



# IRINGA MULTISALES NETWORK

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## HOSPITALITY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Ruaha National Park & Southern Highlands – Tanzania

#### 1. Overview of the Destination

Ruaha National Park is the **largest national park in Tanzania**, covering more than **20,000 km<sup>2</sup>** and forming part of the vast **Rungwa–Kizigo–Muhesi ecosystem** in southern Tanzania. Located about **108 km from Iringa town**, the park is easily accessible by road and air through local airstrips, making Iringa the main gateway for tourism in the region.

Ruaha is known for:

- Large elephant populations
- Predators such as lions, leopards, and wild dogs
- Over 500 bird species
- Authentic wilderness safari experiences

Despite its global tourism potential, the park remains **significantly under-visited compared to northern Tanzania parks**, receiving only a small fraction of the visitors seen in destinations like Serengeti. This creates a **major opportunity for hospitality investors**.

#### 2. Market Opportunity

##### Rapid growth of tourism in Tanzania

Tourism in Tanzania is expanding rapidly.

- **\$4.2 billion tourism revenue in 2025**
- **Over 2 million international visitors annually**

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- Tourism is now Tanzania’s **largest foreign exchange earner**.

However, most tourism still concentrates in the **Northern Circuit (Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Kilimanjaro)** while the **Southern Circuit remains underdeveloped**, receiving far fewer visitors. This imbalance creates strong **first-mover advantages for investors in the south**.

### 3. Strategic Location: Southern Highlands

The **Southern Highlands zone (Iringa, Njombe, Mbeya)** offers a unique tourism ecosystem combining:

- Wildlife safaris (Ruaha, Udzungwa, Kitulo)
- Mountains and scenic landscapes
- Cultural tourism
- Cool climate attractive to international visitors

Iringa region is widely considered the **gateway to Ruaha National Park and the southern tourism circuit**.

### 4. Key Hospitality Investment Opportunities

#### 1. Safari Lodges & Eco-Lodges

High-end safari lodges near Ruaha are still limited.

Potential developments:

- Luxury safari lodge (30–60 rooms)
- Boutique eco-lodge
- Riverfront safari lodge
- Luxury tented camp

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Government tourism plans have identified sites near Ruaha suitable for lodge development with up to 100 beds.

## Target clients

- European safari tourists
- Luxury safari travelers
- Photographic safari groups

## 2. Gateway Hotels in Iringa

Iringa is the **main transit hub for Ruaha safaris**, creating demand for:

- 3–5 star hotels
- Business hotels
- Conference facilities
- Transit safari hotels

## Potential concepts:

- Safari transit hotel
- Conference tourism hotel
- Boutique cultural hotel

## 3. Luxury Tented Camps

Ruaha’s wilderness character makes it ideal for:

- Mobile safari camps
- Seasonal tented camps
- Ultra-luxury bush camps

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These products are highly demanded in the international safari market.

## 4. Eco-Tourism & Sustainable Hospitality

Global tourism trends are shifting toward **eco-friendly tourism investments**.

### Opportunities include:

- Solar-powered safari lodges
- Eco-lodges using local materials
- Community tourism partnerships
- Conservation-linked tourism projects

## 5. Airbnb & Boutique Accommodation

Demand is rising for smaller accommodations around Ruaha and Iringa.

### Opportunities:

- Boutique guesthouses
- Serviced safari villas
- Airbnb safari homes

Ruaha attracts travelers seeking safari experiences, making it suitable for **short-stay rental accommodation investments**.

## 5. Competitive Advantage of Investing in Ruaha

### Untapped market

Fewer hospitality facilities than in northern Tanzania.

### Authentic safari experience

Less crowded parks attract premium safari tourists.

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## Government support

Tanzania is actively promoting the development of the **Southern Tourism Circuit**.

## Strategic expansion potential

Future growth expected as tourism diversifies away from the over-crowded northern circuit.

## 6. Potential Investment Locations

Priority areas include:

- ✓ Iringa town – Gateway hotel investment
- ✓ Ruaha park buffer zones – Safari lodges
- ✓ Idodi & Pawaga areas – Eco tourism lodges
- ✓ Udzungwa Mountains area – Adventure tourism resorts
- ✓ Njombe Highlands – Boutique mountain lodges

## 7. Estimated Investment Scale

Examples:

Project	Estimated Investment
Luxury Safari Lodge	\$5M - &15M
Boutique Eco Lodge	\$2M - \$5M
Tented Camp	\$1M - \$3M
Gateway Hotel (Iringa)	\$3M - \$10M

## 8. Target Markets

- Europe (Germany, UK, Netherlands)
- USA
- Safari tour operators
- Adventure travelers
- Eco-tourism market

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## 9. Why Invest Now

Reasons include:

- Fast-growing tourism sector in Tanzania
- Increasing global demand for safari experiences
- Undeveloped southern circuit
- Strong wildlife attractions in the Ruaha ecosystem

## 10. Conclusion

Ruaha National Park and the Southern Highlands are among the last major, untapped safari investment destinations in Africa.

With growing tourism demand, limited hospitality infrastructure, and increasing government focus on the southern circuit, the region offers high-potential opportunities for hotel, lodge, and eco-tourism investments.

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