

A Comparative Study of Foreign Versus Domestic Owned Firms in the Namibian Tourism Sector

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My project's goals are to investigate whether or not foreign-owned lodges (hotels) face a stricter regulatory and enforcement framework than domestic firms. I also want to find out whether differing regulatory environments affect the level of income generated by conservancies. My final goal is to assess both the feasibility and competitiveness of US firms operating lodges in Namibia.

To meet these goals I needed to collect data on which lodges are Namibian, which ones are located in conservancies and the amount of income they generate or contribute to a conservancy. I also needed to interview lodge owners and managers to find out if there is a difference in the way they are treated by the government and the local Namibians. Furthermore, I needed to find out what steps a U.S. firm would need to take to establish an operation in Namibia.

Most of my stay involved me doing research at the Multidisciplinary Research Center at the University of Namibia. There I met with other researchers who gave me advice on my project and whom to

contact within the Namibian Government concerning my project. The researchers at the university also allowed me access to a copious amount of conservancy data, which includes social-economic data on people living in conservancies and income contributed by lodges.

I spent several days talking to the Namibian Tourism Board to get data on lodges. The Namibian Tourism Board regulates all aspects of the tourism industry in Namibia. They eventually gave me a list of all foreign and domestically owned lodges in Namibia as well as all the regulations these firms face. From this list I drew my sample of which lodges to interview.

At the University of Namibia, I met a collaborator, Thea Simpson, who is continuing my research in Namibia. Thea was selected by Dr. Silva to be a graduate researcher for her work on community-based natural resource management. She is currently interviewing owners and managers of both foreign and domestically owned lodges in conservancies as well as officials in government ministries.

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