



Sustainability is a
checkpoint—the
**summit is further
ahead.**

CASE STUDY
SUNBIRD

CASE STUDY



Overview

Sunbird Hotels and Resorts is a leading hospitality brand in Malawi, offering a collection of upscale hotels and resorts across key destinations in the country.

Their properties are strategically located in major cities like Blantyre and Lilongwe, as well as scenic destinations such as Lake Malawi. Sunbird focuses on delivering a blend of luxury, cultural experiences, and sustainability in their operations.

The primary driver behind Sunbird's engagement with GCX was the introduction of compulsory ESG reporting by the Malawian stock exchange.

Sunbird already had a strong understanding of its role and potential to create positive impacts in the Malawian economy, society, and environment, and had focused on prioritising and executing sustainable practices and initiatives.

However, the Board recognised a knowledge and skills gap at the executive and management levels, particularly in strategically connecting its sustainable initiatives and crafting an ESG report that would accurately reflect the organisation's efforts.



Locations

Operating exclusively in Malawi, East Africa.



Size

Sunbird Hotels and Resorts spans 9 properties across Malawi, and currently holds over 900 employees.



Sector

Hospitality and Tourism.



Assets

The company has considerable economic resources, generating an annual revenue of K34.8 billion in 2023.

Challenges

Sunbird was seeking to address sustainability challenges that needed effective solutions.

These challenges included -

Addressing the knowledge and skills gap at an executive and management level through:

- #1 Theoretical understanding of the sustainability landscape
- #2 An understanding as to how Sunbird's current initiatives fitted into the sustainability agenda
- #3 Developing an integrated sustainability strategy to guide the company's efforts
- #4 Crafting sustainability reports that accurately reflect the organisation's future ambition and current efforts

Solutions

In response to Sunbird's challenges, we at GCX worked in collaboration with the organisation to provide the following strategies:



ESG Training Workshop

GCX conducted a training workshop focusing on critical ESG concepts and the UN SDGs in relation to Sunbird's operating environment and their associated dependencies, impacts, risks, and opportunities.



Sustainability Strategy

We worked with Sunbird to develop a bespoke sustainability framework and roadmap as well as their sustainability policy and position statement.



Current State & Gap Assessment

Analysed Sunbird's integrated report, risk register, and other key information to assess its ESG maturity. This was compared against a sector review, which considered industry frameworks, trends, and best practices, facilitating the identification of ESG gaps and opportunities.



Sustainability Action Plan

GCX translated the sustainability strategy into a phased action plan with specific objectives and tasks for achieving Sunbird's sustainability goals.



Materiality Assessment

The previous steps informed the identification of Sunbird's initial material matters, which were further refined in consultation with Sunbird's Executive Team.



Report Writing Services

We consolidated Sunbird's relevant ESG information to draft their inaugural Sustainability Report (2023). We are currently writing Sunbird's 2024 Sustainability Report.

The Results

The collaborative efforts of GCX and Sunbird have yielded significant results:



Building Leadership Capacity

Sunbird's executive and management team gained improved capacity to navigate the sustainability landscape and ensure business decisions align with Sunbird's sustainability goals.



Strategic Direction

We provided Sunbird with clear guidelines to achieve its sustainability ambitions, which Sunbird has already used to address key ESG risks, thereby enhancing resilience.



ESG Benchmarking

We developed a report highlighting sector-specific ESG risks, regulatory requirements, and stakeholder expectations. We also provided Sunbird with strategic insights into its ESG performance relative to their peers.



From Vision to Action

Developed & implemented guidelines and phased action plan with measurable goals, timelines, and KPIs to ensure Sunbird's progress toward its ESG objectives.



Defining What Matters

Established clearly defined material matters, aligned with global best practices, such as the Net Positive Framework of the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, and regulatory expectations.



Transparent Reporting

Sunbird published its inaugural FY 2023 Sustainability Report and developed an ESG Policy and Position Statement to guide internal and external stakeholders.



BARNET GAUSI
Head of Finance
& Company Secretary



We have been working with GCX since 2023 in developing our Sustainability or Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) framework and writing the 2023 and 2024 Sustainability/ESG report.

GCX's invaluable support - through training, presentations and preparing reports - has been instrumental in our achievement of being the first MSE listed company to develop and prepare a Sustainability report and in coming up with a Sustainability framework and implementation plan that will help us embed sustainability issues into our operations.

