ICON™
HOTELS GROUP AFRICA

COMPANY PROFILE 2026

Retreat. Connect. Experience.

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Retreat. Connect. Experience.

ICON Hotels Group Africa

Creating a Culture of Hospitality Excellence Across Africa

Overview

ICON Hotels Group Africa is a Pan-African hospitality management and development company. We partner with hotel owners to transform properties into distinctive, profitable, and operationally efficient destinations.

We provide end-to-end services — from concept development and pre-opening programs to full hotel management— ensuring each property delivers exceptional guest experiences while meeting owners' financial and strategic objectives.

Our Story

Founded in 2008 by Fred Maina, a seasoned hotelier with decades of experience across East Africa, ICON Hotels Group Africa began as Great Lakes Hospitality, advising hotel owners and developers on feasibility, repositioning, and operational strategy. Recognizing a gap in professional operational support post-development, the consultancy evolved into ICON Hotels Group Africa in 2013, a fully-fledged Pan-African hospitality management company.



FRED MAINA
Founder & CEO

Today, ICON partners with owners across Africa to:

- Transform hospitality assets into successful operations.
- Maintain a collaborative approach that respects each owner's vision.
- Deliver high impact, low cost solutions that balance operational efficiency with memorable guest experiences.

We serve as a dynamic hospitality hub, offering tailored hotel concepts, pre-opening programs, and strategic operator contracts, while leveraging strong networks with financial institutions and international hospitality.

Board of Directors & Leadership

ICON Hotels Group Africa is guided by a seasoned board of directors and leadership team, ensuring strong governance, strategic oversight, and operational excellence.



DR. NICOLE WAMAITHA
Chairlady

Provides strategic leadership and governance oversight.



FRED MAINA
Founder & CEO

Over 40 years of hospitality experience across Africa and beyond; architect of ICON's high-impact, low-cost operational philosophy.



AKAN BASSEY
Group Director: Human Resource

Human resources specialist with experience in hospitality workforce development, talent management, and organizational culture.



NADINE MWIHAKI
Director of Operations

Oversees hotel operations, pre-opening programs, and strategic team management.



SAC SAC JEAN PIERRE

Projects & Development Lead (Communauté économique et monetaire de l'afrique (CEMAC))

Leads market expansion and strategic partnership in Francophone Africa.



MAGDALENE MAINA

Non-Executive Director

Experienced hotelier and caterer, contributing industry insight and operational guidance.



DAVID KANJA

Business Development Head, Kenya

Drives growth strategy, investor relations, and portfolio expansion locally.



Cyril Varak

Head of Engineering

Leads the engineering and technical operations ,managing property infrastructure, system planning, maintenance ,supporting hotel development, pre-opening setup and operational efficiency.

Vision, Mission & Core Values



Vision

To be Africa's leading hospitality and tourism development and management brand, renowned globally for excellence, innovation, and sustainable growth.

Mission

To partner with hotel owners, developers, and investors across Africa to deliver innovative, profitable, and sustainable hospitality solutions that respect the owner's vision, delight guests, and drive long-term growth.

Core Values

- **Hospitality Excellence** – Creating exceptional guest experiences.
- **Innovation** – Applying creative, practical, and cost-efficient solutions.
- **Collaboration & Partnership** – Respecting owners' vision while ensuring operational success.
- **Integrity** – Transparency, accountability, and professionalism.
- **Sustainability** – Balancing financial performance with environmental and social responsibility.

The ICON Management Philosophy

ICON operates with a unique African partnership model, bridging the gap between ownership and professional hotel management.

Our philosophy is guided by:

1

High Impact, Low Cost

Maximizing operational efficiency and guest satisfaction while optimizing resources.

2

Owner Collaboration

Co-designing each hotel to preserve and enhance the owner's vision.

3

Guest-Centered Culture

Delivering memorable experiences that drive loyalty and revenue.

4

Operational Discipline

Robust systems, staff training, and measurable performance ensuring efficiency and profitability.

5

Brand Versatility

Ability to operate independently or integrate global brands based on investor preference.

This approach ensures owners' confidence, guests' satisfaction, and each property's commercial success.

What Makes ICON Different

- **Low Cost, High Impact** – Efficient operations without compromising guest experience.



- **Hands-On Support** – Close collaboration from conceptualization, design, launch and ongoing operations.



- **Flexible Partnerships** – Allowing owners and developers greater involvement while benefiting from professional management.
- **Built for Africa** – Concepts, operations, and service culture tailored for local realities.

Why Developers Consistently Choose ICON

Practical Development Insight

Early-stage input ensures operational efficiency and feasibility.

Low Cost, High Impact Operations

Efficient structures with strong service delivery.

Market-Relevant Concepts

African-focused concepts appealing to both regional and international travelers.

Flexible Partnerships

Tailored models that respect the owner's involvement and vision.

Hands-On Pre-Opening Support

Ensuring smooth launches and strong operational foundations.



The ICON Partnership Model

Management Contracts

Structured to match the owner's investment goals and desired involvement.

Pre-Opening Programs

Recruitment, training, operational systems, marketing strategy, and soft launch operations.

Concept Development

Collaborative design aligning with owner vision and market demand.

Operational Oversight

Day-to-day management ensuring guest satisfaction, efficiency, and financial performance.

Brand Integration

Optional affiliation with global brands such as Best Western, Marriott or Radisson.

Financial Facilitation

Guidance through project financing, feasibility, and fund drawdown.

Technical Services Agreements (TSA)

ICON provides consultancy, guidance, and oversight for greenfield, brownfield, and conversion projects, ensuring optimal flow, functionality, and efficient space planning. We work closely with project teams to deliver developments that meet international hotel standards, while remaining operationally efficient and commercially viable.

Our Services

01 Development Advisory

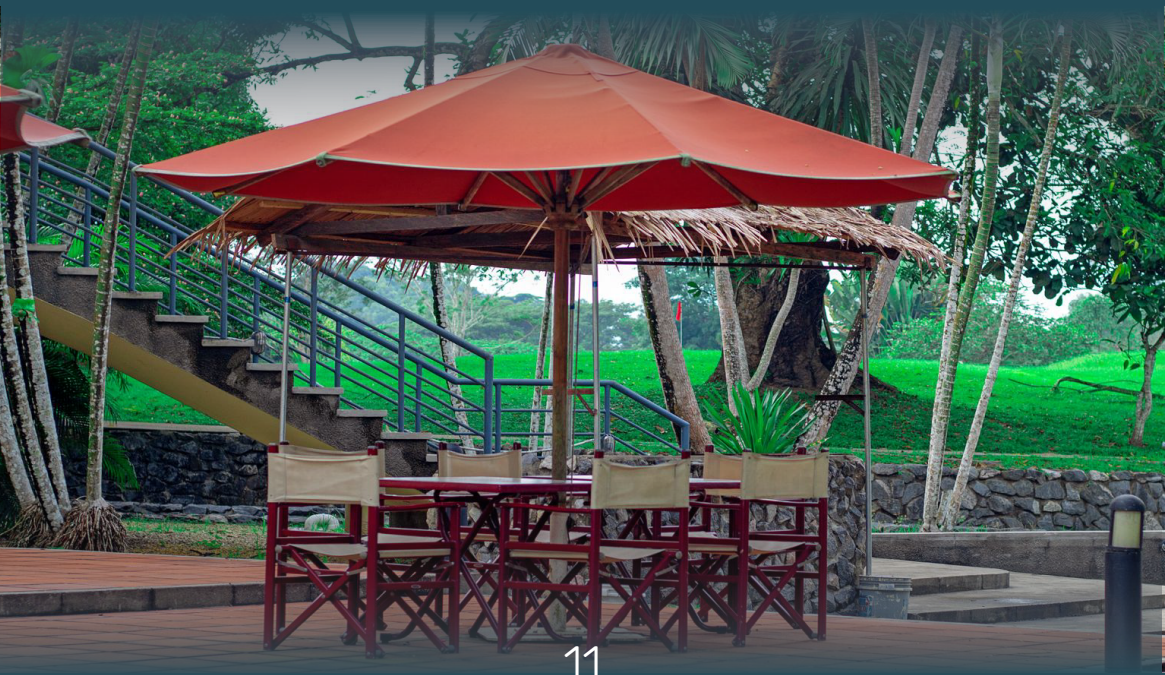
- Feasibility & operational analysis.
- Concept development & investment guidance.
- Market positioning & guest profiling.
- Layout & back-of-house planning.

Value: Minimizes risks, ensures revenue readiness.

02 Concept Development & Branding

- Hotel design & interior guidance.
- Service culture development.
- Brand identity & market positioning.
- Competitive analysis & pricing strategy.

Value: Market differentiation and revenue maximization.





03 Hotel Management

- Front office, housekeeping, F&B operations.
- Full-service dining, catering and events.
- Staff management, training & performance oversight.
- Guest experience & quality assurance.

Value: Operational excellence and protected property value.

04 Pre-Opening Programs

- Recruitment & staff training.
- Standard operating procedures & quality standards.
- Procurement & supplier sourcing.
- Marketing strategy & soft launch coordination.

Value: Smooth launch, strong market entry.

05 Hospitality Consulting & Turnarounds

- Operational audits & performance assessment.
- Revenue & cost optimization.
- Staff training & service quality enhancement.
- Renovation & repositioning guidance.

Value: Unlocks potential and strengthens market presence.

06 Revenue & Commercial

- Dynamic pricing & distribution management.
- Corporate & group sales strategies.
- OTA & GDS partnerships.
- Performance monitoring & data-driven decisions.

Value: Drives revenue growth & ensures competitive positioning.

07 Financial Facilitation & Project Support

- Feasibility studies & business case development.
- Liaison with financial institutions.
- Budgeting, financial control & performance monitoring.

Value: : Reduces financing risk & ensures smooth project implementation.



Portfolio & Track Record

Consultancy Projects:

01 Mount Meru Hotel

Ratings: ★★★★ **Location:** ARUSHA, TZ

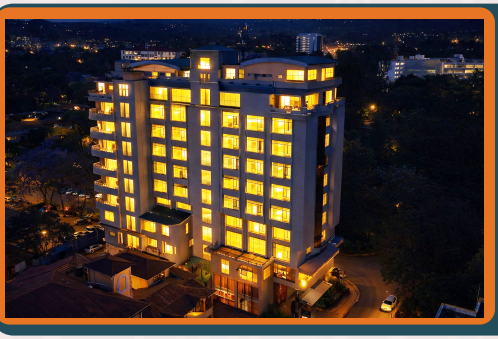


ABOUT HOTEL

Mt. Meru Hotel (formerly Novotel) underwent a comprehensive refurbishment and upgrade at a cost of US$24 million under the leadership of ICON's CEO, who served as Lead Consultant and CEO of the owning company, Hodi Hotels Limited, prior to the establishment of ICON. The project encompassed full-scale refurbishment, strategic repositioning, and successful commissioning, and was completed in December 2010.This landmark experience now forms a key foundation of ICON's technical services capability, particularly in delivering internationally compliant hotel developments and repositioning initiatives. Today, Mt. Meru Hotel stands as a distinguished destination, attracting multinational corporations, NGOs, and high-level dignitaries.

02 Palace Hotel

Ratings: ★★★★ **Location:** ARUSHA, TZ



ABOUT HOTEL

Under its former identity as Great Lakes Hospitality, ICON oversaw the development of World class, 97-key, 4-star hotel located in the heart of Arusha. The project, jointly owned by the National Housing Corporation Tanzania and Palace Hotels Limited, was delivered to successful completion and commissioning in 2012, with the hotel officially opening in February 2013.
This engagement reflects ICON's long-standing capability in delivering end-to-end hotel development projects, from concept through to commissioning, in partnership with both public and private sector stakeholders.

03 Ngurundoto Mountain Lodge

Ratings: ★★★★ **Location:** ARUSHA, TZ



ABOUT HOTEL

The development and commissioning of this prime lodge on the slopes of Mt. Meru in Arusha, Tanzania, was led by ICON's CEO in his capacity as Lead Consultant under the Group's legacy entity. The project included strategic branding and market positioning, establishing the property as a secure and discreet retreat for both dignitaries and leisure guests.
The lodge held a distinctive reputation within the region, having hosted high-level engagements including East African presidential summits, with dedicated presidential cottages reserved for member states—reflecting the strength of ICON's expertise in positioning hospitality assets for niche, high-value markets.

Turnaround Management Contracts:

01 BWC Lagos

Ratings: ★★★ **Location:** LAGOS, NIGERIA



ABOUT HOTEL

ICON Hotel Group Africa assumed management of the former Best Western Victoria Island (now BWC Hotel) under its three-year Rapid Results Initiative (IRRI). The engagement focused on a full-scale transformation, including rebranding, market repositioning, and structured rollout of the new brand. This was complemented by operational systems consolidation and a comprehensive overhaul of key management functions.
Within a short period, the intervention delivered measurable results, with operating costs reduced by over 20% and revenues increasing by more than 50%, demonstrating ICON's capability in turnaround strategy and performance-driven hotel management.

02 IBOM ICON Hotel & Golf Resort

Ratings: ★★★★★ **Location:** Akwa Ibom, NIGERIA



ABOUT HOTEL

ICON Hotel Group Africa assumed management of Ibom Hotel & Golf Resort, a government-owned property that had been experiencing sustained operational losses. Through a structured turnaround strategy, ICON led the repositioning of the asset, including a full rebrand from its former Marriott affiliation to Ibom Icon Hotel & Golf Resort—establishing a distinctive identity tailored to the African market.
The intervention combined brand development, operational restructuring, and performance optimization, successfully transforming the property into a profitable and self-sustaining venture. This engagement highlights ICON's strength in revitalizing underperforming hospitality assets and creating locally resonant, high-impact brands.

Current Management:



Urbanwoods Hotel Suites by ICON

Ratings: ★★★★

Location: Nairobi, Kenya



Osotua Luxury Resort by ICON

Ratings: ★★★★

Location: Naivasha, Kenya

Technical Services Agreements:



Best Western Premier Breeze Hotel

Ratings:

★★★★★

Location:
Cotonou,

Benin

Under Lease/Development:



ICON Regency

Ratings:

★★★★★

Location:
Nairobi, Kenya

(under construction)



Nsimalen Airport Hotel & Golf Resort

Ratings:

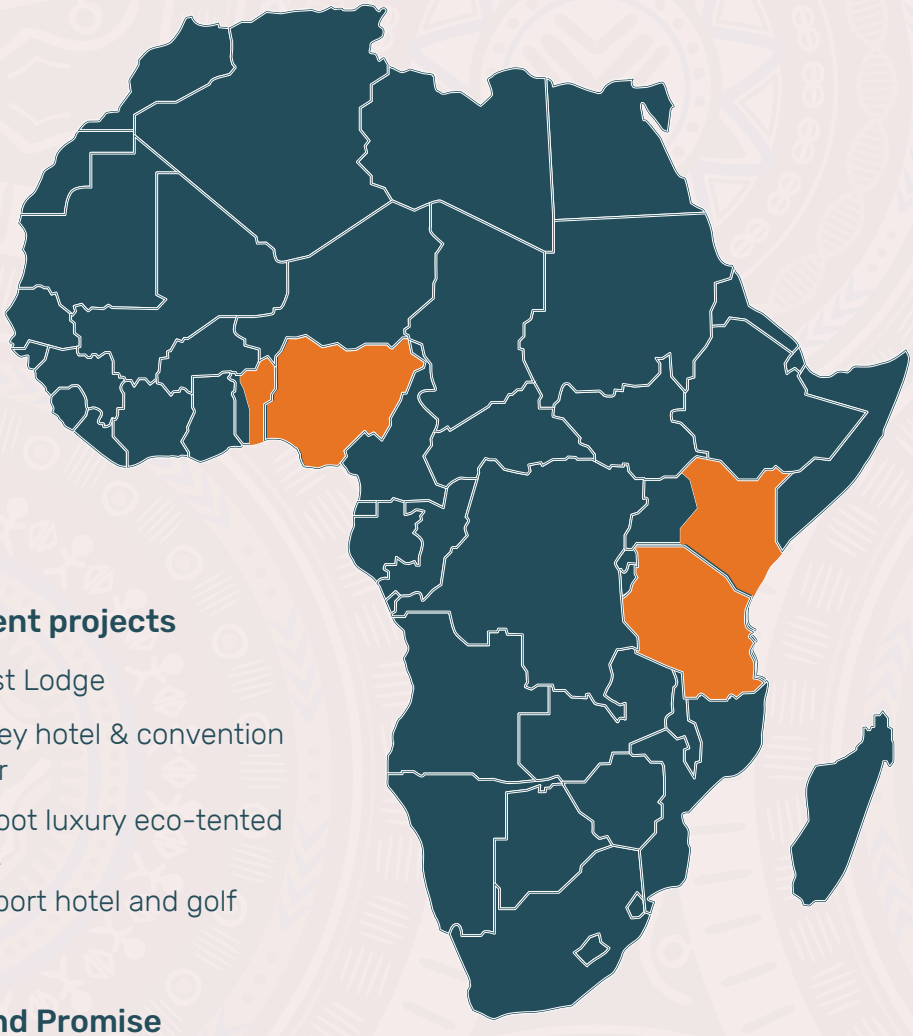
★★★★

Location:
Yaoundé, Cameroon

(under construction)

Growth Vision & Pan-African Ambition

Expand strategically across Africa with authentic and operationally efficient properties.



Current projects

- Tourist Lodge
- 150-key hotel & convention center
- Barefoot luxury eco-tented resort
- 5* airport hotel and golf resort

Brand Promise

Excellence, collaboration, efficiency, and global brand integration.

Partnership Invitation

ICON invites visionary developers and property owners to collaborate in creating distinctive, operationally efficient, and financially sustainable hospitality properties.



Benefits:

Pan-African perspective

Models tailored to diverse markets.

Low-cost, high-impact operations

Efficiency without sacrificing quality.

Hands-on support

From concept through ongoing operations.

Collaborative partnership

Respecting owner vision and investment goals.

Let's create the next generation of African hospitality destinations together — properties that delight guests, empower communities, and deliver lasting value. Partner with ICON, and turn your vision into a profitable, iconic reality.

Contacts

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