



PRÍNCIPE ISLAND

Sustainable Tourism

Sustainability
Team work
Authenticity
Respect
Safety

The Island Of Príncipe

The Atlantic archipelago of São Tomé and Príncipe includes two islands and several islets in the gulf of Guinea.

Príncipe is 200km off the west coast of Africa, has an area of 136 sq km and a population of 7,000.

In 2011 HBD, which is owned by South African entrepreneur, Mark Shuttleworth, rent 7 concessions across the islands: Bom Bom, Macaco, Boi, Paciência, Praia Grande, Uba, and Sundy. For all these concessions HBD created different sustainable hotel concepts, except for Praia Grande (the biggest beach of Príncipe) which is a protected area for turtle conservation.

Since then, HBD, the Regional Government of Príncipe and the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve have been working together to prove that is possible to develop the island in a sustainable and responsible way.

In 2012, the island of Príncipe was designated a “UNESCO Biosphere Reserve”, thanks to the combined efforts of HBD, the local government and the population of Príncipe.

Travellers come to Príncipe to engage and learn about the unique biodiversity and about the life of the Island’s community.

Construction

Opened in December 2017, Sundy Praia is the 4th hotel developed by HBD in São Tomé & Príncipe. The distinctive tented style of the villas was chosen to achieve a reversible design construction, natural light, low impact and minimal use of concrete.

The whole structure of the restaurant is made out of bamboo, a very natural, sustainable and easy material to work with. The atmosphere of this room is very unusual, inviting nature inside the room and providing an unforgettable guest experience.

All the HBD hotels have soft illumination designed to leave turtles and other animals in the rainforest undisturbed.

Roça Sundy is a beautifully converted plantation house opened in June 2017. It was completely restored by local workers who learned new and traditional construction techniques during an intensive three year training course at nearby Roça Paciência.

It wasn’t HBD’s initial intention to turn Roça Sundy into a hotel – its original purpose was to become a Hotel School providing training to Sundy Praia’s future staff. The training was so successful that the school was turned into a 4* boutique hotel fully managed by locals. All staff working at Roça Sundy are from São Tomé and Príncipe.



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HBD also manages its own carpentry team, where wooden furniture for the hotels is crafted, as well as housing for Príncipe's population.

Our Commitment

Our biggest commitment is to let Príncipe be what it is: A beautiful, unspoilt and peaceful rainforest island, where people are kind and nature is generous.

We aim to change just enough to make life more comfortable for the people of Príncipe, while also making sure they have more opportunities.

We are working to make Príncipe an example of Sustainable Development, where private investors work together with the regional government and local associations.

We are here to develop responsible, sustainable and participative tourism, and our guests are part of this process.

Local Communities

In 1900 São Tomé and Príncipe was the world's biggest producer of cacao and the islands were known as the "chocolate islands". Most of the population of Príncipe came from Cape Verde in the 60's with contracts to work for 3 years on the plantations. After the declaration of independence from Portugal in 1975, the country's economy collapsed and these workers remained on Príncipe, never returning to Cape Verde.

In 2011 Príncipe was without 24 hour electricity, cars, commerce and workable infrastructure.

At this point, and despite the poverty of its people, the local government took the courageous step of turning away the business advances of a major palm oil company, on the basis that it would jeopardise their land and their future.

Instead, the government of Príncipe chose to work with HBD, who started its operation in Príncipe based in three main pillars: Tourism, Agriculture and Conservation.

In order to separate the commercial side of the project from the educational and conservationist, the Príncipe Trust Foundation was created in 2015.

Today, with hotels, maintenance and agriculture, HBD employs 10% of the population of Príncipe, and the majority of the Príncipe Trust Foundation's staff is now local.

In partnership with the Azores Tourism School, HBD trained 100 students for 9 months in areas such as: restaurant operation, housekeeping, gardening and reception. These students today are working with us at Roça Sundry and Sundry Praia.

Waste management is one of the biggest challenges in the island. However, with the support of the communities, it is already possible to separate and recycle plastic, glass and organic matter.

Water & Recycling was a project started in 2013 with the Biosphere Reserve and it aimed to encourage people to collect plastic, exchanging it for reusable bottles. It was a big success and we collected more than 300.000 plastic bottles in 2 years. The second phase of this project is the transformation of the plastic into something useful, and this is already happening with the transformation of recycled plastic into bricks. At the same time 10 water stations were installed in key points around the island (hospital, schools, airport, hotels and so on) providing filling stations free of charge to the population.

Waste valorisation Cooperative is a project managed by a local woman named Bela with a team of 10 other women. Together, they collect glass and transform it into jewellery or construction material. They also make compost which they sell to the hotels, as they do with the jewellery and the glass sand for construction.

At the Paciência plantation there is an agricultural project that provides organic food and cosmetics for the hotels – **Paciência Organics**. Here, people from the local community work in the gardens and in the laboratories, producing jams, muesli and other foodstuffs for the hotels and organic product for the spas and is for sale across all the hotels. Visitors to the island can visit this tranquil and beautiful place to see the project for themselves and to buy some of the handmade local products.

Fundação Príncipe trust

The Fundação Príncipe Trust (FPT) is a Conservation NGO based in Príncipe Island. It was created in 2015 out of a need to reorganise the environmental and social arm of the tourism investment company HBD, which since 2011 had implemented projects of this nature as a complementary strategy to tourism to support the sustainable development of the island. Today, the FPT is working towards becoming an independent body, operating alongside HBD and the local government and supported closely by Fauna and Flora International, an international conservation NGO that focuses on building and strengthening local NGOs.

Strategic Objectives of FPT

1) To expand knowledge of Príncipe's biodiversity in order to influence future decision-making processes in the areas of:

- Príncipe Island Botanical Sampling
- Evaluation of the Seabird populations of the Tinhosas Islands
- Evaluation of the coral habitats of Príncipe Island
- **Marine Turtle Conservation***
- **Whale watching***
- The use of new conservation technologies through the inclusion of local communities

2) Reducing illegal and harmful practices to Príncipe's Biodiversity

- “Omali Vida Nón” aims to promote better management of marine resources through the participation of those who are mainly affected – fishers and fish traders.

- "Bumbu d'lê Project" promotes beekeeping and agroforestry as an income alternative and way of life in Príncipe, encouraging better management of forests and restoration of degraded areas.
- Zero Capture: To promote a change of attitude of the population regarding the protection and conservation of the biodiversity and mainly of the sea turtles.
- Biosphere Trails: aims to create opportunities for social and economic development through the offering of initiatives for Ecological and Sustainable Tourism and through the training and qualification of Local Guides.

3) Increase of FPT sustainability

- Seabirds: Identification, Biology and Field Methodology.
- Diving Open Water course
- Training in Excel and Data Base.
- Managing and Leading Conservation Projects.
- Organizational Management Skills for Protected Area Managers
- Photography: Terrestrial and Marine.
- ReedCheck: Methodology and Identification of species.

Marine Turtle Conservation*

Fundação Príncipe Trust joined forces with Alasdair Davies and with the Arribada project in the development of a new type of transmitter, as well as a new application methodology, to dramatically reduce the cost of marking a single green sea turtle to acquire either spatial data with GPS and/or behavioural video monitoring data. The goal is to provide unprecedented access to track sea turtles and monitor behaviour by significantly reducing the cost of the tagging technologies. This 'pit-stop' type of attachment method allows, using traditional fiberglass/epoxy resin methods, to apply a single plaque on the shell of a turtle, and a reusable base to place several charges during the nesting period. Different electronic payloads can be placed on the board and easily removed and replaced with a newly loaded payload (hence the name, "pit-stop") whenever a nesting tortoise returns to the beach (every 12-14 days and up to 5 returns). In December, a payload containing a Raspberry-Pi camera and micro-controller was deployed to gather exciting behavioural data. An open-source, low-cost, next-generation GPS chipset is currently being developed to be incorporated and we are also developing the technological capability to download tag data through a wireless connection to base stations located on the beach.

The conservation efforts of sea turtles in Príncipe are already a success story, thanks to the efforts of the Regional Government. The Foundation allied these efforts with a team of 10 sea guards, and 22 seasonal guards, and two focal points who not only monitor all the beaches and Príncipe's sea, in partnership with the Coast Guard, as well as collecting nesting data of the three species of sea turtles that nest on our beaches.

Whale Watching*

PTF Trained 19 students to observe and identify species of cetaceans and seabirds in different parts of the island, to collect information and understand the behaviour of these animals. In partnership with the hotels this project integrated the students with the hotel activities team and promoted the interaction with tourists and data collection.