



TANZANIA NATIONAL PARKS

Balloon Safaris Guidelines



1.0 Background

Balloon Safaris was originally launched in the Serengeti National Park in 1989 and extended to Tarangire National Park. The decision to introduce balloon safaris to other parks and allow this activity to be conducted by more than one operator creates the need for the balloon operation guidelines. The guidelines will provide a general overview on how this activity shall be carried out in the national parks in Tanzania.

These operational guidelines are applicable for balloon safaris carried out by a private company. The guidelines provide details on balloon safaris, different requirements and also explain how the activity should be carried out.

2.0 Area where activity can take place in the Park

Specific areas where ballooning activities can take place shall be guided by the respective park management in line with the GMP. The park management in collaboration with the balloon operator will verify suitable sites for balloon operations. Parks shall also identify suitable sites to be used as base stations for balloon safaris, preferably close to ranger posts or Park HQ for control purposes.

3.0 Type and number facility/Equipment needed

Belts, harnesses, cables and safety lines will be attached to existing balloon basket or gondola hard points, cargo tie down points, basket or gondola bridles, or other suitable basket or gondola locations.

All of the above devices have load ratings established by the manufacturer in compliance with various industry and government specifications. No person shall be attached to a load release device.

4.0 Permit and License Requirements

A tendering system would be used to select competent Balloon Operators. The highest bidder will be given first priority. The tendering process shall co-opt professionals in balloon operations as per Civil Aviation Authority qualifications.

4.1 Signing contract

Each Balloon Operator will be guided by a specific Contract to be signed between TANAPA and the Operator.

4.2 Duration of Operation for the Operators

Initial contracts for the operators will be a period of five years, and will be renewable depending on good performance.

5.0 Type of Competence and Number of Staff required for the activity

The pilot qualifications will be on the basis of previous experience and safety record, or an actual flight demonstrating the pilot's knowledge and skill regarding rappelling operations.

6.0 Environmental and Social Considerations

The operator for the Balloon safari shall comply with the following environmental/social issues;

- i. Should not fly over staff house/tourist facilities
- ii. The minimum flight distance will 1,000 ft (30 m) to avoid disturbance to animals and other visitors
- iii. In case of changes of new landing site, operator must inform Park Management

7.0 Safety, Security and Health consideration Issues

7.1 Briefing

Briefings will be conducted by the Aerial Coordinator or balloon Pilot in Command (Waiver Holder) specific to the scheduled balloon external load operations. Briefing shall consider safety procedures, Balloon experience and duration of the flight.

7.2 Communication

Communication must exist at all times between the Pilot in Command and ground crew. This Can be accomplished through the use of mobile phones, radios,

intercoms or pre-briefed hand signals.

Additionally, in the event of lost communications the pilot must be able to maintain visual contact with the ground crew. If visual contact cannot be maintained, then a third party who can maintain visual contact will be used. This person may be onboard the balloon, on the ground, or in a chase aircraft.

7.3 Weight and Balance

Due to the nature of balloon external loads involving essential persons or equipment, diligent review and compliance with the manufacturer's maximum weight data is required.

This can also be accomplished through consultation with pilots having previous experience with similar balloon configuration or through a flight evaluation

7.4 Pilot Check List

7.4.1 Balloon

- i. Load bearing capacity and method of securing of all attaching devices related to the external load.
- ii. Verification of load bearing capacity and anticipated loads on the basket or gondola attach points to be utilized.
- iii. Accomplish Weight and Balance of the external load, including, if necessary, the possible release or departure of the external load.

7.4.2 The Pilot in Command

- i. The Pilot in Command is at all times the final authority over his/her balloon and shall be in command over his/hers flight operations and related activities.
- ii. The Pilot in Command or Aerial Coordinator shall have the authority to abort any flight operation in the interest of safety.

7.4.3 Personnel

- i. Verify that only essential personnel are onboard.
- ii. Confirm with essential personnel specific duties and responsibilities.

- iii. Verify all communications and check audio or hand signals.
- iv. Review emergency procedures specific to the external load operation with all essential personnel.
- v. Review any potential risk factor with the essential personnel.

8.0 Duration of the activity and maximum number of visitors

- i. Balloon operation shall start from 3 am to 10 pm and only Balloon vehicles and staff shall undertake the operations. Tour Operators or visitors will not be allowed to be involved in the operations.
- ii. Maximum number of balloons will be stipulated in the respective Parks GMP.

9.0 Payment Modality

- i. Balloon fee shall be paid using Government electronic payment gateway (GePG-MoF), online, bank and mobile or any other approved means of payments. The balloon operator may reserve and make all the payment online through online TANAPA Portal available on website www.tanzaniaparks.go.tz/onlineportal.
- ii. The fee may be paid by the operator to the respective park pay point before the scheduled balloon flight.
- iii. The Balloon Operator shall be required to submit the passenger list to the responsible park officer before flight.

10.0 Indemnity Forms

All visitors shall be required to fill and sign an indemnity form indicating that they are carrying out the activity at their own risk.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

TANAPA shall conduct monitoring and evaluation to ensure the activity is carried out in line with the agreement and park regulations. Further, annual evaluation shall be carried out to assess the impact of the activity and recommend effective mitigation measures or withdraw of the activity.

Conservation Commissioner
Tanzania National Parks