

# Singita Serengeti - Celebrating five years of One Planet Living

*Singita*



ONE  
PLANET  
LIVING



A  
framework  
by Bioregional

# Headline achievements

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Engaging guests with local community and conservation work has contributed to a 10-fold increase in donations to these projects – totalling more than **\$1million**



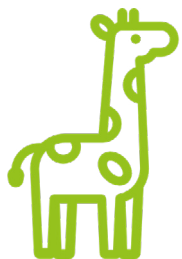
Water use reduced by more than **20%** since 2013



**800 cubic metres** of rainwater storage capacity – one third of an Olympic-sized swimming pool



Reduced vehicle diesel consumption by nearly **30,000 litres** since 2013 with Singita Grumeti Fund reducing fuel by more 30% in two years



The total mass of giraffes, zebras, buffalos, antelopes and elephants in the area has **more than doubled** in a decade



Plastic bottle waste **reduced by 90%** by using reusable steel bottles and installing UV water treatment facilities



**10% reduction** in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from building energy consumption, with accumulated CO<sub>2</sub> savings of 500 tonnes

# Introduction

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In 2013 Singita Serengeti became a One Planet Community, setting out on a challenging journey to achieve sustainability in environmental, economic and social terms. This review looks back at the achievements of the past five years as well as forward with the ambitions and targets set out in the community's evolving One Planet Action Plan.

Singita Serengeti is a tourism venture which exists primarily to support the conservation of one of the world's most iconic and amazing wildlife spaces while supporting local communities. That gave it a great starting point for its One Planet journey.

Sited in northern Tanzania next to the Serengeti National Park, it provides accommodation for over 120 guests at any one time, enabling them to encounter the savannah's magnificent wildlife. The park is renowned for its annual migration of over 1.5 million wildebeest and 250,000 zebra.

Singita Serengeti works closely with the Singita Grumeti Fund, a non-profit ecosystem conservation body, to integrate community, conservation and hospitality. Donations from guests and private philanthropists provide funding to protect 140,000 hectares of land.

The venture also supports the local community. It has more than 800 employees, the great majority from the local area, and some 85,000 people live in 21 villages bordering the protected area.

In 2013 Singita Serengeti's One Planet Action plan was endorsed by Bioregional, the UK-based sustainability charity and social enterprise behind the One Planet Living® framework. This framework uses ten easy-to-grasp, interconnected One Planet Living principles as the basis for planning coordinated actions to improve environmental, social and economic performance, with stretching but achievable targets and regular reviews of progress.

These action plans aim to enable organisations to flourish – and people to live healthy, happy lives – within the natural resource limits of our shared planet.

In the five years since 2013, Singita Serengeti and Bioregional have worked in partnership to regularly

review progress with Bioregional staff visiting each time. Here we look at that half decade of progress under each of the ten One Planet Principles.

The One Planet Living framework has succeeded in engaging the organisation's staff with sustainability and made them feel positive about it. Singita has already become a world leader in demonstrating how international tourism can promote sustainable development. Real progress has been made in challenging circumstances and the journey continues.

## The ten principles of One Planet Living

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	Health and happiness
	Equity and local economy
	Culture and community
	Land and nature
	Sustainable water
	Local and sustainable food
	Travel and transport
	Materials and products
	Zero waste
	Zero carbon energy

# Introduction

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Ben Gill

One Planet Living Manager,  
Bioregional



While Singita Serengeti's  
commitment to  
conservation and  
community development  
had long been

established, over the past five years we  
have seen at close quarters their tourism  
focus shift from luxury to responsibility -  
without any negative consequences on  
guests' experience.

The successes have been huge; both waste and water use have shifted from being an afterthought to setting a benchmark for sustainable luxury tourism. Energy use is now well managed, with an ever-increasing percentage from renewable energy. Transport remains a challenge but most departments have made significant reductions in fuel use, with one achieving a 30% reduction.

The most significant change is probably in culture and attitude. On one of my first annual review visits I chatted with a housekeeper, and when I told her I was from 'One Planet' she nodded her understanding and said 'yes...reduce reuse recycle'. Meat-free Mondays, 'Health Month', staff training and engagement have helped create an environment and culture where staff support each other in setting high standards and moving towards sustainability.



It has also been an eye-opening journey for us. Solutions that may seem obvious or common place are sometimes impossible in rural Tanzania – for example finding conventional recycling options for paper or metal. Yet there are also solutions available that would never work in a 'developed' location, like reusing cement bags as plant pots in a nursery.

The most insightful part of working with Singita Serengeti has been seeing the challenges facing humanity writ large. Population growth has put huge pressure on the local wildlife, so conservation has to go hand-in-hand with community development – but a successful project can act like a magnet, drawing more people to the area. This raises questions we would often rather avoid; can wildlife survive without fences and guards and can humans and nature ever really live in harmony.

Progress in some areas has not been as fast as we would have liked and there remains much work to be done. But having seen the strides that Singita Serengeti has made in five years we are confident it will continue to progress, setting the bar very high for responsible, conservation-orientated tourism.





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## Beverly Burden

Head of Communications and Sustainability  
Integrator, Singita Grumeti Fund



I had worked at Singita in various positions before I was offered the One Planet Integrator position in 2013. As I

had more of a background in conservation and because sustainability was a relatively new commitment to the company, it was a pretty steep learning curve to begin with. There seemed to be so many things that needed doing - from understanding our baseline to upgrading infrastructure to training all staff about One Planet Living. I wasn't quite sure where to begin.

One of the biggest challenges at Singita is the organic growth that it has undergone. We now have over 120 beds spread across grid-connected and off-grid lodges, tented camps, mobile camps as well as private villas, which are part of a private partnerships for conservation programme. There is also a team of 165 people working in conservation and community development. This growth had created a patchwork of infrastructure solutions to keep the tourism and conservation operations running smoothly.

In my first stint in the role of One Planet Integrator I led the training of all staff in One Planet Living, supported the construction of East Africa's first



LEED accredited building, oversaw an estate-wide upgrade of infrastructure and put in place rigorous waste management procedures. When I returned after an 18 month hiatus it was really inspiring to see how Katherine Cunliffe, who had taken on my role, had built on this basis; driving forward water management, getting our two non-grid connected camps on to solar power and starting to eliminate plastic waste.

While we now share the One Planet Integrator role, we're planning for how we can make this particular post redundant by ensuring that sustainable operations are simply the way things are done. Looking back, we've achieved a lot at Singita Grumeti which has inspired the Singita group as a whole to embrace One Planet Living. Hopefully our example will inspire other organisations to align their business goals with sustainability and conservation.



## Health and happiness

Encouraging active, sociable, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.



**250 employees** participated in 'health month' in 2017 with healthy eating and exercise activities



More than **465 scholarships** awarded to local schoolchildren and school-leavers since 2013

With many staff living onsite Singita Serengeti is a community as well as a company. This gives it a unique opportunity, and a responsibility, to help its staff thrive with healthy, happy lives.

Its location in rural Tanzania means there are only rudimentary local health facilities and people face the risk of tropical diseases including malaria. The organisation has a 2020 One Planet target to improve key health statistics for its staff. It has its own clinic and has put a monitoring system in place to track progress. It has also been taking part in a voluntary clinical trial investigating a natural supplement that can help prevent malaria.

An annual 'health month' promotes healthy eating and exercise. In 2017 more than 250 people took part, wearing a green ribbon to raise awareness and show commitment. Exercise options on offer from day to day included running, cycling, volleyball, weightlifting, soccer and rugby. Menus in staff canteens listed calories per dish in English and Swahili. Singita Serengeti's paramedic Francis Muruthi, based at the clinic, said many staff lost weight as a result.

Singita Serengeti has also targeted improving educational attainment for local children and young people under the Health and happiness principle. Each year it awards more than 100 scholarships for primary and secondary school children and for vocational and university studies for school-leavers.



**I feel I have more energy and overall, I feel much healthier."**

*– Joseph Malenya, kitchen staff, Singita Sasakwa Lodge. He lost six kilograms during health month.*







## Equity and local economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.



Support for a local food growers' cooperative has helped create a **70% increase in revenue**



More than **140 new jobs** created for local people

Under this principle, the One Planet Action Plan targets for 2020 are for half of all salary expenditure to go to local staff, for more local staff to be promoted into junior management roles and for 100 new jobs to be created with at least 60 of these for local people. There is support for local employment and entrepreneurship by procuring local goods and services and targeted initiatives in villages and schools.

Several Singita Grumeti Fund initiatives have boosted the local economy, and people's ability to participate in it:

- English Immersion Camps for local primary school pupils and training for primary school English teachers. Improved English language skills for primary school students should ease the transition from primary school, where teaching is in Swahili, to English-speaking secondary school.
- A village-based rural enterprise development programme, helping to diversify the local economy and provide alternative livelihoods to poaching and extracting natural resources

within the protected area. This helps local people improve their skills and build their businesses.

- A programme which pairs school scholarship recipients with a Singita Serengeti staff mentor to support and encourage them. It began in 2018 and will reach 25 students next year.

In 2017, Singita Serengeti also hosted more than 700 young women for a three-day series of 'empowerment' events covering topics ranging from the importance of confidence and career development to menstrual health and female genital mutilation (FGM).



### Singita Serengeti School of Cooking

The Singita Serengeti School of Cooking gives students a year of fully funded training in cooking. After running at

Singita's Kruger National Park camp in South Africa for more than a decade, a second school opened at Singita Serengeti in 2016 helping local people to become skilled chefs to serve Tanzania's growing market.



## Culture and community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.



Visitor engagement with local communities increased through **community visits**



More than **1,300 local schoolchildren** educated about the local wealth of wildlife and key conservation issues at the Environmental Education Center

Singita Serengeti's staff, local communities and visitors are encouraged and supported to understand the sustainability challenge and move towards ways of sustainable living and working. But the approach used respects the local context: the need to increase living standards and prosperity in this low-income rural area.

Targets under this principle are to:

- Increase the number of guests engaging with local communities and local wildlife conservation issues by running community visits. This had led to a large increase in donations from guests for community and conservation work, exceeding \$1 million in 2017.
- Inform, educate and train staff and guests in sustainability issues.
- Help local communities to adopt sustainable lifestyles and grow sustainable businesses.

More than 1,300 local schoolchildren have now learnt about environmental and sustainability issues by attending the Singita Grumeti Fund's Environmental Education Centre where they also find out about their region's wealth of wildlife.

Singita Serengeti staff, at all levels and in all departments, are made aware of the basics of the One Planet Living framework and One Planet Living, with a programme of events to keep them engaged. The One Planet Action Plan and its targets are being integrated ever more widely into the work of all departments. A senior-level Environmental Committee provides oversight; as the venture expands and invests in new infrastructure, it ensures that growth is sustainable with minimal environmental impacts.



The Environmental Education Centre helps young people become future leaders with skills in managing natural resources responsibly. This

knowledge is shared with their families and the community, making a real impact."



– Laurian Lamatas,  
Principal of the  
Environmental  
Education Centre,  
Singita Grumeti Fund





## Land and nature

Protecting and restoring land for the benefit of people and wildlife.



*An anti-poaching scout on patrol*



**Major habitat restoration achieved** with an increase in abundance of wild animals, particularly giraffes, zebras, buffalos, antelopes and elephants



**99%** of Singita Grumeti Fund's large anti-poaching team are from neighbouring communities

Under this principle, Singita Serengeti has pledged to demonstrate that it is effectively conserving biodiversity and wildlife on its concession area using monitoring. It has targeted an increase in the total weight, or biomass, of plant eating mammals (herbivores) on the land, and to reduce the impact of alien invasive species.

In the decade up to 2016 this herbivore biomass doubled – a healthy and encouraging trend. The Singita Grumeti Fund runs a variety of programmes and advanced technologies to reduce poaching and reduce conflicts between wildlife and local communities, with a focus on building up a detailed understanding of what is happening on the ground. For example, it is placing radio collars on 30 elephants to provide early warning of them approaching village farmland so that they can be turned away before they damage crops.

The Singita Grumeti Fund's 132 highly trained wildlife scouts, nearly all recruited from local communities, continuously patrol the area on foot and with vehicles to deter and arrest poachers and monitor the wildlife. Dog teams and drones are adding to the effort. In 2017 there were 475 arrests and nearly 1,200 animal snares were removed,

along with 26 trapped animals actually rescued from snares and treated.



When I was a child growing up in our village, I used to see animals as a nuisance. And I used to hunt too. After being employed at the Singita Grumeti Fund, I became

enlightened about my wrong-doings. I make an honest living and can send my children to school. My life and my family has changed for the better. Animals are valuable and should be preserved."



*– Gotera Magesa Gamba, Wildlife Scout, Singita Grumeti Fund*



## Sustainable water

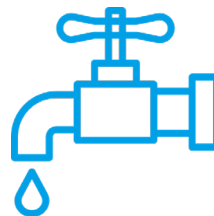
Using water efficiently, protecting local water sources and reducing flooding and drought.



A water tank in a local village



Increased rainwater collection with **800 cubic metres** of storage capacity on site



Major focus on conservation, using meters to measure water use and **to detect and eliminate leaks**

By 2020, Singita Serengeti intends to waste less than 5% of the water it uses through leaks. It has also targeted a 50% reduction in water extraction from local boreholes compared to a 2013 baseline. To make progress, it is bringing in new water saving procedures and raising staff awareness of the need for conservation. It has also massively increased the amount of rainwater that can be collected and stored onsite.

There is now total storage capacity of 800 cubic metres; one third of the capacity of an Olympic-sized swimming pool, and this will continue to grow. Key parts of the plan are installing water meters, alarms and water level sensors down boreholes in order to monitor consumption, help track down leaks and conserve groundwater.

A standard operating procedure for the extraction, monitoring and use of water at Singita Serengeti has been reviewed and signed off by Singita Serengeti's senior level Environmental Committee. This document has been shared in English and Swahili with all staff.

Total water use has fallen by a minimum of 20% from 2013 with the actual reduction likely to be significantly greater than this. The planned installations of three treatment plants will enable cleansed wastewater to be reused in the animal watering holes (substituting for groundwater), and ensuring that Singita Serengeti is a true exemplar of sustainable water management.



When I joined the organisation three years ago, water was not treated as a scarce resource. Now we know exactly how much water is being used and where, and with daily water meter readings we're able to identify, isolate and fix leaks almost immediately. With my background in water conservation being part of this change has been very gratifying!"



– Katherine Cunliffe, Senior Technical Advisor for Sustainability, Singita Grumeti Fund





## Local and sustainable food

Promoting sustainable humane farming and healthy diets in local, seasonal organic food and vegetable protein.



**‘Meat Free Mondays’**  
in staff canteens encourage employees to shift to a lower meat, lower impact diet



Focus on increasing the variety and quantity of food for guests and staff which comes from **local producers**

Under this principle, Singita Serengeti’s One Planet Action Plan aims to introduce more and more locally sourced food into menus for its guests. It has also committed to moving towards sustainable sourcing for all of the fish consumed and to improve the balance of its employees’ diet by shifting towards less meat consumption.

An increasing number of the on-site staff canteens are introducing ‘Meat Free Mondays’. There are moves to source more and more foods locally for both staff and guests – from honey and red peppers to meat and UHT milk. Singita Serengeti is supporting local beekeepers, helping them to bring their honey to market. Products that contain palm oil are being phased out from both guest and staff kitchens.

Meat production has particularly heavy ecological and climate impacts but moves to reduce meat consumption at Singita Serengeti face particular challenges. Eating meat has symbolic importance in the local culture and many of the staff from outside Tanzania come from countries with high levels of meat consumption. Shifting the meat to plant balance of staff diets is not easy and requires continued focus.



Creating a culture of sustainability at Singita Grumeti has been a gradual process of developing new initiatives and supporting them until they become the norm. My favourite initiatives, as a chef, are meat-free Monday, health month and the annual cook off. It’s really rewarding to hear new lodge managers state that they decided to join Singita because of our commitment to conservation and sustainability. Other initiatives for the kitchens in the near future are reducing

single use plastic and looking into local farmers for the lodges.”



– Kyle Ralph,  
Executive Chef at  
Singita Serengeti



## Travel and transport

Reducing the need to travel, and encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon transport.



**15% reduction in vehicle fuel** use achieved over five years



Every department set a target to reduce vehicle fuel use, and **opportunities to shift staff from road vehicles to bicycles** exploited

Here, the main effort is to reduce diesel consumption for Singita Serengeti's road vehicle fleet. That fleet is indispensable; it is needed to move guests and staff around the 140,000 hectare concession and to run anti-poaching patrols.

Targets for reduced fuel consumption, which bring economic and environmental benefit, cover all vehicles except those used by the venture's own construction firm. This is because on-site construction-related activity varies year to year.

There is a target to reduce diesel consumption by 25% by 2020 for the bulk of the vehicle fleet through improved efficiency. A 15% reduction has already been achieved from the baseline year of 2013. The Singita Grumeti Fund has been particularly successful in making big savings in road fuel, even though vehicles are essential for its anti-poaching and wildlife conservation work.

For the construction sector, however, the commitment is to stabilise diesel use. In the longer term a switch to electric vehicles could achieve much larger reductions in transport-related carbon emissions. But electric vehicles which can meet

Singita Serengeti's demanding requirements are not yet available in Tanzania.

Every department has set a target to reduce diesel use. A new solar electricity-powered borehole at the black rhino sanctuary has ended the need to bring in water by road. Scouts now patrol the sanctuary on bikes rather than in a vehicle.



With 140,000 hectares to manage, transport is integral to operations at Singita Grumeti. Over the last five years we have put in place strategies to optimise and control our vehicle use. Leading by example is crucial: the head of the Grumeti Fund sent a great message to his team when he swapped his 4x4 for a bicycle. As a closet

environmentalist it has been really satisfying to see the significant fuel savings we've made!"



–Terry Fade, Head of Security, Singita Grumeti





## Materials and products

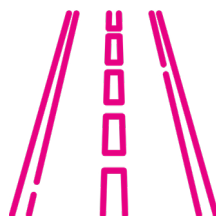
Using materials from sustainable sources and promoting products which help people reduce consumption.



*The deck at Serengeti House is made from sustainable wood*



Kilima Lodge, constructed in 2015, is **Tanzania's first LEED certified building**



**Local materials used to maintain and repair roads, with quarry sites restored**

Switching to genuinely sustainable materials and products is challenging for any business, more so for one based in a remote location and serving a demanding clientele. Under its One Planet Action Plan, Singita Serengeti aims to use more local products and to fully rehabilitate all of the excavation sites (known as murram pits) used to provide material for local road maintenance on its concession land. The plan also has a strong focus on moving towards more sustainable construction materials for its diverse building operations.

One major new building, Kilima Lodge, was the first project in Tanzania to receive LEED certification, a world-leading US-based assessment system for recognising sustainable buildings. The learning from that is being taken forward into subsequent construction projects at Singita Serengeti, starting at the design stage. Supplier contracts now include environmental standards.

All of the wood used will be FSC certified or consist of lower-impact, composite timber substitute. An FSC-certified local supplier has now been found for one useful type of hardwood. And sisal, a waste

material, will be used to provide shading around buildings instead of material from Grewia, a native shrub, so as to discourage unsustainable local harvesting of Grewia.

Singita Serengeti is using locally-woven baskets and locally-made door mats. It has developed a Standard Operating Procedure for procuring electrical and electronic equipment with a 'best-in-class' energy-saving rating wherever possible.



## Zero waste

Reducing consumption, re-using and recycling to achieve zero waste and zero pollution.



90% reduction in plastic bottle waste - saving **74,200 one-litre plastic bottles** from the waste stream



**Local recycling, reuse and composting options** have been developed for the major waste streams – glass, metals, paper, plastic food and cooking oil

**One of Singita Serengeti's biggest sustainability successes is slashing the use of plastic water bottles by nearly 90%.**

Guests need plenty of clean, safe drinking water through long, hot days and evenings spent looking at amazing wildlife. Sealed plastic bottles gave them that security. And while the majority of the 800 Tanzanian staff were used to the local water, they and the small number of ex-pat staff kept thirst at bay with imported plastic-bottled water. Singita Serengeti used to subsidise the price for them. It all added up to consumption of more than 80,000 litre bottles per year.

The company has broken the plastic habit by installing equipment that filters and sterilises local groundwater on site using ultra-violet light. There's even a small plant that converts it into sparkling, carbonated water for dining tables.

Each guest is given a reusable steel water container to replenish with drinking water throughout their stay and then take home as a memento. As for the staff, clean and filtered drinking water is now available in or next to all of their homes and workplaces. They too can use the steel water containers and the subsidy for plastic water bottles has ended.

As well as targeting a 90% reduction in all plastic waste for 2020, Singita Serengeti is also aiming for a 10% reduction in other waste streams and a recycling rate above 90%.

Waste paper is shredded and composted along with food waste. The much-reduced quantities of plastic waste are used to make mosquito nets and children's play furniture. All glass and metal waste is collected for recycling and soft drinks now come from a local supplier in returnable glass bottles. Even old cooking oil is not wasted; a local enterprise uses it for fuel.



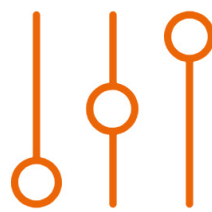


## Zero carbon energy

Making buildings and manufacturing energy efficient and supplying all energy with renewables.



Major investment in photovoltaic panels generating electricity from sunlight **cuts CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 500 tonnes**



Strong focus on improved energy management and cutting energy waste, for example **through careful use of air conditioning**

For this principle, Singita Serengeti's One Planet Action Plan targets a 30% reduction in energy consumption in buildings and a switch to 100% of electricity consumed coming from renewable sources.

Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage are being installed across more and more of the guest accommodation, accompanied by solar thermal roof panels used to heat water. This PV power is a zero-carbon alternative to electricity from the high carbon, unreliable Tanzanian grid or from on-site diesel generators.

By late 2018 the total installed PV capacity across Singita Serengeti had reached more than 300 kW, contributing to a 10% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy consumption in buildings and a saving over 500 tonnes of carbon dioxide to date. At the time of writing another 189kW are being installed.

Carbon emissions from buildings have begun to fall but there is still some way to go. While switching to renewables is a large part of the solution, so too is better management of energy – like making sure that air conditioning doesn't run when guest rooms are empty and guests are out. Progress requires detailed monitoring of energy consumption and

incremental, small measures adding up to a big collective reduction in energy use – and managers are addressing both of these.



The solar PV system has improved the quality of life at Sabora. Without the noise from the diesel generator, I can hear animals at night like lions, zebra and hyenas. I have been working here for 14 years and now Sabora is the nicest home I have ever had."



*Moshi Basso, Head Housekeeper at Singita Sabora Tented Camp*

# Contact



Singita's core vision is to preserve and protect large tracts of wilderness in Africa for future generations. Dedicated to environmentally conscious hospitality, sustainable conservation and the empowerment of local communities, Singita, meaning "place of miracles," was founded in 1993. Its mission is to share a unique part of the world while maintaining respect for the natural environment and challenging accepted notions of luxury.

Today, Singita is the guardian of over a million acres of pristine land in Africa and responsible for successful community development projects, making a tangible difference in the lives of the people living and working in and around its lodges. Singita operates 12 lodges and camps, each a unique experience in its own right, in five regions across three countries in Africa – including Singita Serengeti in Tanzania. The company committed to applying the One Planet framework to all of its operations in 2016.

Andrea Ferry  
Sustainability Coordinator, Singita  
[www.singita.com](http://www.singita.com)



Bioregional is a social enterprise and registered charity which champions a better, more sustainable way to live. We work with partners to create better places for people to live, work and do business. We want to see thriving regional economies where we meet more of our needs from local, renewable and waste resources, enabling people to live happy, healthy lives within the natural limits of the planet, leaving space for wildlife and wilderness. We call this [One Planet Living](#).

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GRUMETI FUND  
TANZANIA

The Singita Grumeti Fund is a Tanzanian non-profit organization formed in 2003 to carry out conservation and community development work. The mission of the Singita Grumeti Fund is to contribute to the conservation of the Serengeti ecosystem in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders. The Singita Grumeti Fund is 100% donor funded and relies on the generosity of individuals to keep its programmes going.

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# Image credits

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## **Photos**

Front cover: Singita

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Page 6, school children: Mike Sutherland

Page 9, anti-poaching scout in header  
image: Mike Sutherland

Page 9, Gotera Magesa Gamba: Mike  
Sutherland

Page 10, Katherine Cunliffe: Mike Sutherland

Page 16, elephants: Mike Sutherland