



Eco initiatives: A vertical hydroponic garden and an innovative water treatment works helps Emboo River address its carbon use

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CARBON NEUTRAL?

Increasingly, safari camps are adapting more environmentally-sensitive practices. To see what a carbon-neutral facility looks like in practice, we visit the Maasai Mara

Emboo River, located on the banks of the Talek, claims to be Kenya's first carbon neutral camp. Solar-powered electric Land Rovers offer a silent safari experience, gliding through the Mara plains, but the owners have tried to look deeper into every aspect of their operation, focusing foremost on minimising their carbon emissions and then on offsetting the carbon they have incurred.

Using their own carbon calculator, they are able to track their emissions accurately to ensure carbon neutrality. Their strategy is shaped around the three scopes of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol:

● **Carbon emissions that Emboo controls:** What can they do to directly control their emissions? For example, solar-powered vehicles emit no CO₂ in the safari experience.

● **Energy sources:** Emboo derives all its energy from solar power.

● **Emissions out of Emboo's direct control:** Examples of this are food sourcing and the transport that guests use to reach the camp. With its new hydroponic vertical garden, Emboo aims to grow 100 per cent of its fresh food very soon. To offset the emissions of transport, guests plant indigenous trees, which helps to capture carbon dioxide, reforest the local area and raise awareness among guests.

Every effort has been made to minimise their trace in every detail of operations: **Biogas:** Emboo turns organic food waste into biogas, which is used in the kitchens. Food scraps are placed into the biodigester, which adds bacteria and turns them into gas, which is used for cooking. Citrus fruits are

the only food waste not used in the biodigester; they are instead used in cleaning products.

Water treatment: The grey and black water from the camp goes into an innovative system of lagoons filled with plants indigenous to the Maasai Mara. This filters the water, removes bacteria and adds oxygen. The cleaned water is sent to the recycled water tank, which is then used for toilet water. Emboo has reduced its water consumption by 90 per cent.

Operational impact: From buying dry goods in bulk to reducing packaging waste and using natural, non-toxic, Kenyan-made cleaning products, Emboo focuses on minimising their carbon footprint in every aspect of operations.

BY ALICIA ERICKSON

Novel recruitment strategy

When it came to staffing The Rockefeller, Cape Town's cool new 19-storey hotel, a no experience necessary, no CV application policy was adopted. Instead, they required anybody with a true passion for people to submit a two-minute cellphone video.

"We had 2000 applications for 90 jobs," said General Manager Reinard Korf. 400 were invited for a day of activities aimed at finding those who displayed sympathy,

empathy, kindness, team spirit and leadership qualities.

"Some tasks were designed to fail, to see how they would cope," explained Korf. Those who showed supportive camaraderie and innate compassion got through. "You cannot imagine the atmosphere of achievement and joy when they realised they'd got the jobs."

Korf has opened nine hotels worldwide and was encouraged



to bring his culture of nurture combined with excellence to The Rockefeller. "My job is to look after my staff. Their job is to look after the guests," he says.

BY CARRIE HAMPTON