystems in safari destinations are protected by the ongoing research conducted there and the anti-poaching efforts carried out by governments, NGO’s and private tourism sector companies. Africa’s savannahs and plains are rich biodiverse regions and the conservation of the habitats and the species that inhabit them are vital for global human

health. Despite being private enterprises, the holistic approach to CSR employed by the companies examined in this study contribute significantly to the protection of biodiversity in various regions in Africa and therefore, human health worldwide.

As discussed, the restrictions on travel might have a positive effect initially on biodiversity conservation. However, many argue that the net conservation impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic will be overwhelmingly negative (Lindsay et al. 2020, p. 1300). This is due to a number of factors, such as “reduced funding, restrictions on the operations of conservation agencies, and elevated human threats to nature” (Lindsay et al. 2020, p. 1300). As wildlife conservation is a critical element of CSR for safari operators, and is directly linked to most if not all other components of the models of sustainable development, wildlife area protection and community engagement and empowerment; critically assessing the conservation models and the challenges presented by the pandemic is crucial. In addition to the significant contribution’s wildlife-based tourism makes to wildlife conservation in Africa, foreign investment constitutes a significant portion of the funding for wildlife conservation (Lindsay et al. 2020, p. 1300). Included in this are non-governmental organisations, philanthropists, zoos, multilateral institutions and private foundations (Lindsay et al. 2020, p. 1300). The decline in funding from tourist activities is not the only notable challenge to funding caused by the pandemic. With economies declining worldwide, the focus will inevitably shift from conservation to humanitarian causes, despite the two causes being arguably intertwined. Entire communities that rely upon tourism revenue as their only source of income will be forced to rely more heavily on natural resources leading to practices such as subsistence poaching or altering land use to agriculture (Lindsey et al., p. 1302).

There is an ongoing threat to conservation resources as policymakers will most likely designate the budgets allocated to conservation as ‘non-essential’ when they are faced with the numerous imminent shortages and cuts in donor funding that are being forecasted to decline over the next 1-2 years (Lindsay et al. 2020, p.1300). Newsome (2020, p.4) argues that the true nature and extent of the aftermath of the pandemic will only be evident in years to come, but it is clear that it has the potential to threaten the future of wildlife populations and the integrity of wildlife tourism programmes. It is impossible to determine the impact of the pandemic on wildlife tourism, but it does present the opportunity to identify situations in which wildlife tourism is poorly managed and therefore, in need of reassessment as to how it can be managed in the future (Newsome, 2020, p.4). Although research seems to overwhelmingly suggest that despite some short-term positive effects of the pandemic with regards to wildlife conservation, the negative

impacts could be vast and long-lasting. However, this will present an opportunity to address systemic flaws in current models and highlight the approaches in effective more resilient methods for long term success. This is not a simple task due to the complicated nature of conservation funding but accentuates the critical need to widen the scope of stakeholders and engage them to work in solidarity to preserve the future of wildlife.

Although there are some recent academic papers and newspaper articles on the subject of tourism and conservation in Africa, the situation is still unfolding and therefore, the full extent of the damage can at this point only be speculated. Through the forecasting of various outcomes that could potentially unfold we can attempt to ascertain what role governments, NGO's, private sector companies, individuals and communities can and will play in determining the outcome. Hockings et al. (2020, pp. 8-9) argue that three potential scenarios could emerge regarding protected and conserved areas in the recovery period of Covid-19. In the first scenario they argue that if the world adapts to the Covid-19 pandemic, things may return to normal and the previous models of conservation would be reapplied; the world would then face the same environmental issues as before, such as biodiversity loss and climate change (Hockings et al., 2020, p. 8). Alternatively, if the pandemic lasts longer or is deadlier than predicted, the world could decline into an economic depression with unemployment rates rising and tourism numbers still at an all-time low (Hockings et al., 2020, p. 8). In this scenario the threat to protected areas would be severe because with a strong focus of governments on job creation and economic stimulation, environmental regulation would not be considered a priority and restrictions to protect these areas could be lifted (Hockings et al., 2020, p. 8). The final scenario they put forward is one in which the world develops new and transformative relations with nature, driven by our newfound understanding of the impact of misusing and degrading nature (Hockings et al., 2020, p. 8). This presents an opportunity for the world to transition to an entirely different view of how we interact with nature and can provide the chance to raise awareness of the intricacies inherent in our reliance on biodiversity and our need to address climate change. This would involve implementing policies based upon a foundation of knowledge that we have already accumulated concerning the drastic measures that should be taken to protect the planet. Leaders from numerous nations have already indicated that they plan to embrace this opportunity to implement nature-based solutions into their recovery plans and to promote diversifying funding sources in conservation areas (Hockings et al., 2020, p. 9).

In addition to the examples cited to support communities reliant on the tourism sector and grants for business, there are a variety of grants aimed specifically at supporting wildlife conservation organisations. A good example of recent action taken to rapidly address the shortage in conservation funding is in the form of a collaboration between the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the European Union through the creation of the ‘SOS African Wildlife Rapid Action Grants’ (IUCN, 2020). The situation is developing rapidly and initiatives such as these are specifically aimed at facilitating immediate responses to threats to wildlife caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This is a targeted rapid grant that is only available for civil society organisations and public entities within South Africa (IUCN, 2020), but as previously stated many of the conservation projects supported by tourism operations are run by non-profit organisation partners. A grant such as this may take some of the immediate financing pressure for sustainably conservation projects off the safari operators. Grants such as these could provide a short term stop gap, preventing the dissolution of the safari tourism industry if they are sufficient in scope and amount to address the scale of the crisis at hand.

3.) Methodology

3.1 Research Strategy

With the aim of developing an in depth understanding of effective CSR strategies, detailed data was collected from five selected safari operators, within the high-end safari segment. Both primary and secondary data was examined in order to provide a detailed analysis of their CSR practices, with regards to their strategy, implementation, the barriers faced and the outcomes of their efforts; in addition to their long-term goals for CSR. In light of the recent global Covid-19 pandemic, the existing and forecasted effects of the pandemic on travel and therefore, the safari operators being studied, will be considered. The measures the companies have taken to adapt their strategies to lessen the impact of the pandemic on their operations and CSR initiatives in the short and long term will be examined. The results will be individually analysed and then compared in order to find patterns, common themes and differences in their methods and outcomes.

3.1.1 Multiple Case Study Design and Methods

A case study method was chosen due to the opportunity for it to provide a broad understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of the CSR strategies employed by companies in the high-end safari sector. A case study allows for various internal and external factors and influences to be incorporated into the analysis. The current rapid global developments caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting significant impact on all features of the topic must also be considered in the approach to developing a study design. Yin (2009, p. 37) maintains that case studies are a very effective method of examining contemporary events, as it offers the unique opportunity to incorporate two sources of data, the direct observation of events unfolding and interviews with people directly involved in the events. In this study, there are numerous forms of data being incorporated into the analysis of the theory.

A multiple case study method was selected to ensure a more robust examination of effective CSR strategies and to provide insight into their similarities, differences both before and after the impact of the pandemic. Yin (2009, p. 55) argues that most multiple case designs, even those using only two cases, are generally stronger than single-case designs. The results of a multiple case study and the evidence it provides, is generally regarded as stronger and more persuasive than single case studies (Herriott & Firestone, 1983, as cited in Yin, 2009, p. 94). Case studies, in all forms, can be part of a larger mixed method study (Yin 2009, p. 55). This paper utilises a multiple case study strategy as part of a mixed methods study, drawing on secondary data published by the companies in their financial, sustainability and impact reports, in addition to information available on their websites. The primary data was collected directly from informants in the form of interviews. The information was then compiled to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topics at hand from which conclusions could be drawn. Another benefit of multiple case study format is that it allows the researcher to draw a single set of cross-case conclusions from the analysis of the multiple cases (Yin, 2009, p. 49).

3.1.2 Reasons for Research Strategy

Due to the complex nature of CSR, and the ambiguity involved in some of the existing formal measurement and reporting methods of the effects of CSR in tourism, a mixed methods study that allows for a diverse list of topics to be covered is appealing. A mixed methods multiple case study, combining qualitative with quantitative data, allows for the emergence of themes specific to the sector of the industry being studied and that of the setting of this field of safari

tourism. Multiple case analysis can produce a robust set of data that can reveal in depth insight into all aspects of the CSR strategies adopted by the companies chosen. The quantitative data, in the form of numerical figures, provides tangible information in regards to measurable outcomes. This, in conjunction with the qualitative data can provide a broad but rigorous analysis of the range of necessary themes for inspection to determine the effects of the CSR strategies in place. Merely studying the numerical outcomes would not be sufficient as it would not take into account the effects of a variety of internal and external influential variables. The implementation methods, challenges faced, strength of the vision of the company, individual efforts, funding sources, motivating factors, and setting related factors such as cultural and religious influences must be incorporated. It would also not take into account various outcomes that are challenging to quantify, and the many projects that have long term goals. In addition, this study will examine how the companies have thus far, and plan in the future to reshape their methods in response to the transformation of the industry by the Covid-19 pandemic. The effort dedicated to addressing complex issues and finding innovative solutions must be incorporated into the evaluation of the CSR strategy and outcomes, in addition to more transparent measurable aspects.

3.2 Research Design & Data Collection

The multiple case study will be utilizing embedded units of analysis, as this allows for multiple units to be examined within the case (Yin, 2009, p. 89). The embedded units of analysis will be constituent parts of both the qualitative and quantitative data collection. This will ensure that all relevant variables are considered in each case, providing a holistic view from which conclusions can be drawn and emergent themes and concepts can be discovered.

3.2.1 Case Selection

Yin (2009, pp. 72-73) argues the selection of cases must be done in a scientific manner, comparable to the selection of topics for an experiment, in order to enable analytic generalization of the empirical results in which they are compared with previously existing theory. A few of the chosen companies have been the subject of published research, which analysed a number of themes related to their CSR practices, strategies and overall results. (Buckley, 2010; Mwakalobo et al., 2016; Snyman, 2019). In order to standardise selection and minimise selection bias, research was conducted to identify a variety of companies that had been studied in detail

regarding their effective CSR strategies. The published research was then examined in detail and subsequently a variety of overlapping parameters were identified to refine company case selection. The companies ultimately selected were chosen based on certain similarities in regards to their CSR strategies, such as, aims to increase biodiversity, empower communities, and achieve ambitious sustainability goals. Therefore, a literal replication logic was employed to select the cases, as opposed to a sampling logic, which is more common to surveys (Yin, 2009, p. 98).

The companies selected as cases for this multiple case study all operate in the high-end safari ecotourism sector in Africa. They offer a variety of lodge accommodation and other services, ranging from safari activities to inland flights. All of which appear to be successful in remaining lucrative, while displaying foundational principles of CSR built into to their business models in both the environmental and social fields. All publish detailed information about the various CSR projects they have developed or contribute to, in addition to information about the revenue streams utilised to fund the projects. The presentation of the information and level of detail provided varies between companies but all of the selected companies offer a high level of transparency, enabling consistent secondary data collection. The companies vary in size but all operate over different countries, except one, that operates over a wide variety of regions within one country. Five cases were chosen in order to ensure the criteria for selecting the companies was not comprised and allowing in-depth analysis of each case while maintaining a large enough sample size to gain useful insight through comparisons and emerging trends. Below in Table 2. the cases are listed with basic descriptive data collected about each. The detailed in-depth information pertaining to their CSR approaches and outcomes that was gathered during the study is later described in the results section.

Table 2

Case Company Basic Characteristics

Company Name	Founding Date	Countries of Operation	Number of Properties*
Wilderness Safaris	1983	Namibia, Botswana, Kenya, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Zambia	48
Natural Selection	2016	Namibia, Botswana, South Africa	19
Asilia	2005	Kenya, Tanzania	23
Nomad Tanzania	2001	Tanzania	15
Singita	1993	South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Rwanda	12

Information collected through the corresponding companies' websites

*Owned, Part-Owned or Managed

3.2.2 Secondary Data Collection

Each of the selected businesses publishes detailed information concerning their CSR work. Detailed notes were taken about the companies general CSR strategy as well as the specific projects they contribute to or developed, which were sourced via the company websites and published reports regarding their CSR projects and the resulting outcomes.

3.2.3 Primary Data Collection

Interviews were conducted with one employee from each chosen company, who is in a leading position within the department directly responsible for CSR related activities. Due to the avail-

ability of detailed information for each business case, via impact/sustainability reports and conservation reports, the interviews were aimed at revealing information relating to the implementation of the companies CSR strategies and the associated challenges faced in achieving successful outcomes. The extensive experience of the interviewees, regarding the hands-on implementation of initiatives, provides valuable insight into the decision-making processes and the multifaceted intricacies of the work they conduct. An interview focusing on the CSR strategies of each business was conducted including open-ended questions addressing a variety of topics. The informants were asked about their company's visions, and the aims and motivations behind their CSR initiatives. Certain questions inquired into the practical implementation of their projects, specifically about drivers that assisted the enactment of projects and the barriers they faced and how they potentially overcame any challenges. The impact of the setting of their operations could have on their CSR focus was discussed and whether their project aims were guided by a variety of variables such as differences in regulation in different countries and regions in which they operate. They were asked about how their company's generated ideas for their projects and the strategy behind their choices of partners was also addressed. Further to this, given the high value accommodation and activities offered by all the companies studied, interviewees asked about how a balance is found between offering luxury amenities and maintaining sustainability with a low carbon footprint. The future goals of the company, specifically in relation to the potential sustainable development, community development and engagement and wildlife conservation were examined. Questions concerning the current and ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ways in which it has affected the company's short term and long term goals and strategies were posed. The final question asked to the informants, was what measures they felt could be taken to make the current tourism-based model for conservation more sustainable. The open-ended nature of the questions and relaxed and informal manner of the conversations led to a variety of different topics and themes emerging in each interview. The interview aimed to allow the topics of discussion to be led by the respondents to ensure that new concepts and topics could surface. Each interview was recorded and transcribed by the interviewer. Consent was provided by the informants authorising the interviewer to utilise the information gathered. All of the transcriptions were then analysed to identify unique or overlapping emergent trends.

4 Results & Analysis

4.1 Secondary Data Results & Analysis

The following section provides a detailed summary of all the data that was collected by the researcher in both quantitative and qualitative forms. The secondary data is put forward in a comprehensive manner that provides an overview of information that is specific to individual company cases and generalisations that apply to all of the case companies. The primary data was analysed using a grounded theory, the Gioia Methodology, in order to maintain a scientific methodology (Gioia, Corley & Hamilton, 2012, p. 15). After this, a thorough analysis of both forms of data was conducted, along with a cross case analysis which presents an integrated examination of the complex and mixed forms of information.

4.1.2 Case Companies & CSR Strategy Histories

Case 1- Wilderness Safaris

Wilderness safaris is one of the pioneers in ecotourism and high value low impact safaris. Initially offering authentic safaris in 1983 to then founding their first eco-friendly bush camps in 1985, the company has since grown into one of the largest and arguably most influential companies in the safari sector. They own or manage 48 properties across East and Southern Africa and own or lease a total of 40 airplanes. Wilderness Wildlife Trust was formed in the 1980s by Wilderness Safaris, as an independent entity, developed to ensure they could maximise the conservation impact created by the funds generated from their tourism activities. The trust supports a wide variety of conservation partners and projects across Africa and because it is managed separately, the trust supports projects beyond the geographic scope of Wilderness Safaris' properties and concessions. Despite its' formation as an independent entity, Wilderness Safaris is able to offer logistical support and resources to aid the trust with their work. Their main aims include; research and conservation, anti-poaching and management, community empowerment and education. In addition, Wilderness Safaris founded a non-profit organisation called Children in Wilderness to foster a collaborative future approach towards sustainable conservation by providing education and leadership development for children in Africa. The organisation has developed a variety of eco-training camps and sessions for local communities, as well as offering a variety of educational scholarships. As a publicly traded company, officially under the

name Wilderness Holdings Limited, they publish annual reports that provide detailed information on all aspects of their businesses, as well as an additional sustainability review available annually up until 2017. The Children of Wilderness and Wildlife Wilderness Trust publish annual impact reports detailing the sources of their funding and what projects the funds have been allocated to. In their 2018 trust impact report, they stated that they had generated a total of 386,979 USD, which had been spent on initiatives supported or developed by the two trusts (Wilderness Trusts, 2018). Just over 50% of the funds went to community empowerment and education, while nearly 20% went to anti-poaching and close to 27% to research and conservation (Wilderness Trusts, 2018). The remaining 2% was spent on vital admin for the website and annual report (Wilderness Trusts, 2018). The sources of the funds for the trusts were broken down as follows; 87% were from guests and trade partners, 12% from Wilderness Safaris and 0.83% were from royalties from wildlife campus (Wilderness Trusts, 2018).

Case 2 – Natural Selection

Natural Selection Safari is the youngest of the companies, but all the companies' founders have been in the industry for a long time and two of them also founded Wilderness Safaris. The company was founded in 2016 by passionate safari and conservation enthusiasts who initially considered developing a non-profit organisation that would generate its' funds through tourism market representation. They decided that an ethically minded commercial safari company could have a more significant impact. They have partial or full ownership over a wide range of properties across Southern Africa. Natural Selection Conservation Trust is an independent non-profit aimed at supporting community upliftment and wildlife conservation in the countries that Natural Selection Safaris operates including Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. A board of trustees are in charge of allocating funds to projects in need of financial support. They work closely with a variety of NGO's to address issues in the various regions over which they operate. Natural Selection allocated 1.5% of a guest stay towards conservation or community development programs. In 2018 their model amounted to 40% of their overall profit being directly channelled towards their CSR initiatives (Natural Selection, n.d.). During the interview with a Natural Selection representative, information about how much this amounted to was obtained. In total, between the funds generated from their tourism revenue (around 75%) and external donors, they have raised 920,000 USD for conservation and community upliftment since they founded in 2017.

Case 3 – Singita

Singita has been operating for over 25 years and has grown to be renowned in the industry, not only for their luxury safari accommodation, but for their sustainable and environmentally conscious approach to hospitality. The company manages a variety of wildlife reserve and concessions and employs over 1,200 people, which impacts around 7,000 family members. They have developed strategic partnerships with non-profit trusts and funds in the areas in which they operate that focus on wildlife conservation and community empowerment. Singita manages a vast private reserve to the east of the Serengeti in Tanzania and generate revenue for the Grumeti Fund, a non-profit organisation developed to conserve it, through tourism and hospitality. They were appointed to manage the property by the owner of the land and founder of the fund, which channels its resources into the community and various conservation initiatives. Similar to their approach in Tanzania, they have non-profit partners on the ground in the other countries in which they operate, who implement the community and biodiversity initiatives that Singita's tourism business funds. The Singita Lowveld Trust is located in South Africa and the Malilangwe Trust in Zimbabwe. The Grumeti Fund's only ecotourism partner is Singita, and they are the only tourism company operating in the Grumeti Reserve. In addition to the funds generated from tourism, they have a variety of NGO partners, and a wide base of donor support which amounted to 3,241,008 USD in donations for the Grumeti fund in 2019 (Grumeti Fund, 2019). One significant partner that Singita have developed to assist them in closely monitoring their environmental footprint and in developing ambitious sustainability goals for the future is One Planet Living. One Planet Living are a sustainability consultancy company that assists in establishing sustainability frameworks based upon the necessity to conserve and protect the environment, community and local cultures. Singita publishes a transparent One Planet Living Review for each of the regions in which they operate, detailing their outcomes and areas for improvement, which are then utilised for future strategic goal formation.

Case 4 – Nomad Tanzania

Nomad Tanzania, the only company in this study that does not operate across borders has a variety of eco-friendly camps across Tanzania. The company was founded on the principles of conservation and of looking after the needs of local communities and ensuring they benefit from the protection of wildlife areas. They developed a trust with an appointed CSR manager who is tasked with allocating the funds to various projects across the country. They dedicate revenue from their shop and spa sales, as well as raising funds from donors and other sources, such as

safari auctions. The Nomad Tanzania Trust report published annually details their various sustainability achievements and developments, in addition to, information about their contributions to and the outcomes of their education, conservation and health initiatives. The report provides a detailed overview of the expansive range of projects and initiatives which they have developed and those which they have contributed to. Rather than providing an overall amount donated, the report highlights the success of specific projects and states how much was contributed towards specific causes. For instance, over the past 15 years, the trust has invested over 750,000 USD in microfinancing loans, which provides opportunities for the development of SME's (Nomad Tanzania Trust, 2018). Since mid-2017, the trust has contributed over 10,000 USD in bed night revenue for the Serengeti de-snaring project (Nomad Tanzania Trust, 2018).

Case 5 - Asilia Africa

Asilia Africa owns and runs a variety of unique properties across remote regions in both Tanzania and Kenya. The company was officially launched 16 years ago but two of their camps were built in the late 80's early 90's as family run properties. Asilia has always focused on offering meaningful journeys to travellers by investing in regions that are ecologically and economically vulnerable, with the aim of benefiting both local communities and ecosystems. Asilia works closely with a wide variety of grass-root non-profit organisations to address needs of local people and wildlife in the areas in which they operate. The company's annual impact reports provide a thorough description of their efforts towards meeting sustainability goals, as well as the many conservation and community empowerment initiatives they have developed or support. The funds used for these causes come from donations made to Asilia Giving, their online donation platform, and additionally via a 5 USD conservation fee they apply per person per night in their properties. In 2018-2019, this amounted to over 300,000 USD raised and spent on conservation and community development projects (Asilia, 2019). Asilia have a number of projects which they have developed, implemented and maintain independently, such as the Twende Porini program. This program offers children from local communities the opportunity to get a first-hand introduction to tourism and conservation at the Asilia camps.

4.1.3 CSR Strategy Results & Analysis



Figure 5. CSR & Ethical Practice Aims and Resulting Projects & Initiatives

Developed from Secondary Data Collected Through Published Impact/Sustainability Reports & Company Websites

Figure 5. above is an accumulation of data collected from the information published by each company in various forms. Positive impact or sustainability reports were published by all the safari operators except Natural Selection, which was recently founded and has reported that they are working towards developing a method to do so. Each safari operator published detailed information on their website pertaining to the projects that they support and the partners they work with. The data was divided into three main sections, 'conservation', 'community' and 'sustainability,' in order to produce a comprehensive overview of the information collected and analysed. However, it must be noted that there is significant overlap between the three sections regarding the aims and outcomes of their projects and initiatives. As previously stated in this study, the three concepts are complexly interlinked and interdependent. In order for conservation efforts to be viable for long term success, it is vital that local communities are in support of and directly benefit from the preservation of local ecosystems. Sustainable practices must be adopted by both local communities and private commercial enterprises to ensure that both wildlife and their habitats can be preserved. Therefore, when analysing the categories utilised in Figure 5., rather than examining each topic individually, the interconnected nature of each topic must be considered in order to understand the wider implications of each project and initiative explored. In some instances, the apparent purpose behind an initiative can be far succeeded by the long-term objective behind it. For example, Nomad Tanzania developed a 'meal a day' program for preschool children in villages surrounding their properties. In the villages that the initiative is based, it is uncommon for children to be enrolled in preschool education and the simple initiative encourages attendance by providing them a nutritious meal to start their day. Resulting in an increase in children beginning their vital education from the earliest age possible. In this case the long-term benefits of the children receiving education and improving their future likelihood of job security outweighs the short-term benefit of providing a free meal to children from impoverished families.

The secondary data obtained suggests the CSR strategies are very similar among all five businesses and are categorised in detail in Figure 5. In addition to the category name and the main aim, the subcategories such as antipoaching and reducing human wildlife conflict, are common focuses of their projects aimed at achieving the overall goal of biodiversity conservation and wildlife management. The list under each subcategory represents projects or initiatives they develop and or contribute to, in order to accomplish their main goal. The socioeconomic and environmental context has a significant bearing on the needs of the communities and habitats within the areas in which the companies operate. Consequentially, the specific projects they

prioritise vary. Due to the broad range of projects and initiatives to which each company contributes and the significant overlap in motives or focuses of their efforts, Figure 5. provides a holistic view of the aims common to each company studied. The secondary information provided the foundation for understanding the strategies of each company, to which the interviews then provided context and deeper insight.

4.2 Primary Data Results Analysis

In order to establish a scientific method of analysis of the qualitative data collected from the interviews, the Gioia methodology was applied (Gioia et al., 2012, p. 20). The method entails allowing the interviews to be led by the interviewees and allowing the direction of the interview to adapt based upon the themes that emerge (Gioia et al., 2012, p. 20). During the transcription process and after the transcripts were further examined, notes were then taken of a wide variety of concepts or themes that emerged throughout the interview. The 1st order concepts, as they are referred to in Gioia Methodolgy, are led by the words of the informant and are in the beginning stages an extensive list of different concepts in different categories (Gioia et al., 2012, p. 20). Differences and similarities between the emerging concepts were determined and certain concepts were integrated into a single concept with a descriptive label. The 2nd order are the theoretical level of themes, dimensions and the larger narrative, answering the important question of what is developing and how do the concepts fit (Gioia et al., 2012, p. 20). At this point the themes were developed and the concepts were categoried accordingly. The final category is the aggregate dimensions which represents the composition of multiple components of the data. The data is categorised in the form of a data structure picture below, in Figure 6, providing a visual tool to illustrate the scope of information gathered. After which, each of the concepts are discussed in reference to their context and prevalence in the interviews. Specific examples are provided to better illustrate their relevance.

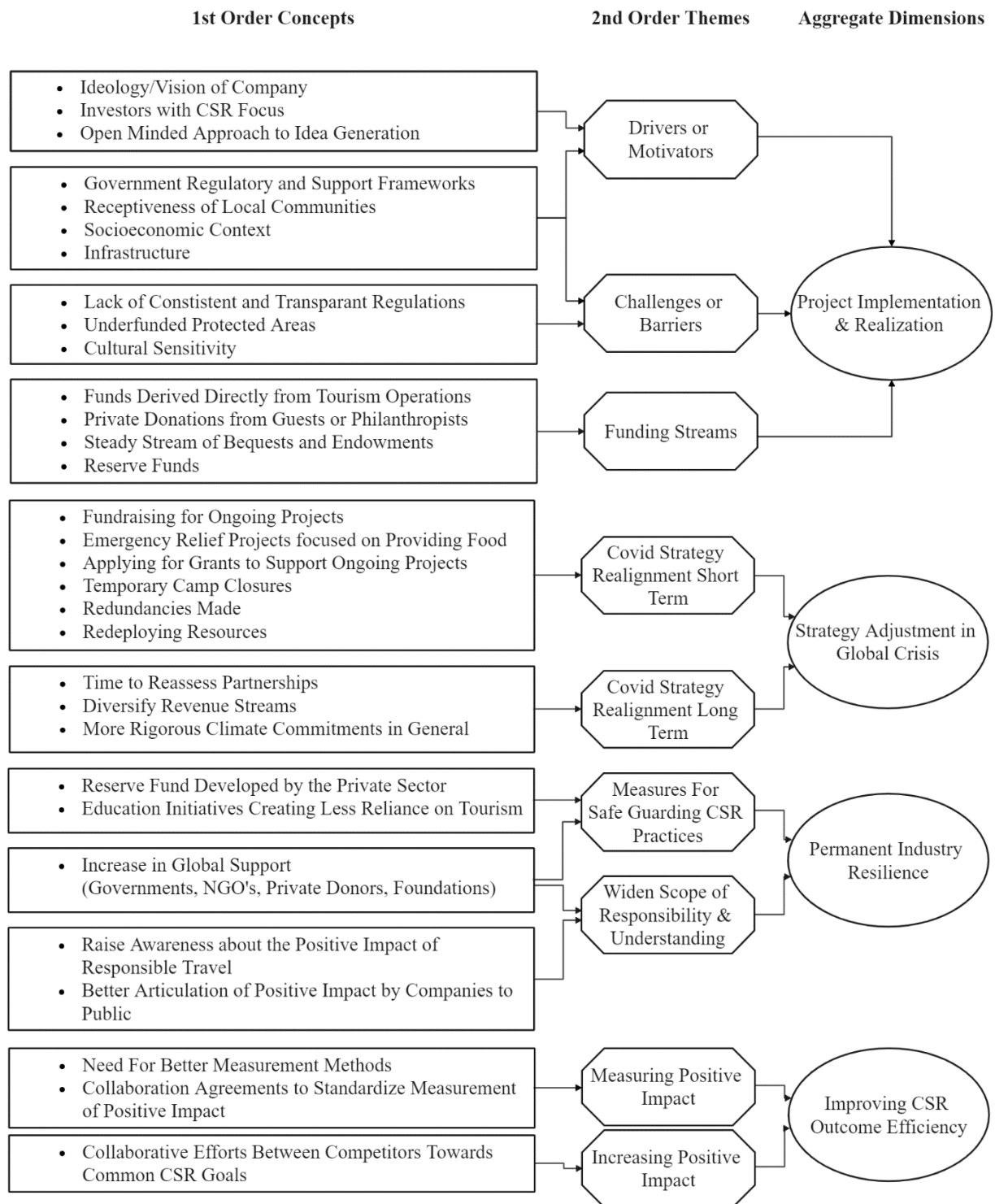


Figure 6: Data Structure of Information from Case Interviews

Developed using the Gioia Methodology and primary data collected through interviews

Gioia et al., 2012, p. 21

4.2.1 Practical Implementation & Realization

The data obtained from the interviews was categorised into a broad list of concepts and themes, which were then characterised into four broader aggregate dimensions. The first aggregate dimension is the ‘Practical Implementation & Realisation of CSR’ which refers to a variety of drivers, motivators, challenges faced and how the companies funded their projects.

Three concepts were identified that underlie the theme “drivers or motivators.” The first is the **ideology/vision of the company**, which refers to the company’s general ethos and business strategies in place. This was acknowledged as a driver or motivator for all of the companies, as all have CSR principles integrated into their business strategy and operational processes.

The second driver documented during the interviews was the value of **investors with a CSR focus**, that are not profit driven. The importance of having investors with the right intentions was a strong point raised by informants in numerous interviews. The representative from Natural Selection emphasized the commitment of the founders of the company to CSR principles, saying “they recognize the value out of tourism in terms of protecting wild places and the, and incentivizing local communities to protect those resources and acknowledge, the interplay between community, and conservation projects, they need to, it needs to be some kind of shared value.” This is substantiated by the proportion of revenue that Natural Selection contributes to community and wildlife initiatives. Their model of 1.5% of a guest stay going directly to these projects, amounted to 40% of their overall profit in 2018, which is remarkably high for any private company.

Another example of this that was discussed is Asilia’s investor Norfund, a Norwegian development corporation that invests in private enterprises within developing countries to support sustainable businesses. The interviewee for Asilia remarked on how Norfund had been the catalyst for a number of CSR initiatives. For instance, they insisted that the training and management programs have a 50/50 split between males and females which resulted in the launch of an all-female camp, a rarity in a male dominated industry.

Another significant “driver” in realising projects is adopting an **open-minded approach to idea generation**. All of the companies fostered a collaborative approach to idea generation by speaking with staff from local communities, listening to investors, and partner NGO’s. When discussing the various partnerships that companies had developed, all reported that they join

forces with both large international NGO's and small grassroots organisations. All of the companies had formed external trusts, or non-profit organisations, some of which function largely independently from the tourism enterprise.

The interviewee from Nomad Tanzania stated "It's very much mixed to be honest, we have some camps which are completely filled with staff members from the local village and they are the best point of information of what's the situation in the village and we can quickly go down and have a look. It's not an off the shelf one fits all solution, so what's the biggest problem and then what's the most practical solution we can try to use to address it. Obviously taking experience from other camps, but yeah staff members are in there from the beginning and they are the ones who run it and help support it and are kind of help/hotlines in a way if the community aren't happy they can go and tell so and so who there's uncle who works in the camp in a very nice honest open way. So yes, staff have a huge input but then in terms of the direction from the company. Conservations always in our sights because that might not be the most immediate need for a family in a remote community or a remote village but it has a longer lasting impact so about conservation tourism and the future or tourism is at risk and these projects are being run through tourism ventures."

The **receptiveness of local communities**, and **socioeconomic context** were identified as both a potential "driver" and "barrier" for CSR. Both variables impacted their ability to implement projects and the potential success of those projects. The willingness of local communities to build relationships with private commercial safari companies varies across countries quite significantly according to some of the informants. Naturally the approach of the company towards communities can significantly positively or negatively affect potential outcomes of collaborative schemes, community development or engagement projects. A common theme discussed throughout the interviews was the importance of **cultural sensitivity** and understanding and the "challenge" that it created for the companies. For example, many interviewees indicated that allowing the initiatives to be community led was essential, rather than assuming what is needed. Many of the interviewees said they found it most affective to allow the communities to approach them with ideas and then develop a plan and budget accordingly. The ability to build an atmosphere of trust is an important part of achieving long term goals that positively impact the people and environment.

Government regulatory and support frameworks different significantly across African nations and may prove to be a “driver” for CSR or a “barrier”. They may impact the necessity for and focus of certain CSR initiatives. For example, as mentioned, anti-poaching is a significant component of all of the case companies’ efforts towards conservation. However, the informant representing Wilderness Safaris’ stated that private enterprises are not permitted to take part in anti-poaching in Botswana. Wilderness has developed some incredibly effective anti-poaching initiatives in other countries, but they cannot take part in that aspect of conservation in Botswana. From another perspective, in the same interview it was stated that primary schools in Botswana are free, which enables the company to focus their CSR school funding on high levels of education.

One significant “challenge” or “barrier” faced by the companies is **a lack of consistent and transparent government regulations**, which can seriously impede companies’ abilities to realise certain projects. Frequent changes in regulations, fees and taxes can cause operational difficulties and create a level of uncertainty.

Another major “challenge” faced by the companies in their conservation work, is the **under-funded protected areas**. The lack of sufficient funding and funding leakages posed a threat to the habitats and increases the pressure on the companies to maintain biodiversity.

The concept of **infrastructure**, was discussed and its’ ability to be a “driver or motivator” enabling and leading CSR projects. For example, the lack of clean water access can become the motivation and focus of a project. However, lack of infrastructure can also pose a challenge, for the implementation of projects or sustainability initiatives. For example, when there is a lack of recycling facilities available, a company might have to develop this infrastructure to meet their sustainability goals.

The “funding streams” for CSR activities was a significant point of discussion throughout the interviews due to impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on tourism numbers and therefore, funds. All of the companies allocated **funds derived directly from tourism operations**, in the form of a bed night levy or dedicating shop/spa sales, in addition to grants or other lump sums allocated directly from tourism revenue. All of the companies received some form of **private donations from guests or philanthropists**, and the representative for Nomad Tanzania stated that they had a **reserve fund**. The issues of a lack of consistent funding in a time of crisis with declining tourist numbers was discussed in all interviews, in addition to the need for diversified and stable streams of funding. The representative for Singita stated that “we’ve been working

quite hard as a company prior to Covid on, what we call a Singita endowment fund. So working with many of our guests and donors around long term bequests and endowment that can support either our own areas and our growth and expansion into having a very key role in these key biodiversity areas for Africa, or even just becoming a funding mechanism beyond our own footprint for key conservation areas across Africa.” After which the informant further accentuated the importance of having three streams working in conjunction: consistent donations, like-minded shareholders, and tourism revenue. The value of developing and maintaining sustainable **steady streams of bequests and endowments** was emphasized.

4.2.2 Strategy Adjustment in Global Crisis

The concepts and themes regarding the various companies’ responses to the Covid-19 pandemic were categorised into the aggregate dimension ‘Strategy Adjustment in Global Crisis.’ The information collected provides insight into the impact of the ongoing crisis on the private safari ecotourism industry, and the many people and ecosystems who are dependent upon it.

A variety of concepts emerged relating to **strategy realignment in the short term** as a result of the pandemic. The first was the various ways in which the companies are **fundraising for ongoing projects**. This took a variety of forms such as **applying for grants to support ongoing projects**. There were examples of innovative approaches, such as auctions and crowdfunding for land leases. The representative for Natural Selection mentioned that they had applied for a grant to continue to fund their Elephant Express initiative in Botswana. Initially it was developed to mitigate the issues of human wildlife conflict in an area frequented by elephants, by providing two buses to bring children from five villages to and from school. With the lockdown leaving schools closed, the buses were no longer needed for school transport. Therefore, they could be used to bring villagers to clinics and to transport doctors to the villages to conduct medical checks on the elderly. The interviewee pointed out the importance of continuing this initiative due to the impact that access to education can have over time, and the resilience it can create for the villages by providing opportunities.

During all of the interviews the informants referenced that a significant priority throughout the pandemic is **emergency relief projects focused on providing food**. The negative economic impact caused by the pandemic to local and national economies has left many facing food shortages. Anti-poaching was another vital focus that the companies were continuously channelling funds and resources to throughout the crisis.

Redeploying resources is a significant facet of the rapid responses to the crisis by the various companies. Utilising vehicles and guides to conduct anti-poaching patrols was one of the examples mentioned. The representative for Nomad Tanzania mentioned that prior to the pandemic the company had begun “moonlighting” resources. For example, by using a guest room to accommodate a doctor who can provide medical care to a local village. They were then able to apply this technique further after the pandemic began.

The harsh reality was discussed of the **redundancies made** and the high probability that there will be more if the pandemic continues to affect tourist arrivals. Financial restructuring was mentioned during one of the interviews and a couple of the interviewees specified the need for temporary or potentially permanent closure of some of their properties.

The various measures the companies had employed for ‘Covid-19 strategy realignment in the long-term’ to mitigate the impact of the current and potentially future crises was discussed. One significant concept that was emphasized in all interviews is the importance of **diversified revenue and funding streams**. However, it was discussed that unlike other crises in the past, the Covid-19 pandemic has the potential to disrupt all funding streams in the long term. Interestingly the interviewee representing Asilia stated that they had gained an additional investor during the pandemic, the Industrialisation Fund of Developing Countries. This is a Danish non-profit, that like Norfund, invests in private sustainable businesses in developing countries. The interviewee stated that “having investors like that has been influential in Asilia especially at the moment during COVID they've allowed, you know, because they're not focused on profit, they're there for good. And so they want us to stay open. They've allowed us to keep our staff on yes, paid at a reduced rate, but has allowed us to keep motivated and for them to put money, you know, food on the table and to keep educating their children. Whereas, other camps and operators just closed up shop, haven't even opened. Some have even fired their staff or put them on unpaid leave.”

The global shift to make **more rigorous climate commitments** was discussed with the Singita interviewee and the potential positive effects that could have on the industry. The ongoing work conducted by Singita to “becoming a positive climate company” was also discussed, and their method of setting their own stringent carbon goals.

The representative for Asilia mentioned that it was an ideal **time to reassess partnerships** to ensure they “fit well with you, your ethos and your missions.” The interviewee carried on to emphasize the importance of ensuring that companies are working together with partners who are having the strongest positive impact possible in the country they’re operating in and to evaluate them regularly to avoid greenwashing.

4.2.3 Permanent Industry Resilience

There was discussion within all of the interviews concerning measures that enable the development of ‘Permanent Industry Resilience.’ The heavy reliance on tourism for conservation was discussed along with what actions the interviewees felt could strengthen the tourism-based model for conservation in the future with many of the responses centred around ‘measures for safeguarding the CSR practices’ and way to ‘widen the scope of responsibility and understanding.’

When discussing ‘measure for safeguarding CSR practices’ in the future, one concept discussed was the potential for a **reserve fund developed by the private sector**. The interviewee from Asilia referred to an article ‘The Future of Africa’s Wild Places- and Why Safaris Matters;’ in *Afar*, an online travel magazine focused on meaningful travel. The article cited a variety of emergency relief projects underway in the safari sectors, including CSR initiatives from Wilderness Safaris, Asilia, Singita and Natural Selection. In the article, a conservationist, Joubert, working for a safari company ‘Great Plains’, mentioned the importance of private reserve funds and discussed the possibility of Great Plains’ developing an endowment-style model that could attract major investments (Flowers, 2021). The interviewee then discussed the potential for a private driven Africa centric fund to be developed to safe guard the industries projects in times of crisis.

The concept of the imperative need for an **increase in global support** was discussed within the interviewees as both a ‘measure for safeguarding CSR practices’ and a way to ‘widen the scope of responsibility and understanding’ for issues related to wildlife conservation. The representative from Wilderness stated that Africa’s protected areas are significantly underfunded and that “to make it truly sustainable in the long term or truly resilient is going to have to come with significant international funding support, whether that’s from private donors, private foundations or from bilateral or special organisations.”

The important dimension of **raising awareness about the positive impact of responsible travel**, is another critical aspect of the aim to ‘widen the scope of responsibility and understanding’ that was indicated in numerous interviews. In addition to, the notion that the pandemic could draw more awareness to the global implications of conserving Africa’s protected areas. The final concept identified for the aim to ‘widen the scope of responsibility and understanding’ was for **better articulation of the positive impact by the companies to the public**. A couple of the company representatives indicated that they feel that their companies could improve how the message is conveyed to travellers.

4.2.4 Improving CSR Outcome Efficiency

Due to the complex nature of CSR goals and outcomes the approach to ‘measuring positive impact’ and ‘increasing positive impact’ with the broader aim of ‘Improving CSR Outcome Efficiency’ was discussed.

The theme of ‘measuring of positive impact’ was raised by some of the companies, as well as a need for **better measurement methods**. One interviewee indicated that it would be beneficial to develop **collaborative agreements to standardize measurement of positive impact** and the way in which it is reported. The interviewee indicated that an agreement between companies within the sector for a best practice approach to certain CSR strategies and measurements would be advantageous.

The theme of ‘increasing positive impact’ initiated a discussion about the importance of **collaborative efforts between competitors towards common CSR goals** during the interviews. The notion of the connected nature of ecosystems across borders and vast areas that mammal migrations can cover were examples of the value of companies viewing the bigger picture when it comes to conservation goals. One example of this approach, that was referred to by the representative of Wilderness Safaris, is the Lionscape Coalition. The partnership program is a collaborative effort by leading ecotourism companies such as, Wilderness Safaris, Singita and Asilia with a conservation network, the ‘Lion Recovery Fund,’ to address the issue of the sharp decline in lion populations across the continent. The network of 145 projects, operating over various countries, established by this partnership, has the ability to make a profound impact on lion populations in the future, with goals to double the population by 2050.

4.3 Cross Case Analysis

The data collected suggests that the companies have very similar visions and primary CSR objectives, but there are variances in their CSR models, business approaches, practical implementation and funding streams. Despite the apparent differences between the companies, the pandemic has significantly negatively impacted all of them.

The companies reported facing similar challenges and drivers affecting the practical implementation of their CSR projects and initiatives. The value of having investors who are driven by the ideals of conservation and sustainable development played a very significant role in some of the companies' abilities to maintain high standards regarding their CSR goals and outcomes. This was certainly a common theme among all of the companies, and while the number and type of investors was not discussed in depth in each interview, Asilias' interviewee made the benefits of having strong minded and well-intentioned investors clear. All the companies studied emphasized the importance of garnering the support of local communities for conservation. A significant factor that appeared consistent in its ability to affect the potential success of CSR strategies is the socioeconomic context of the country or region in which they are executed. All of the companies emphasize their intentions to have long term sustainable impacts that result in the empowerment of local communities within their published information and during the interviews. However, the importance of adapting to the socioeconomic context of a region or country and the need to address fundamental needs is a reality for some of the companies. For instance, in the interview with a representative from Singita, it was mentioned that in Zimbabwe the social economic crisis, prior to the pandemic, has resulted in them, together with their partner the Malilangwe trust, implementing food programs in schools, in which they support the nutrition of 20,000 school children. The interviewee explained that they must first address fundamental survival issues first to add value to their long-term goals of empowering the communities.

All of the companies had steadily funded their CSR initiatives predominantly with funds directly derived from tourism activities. There have been a variety of crises to hit African nations in the past that have affected tourism numbers across one or numerous countries, such as Ebola, but the unprecedented decline caused by Covid-19 has significantly affected all of the companies' abilities to continue to fund their partner's ongoing CSR projects. As mentioned, Singita was the only company that stated that prior to the pandemic they had developed a steady stream of bequests and endowments from other sources. However, it was stated during the interview

that this financial resource could only sustain projects for a certain amount of time. The representative for Nomad Tanzania discussed an emergency reserve fund that provided a buffer. As stated, Asilia acquired a new non-profit investor during the pandemic, which assisted the company.

In all cases, the companies had mobilised to address immediate needs of local communities during the pandemic, by prioritising food relief. Anti-poaching was another significant focus discussed by almost all of the companies as a crucial aspect of their work that must be continued throughout the crisis. All the companies were reallocating their resources to maximise their positive impact in a variety of ways. Regarding the affects the pandemic would have on their long-term CSR strategies, the common theme was the need for more robust funding by finding consistent and diversified sources.

As discussed, some of the companies' CSR success is widely acknowledged from detailed case study research (Buckley, 2010; Mwakalobo et al., 2016; Snyman, 2019) and the many awards they have won (Safari Awards, 2020), but despite their detailed impact reports, there is little information about the impact measurement criteria they employ. It must be noted that the questions within the interview did not enquire about specific measurement methods and the topic was only discussed after being introduced by interviewees. Wilderness safaris would appear to be the most widely researched (Buckley, 2010; Christie et al., 2014; Snyman, 2019), of the companies in regards to their CSR strategy, having had a number of case studies conducted on measuring the success their CSR strategies, with very positive results. Asilia published details about various certifications that they have achieved. For example, ten of their properties were audited and credited using the GSTC criteria. Moreover, they are the only safari company in Africa to be certified by the Global Impact Investment Rating System (Asilia, 2019). As previously mentioned, Singita implements the One Planet Living framework for measuring sustainability achievements. The other two companies did not publish any information regarding the criteria they use to measure their impact.

Ultimately, the data collected indicates that there are significant overlaps between the companies' visions and CSR strategies overall. In all cases companies have successfully positively impacted communities and ecosystems over vast regions across East and Southern Africa. Some of the significant ways in which the companies differ is the depth and format of information provided in their published reports about their positive impact outcomes, the scope of their network of NGO partners, and the amount of funds and resources they contribute to CSR work. A more standardised approach to reporting positive impact may have improved this study by

enabling more relevant and measurable comparisons to be made. Variation in the format and type of information published made it impossible to produce a table in which direct comparisons are made. For example, some companies published the total monetary amount contributed to CSR initiatives over a year period but did not explain the exact amount allocated per bed night, which would have been a useful tool for comparison. The sheer amount contributed is worthy of consideration but due to the varying funding streams and various sizes of the case companies, categorised information using a standardised approach would have been valuable. For example, a standardised reporting format would enable direct comparisons and provide a breakdown of amounts indicating the percentage of CSR funding generated from tourism revenue versus donations for guests and partners.

As discussed, the wide variety of socioeconomic and environmental contextual factors in the several countries and regions they operate in produces variation in their approaches and their resulting level of success. Despite the differences in all of the cases companies, their dedication to having a positive impact is consistently an important theme for each. This is well illustrated by their ongoing commitment to providing support for communities and continuing to safeguard biodiversity in a time of crisis for the companies from a financial perspective.

5 Conclusions

This study sought to provide an in-depth investigation into various companies' CSR strategies and implementation, in a bid to understand more about CSR within the context of safari ecotourism. A variety of patterns and concepts that have emerged from this study can be applied, in conjunction with other research, to guide policy development, financial support networks, and to encourage the implementation of standardised CSR outcome reporting. The contingency factor, the Covid-19 pandemic, has highlighted the strengths and weaknesses prevalent within the industries existing CSR strategies. The limited available research on the topic studied is not reflective of the importance of this subject and its relevance on a global scale.

5.1 Implications of the Findings

5.1.1 Safari Operators Strategy Adjustments

The safari ecotourism analysed within this study represent the embodiment of the principles of CSR and sustainability; however, the ongoing Covid-19 crisis has proven to be a litmus test for

all sectors in the tourism industry, including companies that have previously enjoyed considerable success. Despite the arguable strengths and triumphs of their models the pandemic has presented an external threat that has strained, almost to breaking point, their otherwise stable strategies. This does not speak to flaws endemic to their business models, but rather, to a dire shortage of external support systems during times of unforeseen crisis. These circumstances provide a unique opportunity to re-examine all aspects of business operations, including CSR models. It is vital that any vulnerabilities are identified and measures are put in place to safeguard the critical work being conducted by safari operators in the future. All of the companies analysed within this study have demonstrated a remarkable commitment to CSR practices, best displayed by their continued dedication when faced with the extreme financial pressure caused by the reduced tourism numbers over the past year. It is clear that the pandemic is unprecedented, and therefore, all businesses across the industry have been unprepared for a crisis of this magnitude and its' affect on their abilities to continue to fund their CSR practices. It is imperative that consideration be given to what can be done immediately by the companies and other stakeholders and in the long-term to make the business and CSR models more robust in the face of global upheaval. The availability of immediate financial relief in the form of grants for staff salaries, tax breaks by local governments and interest free loans are a few ways in which external bodies can help secure a future for the industry. However, these forms of funding have thus far proven inadequate in providing short term relief.

Diversifying funding in the future to fortify CSR practices is key to producing resilient strategies. Singita, was the only company to have mentioned during interviews, that they had developed steady and consistent endowments and donations from various sources prior to the crisis. Another example that illustrates the value of diverse funding streams, but in the form of investments, lies within Asilia's inclusion of non-profit development organisations into their investment portfolio, which provides a buffer and, in this instance, has enabled ongoing payment of staff salaries during the pandemic. Developing a variety of funding streams is helpful, however, given the scale of the crisis more measures are needed. Throughout the crisis all of the companies have had to take CSR funds, normally dedicated to education and other empowerment initiatives and funnel them to emergency food packages. This is in part because of the reliance of local communities on the revenue generated by wildlife tourism both directly and indirectly and the impact of the pandemic on local economies. As discussed, on average one salary can support up to eight people within a community. Education has proven to not only positively impact individual's attitudes towards supporting conservation goals (Anthony, 2007; Tessema

et al., 2007; Snyman, 2014), but has the ability to improve livelihoods in the long-term which relates to employment opportunities outside the field of tourism. There are many examples within the companies studied in which general education is supported, as well as, many examples of education focusing on future careers within the field of conservation, tourism and hospitality. The Children in Wilderness Trust runs clubs, training sessions, eco-mentoring programs and camps for local children starting at a young age and in turn offers a variety of scholarships at different levels with the aim of facilitating sustainable conservation through leadership development (Wilderness Trusts, 2018).

To ensure CSR programs continuation in times of turmoil, in addition to diversified funding streams, a private industry reserve would provide a level of security. This could be in the form of an endowment style model in which private organisations, and potentially other donor sources, dedicate funds during times of stability. The fund could be managed by an external body or board of trustees. This could offer support in circumstances such as regional civil unrest, or larger scale issues such as global pandemics.

Although the main aims for the companies CSR practices are comparable, their CSR strategies and sub focuses differ significantly due to a variety of factors. Despite the standards set by external bodies that stipulate criteria for sustainable companies or for what constitutes an eco-tourism business, measuring the exact outcomes of a vast range of CSR projects and initiatives is extremely challenging. As this paper has outlined, there are numerous ways in which the companies studied contribute to CSR initiatives, including through NGO's they have developed or collaborate with and there are a variety of challenges they can face in implementation. The significant influence that independent variables such as culture, socioeconomic context, region, and the environment, have on the impact of CSR projects makes identifying widely applicable strategies immensely challenging.

In addition to considering the challenges presented by the range of contextual variables, it is worth noting the difficulties involved in measuring success. In the case of assessing the success of CSR strategies, quantifying it with a single, or even several numeric values is rudimentary and insufficient. For example, while there are seemingly more obvious quantifiable measures of conservation success such as species richness, there are less conspicuous but equally essential factors which must be considered such as community engagement. Community support for conservation plays a critical role for its' long-term success (Bauer et al., 2017; Hunter et al., 2007), and numerous studies have found that safari companies can strongly influence a community's attitude towards environmental preservation (Anthony, 2007; Tessema et al., 2007;

Snyman, 2014). Considering the limitations associated with measuring success, utilising a comprehensive methodology of quantifying success across the industry, that is flexible and incorporates contextual differences is key. However, overall not much information is available about the specific ways in which the case companies measure their impact or about their formal certifications. Adoption by the sector of the same independent third-party verification of sustainability claims would provide more transparency and set a precedent for other sectors to follow which could lead to less greenwashing across the whole safari industry. Developing a system of standardised reporting is also an important consideration for the companies, as it would enable direct comparisons to be made, particularly in terms of the more measurable outcomes, such as, the amount of funding dedicated to a specific project. This would assist in the formation of frameworks for companies to employ similar CSR models and could guide the establishment of policy and regulation.

Social media platforms should be utilised more regularly and effectively to market the positive impact of ecotourism companies, particularly when there is a shift in outlook towards biodiversity and sustainability. Safari operators and their partners such as, tour operators and travel agencies should work collaboratively towards ways to better convey the message that if chosen carefully, a safari to Africa will directly result in funds being channelled towards social and conservation projects. As travel begins to increase, travellers will undoubtedly seek reassurances about health and safety measures taken by tourism operators. The safari industry has already begun promoting the measures that they have put in place to protect their guests. The nature of safaris lends itself well to the implementation of Covid-19 safety protocol. The tropical climate and remote regions enable guests to spend most of their time outside and permits social distancing with ease. With many people looking to reconnect with nature after international lockdowns, safaris could have a surge of popularity in the future.

5.1.2 Mobilising the Global Community Support

As previously stated, research strongly suggests that the Covid-19 pandemic is a zoonotic disease (WHO, 2021). This has raised awareness to the widely researched connection between the illegal wildlife trade, biodiversity loss and the increased risk of zoonotic diseases (ACF, 2020; Carrington, 2021; WHO, 2021). As suggested throughout this paper, the pandemic has negatively impacted vital conservation funding and ongoing work which focuses on increasing biodiversity and halting the illegal wildlife trade. The economic strain caused by the pandemic,

has resulted in increased unemployment and reduced revenue for communities reliant upon wildlife tourism. This will inevitably lead to communities developing a stronger reliance upon natural resources for survival via subsistence hunting and land use adjustment which will in turn result in biodiversity loss (Lindsey et al., p. 1302). The chain of events currently unfolding in Africa demonstrates the circular nature of the circumstances. The impact of the pandemic is eroding the very systems put in place to guard biodiversity which itself promotes resilience to future pandemics. We are at a pivotal moment and without remedial intervention, we risk exacerbating the likelihood of future crises. While it is clear that governments need to mitigate imminent threats to human health and the economy, they must understand that the stability of human health is a consequence of long-term sustained biodiversity.

Currently government and non-government agencies are mobilising and developing task forces to assess the impact of the crisis on various regions and sectors. Specialists such as Dr. Anna Spenceley, who provided an expert interview for this study, are conducting research to determine the effect of the pandemic on protected area tourism and its' wide range of stakeholders. However, when asked about the emergency relief and stimulus packages, Dr. Spenceley stated that "they aren't sufficient to address the scale of the crisis right now" (Spenceley, 2021). Her position as chair of the 'Protected Areas Specialist Group,' part of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, makes her the leading expert on the subject, protected area tourism in Africa (IUCN, n.d.). International governments must join forces to increase financial relief for ecotourism safari operators and organisations that contribute to conservation and social projects. In the short terms this can be in the forms of grants, loans, tax breaks, or salary support schemes, whereas, to provide sustainable lasting support, the critical underfunding of protected area must be remedied.

It will take a collegial effort to implement new and effective sustainable measures that both safeguard wildlife conservation and communities that depend upon it. Diversifying funding streams for protected areas and the communities that rely solely upon revenue generated from wildlife tourism is vital and the importance of doing so has been argued in recent research (Hockings et al., 2020) and has attracted broad ranging attention. For example, unearthing new innovative methods of generating wildlife conservation revenue outside of tourism has been the focus of grant schemes and academic competitions (The Lions Share, 2020; The Luc Hoffman Institute, 2020). Finding alternative ways for communities to benefit directly from the preservation of natural resources as well as, producing new revenue streams that can be funnelled

back into the protection of the wildlife requires creative solutions. The development of a reserve fund, similar to the model discussed for the private industry could prove to be an effective method in the future. This would enable quick responses and rapid roll out of emergency relief, stimulus packages and grants to be administered in a crisis. Long term consistent endowments from international governments would create less reliance on the tourism industry and ad hoc donations and provide more sustainability to protected area conservation. All of the strategies presented involve a high level of collaboration on local and international levels.

5.1.3 Transforming Ecotourism from Niche to the Norm

As previously discussed, it is essential to emphasize to customers the importance of opting for a sustainable or ecotourism journey. Beyond its' value from a marketing perspective, raising awareness can aid a shift in the public's view of travel. It is challenging to enforce the correct usage of labels, such as eco-lodge, that imply certain standards are being met. However, there should be more impetus from Western tour operators and travel agents to be more rigorous in their selection of partners and own usage of such titles. Western governments should tighten restrictions regarding the commercial use of titles such as, 'responsible travel' or 'ecotourism,' and only allow the term to be used when certain criteria have been proven to have been met for official accreditation. Monitoring via audits or other methods should be established to ensure standards are continuously adhered to. Western tour operators and travel agencies should actively contribute to the CSR projects conducted by their partners, clearly articulate the positive impact of their journeys to their clients, and as a result become ambassadors for the projects they support. The specialised nature of safari travel sales lends itself well to this possibility due to close relationships in the industry that exist between safari operators and travel agencies.

The rapid development of initiatives aimed at facilitating the evolution of sustainable tourism to the mainstream could support the transformation of the entire industry (Travalyst, 2020). Crucial to this is the need for a shift in global perspectives enabling ecotourism to become the norm rather than a niche segment of the market. Organisations such as Travalyst play a significant role in reinforcing the message of sustainable tourism to the public, while providing valuable information to tourism businesses about how to adapt to new customer expectations and market trends. In aiding the shift, it is vital to promote inspiring success stories of sustainable models. This could present an opportunity for the high-end safari sector to become a leader in the future of travel, demonstrating the success of ecotourism. Much can be learned from the

remarkable dedication of the case companies' efforts towards conservation, community upliftment and sustainable development. They are a prime example that responsible business practices and remaining lucrative are compatible concepts, not mutually exclusive. They are representative that principles of sustainability can be integrated into business models and the implementation of sustainable practices can have financial benefits, for example by local sourcing or using renewable energy. The shift within the tourism industry as a whole towards adopting sustainable practices should be facilitated by governments. What seems to be missing in the discourse about the transformation of the entire tourism industry is the reality that many in the industry are on the brink of bankruptcy. Encouraging tourism companies to shift towards a commitment to meet standards of sustainable practices, will only be successful if the adjustment is incentivised by governments. For example, to ease the transition, bodies such as the European Union can develop a provision or incentive package.

5.2 Study Limitations & Recommendations for Further Research

While the study aimed to provide a thorough investigation of the CSR strategies of the high-end ecotourism sector, future studies could consider a comparative case study in which low or midrange ecotourism properties are evaluated along the same lines. It would be interesting to determine how companies with arguably less resources, due to their price range, enact CSR. Ascertaining whether or not they allocate tourism revenue, other resources, or fundraise on behalf of the projects and initiatives they support, in addition to, determining if their focuses of implementation varies is worthy of further research. While this study took into consideration the influence that socioeconomic, cultural and environmental differences have on CSR strategies, another research design could potentially offer more insight into the effects of these variables. For example, a case study could be designed to analyse the CSR strategies of a variety of safari ecotourism companies, that operate in only one country. A large data sample including numerous companies from each major safari destination would provide scientific rigour. A study with this sample format could result in data that indicates the extent that specific cultural, environmental and socioeconomic variables influence CSR focus, practical implementation and outcomes. Research into the most effective reporting methods for CSR outcomes could assist with the development of a standardised reporting framework, resulting in more transparency.

In view of the global circumstances, the need for research to focus on determining methods for diversifying funding for protected areas and the communities that rely upon them is undeniable. This topic of finding new innovative ways to generate income from wildlife conservation, in addition to tourism, appears to be a new area of research and is currently in the idea phase. Therefore, it will take considerable time, effort, testing and research to determine what methods are effective and sustainable overtime. The gravity of the current circumstances accentuates the urgent need for a solid foundation of research about CSR in safari ecotourism. Future research should draw upon our new found understanding of the critical role the CSR strategies of safari ecotourism businesses play in conservation of wildlife and strengthening local economies. The global implications for the collapse of the safari ecotourism sector cannot be underestimated and immediate action must be taken to stabilise the industry. It is of paramount importance to encourage a shift in perspective to consider biodiversity in Africa as an element essential to global health, rather than a luxury commodity.

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Appendix

Interview Questions:

Key Concept:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Corporate Social Responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. (UNIDO definition)

- 1.) How would you define your companies vision?
- 2.) What are the main aims/focuses of the CSR initiatives created by your company?
- 3.) What do you feel are the main motivators for your companies CSR initiatives?
 - 3.1) Are you guided by cultural values/expectations over the different destinations/regions within which you operate?
- 4.) Can you provide examples of drivers that enabled the implementation of your CSR projects?
 - 4.1) What are some barriers you faced when implementing CSR projects/initiatives?
 - 4.2) Have you overcome these barriers, if so how?
- 5.) How are the ideas for your individual and partner CSR projects generated?
 - 5.1) How do you choose your non-governmental organisation partners?
 - 5.2.) In your experience do you feel that it is more effective for companies like yours to work with small local NGO's or with international NGO's? Why?
 - 5.2) Do you chose which projects to contribute to within the organisations you work closely with?

6.) How do you engage the local communities in taking an active role in your development and conservation projects?

7.) How does your company find a balance between providing luxury amenities & activities (ex. Private safari Vehicles, Helicopter safaris) and maintaining a low carbon footprint?

7.1) What measures do you take to offset your carbon footprint?

8.) What do you feel are the most significant outcomes of your company's efforts towards sustainable development, conservation and community development?

9.) What are your company's future goals in regards to CSR and sustainable development?

10.) How have you adapted your future CSR strategies in light of the global pandemic?

10.1.) Which models have proven to be resilient and which do you plan to reassess?

10.2) Do you plan to redeploy your resources?

11.) How has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted your company so far?

12.) How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected your CSR projects (or management of protected areas/public-partnerships/joint ventures) currently in place?

13.) How do you feel the current tourism-based model for conservation in Africa could become more sustainable?