

Singita One Planet Annual Review 2018/19



Singita



ONE
PLANET
LIVING



A
framework
by Bioregional

One Planet Annual Review 2018/19

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Singita is a conservation company that's preserving more than one million acres of African wilderness. It supports its sustainability efforts and community outreach by providing environmentally conscious hospitality in 12 lodges across the continent.

This report shares Bioregional's review of Singita's One Planet Living progress over the last year, highlighting successes and challenges as well as stories of inspiring change.

Rethinking luxury tourism

Bioregional has worked with Singita since 2012 to embed One Planet Living at its six lodges at Singita Serengeti in Tanzania. One Planet Living is our sustainability framework - ten simple principles that help organisations create and communicate sustainability.

In 2016, Singita committed to using this framework at all its 12 lodges in Southern Africa and East Africa by creating an ambitious One Planet Action Plan.

Building on a historically strong base of achievements in wildlife conservation and community outreach, Singita is now showing impressive progress in zero waste, water management and sustainability engagement.

Placing sustainability at its heart

Launched in 2018, Singita's Vision 2025 targets embed ambitious sustainability commitments in its core business mission (see page 10). These complement its One Planet Action Plan but focus on some challenging achievements, eg the elimination of all single-use plastics.










Singita's progress towards zero waste is especially impressive considering the lack of recycling infrastructure in its rural locations. Increased water monitoring has made appropriate use and tracking leaks easier, a must in water-stressed South Africa.

We've also been impressed by how Singita is spreading the message of sustainability to the wider industry, as well as creating One Planet Living champions with its own staff.

It now needs to turn its attention to trickier areas, most importantly its energy, travel and construction carbon footprint. This is challenging due to its locations and operational needs, but it's encouraging to see there are plans in place to respond (see page 11).

The ten principles of One Planet Living

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	Health and happiness
	Equity and local economy
	Culture and community
	Land and nature
	Sustainable water
	Local and sustainable food
	Travel and transport
	Materials and products
	Zero waste
	Zero carbon energy

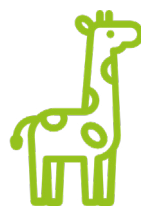
Significant achievements in 2018/19



Changing lives...

10 students trained at the Singita Community Culinary School – bringing the total to 70 people with 95% of alumni in employment.

This fully funded 12-month programme trains local people with the skills they need to work in commercial kitchens.



478 schoolchildren attended the Environmental Education Programme run by The Malilangwe Trust, Singita's Conservation partner in Zimbabwe.

These young people visit Hakamela camp with teachers or parents to learn about the environment, including the water cycle, climate change and local conservation.



Young people are the future...When they have been on these courses, the children become ambassadors to the local communities and we have seen some very positive results."



I'm so positive about the future. It has changed my life."

Dumisani Mnisi, a graduate of Singita Community Culinary School

Tendai Nhunzwi, Director of Malilangwe's Neighbour Outreach Program

Transforming its business...



Renewable energy measures have reduced building **carbon emissions by 60%** since 2014, including the first installation of Tesla battery storage in Africa.

All buildings are also being upgraded to ensure that they demonstrate best practice in energy efficiency including LED lighting, efficient inverter air conditioning units and efficient appliances.



Spreading the word...

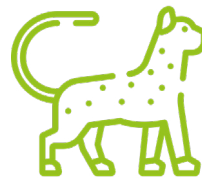
Promotion of vegetarian meals on 'Wellness Wednesdays' reduced meat consumption by approximately **2.5 tonnes of beef and more than 5 tonnes of chicken** in 2018.

The team has also collected vegetarian recipes from across the organisation and created a cookery book to inspire staff and others to try new meals.



97% reduction in plastic bottle waste with a commitment to eliminate single-use plastics by 2020.

The recycling centre at Singita Pamushana recycles close to 100% of materials, an impressive achievement considering a lack of local recycling infrastructure.



With more than **25 years' experience in conservation**, Singita is sharing its expertise with the wider industry.

This includes:

- working with two conservation initiatives to protect species across the continent
- speaking at several industry events about sustainability
- collaborating with leading conservation-orientated tourism companies to develop benchmark sustainability indicators for the industry.



One Planet Living committee at Singita Pamushana

One Planet Living stories

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Growing the local economy

David Shilabi at Xicupe Farm was born and raised in Justicia, a village just outside Singita Sabi Sand

I joined the Singita team in 1990 as an admin clerk for the environmental management team. But my passion was gardening, and I started growing vegetables in my spare time. Soon I was selling them to my neighbours.

After 22 years at Singita, I left to pursue a full-time job in agriculture in 2012 and set up Xicupe Farm. I was supported by Singita's Community Partnership Programme, which

aims to assist small local business development.

My farm flourished and I now provide vegetables to Singita Sabi Sand's lodges, as well as the local community. In return Singita has even named a salad after me!

Local people get fresh produce from my garden, which would be costly in town. I sell the excess to local pig farmers, and also donate to families who are bereaved and cannot afford food.

In the future I'd really like to find a sustainable way to water the garden as I've struggled with water shortages in the past. Through the help of the Singita team,

my mentor and I are also looking at eliminating plastic in the packaging process. We will be looking at recyclable ventilated containers in different sizes to supply to the lodges this year.

This self-sustaining enterprise has enabled me to put my five children through school with the two eldest now at university. I also share my expertise by mentoring other budding gardeners."

The recipe for a sustainable food culture

**Andrew Nicholson,
Executive Group Chef at
Singita**

Chefs have a huge responsibility for sustainable food practices. We need to be addressing wastage, recycling, packaging, local versus imported, as well engaging with our supply chain.

In 2018, I concentrated on rebuilding relationships with our suppliers. Chefs used to go to the market or to the butcher and pick their produce face-to-face. Suppliers would keep their special ingredients for them behind the counter.

This has been lost – but we are bringing it back. We have

open discussions with our suppliers when it comes to seasonality, sustainability and local produce. We only deal with suppliers who believe in our goals and are striving to be better.

And we have built a culture in the kitchen where the chefs will constantly be searching for more sustainable products as well as local, seasonal products. They are expected to question everything that they are unsure of.

The time of excuses and compromise is long past, we need to act now.”

“

We only deal with suppliers who believe in our goals and are striving to be better.”





Sharing the message of One Planet Living

Andrea Ferry, Sustainability Coordinator at Singita

We are reaping the rewards of our staff engagement programmes as more people understand our sustainability principles and are applying them – both at work and at home. It feels like we are truly grounded in this way of thinking now.

Our monthly events, emails and reward systems will be pushed further in 2019 with a special focus on junior staff education and a brand new One Planet Living committee at Pamushana lodge.

It's also been great to see increased interest from

journalists for information about Singita's sustainability work, and we were really happy that our Sabora lodge was a finalist in Virtuoso's Sustainable Tourism Leadership Awards. We continue to weave the sustainability message throughout our website, blogs and communications. 2019 will see us issuing more 'calls to action' to our readers and followers.

The One Planet Living principles and brand have really benefitted Singita by providing a framework and positive way to communicate sustainability to guests, staff and other stakeholders. I look forward to another challenging but rewarding year of One Planet Singita!

“

It feels like we are truly grounded in this way of thinking now.”

From the desk of a director

Mark Witney, a Director of Singita

Singita's 100-year vision is to protect large areas of wilderness in Africa for future generations, a goal which positions us firmly as a brand whose primary purpose is conservation; and our tourism operations support this endeavour.

One of the ways to achieve this is to operate in a way that causes minimum environmental impact, which includes reducing our carbon footprint. Effects of climate change are not something far away for Singita. They are real, and impacting us on the ground – especially in the communities that border our concessions.

The warming planet means that much of Africa will experience droughts on an unprecedented scale which will put fragile ecosystems under threat and increase the pressure in neighbouring communities whose agricultural lands will be depleted. Currently half of Singita's lodges rely on clean solar powered energy.

We are very proud of our One Planet Living successes already achieved and we have set some challenging goals for the future as we strive for a smaller and smaller environmental footprint and look to set an example to guests, staff, communities and our competitors. We can all play our part so join us as we continue our journey of sustainability.

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Overall progress

One Planet Living principle	2020 Outcomes
Health and happiness	Improvement in staff health and engagement ✓
	Improve local education and teaching levels ✓✓
Equity and local economy	Maximise local recruitment ✓✓
	Support development of local businesses ✓
Culture and community	25% of guests to participate in a community activity ✓
	Promote a culture of sustainability ✓
	Maximise contribution to Singita Lowveld Trust (SLT) ✓✓
Land and nature	Maximise area under management ✓✓
	Maximise anti-poaching and conservation efforts ✓✓
	Encourage environmental care within local communities ✓✓
Sustainable water	Reduce losses through leaks to 5% ✓
	Reduce extraction of water from boreholes ✓
Local and sustainable food	Increase local expenditure ✓
	All fish to be sustainably harvested ✓✓
	Improvement in staff diet ✓
Travel and transport	20% reduction in fuel ✓
	Reduction in business flights ✗
Materials and products	Only sustainable cleaning products ✓✓
	Prioritising sustainable construction and fit-out materials ✓
Zero waste	90% reduction in plastic waste ✓✓
	> 90% recycling rate ✓
Zero carbon energy	30% reduction in energy use ✓
	100% renewable energy ✓

Substantially or entirely completed or a high degree of certainty over delivery

✓✓

On track for a long term target

✓

Substantially incomplete, behind schedule or doubt over delivery

✗

Singita's 2025 Vision

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During 2018 Singita launched its 2025 vision for the business including six sustainability targets. These are aligned with its One Planet Living objectives but tackle specific aims:

- Off-grid lodges 80% powered by renewable energy and on-grid 30% powered by renewable energy
- Reduce water use per bednight by 30% from property-specific baseline year
- Elimination of single-use plastics by 2020
- Only 10% waste to landfill by 2023
- 50% of Singita's fresh produce to be purchased from within a 100km radius
- 100% electric game-viewing vehicles within three years of commercial availability; 80% of other vehicles electric within four years.



What can Singita do next?

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Ben Gill, One Planet Living Manager, shares his thoughts on the challenges for Singita's One Planet Living journey and the actions it can take

Singita is setting the standard for sustainable tourism, and we're so pleased to be part of its progress. But if it's to keep pace with the increasingly urgent action we need on climate change then it will have to push for more transformation – especially in terms of carbon reduction.

Transport is proving particularly problematic as it's responsible for nearly 30% of Singita's carbon footprint, with business flight emissions increasing by 15% in 2018. And while excellent strides have been made in implementing renewable energy at some lodges, others are falling behind.

We know that Singita can rise to the challenge though, by applying the same attention to detail and focus that led to its impressive achievements in waste and water management.

Driving change

Solving these issues is difficult. As a tourism and conservation business, transport is integral to its operations. Its rural locations mean renewable grid energy tariffs don't always exist and electric vehicles aren't yet commercially available.

Singita also has an ongoing programme of refurbishments and plans for expansion. Recent projects have had significant carbon impacts, while also providing opportunities for increased sustainability with improved low-energy infrastructure.

It's reassuring to see these challenges directly addressed in Singita's Vision 2025 targets, including specific targets on renewable energy and electric vehicles.

Taking a long view

Creating a clear strategy for achieving these targets is my overarching recommendation to Singita, especially regarding:

Renewable energy rollout at all lodges, and faster deployment of energy-efficient measures.

Reducing business travel flights through planning, remote meetings and critically reviewing when flying is really necessary.

Creating and embedding a process to ensure the impact of refurbishment and new construction is minimised – including the embodied carbon.

I'd also suggest that while waiting for electric vehicles to become commercially viable, Singita should implement interim measures such as reviewing vehicle numbers or offset funds for private guest vehicles used on safari trips.

The fact that all these concerns are reflected in its Vision 2025 targets is promising, and we look forward to reporting back on Singita's progress next year!

Contact and credits

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Singita

Singita's core vision is to preserve and protect large tracts of wilderness in Africa for future generations. Dedicated to environmentally conscious hospitality, sustainable conservation and the empowerment of local communities, Singita, meaning "place of miracles," was founded in 1993. Its mission is to share a unique part of the world while maintaining respect for the natural environment and challenging accepted notions of luxury.

Today, Singita is the guardian of more than a million acres of pristine land in Africa and responsible for successful community development projects, making a tangible difference in the lives of the people living and working in and around its lodges. Singita operates 12 lodges and camps, each a unique experience in its own right, in five regions across three countries in Africa – including Singita Serengeti in Tanzania. The company committed to applying the One Planet Living framework to all of its operations in 2016.

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Bioregional is a social enterprise and registered charity which champions a better, more sustainable way to live. We work with partners to create better places for people to live, work and do business. We want to see thriving regional economies where we meet more of our needs from local, renewable and waste resources, enabling people to live happy, healthy lives within the natural limits of the planet, leaving space for wildlife and wilderness. We call this [One Planet Living](#).

Ben Gill
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Credits

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