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Sustainable tourism in Africa has received another great boost with the signing of a mutual recognition agreement (MRA) between Fair Trade Tourism and Ecotourism Kenya.

The MRA sees Fair Trade Tourism recognising Ecotourism Kenya’s Gold eco-certified camps, lodges and hotels which can now be incorporated by approved tour operators into Fair Trade Holidays - holiday packages that represent global best practice in responsible tourism.

These packages feature a minimum of 50% bednights spent in a Fair Trade Tourism certified (or recognised) property, and can also feature certified activities and tours which contribute towards this percentage.

Launched in 2002 and recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Ecotourism Kenya’s Eco-rating Certification Scheme is a sustainable tourism voluntary certification programme that has certified more than 100 facilities across Kenya.

Ecotourism Kenya’s Eco-rating scheme Gold standard facilities now recognised by Fair Trade Tourism are:

- Base Camp Maasai Mara, Maasai Mara
- Camp ya Kanzi, Amboseli
- Cottars 1920 Camp, Maasai Mara
- Elephant Pepper Camp, Maasai Mara
- Elsa’s Kopje, Laikipia
- Kicheche Bush Camp, Maasai Mara
- Kicheche Laikipia, Laikipia
- Kicheche Mara Camp, Maasai Mara
- Kicheche Valley Camp, Maasai Mara
- Kilima Camp, Maasai Mara
- Kitich Camp, Samburu
- Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp, Nakuru
- Lewa Safari Camp, Laikipia
- Mara Plains Camp, Maasai Mara
- Medina Palms Hotel, Watamu
- Naboisho Camp, Maasai Mara
- Olarro Lodge, Maasai Mara
- Porini Amboseli Camp
- Porini Lion Camp, Maasai Mara
- Porini Mara Camp, Maasai Mara
- Porini Rhino Camp, Laikipia
- Sanctuary Olonana, Maasai Mara
- Sasaab Samburu, Samburu
- Serena Beach Hotel and Spa, Mombasa
- Solio Lodge, Nyeri
- Sirikoi Lodge, Laikipia
- Sweetwaters Serena Tented Camp, Laikipia
- Tawi Lodge, Amboseli
- Tortilis Camp, Amboseli
- Turtle Bay Beach Club, Watamu

“In line with Fair Trade Tourism, Ecotourism Kenya has a mission to ensure that hotels, camps and lodges have a minimum effect on the environment; that staff are treated fairly and employed ethically; and that, where possible, income generated by tourism finds its way back into the local community” says Ecotourism Kenya Chairman Dr Mohanjeet Brar.

The founding pillars of the organisation are to:

- Encourage travel to natural areas;
- Minimise impact of tourism activities on natural attractions;
- Recognise and build awareness about local conservation values and their importance to society;
Provide direct benefits and empowerment for local people at destinations without retrogression on environmental, cultural or local living standards;
Respect local people, their customs and culture;
Support sustainable development of local economies through direct involvement and participatory decision-making.

“Our MRA with Fair Trade Tourism is an endorsement of Kenya’s leading green accommodation facilities that have demonstrated outstanding best practices in responsible resource use, environmental conservation and are mindful of the welfare of local people” says Ecotourism Kenya CEO, Grace Nderitu.

Fair Trade Tourism is a leading Southern African non-profit organisation promoting responsible tourism development. It grows awareness about responsible tourism to travellers, assists tourism businesses to operate more sustainably and facilitates a globally recognised certification programme. In 2011 its certification standard became the first in Africa to be recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.

The organisation’s steady expansion into Africa through direct product certification and partnerships with like-minded certification programmes has positioned it at the forefront of the sub-continent’s sustainable, responsible tourism efforts.

“We are thrilled to have formalised our partnership with Ecotourism Kenya,” says Fair Trade Tourism non-executive director, Jane Edge. “This means that it is now possible to travel the Fair Trade way in eight countries - Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Seychelles, Tanzania, Namibia, Botswana, as well as Kenya.”

If you are interested in finding out more about Fair Trade Tourism certified and recognised products, download the Fair Trade Traveller app magazine from the Apple App Store here or the Google Play Store here.

Alternatively, visit the Fair Trade Tourism website.

ENDS
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