

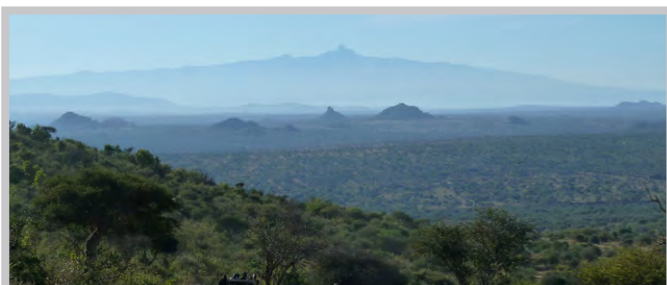


WHAT IS THE EARTH SKILLS NETWORK AND WHY IS IT NEEDED?

1 Protected areas are the cornerstone of international efforts to meet ambitious global conservation targets, such as preventing species extinctions and safeguarding valuable ecosystem services. They play a critical role in the preservation of biodiversity and deliver a range of other environmental, social and economic benefits. Despite recognition of their outstanding value many protected areas face challenges, which can limit their capacity for effective management and lead to ineffective conservation. Lack of staff training in operational effectiveness, business planning and other key management skills can be a significant contributing factor to this.

2 Companies have a wealth of experienced staff and spend a lot of resources on training for effective business management. The Earth Skills Network brings together experienced business mentors, recruited from the corporate world, with managers from protected areas, in a mentor-mentee relationship to transfer key business skills. This training supports effective conservation by helping to ensure that sites have a strong organisational foundation and a strategic approach to management.

3 Through dialogue and collaboration with their mentor, protected areas engage with businesses, which may be operating in their region. This helps companies to understand their dependencies on biodiversity and ecosystem services, gives them a broader understanding of the landscape within which they operate and the potential impact of business decisions on protected areas.



WHY IS THE EARTH SKILLS NETWORK RELEVANT TO ME AND MY ORGANISATION?

1. Most protected area site managers are trained biologists with several years of field experience, giving them solid grounding to respond to the wide range of challenges they face, from managing forest fires to counteracting poaching. However, effectively managing protected areas requires additional skill sets, which that are not always part of traditional staff training. Management challenges go beyond ecosystem health and include those related to running a site's organisational systems and processes. If a protected area lacks organisational effectiveness then it will be compromised in its ability to deliver on management objectives.

2. The ESN can help your organisation to put processes in place that will assure effective operations, through the training of staff in essential business management skills. By applying these skills, your organisation will be able to make better use of available resources, identify and prepare responses to potential risks, develop the foundations for sustainable financing of activities, and more.

3. By joining the Earth Skills Network you can:

- Access a fully-funded, in-depth training programme in business planning and effective management.
- Receive mentoring from an expert with significant business experience in an international organisation, helping your site to take a strategic approach to tackling specific issues.
- Support the professional development of staff, helping them to develop the leadership competencies required to put the skills they have developed into practise.
- Network, connect with and support staff from other African protected areas.
- Have an opportunity for constructive dialogue with members of the business community, potentially with companies that are operating in your region.

4. Specific areas of business planning training include:

- Organisational vision and objectives.
- Creating an effective organisational structure.
- Stakeholder analysis.
- Identifying customers and competitors.
- Marketing your organisation's 'products' and services.
- Identifying risks and planning mitigation measures.
- Constructing budgets and analysing finances.
- Creating an activity plan and effective operational processes.



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HOW IS THE PROGRAMME STRUCTURED?

1. Three members of staff join a 10 day intensive residential training programme co-delivered by a team of learning and business professionals.
2. During the residential training your staff work with an allocated business mentor to review your site's needs and plan how to best apply the skills developed during the training.
3. After the residential training your staff will have access to the business mentor for support in achieving their objectives, for at least 12 months.
4. Support, guidance and encouragement from the business mentor, combined with senior management support on the ground will ensure the most effective outcomes.



“Every success story starts with a dream. Do you dream of a better future for your protected area? Joining this course was the best decision in my professional life. The content and experience was rich and more importantly the networking has been amazing.”

Manager, Keta Lagoon Ramsar Site, Ghana

Following the residential training programme, this site intends to focus on the processes needed to develop a business plan (e.g. prioritising activities, finding donors and collaborating effectively).

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE FUNDING?

1. Travel for three members of staff from their home to South Africa for the 10 day Residential Training Programme (direct flight, economy class).
2. Nine nights of accommodation at the Residential Training Programme in the Lajuma Research Centre, South Africa.
3. Meals and drinks for the duration of your stay at the 10 day Residential Training Programme.
4. Comprehensive travel and medical evacuation insurance for the duration of the 10 day Residential Training Programme.
5. All facilitation costs and training materials.
6. 12 months of expert business mentoring.

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE FUNDING?

1. Staff salaries – it is expected that the staff members attending this training will continue to have their salary fully funded by your organisation.
2. Any miscellaneous expenses (e.g. clothing, any other equipment).



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WHAT ARE THE CRITERIA FOR ENTRY?

1. ABOUT YOUR STAFF:

- Three staff from the site must be available to participate in the programme on the same training team.
- All three staff must have sign off from Senior Management.
- Staff must be fluent in English, as English is the main training language and application materials must be completed in English.
- No business planning knowledge is required but staff must be in a position to benefit from the training e.g. through involvement in management or business planning.
- Previous training recipients are not eligible to apply again, but we welcome repeat applications from different individuals within the same site.

2. ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION:

- A marine or terrestrial natural protected area in Africa.
- Must have an IUCN Protected Area classification, be a UNESCO World Heritage Site, or be working towards WHS status.
Or,
Be a protected area agency or management authority, working across a number of sites.
- The site must have clear (gazetted) boundaries.
- Management Authority and Approvals Authority must be known.
- All governance types are eligible for the programme.
- Depending on governance type, the site must have relevant approvals to participate in the programme.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED SO FAR?

1. The programme has been running for six years.
2. To date 33 business mentors have partnered with 96 staff representing 33 protected area organisations.
3. Mentors have been recruited from a wide range of geographies and have mentored protected area staff from 14 African and 6 Asian countries.

MENTEE CASE STUDY

Sheprine Akinyi, Lake Nakuru National Park



“ASANTE SANA!! (thank you very much) to Earthwatch. The programme is not only a forum for gaining knowledge but an opportunity to network, make friends and above all have a life changing experience that one can never regret attending.

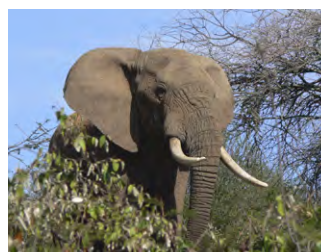
The training was an eye opener for me and by the end of the first session I had already started envisioning changes that I would put in place once I went back to Lake Nakuru National Park. The training helped me realise just how privileged I was to be a part of a team managing such a site not only for the people of Kenya but for the world. I have been able to share knowledge and skills learnt at Mpala with many colleagues.”



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WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE TRAINING?

1. 98% of protected area staff agreed or strongly agreed that their business mentor helped them to better understand the business planning process, and that their performance in their work would be improved as a result of what they had learned. For example, with the support of their mentor, one protected area participant launched a working group to get another national park gazetted as a UNESCO site.
2. Protected area staff report a marked improvement in their confidence and understanding of business skills (*Blue line indicates pre-training mean score, red line indicates post training mean score*)

“This program has not only empowered me by improving my capacity as a manager, it has motivated me to take a proactive approach as a key stakeholder in the development and implementation of a business plan as well as an improved network to share ideas, challenges and solutions”

“All I learnt from this programme will help me to improve the management of the site where I work, and I will share it with my colleagues of the World Heritage Site. We are now in a change process, to have a more entrepreneurial kind of management, instead of waiting for funds from donors, to be creative...”

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Mentee, upon completing his training



3. Following the residential training 97% of mentees felt that the protected area they worked for would be better managed as an impact of this programme. The mentees have reported various outcomes following the mentoring programme. For example, at one site over \$25,000 per year of cost savings were identified, community forums were run to address the issues surrounding illegal logging, an improved marketing plan for tourists was put in place and collaboration with local hotels was agreed.

For more information please contact:

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