SABA minimum vs. Recommended Hunting Requirements

SABA rightly list on their website the minimum KE and arrow weight as determining factor for different sized species and not bow poundage. But as said, these are the absolute minimum requirements for hunting different sized animals. But what about recommended requirements?

If you buy a new computer for the home, and want to install your favorite programs, you will get a Requirements Specification with every program. These requirements often list the minimum hardware needed to run the program at its most basic form. They also list the recommended requirements, which are needed for optimal performance of the program and all the features the program offers. The minimal requirements will often not be able to give you all of the features and capabilities of the program you want from it and with the recommended requirements listed, you get an idea of whether you should go for an upgrade option on your hardware or stick to the limited capabilities your hardware offers you.

The same principals should apply to a hunting setup.

I think SABA did a good job to put these minimum requirements together, but what we need next to these is recommended requirements for optimal results and performance. What is recommended requirements at this stage is very debatable and bowhunters are left to make this decision for themselves. Often the wrong decision is made, because the bowhunter is left looking at the minimum requirements, and thinking that if he gets close to that, he should be fine, even if he is left with a setup that's beneath the minimum requirements.

Off course we all know that correct shot placement takes a higher preference than a more than adequate setup and no amount of arrow weight or kinetic energy will make up for poor shot placement , but in the field things do not always turn out as you would want it to. Even if you know the hunted animal's anatomy by heart, and know exactly where the perfect shot should be, we must remember that animals do not walk 100% broadside all the time with a SANIFAA target attached to them marking the bull's-eye. The hunter is often in a situation where he should make split second decisions like the angle of the animal in relation to him, the distance of the animal, and where the perfect shot should be. These decisions cannot be taught from a book or instructional video. When a hunter is taking aim at an animal, he has to make these decisions almost by instinct without the help of anyone else. With more experience comes better decision making, which results in better shot placement and less wounded and missed animals. For the archer new to bowhunting, the chances of making an incorrect calculation is much higher than the seasoned bowhunter, and in these circumstances a marginal or minimum setup will only put him in a very disadvantaged situation.

Most experienced bowhunters will advocate the vital triangle for the perfect shot, which is formed by the elbow joint, shoulder joint and scapula. This area is quite big, and for the newbie bowhunter often very difficult to "see" or imagine when he faces a slightly different angle than a broadside shot. The perfect shot is one that allows the maximum amount of error and still results is a quick kill. The amount of error made by the bowhunter is determined by various factors, and the less experienced the bowhunter, the bigger these determining factors play a role.

The minimum requirements are those that take into account the fewer amounts of errors made by the bowhunter. If an animal had only the soft flesh to contend with we could all hunt Eland with 40lbs bows and 300gr arrows, but unfortunately a mammal has a skeleton which is designed to protect the fragile interior organs from damage. This skeleton provides an armored barrier to damage from the outside, and the hunter has to take this into consideration when choosing the correct setup for the relevant animal. What you should want in a setup, is one that can provide bone breaking performance and still penetrate enough to reach the vital organs.

Below I've compiled my own recommended requirements for different animals which should provide you with a setup that caters for the unexpected or unintended as well. But remember again, no amount of kinetic energy or arrow weight will make up for poor shot placement.

	SABA minimum Requirements		**Recommended Requirements**	
Animal	**Arrow weight**	**Kinetic Energy**	**Arrow Weight**	**Kinetic Energy**
Blesbok	300gr	40ft-lbs	400gr	50ft-lbs
Buffalo	600gr	80ft-lbs	800gr	90ft-lbs
Bushbuck	300gr	40ft-lbs	400gr	50ft-lbs
Bushpig	400gr	50ft-lbs	500gr	60ft-lbs
Duiker	300gr	40ft-lbs	350gr	40ft-lbs
Eland	500gr	60ft-lbs	500gr	70ft-lbs
Elephant	800gr	105ft-lbs	1000gr	105ft-lbs
Gemsbok	500gr	60ft-lbs	500gr	70ft-lbs
Giraffe	800gr	95ft-lbs	900gr	100ft-lbs
Hartebeest (Red)	400gr	50ft-lbs	450gr	60ft-lbs
Hippopotamus	800gr	95ft-lbs	900gr	100ft-lbs
Impala	300gr	40ft-lbs	400gr	50ft-lbs
Klipspringer	300gr	40ft-lbs	350gr	40ft-lbs
Kudu	400gr	50ft-lbs	450gr	65ft-lbs
Leopard	500gr	60ft-lbs	500gr	70ft-lbs
Lion	500gr	60ft-lbs	500gr	75ft-lbs
Nyala	400gr	50ft-lbs	450gr	60ft-lbs
Oribi	300gr	40ft-lbs	350gr	40ft-lbs
Ostrich	400gr	50ft-lbs	450gr	55ft-lbs
Reedbuck	300gr	40ft-lbs	400gr	50ft-lbs

Reedbuck (mountain)	300gr	40ft-lbs	400gr	50ft-lbs
Rheedbuck (grey)	300gr	40ft-lbs	400gr	50ft-lbs
Rhinoceros	800gr	95ft-lbs	1000gr	100ft-lbs
Sable Antelope	500gr	60ft-lbs	500gr	70ft-lbs
Springbok	300gr	40ft-lbs	350gr	45ft-lbs
Steenbok	300gr	40ft-lbs	300gr	40ft-lbs
Tsessebe	400gr	50ft-lbs	450gr	60ft-lbs
Warthog	400gr	50ft-lbs	450gr	60ft-lbs
Waterbuck	400gr	50ft-lbs	450gr	65ft-lbs
Wildebeest (Blue)	400gr	50ft-lbs	500gr	70ft-lbs
Wildebeest (Black)	400gr	50ft-lbs	450gr	65ft-lbs
Zebra	400gr	50ft-lbs	500gr	70ft-lbs