



Bushwise Field Guides and aha Hotels & Lodges invest in upskilling students from local communities

We are pleased to announce an exciting new initiative between Bushwise Field Guides, aha Hotels & Lodges and Mankwe Gametrackers to offer fully-sponsored safari career training and employment to students from local communities in South Africa.

Under this initiative, Bushwise will provide comprehensive field guide training to eight local students every six months, who will then go into positions at aha lodges around the country and with Mankwe Game Trackers in the Pilanesberg. The partnership hopes to train and employ approximately 40 candidates over three years, while promoting skills development and transformation in the wildlife tourism industry.

[Bushwise](#) is a leading FGASA-endorsed field guide training provider located in Hoedspruit, South Africa near the Kruger National Park.

[aha Hotels & Lodges](#) is the tourism property management company of Tourvest, operating a portfolio of properties in South Africa and Zambia.

[Mankwe Gametrackers](#) is the largest outdoor adventure activity in the North West Province, operating game drives, bush walks and numerous other activities in and around the Pilanesberg National Park.

According to aha Hotels & Lodges CEO Graeme Edmond, “We are very excited to have the first candidates arriving in a few weeks’ time. These candidates will go on to become full-time employees in our lodges, and we hope that they will continue to grow with us for many years to come. This partnership is a vital initiative to ensure that the communities which our lodges serve continue to benefit from and be the guardians of conservation in this country.”

The first group of eight future field guides will begin their training in January 2023 in the Greater Makalali Game Reserve, home to the aha Makalali Private Game Lodge and Bushwise’s Mahlahla campus. Uniforms have been generously sponsored by Ruggedwear®, an industry-leading bush wear provider based and manufactured exclusively in South Africa.

Bushwise Director Eugene Relling commented, “It’s amazing to see our leading tourism brands coming together to create ambassadors of the natural world. What makes this transformation project even more special is that these ambassadors will be given permanent employment.”

The training provided by Bushwise will include field guide qualifications, track and sign, trailing, 4x4 driving, guiding ethics, conservation, community engagement, first aid, and more. After graduation, participants will go on to work at lodges around South Africa including aha Makalali Private Game Lodge, aha Thakadu River Camp, Mankwe Game Trackers and Nkambeni Safari Camp.



“This partnership is about opening doors and creating opportunities for these young men and women that we hope will be life changing for them. We look forward to working with aha and Bushwise to make their dreams a reality,” said Ruggedwear® Managing Director, Howard Rogerson.

Over the next three years we will closely follow the journey of these students in this exciting new initiative. For regular updates, follow [Bushwise](#), [aha Hotels & Lodges](#) and [Ruggedwear®](#).

This article was originally published by [Bushwise Field Guides here](#).