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**United Nations Development Programme
Project Document for nationally implemented projects
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ANNUAL REPORT: January – December 2022

Project title: Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and Climate-Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe	
Country: The Republic of Zimbabwe	Implementing Partner: Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI)
Management Arrangements: National Implementation Modality (NIM)	
Country Programme Outcome: By 2026, all people in Zimbabwe, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, benefit from greater environmental stability and robust food systems in support of healthy lives and equitable, sustainable, and resilient livelihoods.	
CPD Output 2.3. Solutions scaled up for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals, and waste management	
UNCDF Strategic Priorities: Environmental Protection, climate resilience and natural resources management	
NDS1 Priorities: Food and nutrition security; Environmental Protection; Climate Resilience and Natural Resources Management.	
UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Category: Moderate	UNDP Gender Marker: 2 (the project has gender equality as a significant objective)
Atlas Project ID/Award ID number: 00107199	Atlas Output ID/Project ID number: 00107558
UNDP-GEF PIMS ID number: 5693	GEF ID number: 9660
Planned start date: July 1 st 2018	Planned end date: July 1 st 2024
LPAC date: Friday 13 th April 2018	
Brief project description: Zimbabwe has very high level of biodiversity and is home to all the "Big Five" – African elephant, white and black rhinos, lion, buffalo, and leopard. However, it also faces	

<p>multiple challenges for sustainable development associated with biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and climate change consequences. This 6-year GEF project focuses on reducing key threats for wildlife, habitat, and livelihoods of local communities (poaching, IWT, deforestation, and impact of climate change) in one of the key biodiversity country's hotspots – Lower Zambezi Valley. The project strategy aims to strengthen the capacities of law enforcement agencies to fight wildlife and forest crime (Component 1); strengthen Protected Area (PA) and Community Wildlife Conservancy management for wildlife and woodlands(Component 2); build strong sustainable Natural Resources Management (NRM) capacity for local communities and districts in cooperation with private sector (Component 3); and promote effective knowledge management (Component 4) to achieve the project objective: <i>to promote an integrated landscape approach to managing wildlife resources, carbon and ecosystem services in the face of climate change in the protected areas and community lands of the Mid to Lower Zambezi Regions of Zimbabwe</i>. The total project funding is US\$ 57,436,964, including GEF contribution of US\$ 10,025,964 and co-financing – US\$ 47,411,000. This project forms part of the GEF Programmatic Approach to Prevent the Extinction of Known Threatened Species and falls under the GEF Programme Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development (9071). Under this programmatic framework, with the coordination through the programme steering committee, coordinated knowledge management and cross-fertilisation of the individual projects will be assured.</p>	
FINANCING PLAN	
GEF Trust Fund	USD 10,025,964
UNDP TRAC resources	USD 2,000,000
(1) Total Budget administered by UNDP	USD 12,025,964
PARALLEL CO-FINANCING (all other co-financing that is not cash co-financing administered by UNDP)	
Government (METHI, ZPWMA, FC, EMA, CAMPFIRE)	USD 40,100,000
NGOs (ZAT, LGDA, CTDO, SAFIRE, Environment Africa, ZELA, BTZ, DCA and ZIP SCOPE)	USD 2,540,000
Private Sector (Kariba REDD+ Project Tree Eco Ltd., HKK Safaris, McCallum Safaris, Nzou Safaris)	USD 2,771,000
(2) Total co-financing	USD 45,411,000
(3) Grand-Total Project Financing (1)+(2)	USD 57,436,964

Background

The Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI), received funds from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and with technical support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), developed a project to mitigate these challenges in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe. The project “Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and Climate-Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe” also known as the *Zambezi Valley Biodiversity Project (ZVBP)* was developed in strong cooperation with national and international stakeholders. The Project has four components, and these are (a) Strengthening capacity and governance frameworks for integrated wildlife and forest management and wildlife and forest crime enforcement in Zimbabwe; (b) Strengthening Zimbabwe’s PA estate and CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies in areas global BD significance; (c) Mainstreaming BD and ES management, and climate change mitigation, into the wider landscape; and (d) Knowledge Management, M&E and Gender Mainstreaming.

Zimbabwe has a high level of biodiversity of global significance. The country faces multiple challenges for development associated with biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and climate changes consequences. The challenges include, poaching and illegal wildlife trade, human wildlife conflicts and retaliatory killings, deforestation, and climate change consequences that include droughts, floods, and increased frequency of veld fires.

The project has four outcomes which are (1). Increased national capacity for IWT control, and integrated wildlife and woodland management; (2). Improved capacity of PA network and CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies to protect globally significant biodiversity of the mid-lower Zambezi region over a total area of 1,616,900 ha; (3). Increased area under sustainable management and benefits for local communities from CBWM, SFM and SLM in established CWCs and (4). Lessons learned by the project through participatory M&E and gender mainstreaming are used nationally and internationally.

1. Executive Summary

The Zambezi Valley Biodiversity Project is being implemented in the Zambezi Valley region and covers Hurungwe, Mbire and Muzarabani Districts as well as Mana Pools National Park and the surrounding protected areas complex that includes Sapi, Chewore, Hurungwe, Dande, Charara and Doma Safari Areas. In 2022, the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) stepped up their efforts to combat wildlife poaching by increasing the number of daily and extended patrols, which led to the arrest of 35 suspected wildlife poachers and the recovery of 641 wire snares in the project area. However, human-wildlife conflict remained a pressing issue, with seven people losing their lives due to wild animal attacks. Among the fatalities, five were recorded in Mbire, two from crocodiles, two from elephants, and one from a lion, while two people were killed by elephants in Muzarabani.

During the reporting period, stakeholder consultations were conducted on the Environmental Management Act across all provinces in Zimbabwe. Draft bills were created for both the Environmental Management Act and the Parks and Wildlife Act. Additionally, a draft Wildlife Policy was developed, which is currently awaiting review by Cabinet. The project is also focusing on wildlife law enforcement by collaborating with the National Prosecuting Agency and the Judicial Services Commission through UNDP. To enhance the capacity of regional prosecutors in handling environmental crimes, a workshop was held in Bulawayo, and another workshop on sentencing guidelines was conducted in Kadoma.

The CAMPFIRE Association managed to send a total of 30 new recruits (14 females and 16 males) to undergo a 30-day basic ranger training course on bushcraft, weaponry, community engagement in conservation and law enforcement at the Zimbabwe Institute of Wildlife Conservation (ZIWC).

The Project has so far supported nine projects across the three districts through the Low-Value Grant modality. Two of the projects were completed in 2022.

Context and key developments of the project

At the beginning of the year, COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed, allowing project staff and partners better access to the project areas than in 2021. However, the annual spending limit took a long time to be approved, delaying the start of 2022 activities. To address this issue, the project team developed an accelerated delivery plan to speed up the implementation of project activities.

2. Objectives

The objective of the project is to promote an integrated landscape approach to managing wildlife resources, carbon, and ecosystem services in the face of climate change in the protected areas and community lands of the Mid to Lower Zambezi Regions of Zimbabwe.

Outcome 1. Increased national capacity for IWT control, and integrated wildlife and woodland management

- **Output 1.1.** National policy and regulatory framework is reviewed and updated in accordance with the new Zimbabwe Constitution and national development priorities including National Wildlife Policy, Parks and Wildlife Act, forest legislation in accordance with National Forest Policy (2017), and National Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy.
- **Output 1.2.** Two Multi-Agency Wildlife Crime Prevention Units are established and functional to ensure strong inter-agency collaboration to fight IWT and forest crimes
- **Output 1.3.** Key law enforcement agencies (ZPWMA, ZRP Minerals and Border Control Unit, FC, ZIMRA, EMA, investigators, judiciary, and prosecutors) are provided with necessary trainings and tools to fight IWT and forest crime

- **Output 1.4.** Nationwide system for monitoring wildlife and forest crimes is developed and implemented
- **Output 1.5.** International treaties between Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique on protection of ZIMOZA and Lower Zambezi - Mana Pools Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) are developed, submitted to the countries' governments and supported for implementation
- **Output 1.6.** Project area awareness campaign targeting IWT, deforestation and climate adaptation/mitigation issues is developed and implemented

Outcome 2. Improved capacity of PA network and CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies to protect globally significant biodiversity of the mid-lower Zambezi region over a total area of 1,616,900 ha

- **Output 2.1.** Updated Management Plans are developed and implemented for UNESCO Mana Pools WNH site (Mana Pools National Park, Sapi, and Chewore SAs) and surrounding PA complex of Charara, Hurungwe, Dande, Doma Safari Areas, including enhanced anti-poaching, woodland, HWC and veld fire management.
- **Output 2.2.** CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies (CWCs) with total area of 334,500 ha are officially established, have functional governance structure and CWC Management Plans, and trained in CBWM, SFM, HWC, and fire management
- **Outcome 3. Increased area under sustainable management and benefits for local communities from CBWM, SFM and SLM in established CWCs**
- **Output 3.1.** Integrated Landscape Management Plans for Hurungwe (northern part), Mbire, and Muzarabani Districts are developed, officially approved, and implemented
- **Output 3.2.** Pilot projects on community based SFM, SLM, HWC management and alternative sources of income are developed and implemented in the target CWCs via sustainable small grant mechanism
- **Output 3.3.** Model woodland restoration projects are developed and implemented in the target CWCs.
- **Output 3.4.** Local communities in the target CWCs are provided with alternative sources of energy and energy saving equipment to decrease their dependence on firewood

Outcome 4. Lessons learned by the project through participatory M&E and gender mainstreaming are used nationally and internationally

- **Output 4.1.** Participatory project monitoring, evaluation and learning framework is developed and implemented
- **Output 4.2.** Lessons learned from the project are shared with national and international conservation programmes, including GWP
- **Output 4.3.** Gender strategy developed and used to guide project implementation, monitoring and reporting

3. Achievements

Outcome 1. Increased national capacity for IWT control, and integrated wildlife and woodland management

Output 1.1: National policy and regulatory framework is reviewed and updated in accordance with the new Zimbabwe Constitution and national development priorities including National Wildlife Policy, Parks and Wildlife Act, forest legislation in accordance with National Forest Policy (2017), and National Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy.

National Policy And Regulatory Framework Review

Wildlife Policy

As part of the Project's efforts, the Zimbabwe Wildlife Policy underwent a thorough review process, which included conducting extensive stakeholder consultations in regions with significant wildlife populations. The resulting policy document has been produced and is currently awaiting approval from the Cabinet..

Review of the Parks and Wildlife Act

To ensure that the review of the Parks and Wildlife Act was comprehensive and inclusive, stakeholder consultations were conducted to gather valuable input. Building on this feedback, a Draft Bill for the Parks and Wildlife Act was developed and is currently being finalized in collaboration with the assistance of the Attorney General's office.

Review of the Environmental Management Act

To ensure a comprehensive review of the Environmental Management Act, stakeholder consultations were conducted across all provinces of the country. The purpose of this review was to align the Act with current provisions of the Constitution, as well as address enforcement challenges and loopholes in the existing framework. Among the issues raised by stakeholders were the need to revise penalties, improve enforcement of the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP), streamline the process of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) certification, and extend the fire season deadline to enable controlled burning as a measure to prevent wildfires. The draft bill is currently being finalized with the assistance of the Attorney General's office to ensure its compliance with legal standards and best practices.

Output 1.3. Key law enforcement agencies (ZPWMA, ZRP Minerals and Border Control Unit, FC, ZIMRA, EMA, investigators, judiciary, and prosecutors) are provided with necessary trainings and tools to fight IWT and forest crime

Environmental Crimes workshop with National Prosecuting Agency

A workshop aimed at building the capacity of National Prosecuting Agency Regional Prosecutors on child marriages and environmental crimes was held from 22nd to 25th November 2022 at the Rainbow Hotel in Bulawayo. Prosecutors from all ten provinces of the country were in attendance.

The workshop was divided into two parts, focusing on (i) child marriages and (ii) environmental crimes. Representatives from the Environmental Management Agency, Forestry Commission, and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority delivered presentations on legislation governing natural resources, the environment, and the challenges faced by these organizations in prosecuting offenders.

The presentations highlighted several challenges encountered in prosecuting environmental crimes, including:

- i. Environmental crimes are not prioritized as highly as other crimes such as robbery and murder.
- ii. Prosecutors have limited knowledge of environmental legislation, as evidenced by the issuance of bail and community service in cases that warrant imprisonment.
- iii. Adequate evidence is often lacking in environmental crime cases, making it difficult to secure convictions.

By addressing these challenges, the workshop aimed to equip prosecutors with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively prosecute environmental crimes and combat child marriages, ultimately contributing to the preservation of Zimbabwe's natural resources and the protection of its children.

Some of the recommendations made include the following.

- i. There is a need for the National Prosecuting Agency (NPA) to establish Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), Forestry Commission (FC), and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) to facilitate collaboration and improve tracking of environmental crimes. The workshop noted that various organizations such as Tikki Hywood and Speak Out for Animals have already established MoUs with the NPA, highlighting the importance of such partnerships.
- ii. The use of DNA testing to identify species and areas of origin can significantly assist in prosecuting environmental crimes. Failure to identify the species and place of origin has led to some cases being dismissed. Therefore, it is important to explore and utilize available technology for evidence collection and identification.
- iii. Raising awareness of environmental crimes is critical, as most prosecutors have limited knowledge in this area. Capacitation of prosecutors in regions with wildlife should be prioritized to enhance their understanding of environmental laws and improve their capacity to prosecute offenders.
- iv. Engaging law enforcement agencies such as the Zimbabwe Republic Police and raising awareness of environmental crimes is crucial for effective prosecution. This would also help in creating a coordinated effort towards combating environmental crimes.
- v. The NPA should be invited to attend the Conference of Parties (CoPs) to have a better appreciation of environmental issues, international conventions and the necessary legal frameworks.
- vi. The FC, EMA, and ZPWMA should make use of the Constitutional Law to avoid abuse and use of force to extract information from offenders. This will ensure that the rights of offenders are respected while still ensuring accountability for environmental crimes.
- vii. When carrying out amendments of Acts, it is essential to consider the level of fines imposed. In addition to having deterrent fines, effective enforcement of the laws should also be carried out to ensure compliance with environmental regulations.

The project will support the implementation of some of these recommendations in 2023.

Output 1.4. Nationwide system for monitoring wildlife and forest crimes is developed and implemented.

SMART Implementation

The project is supporting the implementation of Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART). This is a system that allows rangers and managers to easily collect, analyze, report and act on a wide range of data relevant for protecting wildlife. A consultant was engaged to develop a National SMART Strategy and Implementation Plan, including a localised implementation plan for the Zambezi Valley; and train field staff in the use of SMART in monitoring illegal wildlife trade.

To promote ownership and awareness of the SMART/RBM Project, a series of workshops were conducted in key conservation areas, including Mbire, Karoi, Gokwe, Hwange, and Masvingo. Additionally, a national workshop was held in Harare in April 2022. The workshops aimed to raise awareness and promote ownership of the SMART/RBM Project deployment and implementation in key conservation areas, including Parks Estate, State Forest Land, CAMPFIRE Rural District Councils, and community and private conservancies. Additionally, the workshops sought to formulate a strategic goal

for the national strategic framework for SMART/RBM development and implementation. The workshops also provided a platform for stakeholders to share their experiences and insights on how to improve the implementation of SMART/RBM in Zimbabwe.

The consultant has completed a report entitled "Review of SMART Implementation and Use in Zimbabwe's Protected and Conserved Areas." Analysis conducted as part of the review indicates that ranger staffing levels in most complex Conservation Areas located in major wildlife range areas are inadequate for effective patrol coverage. This is particularly concerning as some rangers are also tasked with other park management duties. Table 1 (see below) provides details of the current field manpower levels, availability of motor vehicles, and use of other surveillance methods at protected areas in Zimbabwe. It is evident that most of the Zambezi Valley has insufficient staff for patrols, and additional resources and alternative surveillance methods are required. To address this, the project has procured two drones and three boats for the area, which are expected to be delivered in January 2023.

Training of rangers is ongoing and will be concluded during the second quarter of 2023.

Table 1. Field manpower levels, motor vehicle availability and use of other surveillance methods at CAs in Zimbabwe.

(key for the colour coding of field staff densities are as given below)

1 ranger to ≤ 30 km ²	1 ranger to 30-50 km ²	1 ranger to 51-100 km ²	1 ranger to ≥ 100 km ²
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Land Category	Conservation Area	Area (km ²) per ranger	No. of motor vehicles	Area (km ²) per vehicle	Other surveillance system used at CA (Aircraft surveillance, Drone, Camera Traps, Canines)
north-west Matabeleland					
Parks Estate	Hwange-Main Camp	164	5	2 135	Drone & Camera Traps
	Hwange-Robins Camp	128	1	2 680	Nil
	Hwange-Sinamatella	33	1	1 400	Aircraft & Camera Traps
	Kazuma NP	39	1	313	Nil
	Matetsi SA	82	1	1 889	Aircraft
	Zambezi NP	19	0	0	Aircraft & Canines
Forest Land	Fuller-Mvutu FL	17	0	0	Nil
	Gwaai-Bembesi FL	74	1	1 994	Nil
	Gwampa FL	7	1	47	Nil
	Kazuma FL	18	0	0	Nil
	Ngamo-Sikumi FL	61	0	0	Nil
	Pandamasue FL	21	0	0	Nil
	Umgusa FL				Nil

Land Category	Conservation Area	Area (km ²) per ranger	No. of motor vehicles	Area (km ²) per vehicle	Other surveillance system used at CA (Aircraft surveillance, Drone, Camera Traps, Canines)
Mid-Zambezi valley					
Parks Estate	Charara SA	41	3	564	Nil
	Chewore SA	82	3	1 089	Aircraft & Drone
	Dande SA	23	1	523	Nil
	Doma SA	73	1	945	Nil
	Hurungwe SA	87	2	1 478	Drone
	Mana Pools NP	88	2	1 098	Aircraft & Drone
	Sapi SA	280	1	1 118	Nil
Sebungwe					
Parks Estate	Chete SA	132	2	791	Drone
	Chirisa SA	64	1	1 080	Nil
	Chizarira NP	73	3	637	Nil
	Matusadona NP	25	3	490	Aircraft
	Sengwa W.R.A	22	1	373	Nil
Forest Land	Kavhira FL	40	0	0	Nil
	Mafungautsi FL	34	0	0	Nil
	Sijarira FL	26	0	0	Nil
south-east Lowveld					
Parks Estate	Chipinge SA	14	2	131	Drone
	Gonarezhou NP	24	12	420	Aircraft, Camera Traps , & Canines
Conservancies	Malilangwe	6	4	125	Nil
	Save Valley	50	5	491	Aircraft, Drone, Camera Traps, & Canine
Matabeleland South					
Parks Estate	Matopos NP	8	6	76	Camera Traps
	Tuli SA	38	1	416	Nil
Conservancies	Bubye Valley	20	12	270	Aircraft, Drone, Camera Traps, & Canine
Eastern Highlands					
Parks Estate	Chimanimani NP	7	1	200	Drone

Land Category	Conservation Area	Area (km ²) per ranger	No. of motor vehicles	Area (km ²) per vehicle	Other surveillance system used at CA (Aircraft surveillance, Drone, Camera Traps, Canines)
	Nyanga NP	6	1	472	Drone
	Vumba Bot. Res	1	0	0	Nil
Forest Land	Chirinda Forest	1	0	0	Nil
Small protected areas in Low to -Highveld					
Parks Estate	Chegutu SA	48	0	0	Nil
	Kyle Rec. Park	7	2	85	Drone
	Manjirenji Rec. Park	11	0	0	Nil
	Chivero Rec. Park	1	3	16	Camera Traps
	Umfurudzi SA	22	1	760	Camera Traps
	Mushandike Sanctuary	32	0	0	Drone
	Ngezi Rec. Park	4	1	58	Nil
	Nyamaneche Sanctuary	1	1	25	Nil
	Osborne Rec. Park	8	1	108	Nil
	Sebakwe Rec. Park	3	1	26	Nil

Output 1.5. International treaties between Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique on protection of ZIMOZA and Lower Zambezi - Mana Pools Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) are developed, submitted to the countries' governments, and supported for implementation

Baseline Survey for ZIMOZA and LOZAMAP TFCAs

Consultants were contracted to conduct a baseline survey for the ZIMOZA and LOZAMAP Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs). In collaboration with representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, ZimParks, and other stakeholders, the consultants held meetings to discuss the baseline approaches. The survey has since been concluded, and a comprehensive report has been produced.

The report proposes boundaries for the two TFCAs, as illustrated in Figure 1, analyzes land use systems in the three countries, and identifies conservation challenges across the landscapes. The report also highlights economic opportunities related to the TFCAs.

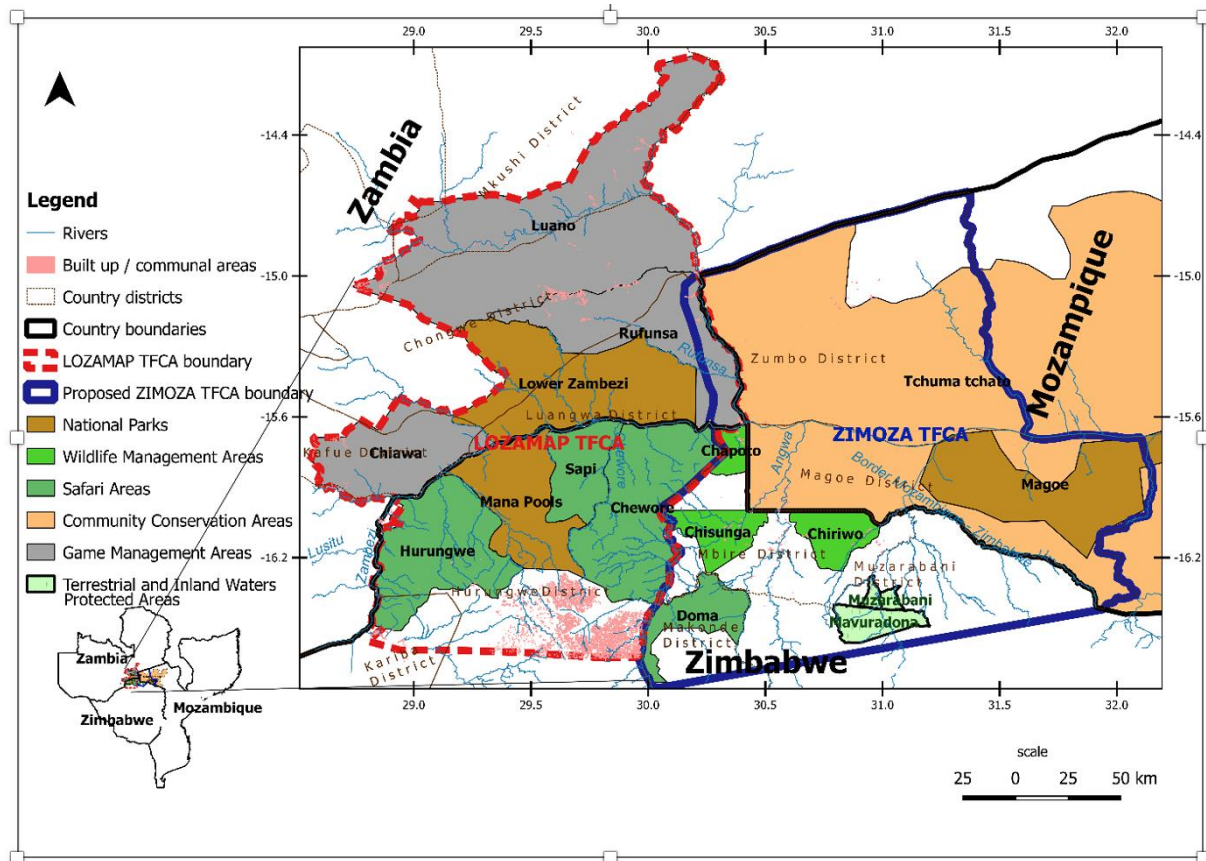


Figure 1. Proposed LOZAMAP and ZIMOZA boundaries

Zambia and Zimbabwe have already worked on a draft MoU and this has been submitted to Cabinet (Zimbabwe) for consideration. Once signed, this project will support development of a joint management plan and processes for establishing a Secretariat.

Output 1.6. Project area awareness campaign targeting IWT, deforestation and climate adaptation/mitigation issues is developed and implemented

Conservation Awareness in the Project

The project has small grants that can be accessed by NGOs and CBOs to carry out awareness campaigns and improve conservation in the project area.

ZELA in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) conducted human rights education and open house discussions with 185 beneficiaries (46 female and 139 male) from Muzarabani Wards 6, 10, 21, 24, 27 and 29. The sessions were targeted towards assisting communities to access justice by providing human rights education and strengthening their understanding of human rights. ZELA also distributed 185 Shona copies of the Zimbabwe constitution.

ZELA in collaboration with the Environmental Management Agency, and Forestry Commission established six environmental clubs with 177 students from six schools in Muzarabani district. The six schools were Chiwenga Secondary School in Ward 24, Hwata Secondary School in Ward 6, Musedza High school in Ward 27, Chawarura High School in Ward 21, Chiweshe Secondary School in Ward 10, and Minda Primary School in Ward 29. Each club has a patron who is a teacher. The clubs spread awareness and knowledge on illegal wildlife trade, deforestation and climate change adaptation and mitigation in schools. They are engaged in tree planting at their schools.

Veld fire prevention awareness campaigns, training in the project area

In Hurungwe District, veld fire awareness meetings were conducted in seven locations with an attendance of 188 people, including ward environmental monitors, village heads, councillors, and communities. These meetings focused on pre-suppression measures such as constructing fireguards before the fire season started to reduce incidences of veld fires. Villages were given a deadline of July 16, 2022, to establish fireguards. A radio program on Nyaminyami FM was also aired, covering veld fire mitigation practices, proper handling of hazardous substances and waste, and causes of deforestation. This program increased awareness of veld fire issues in the project area.

In Muzarabani district, awareness campaigns were conducted in five wards, reaching approximately 360 people. Topics discussed included climate change, human-wildlife conflicts, streambank cultivation, veld fires, and deforestation. Poverty was identified as a factor contributing to environmental insecurity, with the population relying on nature for survival and putting pressure on the environment, which in turn threatens biodiversity conservation. Communities were tasked with developing village-based plans to combat pressures on the environment..

Outcome 2

Output 2.1: Updated Management Plans are developed and implemented for UNESCO Mana Pools WNH site (Mana Pools National Park, Sapi, and Chewore SAs) and surrounding PA complex of Charara, Hurungwe, Dande, Doma Safari Areas, including enhanced anti-poaching, woodland, HWC and veld fire management

Park Level meetings on Park Planning

The project initiated the development of Strategic Park Management Plans in Mid Zambezi and surrounding Rural District Councils (RDC). The consultant, Ian Games, has produced the draft management plans for the following:

- i. Mana Pools National Park
- ii. Charara Safari Area
- iii. Sapi Safari Area
- iv. Chewore Safari Area
- v. Doma Safari Area
- vi. Hurungwe Safari Area
- vii. Dande Safari Area

Draft district plans have also been produced for Hurungwe and Muzarabani, and an addendum to Mbire Land Use Plan have been produced.

Law Enforcement and Human Wildlife Conflict

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) increased the number of daily and extended patrols. This resulted in the arrest of 35 suspected wildlife poachers, subsequently 641 wire snares were recovered, and three dogs were shot. Two buffaloes, two impalas and one hippo were killed. Six illegal gold panners were arrested, 56 boats and canoes were impounded. There were 91 cases of illegal fishing, 36,910 meters of fishing nets measuring, and 1430kg of fresh fish were recovered. Recoveries during the period include two metal detectors, two mattocks, one axe, one hoe, three shovels, five plates, two pots, one knife, two gold sieving pan and one drill bit. These cases were recorded because of enhanced patrol efforts in the project area. Charcoal production remains a challenge 19,250kg of charcoal was confiscated in Chiwenga Ward.

In October 2022, an elephant carcass was found with its ivory missing in Hurungwe Safari Area, and approximately 200 dead vultures were suspected to have been poisoned after feeding on the carcass.

This tragedy highlights the ongoing issue of wildlife poaching and the devastating effects it has on both individual animals and entire ecosystems.

Fire Management and Invasive Species Identification

The Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority in collaboration with the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) conducted a fire management and invasive species training with 18 rangers (3 women, 15 men) in Mana Pools. Fire-fighting practical demonstrations were conducted to acquaint field staff with firefighting equipment. The practical demonstrations included mock fire drills on firefighting.

At least 1500 bundles of thatch grass were harvested in the project area.. About 50ha of area was protected through thatch grass harvesting. Hay bailing was done in Ward 28 in Muzarabani. EMA managed to produce 400 hay bales.

Pickets Construction

Three boreholes were successfully drilled at Madzikita (Chewore North), Gota Gota (Hurungwe Safari Area) and Chimwa (Charara) picket posts during the reporting period. A contractor was hired to construct the Gota Gota and Chimwa pickets. The construction has been completed. The structures were constructed using chromadek materials. Chimwa Picket structures include 3 bedrooms, one radio room, kitchen, pantry, and bathrooms. Electrification and plumbing of the picket posts will be carried out as the final process. The pickets will provide accommodation for rangers on patrol.

Output 2.2: CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies (CWCs) with total area of 334,500 ha are officially established, have functional governance structure and CWC Management Plans, and trained in CBWM, SFM, HWC, and fire management.

Game Rangers Training

The CAMPFIRE Association sent 30 new recruits, including 14 females and 16 males, to undergo a 30-day basic ranger training course at the Zimbabwe Institute of Wildlife Conservation (ZIWC). The training focused on key skills such as bushcraft, patrolling, map reading and weaponry. The newly trained game rangers will enhance law enforcement efforts against wildlife crimes and help address human-wildlife conflicts, including responses to problem animals. A pass-out parade was conducted on November 25, 2022, to celebrate the successful completion of the training.

Procurement of Equipment for CWCs

- CAMPFIRE Association procured seven 250Cc off-road motorbikes were procured (4 for Mavhuradonha and 3 for Masoka). The provision of motorbikes is expected to improve patrol efforts and timely response to Problem Animal Control (PAC) incidents by game rangers within the conservancies.
- An AG2000, four-wheel towed grader and a tractor trailer were procured for Mavhuradonha CWC. The grader is expected to enhance road maintenance in the conservancy and improve movement during patrols and reactions to emergencies.
- The project also procured 5t farm trailer, 12 Binoculars, and 12 Cameras for the CWCs. The cameras will assist in evidence gathering.

Borehole Drilling for Scout Base Camps

Three boreholes have been successfully drilled at the three scout base camp sites in Muzarabani, which will ensure that game scouts have access to clean water during their extended patrols.

Construction of Weir Dams

1. Kamasore Weir Dam, Mbire

Construction of weir dams at Pfundundu and Kamasore in Masoka/Kanyurira conservancy was completed. Pfundundu weir dam has a capacity of around 160 mega litres and Kamasore weir dam has a capacity of around 200 mega litres. The weir dams provide water for wildlife especially during the dry season in the conservancy. Water provision was identified as a key measure to reduce human and wildlife conflict as most wildlife will be kept within designated wildlife areas. Another weir dam is under construction at Chituwi

Pfundundu Road Rehabilitation

The project supported the grading and rehabilitation of 44.2km gravel road at Pfundundu Conservancy. The conservancy is being run by the International Anti-Poaching Foundation (IAPF) and this project support has improved trafficability across the conservancy during patrols.

CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies Trusts

The CAMPFIRE Association conducted workshops to develop Notarial Deeds of Trust for Mbire-North, Mbire South and Karinyanga CWCs from the 5th to the 8th of May 2021. Only Mbire RDC has endorsed the establishment of three Community Trusts through a Council Resolution and this has paved the way for formally registering three Community Trusts, namely Mbire-North, Mbire-South & Karinyanga. Endorsements follow-ups are being made with Hurungwe and Muzarabani RDCs.

CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies, Problem Animal Control and Human-wildlife Conflict

Rural District Councils (RDCs) and Safari Operators carried out 735 patrols conducted across the 6 Conservancies as follows: Mbire 116 patrols, Hurungwe 503 patrols, Muzarabani 116 patrols. The patrols led to 70 arrests, recovery of 456 wire snares, 2 pairs of ivory, 127 tonnes of firewood, 430 charcoal bags, 1 elephant carcass and panning equipment. Two flagship species poached, 1 lion and 1 Buffalo in Mbire. At least 300 Problem Animal Control incidents were recorded in the project districts. The problem animals killed livestock, and damaged crops, and infrastructure. Seven people were killed by wild animals, five in Mbire (two from crocs, two from elephants and one from lion) and two in Muzarabani (elephants).

Outcome 3. Increased area under sustainable management and benefits for local communities from CBWM, SFM and SLM in established CWCs

Output 3.2: Pilot projects on community based SFM, SLM, HWC management and alternative sources of income are developed and implemented in the target CWCs via sustainable small grant mechanism

The Project supports NGOs and CBOs to work with communities on livelihood enhancement projects. The project has so far supported nine such organisations. Details of activities carried out by these organisations in 2022 are listed below.

Community Technology Development Organisation CTDO

Community Technology Development Organisation (CTDO) procured 110 beehives and distributed 100 of these to 100 beneficiaries (63 female and 37 male) in Wards 7, 8 and 9 of Hurungwe. The 100 beneficiaries were trained on apiculture and the training was conducted in collaboration with Zimbabwe Apiculture Trust and Hurungwe RDC. The beehives in Wards 8 and 9 were set up in forests with the aim of complementing conservation efforts to prevent deforestation and veld fires. The beneficiaries in Ward 7 used the beehives to create a bio fence along an elephant corridor with the aim of deterring elephants from encroaching into settlements and fields.

CTDO procured and distributed six commercial solar dryers that will be used for vegetable preservation in the community gardens. The project anticipates high volume of vegetable production in the gardens and excess will be preserved using the dryers. A total of 71 farmers (47 females and 21 male) were trained on the use of the solar dryers. Project beneficiaries have already started using the solar dryers to dry vegetables such as cowpeas leaves from their fields.

CTDO motorised one borehole and installed two 5000-liter tanks in Ward 9, Kakwindi village. CTDO fenced two small nursery gardens and one-hectare community nutrition garden in Hurungwe Ward 9. A total of 27 community members (17 male and 10 female) participated in fencing the community garden. The trenching and piping of a 2.5km water pipeline with four water drinking points was completed by the community. The water system is benefiting over 500 households by providing access to clean and safe drinking water. A total of 128 community members (82 male and 50 female) participated in setting up the water pipeline.

CTDO trained 61 farmers (44 female and 17 male) at Mahwawu and Nyamakate community nutrition gardens on general horticulture crop management, including pest and disease management. CTDO also trained 28 beneficiaries (21 female and 7 male) from Nyamakate nutrition garden in tree planting, grafting and orchard management. The project managed to procure 100 mango and 60 orange tree seedlings. The practical trainings were conducted at the garden as the beneficiaries were being equipped with skills to plant trees and manage their orchard.

Lower Guruve Development Association (LGDA)

Lower Guruve Development Association (LGDA) established fish farming projects at Angwa, Kanyemba and Nyambudzi in Mbire. Beneficiaries at Angwa sold over 37kg of fish and earned more than US\$111.00 while over 13.5kg were shared amongst the members for home consumption.

LGDA upgraded the existing solar system and provided an additional 5000-liter water tank at Kadzi Evergreen Garden in Ward 4. LGDA carried out the rehabilitation of Kadzi Evergreen and Nyambudzi Community gardens from wooden to steel poles with the aim of strengthening the security around the garden. LGDA installed in-field water pipelines, 12 water taps at Masoka and 11 water taps at Angwa community gardens. An additional one-hectare community garden with 39 beneficiaries (14 male and 25 female) was established at Angwa with the aim of integrating activities around the solarized borehole and fishpond at Angwa. Fencing of the garden was completed and two toilets were constructed. The project demonstrated the successful establishment of community gardens and aquaculture activities in communities for income generation and consumption. This will also assist in mitigating issues of human-wildlife conflict and stream bank cultivation.

Zim Apiculture Trust

ZAT completed the construction of two honey processing centres in Mbire and Muzarabani that are benefiting 1 206 beekeepers (723 male and 483 female). The centres were equipped with honey processing equipment and the test run with the Committees of the Mbire and Muzarabani Beekeepers

Associations. The project has demonstrated the use of apiculture to build capacities in communities, including women in making beehives, management of hives and processing of honey. The project is supporting efforts to conserve forests and reduce human wildlife conflict through establishment of bio-fences.

Output 3.3. Model woodland restoration projects are developed and implemented in the target CWCs.

National Fire Week Launch 2022

The Honorable Minister of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry handed over equipment that was procured by the project to the Mbire, Muzarabani and Hurungwe districts at the national fire week launch press conference which was held at Forestry Commission Head Office in Harare on the 16th of May 2022. The equipment included:

Table 1. Equipment was handed to the project Mbire, Muzarabani and Hurungwe districts

Items	Distribution			Totals
	Hurungwe	Mbire	Muzarabani	
Fire beaters	340	328	340	1008
High pressure knapsack sprayers	40	40	40	120
Fire catchers	2	2	2	6
Fire blowers	2	2	2	6

Nurseries, Seedling Production and Tree Planting

A total of 383,377 seedlings were produced during the reporting period. The seedlings included different trees species including 6,464 indigenous, 1,708 exotic fruits, 1,470 other exotics and 3,031 Eucalyptus amongst others. Boreholes at the three nurseries were fully equipped and are now operational.

Chitindiva Nursery

The borehole at Chitindiva was solarised and fully equipped. Water is being supplied to the nursery, Chitindiva School and the community and these were allocated independent storage tanks. A total of 52,262 seedlings were produced during the month giving a cumulative total of 53,701. Ten casual workers were employed to assist with pricking out (from seedbeds to planting pockets). At Chitindiva 142,660 seedlings were produced with Eucalyptus dominating bringing total production to 187,363. Three nursery monitoring visits were conducted in November to monitor seedling production. Activities done during the month included.

Mushumbi Nursery

Pot filling was done for 9,000 pots from which 3,000 pots were sown with mahogany, *F. albida* and gums. The borehole at Mushumbi nursery was solarised but it is yielding hard salt water, and this is resulting in wilting of germinating seedlings. This is negatively affecting seedling production. Forestry Commission is currently offloading water on the ground as a means of flushing out the salts, but this has not yet yielded any considerable change. The district has requesting for water quality testing to be conducted for the borehole. There are 6,500 seedlings

that were produced by stakeholders in the district as follows; Carbo Green Africa produced 200 *Faidherbia albida*, 200 guava, 100 mahogany and 6,000 Eucalyptus seedlings were produced by a private nursery at ARDA farm.

Mavhuradonha Wilderness Nursery (

The borehole at Mavhuradonha nursery was solarised and fully equipped. Water is being supplied to the nursery, Wilderness lodge and the scout base camp. A total of 33,746 seedlings were produced during the month bringing the total production to 171,391. A total of 223 lemons were transferred from Nzvimbo nursery to Mavhuradonha. Major activities during the month were pot filling, weeding and general nursery cleaning which was done by casual labour. The major challenge at the nursery was high labour turn over due to delay in wages payment.

Forest Research Nursery

There are 500 Kenyan croton, 20 granadilla and 100 gum trees that were collected from Forest Research Nursery and delivered to Mbire for planting.

Harare Forest Nursery

A total of 2,500 lemons were produced and seedlings are still germinating on seedbeds.

Tree Planting

A total of 212,070 trees were planted during this reporting period. Forestry Commission in collaboration with different stakeholders such as Zim Apiculture Trust (ZAT), and SAFIRE assisted in the tree planting during the reporting period. In Hurungwe, 1,040 trees were planted at two schools and one community garden. In Mbire, a total of 40 fruit trees were planted (6 lemon, 6 orange, 6 nartjies, 5 avocado, 5 mango, 5 guava, 2 mahogany, 5 tamarind) at Mahuwe primary school at the Provincial Clean-up campaign

Output 3.4. Local communities in the target CWCs are provided with alternative sources of energy and energy saving equipment to decrease their dependence on firewood

Biotechnology Trust Zimbabwe (BTZ).

On 26 January 2022, BTZ conducted the second phase of tree planting at Nyamakate Secondary School, with 15 community members (4 females and 11 male) in attendance. With the assistance from the community and Forestry Commission, the communities planted 450 trees (100 guava, 200 eucalyptuses, 30 pod mahogany, 40 Uapaca kirkiana (Mazhanje), 30 Kenyan Croton, and 50 Leucaena trees). Tree planting helps to promote reforestation, increase the availability of nutritional supplements, create, and maintain a healthy environment and ecosystem.

The construction of a biogas powered tobacco curing barn at Makanjera homestead in Nyamakate, Hurungwe is at a standstill as BTZ is struggling to complete the project. BTZ attributed the challenges to continuous price increases in the cost of construction materials, and this resulted in financial inadequacy. BTZ was requested to submit financial reports to UNDP for review. Reports were not provided.

Environment Africa

Environment Africa supported five early adopters of biogas digesters with 40% financial support from the project whilst the beneficiaries co-financed with 60%. The five biogas digesters for early adopters were completed and are functional. The project successfully demonstrated the use of biogas as an alternative source of energy in the project area. The use of biogas at household levels has demonstrated a significant reduction in firewood use for cooking at households that are using biogas.

Output 4.1: Participatory project monitoring, evaluation and learning framework is developed and implemented

Monitoring by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Environment, Climate and Tourism

The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Environment, Climate and Tourism carried out a monitoring and verification visit of the Zambezi Valley Biodiversity Project in Mbire, Muzarabani and Hurungwe from the 17th - 21st of March 2022. The Parliamentary Committee visit was part of its oversight role to assess the integrated landscape approach to managing wildlife resources, carbon, and ecosystem services in the protected areas and community lands of the Mid to Lower Zambezi Regions of Zimbabwe. The members of parliament participated in the visited selected project activities in Mbire, Hurungwe and Muzarabani Districts. The objectives of the visit were:

- To verify the implementation of ZVBP activities and delivery of result
- To generate lessons learnt from the projects
- For the Parliamentary Committee to provide technical support to the ZVBP project

The Committee held meetings with representatives from Rural District Councils, grantees, and Responsible Parties. Issues discussed during the monitoring visit included human-wildlife conflict management, reactions to Problem Animal Control (PAC), and training and capacitation of game scouts. The Committee also visited an apiary and community gardens that were established through small grants.

Output 4.2. Lessons learned from the project are shared with national and international conservation programmes, including GWP

The project manager attended a conference on Elephant Conservation hosted by Zimbabwe in Victoria Falls.

The objectives of the conference were:

- To take stock of the successes and failures of African Elephant conservation.
- To reach a consensus on measures to improve African Elephant conservation in Southern Africa.
- To agree on a framework for stockpile management.

The key challenges that were highlighted include the following:

- Inadequate funding for conservation research and enforcement constraining sustainable wildlife management.
- Habitat degradation.
- Increasing human population and more demand for land.
- Increasing poverty in communities near protected areas.
- Overabundance of elephants.
- Increasing human-elephant conflict.
- Growing ivory stockpiles which are expensive to manage.
- Climate change resulting in frequent droughts.
- Wildlife trade restrictions.

- De-campaigning against trophy hunting.
- A mismatch between wildlife resources and benefits.

4. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, and Social Inclusion

The project is deliberating targeting and encouraging women's participation in project activities. This is being done through a targeted approach towards engaging women and reporting on gender-disaggregated data. Women's participation is very high in community gardens and energy efficient technologies for cooking such as biogas and cook stoves.

Capacity Development and Sustainability

The project conducted training to strengthen the capacities of NGOs and Responsible Parties to carry out procurement, financial management, reporting and communications consistently with UNDP policies and procedures under the ZVBP. CTDO trained 100 beneficiaries (63 female and 37 male) from Wards 7, 8 and 9 in apiculture and provided them with 100 beehives.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Project Team carried out quarterly monitoring visits to the project. This included visits to the RP activities as well as the protected area.

The ZVBP small grants carried out quarterly monitoring visits in the three districts to monitor small grants activities. The main observations were that the communities are realising results from small grants projects. Income is being generated from community gardens, fishponds, biogas. It was observed that there is high demand for water in communities and this is exerting pressure on the limited water that was provided by the project. Communities in Nyamakate have not been able to put water in troughs for livestock because there is not enough water. Community led water management committees and a project specific constitution are crucial for sustainable management of water projects. Functional community gardens help in reducing incidences of Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC), poaching and streambank cultivation, whilst generating income for the communities and enhancing livelihoods. It was recommended that there is a need for scaling up water provision projects in Hurungwe and to address gaps that have been identified. This will reduce the risks of potential conflict in the community. There is a need for timely verification of all procurements done through the project.

HACT Compliance

The UNDP Country Office had an audit by the Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) from 30 October to 11 November. The GEF6 was part of the projects that were audited.

A training workshop was conducted to strengthen the capacities of NGOs and Responsible Parties to carry out procurement, financial management, reporting and communications consistently with UNDP policies and procedures under the ZVBP. The training for ZVBP Responsible Parties and Grantees was held on the 24th of November 2022. The RPs and grantees were trained on good financial management and procurement practices. Other topics covered also included reporting on (quarterly, annual, and final project financial reports), the use of FACE forms to request for funding authorization, and reporting on expenditures. The presentation also covered issues on certification of expenditures, the quality of supporting documents for acquittals, eligible and ineligible payments, value for money, restrictions on cash withdrawals, the quality of documentation that is expected for the smooth processing of payments, acquittals of DSA and fuels.

Observations

- There have been reduced incidences of elephants in areas where bio-fences were piloted to deter elephants from encroaching into homesteads and fields. The bio-fences need to be complemented with other strategies such as the use of chilies to be more effective.

Recommendations

- To increase the number of trees produced and planted by the project, promoting the establishment of household or community tree nurseries and orchards is necessary.
- To ensure that the project procures equipment that meets expected quality and safety standards and provides value for money, project partners must conduct quality assessments on all procured goods.

Annual Review and Planning Meeting

The project carried out the annual review and planning meeting in Kariba from 13 to 14 December 2022. The objectives of the annual review and planning workshop were:

- To review progress of implementation of 2022 planned activities, discuss challenges faced in 2022 and provide recommendations for future implementation.
- To present and review each partner's proposed annual work plan for 2023, and to collaboratively refine the activities and define resources that will be necessary to fulfil the deliverables of the project in 2023.
- Review the operational management effectiveness and efficiency of implementation
- Present the 2022 Annual Progress Report and the 2023 Annual Work Plan to the Project Technical Committee.

The project conducted a review of activities implemented by RPs and NGOs, including the results achieved, lessons learned, and recommendations from 2022. Presentations were made by FC, EMA, ZPWMA, CTDO, ZAT, DCA, ZIP SCOPE, Environment Africa, ZELA, and LGDA. The presentations demonstrated that RPs and grantees had made significant progress in achieving project results. The review recommended increased collaboration between RPs and grantees. Following the review, a planning meeting for 2023 was held, and the ZVBP Annual Workplan for 2023 was developed.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Challenges:

- The annual spending limit took long to be approved which in turn affected activities that needed funds released for them to proceed
- The Rural District Councils delaying endorsing the establishment of three Community Trusts
- Late approval of small grants partners at District level. This is mostly affecting Muzarabani district
- Two out of nine NGOs under the small grants (SAFIRE and BTZ) have experienced project delivery challenges. SAFIRE delivered defective equipment to communities, which was replaced after communication with the project team, but the replacement equipment is also not working.
- Overpricing of services and equipment especially where payments are being done through bank transfers.

- Biotechnology Trust of Zimbabwe (BTZ) is struggling to complete the establishment of a biogas-powered tobacco curing barn in Hurungwe due to financial inadequacy resulting from price fluctuations. The project team held meetings with BTZ and requested current financial reports, which have not yet been provided.
- RPs' delayed acquittals of fuel led to a delay in fuel requests and dispatch to communities.

Lessons learned:


- Pickets are crucial infrastructure for controlling illegal wildlife trade since they improve rangers' accessibility and coverage of wildlife areas, while also providing accommodation and facilities such as radio charging for communication purposes.
- Committed individuals, rather than groups, yield the best results in bee-keeping projects. Such projects offer environmental benefits, such as reduced veldt fire incidences and encouraging tree planting for bee forage.
- Despite the high number of arrests made in 2022, the successful prosecution rate remains low. Out of 70 arrests made, only 7 resulted in successful prosecutions.

6. Project Board Meeting Outcomes and Programmatic Revisions

Two Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meetings were held during the year, one the 28th of July 2022., and the other on the 20th of December 2022. The objective of the meetings was to review the progress of project implementation and consider work plans and reports.

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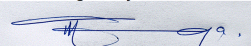
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