



**REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA**

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**GAME RANCHING POLICY FOR BOTSWANA**

*Ministry of Trade, Industry, Wildlife and Tourism*

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## **POLICY ON GAME RANCHING**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Botswana is endowed with a rich and diverse wildlife resource. To date the main commercial exploitation of this resource has been through non-consumptive uses in parks and reserves. Both non-consumptive and consumptive uses are practised in Wildlife Management Areas. Experience in neighbouring countries has shown that there is scope for the commercial utilisation of wildlife in enclosed farms and ranches outside these wildlife areas.
- 1.2 However, there are some significant differences between Botswana and neighbouring countries, like South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, which have impeded the rapid adoption of game ranching as an industry in Botswana. The primary difference is in the land tenure system, as in these other southern African countries there are much larger areas of freehold land, that were previously used for livestock ranching, and have now been converted into game ranches.
- 1.3 The Wildlife Conservation Policy of 1986 covers game ranching in broad terms. This policy document provides more detailed directions for the development of a game ranching industry and serves to give implementation guidelines for the appropriate sections of the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992. This Act and any regulations concerning Game Ranching under it, provide a sound legislative basis for the development of a viable game ranching industry.

- 1.4 This policy document identifies the constraints that have so far hampered the development of game ranches in Botswana and establishes guidelines for Government and Private Sector action that will remove or reduce these constraints. The policy is aimed at developing a game ranching industry that will provide a commercially viable and sustainable alternative for livestock enterprises either on its own or in mixed livestock/game ranches. It only deals with game ranching and not game farming, which as defined below, will be the subject of a separate policy document to be developed by the Ministry of Agriculture.

## 2 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are adopted for the purposes of this policy:

- a) *Concession* is a part of a Wildlife Management Area wherein the consumptive and/or non-consumptive resource use and management rights are leased to individuals or commercial companies or community-based organisations (CBO).
- b) *Conservancy* is the fenced amalgamation of two or more game ranches with the intent to manage the joint areas as one inseparable entity for wildlife utilisation.
- c) *Consumptive use* means the utilisation of individual game by its permanent removal, or removal of its parts, from or within an area.
- d) *Game farming* is the managed, intensive production of semi or totally domesticated animal species in small fenced camps or farms under controlled conditions. For the purpose of this policy this shall only include ostriches, crocodiles, snakes, guinea fowls, hares and rabbits or such other species as may be agreed upon between the Department of Wildlife and National Parks and the Department of Animal Health and Production.
- e) *Game ranching* is the managed, extensive production of free-living wildlife on

land fenced in accordance with the fence specification in respect of a given species.

- f) *Game/livestock ranching* means extensive production of livestock or small stock in combination with wildlife species in fenced, large, private or communal areas.
- g) *Game-proof fence*, in relation to any game species, means a fence which complies with the standard proscribed in the Game Ranches Regulations (to be published) for that species of game, but does not include any such fence in which a game trap has been constructed or of which any portion has been removed, damaged, cut, flattened or raised or is in such a bad state of repair that the efficacy of such fence is impaired.
- h) *Non-consumptive use* means use for recreational, educational, research, cultural or aesthetic purposes that does not entail the permanent removal of individual game through hunting, cropping, culling, capture or other lethal or non-lethal methods of removal.
- i) *Private sector*, for purposes of this policy, includes appropriate commercial enterprises and non-governmental organisations or community-based organisations involved in game ranching.

### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Game ranching is a slow, but steadily, growing industry in Botswana. Analogous to the situation in neighbouring countries, this growth has been mainly confined to freehold livestock ranches.
- 3.2 Few successful game ranches are operational in the communal areas. Those that do operate on tribal land are confined to leasehold ranches established under the 1975 Tribal Grazing Land Policy. Some of the main constraints in the

development of a game ranching industry in Botswana are:

- a) Insufficient security of tenure. It is very difficult to obtain land for game ranching in communal areas as it implies fencing of substantial areas of land. However, the Agricultural Development Policy of 1991 will likely change this as more land becomes available for ranching and this may be converted to game ranching on application to relevant land authorities.
- b) Insufficient capital and/or collateral. The capital requirements for the development of game ranching are quite high, particularly in terms of fencing, stocking and infrastructure development.
- c) Inadequate appropriate skills and experierice to develop and manage game ranches in Botswana.
- d) Inadequate extension and information dissemination on game ranching and its potential.

3.3 The land tenure issue is particularly vital. At the present time, only freehold land, State Land leasehold ranches and the ranches allocated and developed under the 1975 Tribal Grazing Land Policy on Tribal Land are available for the development of game ranches. The National Policy on Agricultural Development (1991) will lead to a major shift from communal land ownership in the tribal areas to leasehold ownership and thus offers further opportunities for the development of a game ranching industry on Tribal Land.

3.4 The aim of Government to create employment opportunities can be achieved in various mutually supportive ways. To date the game ranching industry has not significantly contributed to this aim. More investment in this industry will further boost the employment opportunities especially for the rural people. Apart from employment creation and the creation of additional economic activities in the

rural areas, the game ranching industry serves as reserve of wildlife species, including threatened and endangered species. The new leases for livestock ranches give investors more leeway to mix game ranching with their livestock ranching activities.

- 3.5 Game Ranching Industry provides scope for economic diversification in the rural areas. This is in line with Government's policy in this regard and Government's intention to make wildlife and tourism the engines of economic growth in the rural areas.

#### **4 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

The objectives of this Policy are:

- a) To increase economic returns from wildlife resources outside National Parks, Game Reserves and Wildlife Management Areas.
- b) To promote the development of a game ranching industry that will provide a commercially viable and environment friendly industry either on its own or in mixed livestock/game ranches.
- c) To maximise the role of the private sector in the development of game ranching as well as the processing and marketing of its products, with Government playing a facilitative role.
- d) To facilitate the development of an internal and external market for wildlife and its products.
- e) To provide up-to-date knowledge and information on game ranching through research and extension.

- f) To promote the use of game ranches in the conservation of threatened and endangered species.
- g) To ensure the well-being of game populations in the wild so that sufficient and good quality genetic material is available for the stocking and restocking of game ranches in Botswana within the limits of Biologically Acceptable Off-take.
- h) To facilitate and give preference to participation by Batswana in the ownership and management of game ranches and encourage joint ventures with foreign investors.
- i) To increase the impact of the game ranching industry on rural employment, economic diversification and the national economy by promoting the local processing of the products of the industry in small, medium and large scale enterprises.

## **5 STRATEGY**

The Department of Wildlife and National Parks will be the main implementing agent of this policy, as provided for in the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992. The following strategy will be adopted to achieve the aforementioned objectives:

- a) The provision of a clear set of guidelines and regulations pertaining to the game ranching industry.
- b) A clarification of the roles of the private sector and the relevant Government departments in the development of a viable game ranching industry.
- c) A review of existing legislation, procedures and licensing systems to streamline operations and reduce bureaucratic constraints.
- d) The provision of training and the dissemination of up-to-date information for both existing and prospective game ranchers, in particular Batswana.

- e) The development and implementation of an applied research programme for game ranching.
- f) Promoting the development of small and medium scale enterprises for the processing of wildlife products through existing enterprise development programmes.
- g) Networking with regional and international key players in game ranching.
- h) Development of a marketing strategy for wildlife and wildlife products for the local, regional and international markets.
- i) Review of this policy every five years following an evaluation of its implementation and effectiveness, unless the situation demands otherwise.

## **6 GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- 6.1 Through this policy, the Government of Botswana wishes to promote game ranching on freehold, state and tribal land outside National Parks, Game Reserves and Wildlife Management Areas. However, Government does not support the development of game ranches inside the buffalo fence, where ranches would be to the detriment of wildlife, because of their interference with wildlife movements in that region. Commercial wildlife utilisation north of the buffalo fence takes place through concessions where resource use and management rights are leased to companies and communities.
- 6.2 This policy promotes the formation of conservancies to increase the economic value of game ranches.
- 6.3 All Game Ranches will be approved by and registered with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.

- 6.4 Only ranching of species and/or subspecies that are indigenous to Botswana will be encouraged. Nationally protected and partially protected species will be allowed for game ranching purposes for the benefit of conservation and possible reintroduction into the wild.
- 6.5 Species that are not indigenous to Botswana, or to a particular region in Botswana, may be subjected to special fencing requirements as determined by the Director of Wildlife and National Parks in order to prevent their escape and possible competition with indigenous resources or contamination of the indigenous gene pool.
- 6.6 All ranches that keep species or subspecies listed in one of the CITES appendices will be registered with CITES Authorities.
- 6.7 While ranchers will in general determine their stocking rates and off take levels, CITES listed, protected and partially protected species will be subject to a quota. Stocking rates will be monitored and controlled in the same manner as the livestock industry, i.e. through the leases and existing legislation as the Agricultural Resources Act.
- 6.8 Capturing and cropping in ranches will be allowed throughout the year and can take place at night.
- 6.9 All ranchers will be required to keep a register of animal populations existing in their ranches as well as any off take, for the purpose of monitoring by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.

- 6.10 Live capture from freehold or leasehold ranches will be allowed with the approval of the landowner or leaseholder.
- 6.11 Capture of game from the wild for stocking or restocking shall be based on the annual capture quotas set by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks for each Controlled Hunting Area (CHA).
- 6.12 Live capture of game animals from the wild will be encouraged to take place in community and commercial concessions, thus creating economic activities in the rural areas that generate benefits directly from wildlife resources within those areas. The lessees are free to utilise part of their hunting quota for capture purposes. Concessionaires are allowed to sell live animals at prices negotiated with buyers or through auction or tender, except for the normal licence fees paid to Government.
- 6.13 All ranchers will be responsible for engaging their own capture operators. Only capture operators that have been registered with Department of Wildlife and National Parks may be used.
- 6.14 The Department of Wildlife and National Parks may limit or prohibit the live export of game species if it believes that such limitation or prohibition will favour the development of game ranches and/or allied processing industries locally.
- 6.15 Valuable species such as roan antelope, sable antelope, leopard, wild dog, lion and cheetah that otherwise have to be destroyed as problem animals shall, wherever feasible, be removed alive and offered for sale to game ranchers.

- 6.16 Government may request ranchers to donate game animals for reintroduction into the wild. Ranching of partially protected, protected and CITES listed species will be subject to specific agreements between DWNP and the ranchers and will make provision for possible reintroduction into the wild.

## **7 PRIVATE SECTOR ROLES**

- 7.1 The private sector will be the main driving force behind the development of a viable game ranching industry in Botswana.
- 7.2 Game ranchers will be encouraged to form legal entities, such as Game Ranchers Associations, that can function as a negotiating partner with Government. Such organisations can also serve to provide certain services to the industry, often at better prices because of economies of scale.
- 7.3 Marketing of wildlife and wildlife products will be the responsibility of the private sector.
- 7.3 Participation of Botswana at all levels of management in the industry will also be encouraged. To this end, and as in other industries, game ranching operations will be required to develop, government approved, training and localisation plans.
- 7.5 It will be the responsibility of the individual rancher or Game Ranchers Associations to develop, government approved, auction and slaughter facilities in the country. DAHP and DWNP will draft criteria such facilities will have to adhere to.

## **8 SPECIFIC DEPARTMENTAL ROLES**

8.1 Under this policy, Government 's role will be limited to the promotion and facilitation of game ranching in the country. This includes creating a conducive environment for the private sector to take the lead in the game ranching industry. Nevertheless there are certain responsibilities for Government that pertain to the game ranching industry. For clarification, the specific roles of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks and the Department of Animal Health and Production in game ranching are provided below.

8.2 Responsibilities of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks:

- a) The approval and registration of game ranches in accordance with the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992 and the regulations developed thereunder.
- b) The monitoring of the operations of game ranches to ensure compliance with the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act of 1992 and any regulations developed thereunder.
- c) The approval, monitoring and inspection of any wildlife holding and auction facilities.
- d) To provide guidelines for the development of management plans for game ranches and, where required, provide specific assistance in the development of such plans.
- e) The provision of research, extension and training concerning game ranching.
- f) The issuance of permits for live capture, export and import of wildlife.
- g) The approval and licensing of any game capture outfit that operates, or wishes

to operate, in Botswana.

- h) The provision of a wildlife quarantine facility in accordance with the guidelines and requirements of the Department of Animal Health and Production at a location that will facilitate the movement of game in Botswana.

### 8.3 Responsibilities of the Department of Animal Health and Production:

- a) To monitor and advise on animal health aspects in game ranches.
- b) The provision of veterinary services on game ranches.
- c) Collaborate with DWNP in the provision and operation of wildlife quarantine facilities, including the provision of veterinary services.
- d) The issuance of veterinary permits for the movement, import and export of all wildlife species.
- e) The approval and registration of wildlife veterinarians employed by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, game ranchers and game capture companies/organisations.

## 9 INVESTMENT INCENTIVES

- 9.1 A major obstacle for the establishment of game ranches is the large capital costs required for the requisite infrastructure, such as game proof fencing, water and buildings. One way to partially, overcome the high start-up costs is by combining cattle and game ranching.

- 9.2 Apart from existing investment stimulation schemes, such as CEDA, Government will not avail additional investment incentives for the game ranching industry. The private sector is expected to provide the necessary capital for the development of enterprises related to game ranching.

## **10 HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING AND EXTENSION**

- 10.1 The Government, through the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, will develop a specific programme to promote game ranching in Botswana.
- 10.2 The Government, through the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, will develop the capacity and infrastructure required to provide expert knowledge, undertake research, disseminate its results, and demonstrate and teach techniques and management skills in the field of game ranching. To this end DWNP has established the Matlho-a-Phuduhudu Demonstration Game Ranch that will serve as a focal point for such training, extension and research in game ranching. Other wildlife educational institutions may be utilised as required.
- 10.3 To assist game ranchers in their operations, a series of extension materials will be produced that deal with specific wildlife management issues and disseminate the latest developments and research findings in game ranching.
- 10.4 Relevant training will be extended to extension officers that will provide extension services, conduct applied research, monitor operations and assist Batswana interested in setting up game ranching ventures. The present Wildlife Game Capture Unit within the Department of Wildlife and National Parks will be expanded and strengthened so that it can be used to provide capture services where possible or at least supervise the capture operation by the private sector.

- 10.5 Training modules for game ranching will be developed at the Botswana Wildlife Training Institute and the Demonstration Game Ranch to provide training in game ranching techniques and management. These modules, with some adaptation, will also be used to provide training to (prospective) game ranchers.
- 10.6 The Government, through the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Wildlife and Tourism, will promote, and pay particular attention to, the development of small and medium scale enterprises for the processing of wildlife products.
- 10.7 The Government, through the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Wildlife and Tourism, and in collaboration with the game ranching industry, will investigate the need for the development of a specific marketing strategy for wildlife and its products. If such need exists, the Ministry will assist Game Ranchers Associations with the development of a marketing strategy.