

WTM Africa 2016: Winners of African Responsible Tourism Awards 2016 announced

The winners of the [African Responsible Tourism Awards 2016](#), sponsored by Wesgro, have been announced at a special ceremony held at the World Travel Market Africa in Cape Town.



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Says Harold Goodwin, Chair of the Judging Panel. "All of those longlisted should be recognised as having made a significant contribution and be proud of what they have achieved. As in the World Responsible Tourism Awards the judges looked for winners who might educate and inspire others, for examples of businesses and organisations which are realising the ambition of Responsible Tourism to use tourism to make better places for people to live in; great places to live are great places to visit."

Speaking before a packed audience of over 100 tourism professionals, media, ministers and officials, Heidi van der Watt, managing director of Better Tourism Africa pinpointed what makes the Award winners the leaders in responsible tourism in Africa: "Our winners have a vision that extends beyond the commercial – linking business success with the wellbeing of local communities and the longevity of their environments. They want to make profits with principles, communicate balance sheets alongside beliefs, and won't undermine passion in the pursuit of professionalism. They are resilient, determined, humanising advocates for their destinations. They are the future of tourism in Africa."

Tim Harris, chief executive officer of awards sponsor Wesgro said: "We are pleased to recognise the vision of the Award winners for providing leadership in their respective sectors throughout Africa, and effectively contributing to growing tourism in a sustainable manner. Today, we celebrate their commitment and achievements."

Overall Winner

The [Mara Naboisho Conservancy](#), a conservancy that brings together community and wildlife conservation to make better places to live in and great places to visit was announced as the Overall Winner.

Judges' reasons for winning: "Prior to setting up Naboisho Conservancy, four years of consultation with the 554 landowners lead to 94% of them signing over their land to a holding company with their own appointed directors who have in turn entered into a management agreement with Naboisho Conservancy. The community gets direct and tangible benefits from wildlife conservation; no other activity provides as much income to as many people as Naboisho Conservancy.

With these direct benefits there is less need for the community to rely on other destructive practices such as intensive farming and over grazing by too many cattle. This in turn furthers the cycle for a sustainable future for community driven wildlife conservation. Naboisho Conservancy pioneered controlled livestock grazing and holistic rangeland management. The co-existence between wildlife and cattle, where the interests of wildlife and traditional Maasai livestock practices are mutually respected and genuinely integrated. The term 'Naboisho' literally means "coming together" in the Maasai's Maa language and this is exactly what Naboisho Conservancy represents."

Best for Beach Tourism - supported by BulkSMS

Gold Winner: [Nkwichi Lodge](#)

Gold Winner (Innovation): [Shark Spotters](#)

Silver Winner: [Baobab Beach Resort](#)

Best Contribution to Cultural Heritage Conservation – supported by Sustainable Tourism Partnership Programme

Gold Winner: [Bushman's Kloof Wilderness Reserve](#)

Silver Winners:

- [Segera Retreat](#)
- [Wilderness Safaris](#)

Best Operator for People with Disabilities, supported by Warrior on Wheels Foundation

Silver Winners:

- [ATKV Goudini Spa](#)
- [Flamingo Tours](#)

"The judges' decision not to award a Gold in this category reveals that much work still needs to be done in the tourism sector."

Best for Poverty Reduction, supported by EDGE Tourism Solutions

Gold Winner: [!Xaus Lodge](#)

Silver Winners:

- [Chitabe Camp](#)
- [Sani Lodge Backpackers](#) and [Drakensberg Adventures](#)
- [Simien Lodge](#)

Best for Accommodation for Responsible Employment, supported by Thebe Reed Exhibitions

Gold Winner: [Spier](#)

Silver Winners:

- [Chobe Game Lodge](#)
- [Leriba Hotel](#)

Best Responsible Tourism Marketing Campaign, sponsored by Verde Hotels

Gold Winner: [Great Plains Conservation](#)

Best for Public Policy and/or Support, supported by Singer Group

Gold winner: [National Department of Tourism, South Africa](#)

Silver winners:

- [City of Cape Town](#)
- Ministry of Tourism, Morocco

Best for Wildlife Conservation, sponsored by African Penguin and Seabird Sanctuary

Joint Gold Winners

- [Mara Naboisho Conservancy](#)
- [Oi Pejeta Conservancy](#)

Silver Winner: [Conservation Travel Foundation](#)

People's Choice, supported by Ticket2Utopia

Winner: [Marine Dynamics](#)

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